

Mawlana's Relations with the Akhīs

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Abstract

It is known that there were akhīs in Konya before Bahā al-Din Walad's arrival in Anatolia with his family after 1220 and his decision to settle in Konya. This Akhī structure was influenced by the Arab futuwwa and Persian chivalry, synthesized with the Turkish national culture and transformed into its own unique form. The legendary architect of this transformation is Akhī Evrān. Organized exclusively among tradesmen, the Akhīs came from various social strata and belonged to various orders representing all branches and tendencies of Sufism in Anatolia, especially Mawlawism and Bektashism. Therefore, they had a very significant role in the harmonization of the religious life of Anatolian settlements. There is asceticism that we see in the Hanafi tradition on the basis of this social role. Bahā al-Din Walad and his son Jalal al-Din Rūmī, who were disciples of N. Kubrā, had a more independent Sufi life, partly in line with the madrasa tradition. After his father's death, Jalal al-Dīn, who had been under the edify of Sayyid Burhan al-Dīn Tirmidhī, experienced a real change when he met Shams al-Tabrizī in 1244. Leaving aside the troubles of Shams' comings and goings and Damascus journeys, Mawlānā transforms into a person who spends his time in samā and dawrān, singing with a Sufi understanding based on love. In this process, it is quite normal for Mawlānā Jalal al-Dīn to have relations with the akhīs, especially those living in Konya. When we take into account the information in the sources, it is possible to say that these relations were often friendly and sometimes controversial, depending on the course of events. As a matter of fact, one of his two closest disciples, Najm al-Dīn Zarqūb, was a goldsmith, while Husam al-Din Chalabi who was nicknamed Akhī Turkoglu because of his father, was someone who grew up and lived within the akhī tradition. However, we can say that the akhīs were in favor of a regular religious life based on reason with the understanding of asceticism they adopted, and that they distanced themselves from Sufism's dhikr forms, especially sama and dawran. On the other hand, during the war of succession between the sons of Kaykhusraw II, the akhīs and Mawlānā were on opposite sides. While the akhīs supported ‘Izz ad-Din Kaykaus in cooperation with the Turkmens against the Mongol invasion, Mawlānā supported Kilij Arslan IV, who was proclaimed Sultan in Konya with Mongol support. This political stance sometimes made the relations between the parties contentious and controversial. In this paper, Mawlānā's relations with the akhīs will be discussed within the framework of political and social developments in the 13th century.



Keywords

Mawlānā, akhīs, asceticism, mysticism, politics

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Mevlânâ'nın Ahîlerle İlişkileri

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Öz

Bahâeddin Veled'in ailesiyle birlikte 1220'den sonra Anadolu'ya gelişi ve daha sonra Konya'da karar kılmasından önce Konya'da Ahîlerin varlığı bilinmektedir. Bu Ahîlik yapısı Arap fütüvvetinden ve Acem civanmertliğinden etkilenecek, bunları Türk millî kültürüyle sentezleyip nev'i şahsına münhasır hale dönüşür. Bu dönüşümün efsanevî mimarı ise Ahî Evran'dır. Münhasıran esnaf arasında örgütlenen Ahîler, çeşitli sosyal tabakalardan gelip, başta Mevlevilik ve Bektaşilik olmak üzere, Anadolu'daki tasavvufun tüm kol ve eğilimlerini temsilen değişik tarikatlara bağlıdırlar. Dolayısıyla, Anadolu yerleşim merkezlerinin dini hayatının ahenkleşmesinde son derece anlamlı bir role sahiptirler. Bu sosyal rolün temelinde Hanefi gelenekte gördüğümüz zühd anlayışı vardır. N. Kübra'nın müridi olan Bahâeddin Veled ve oğlu Celâleddin Rumî ise medrese geleneğine bağlı olarak kısmen daha bağımız bir sufiyane yaşayıp sahiptiler. Babasının vefatından sonra Seyyid Burhaneddin Tirmizî'nin terbiyesine devam eden Celâleddin, asıl değişimi 1244'de Şems-i Tebrizî ile karşılaştığında yaşar. Şems'in geliş gidişleri ve Şam yolculuklarının sıkıntılarını bir kenara bırakırsak, artık Mevlânâ aşk temelli sufiyâne bir anlayışla terennümlerde bulunan zamanını semâ ve devrân ile geçiren bir kişiliğe dönüşür. Bu süreçte Mevlânâ Celaleddin'in özellikle Konya'da yaşayan Ahîlerle ilişki içerisinde bulunmasını son derece normaldir. Kaynaklardaki malumatı dikkate aldığımızda bu ilişkilerin olayların gidişine göre çoğu kere dostane kimi zaman da ihtilaflı olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Nitekim onun kendi yerine bıraktığı en yakın iki müridinden Necmeddin Zerkûb kuyumcu esnafıdır, Hüsameddin Çelebi ise babasından dolayı Ahî Türkoğlu lâkabına sahip akhîlik geleneği içinde yetişen ve yaşayan birisidir. Bununla birlikte akhîlerin benimsedikleri zühd anlayışıyla, akıl temelli düzenli bir dini hayattan yana olduklarını sûfiliğin başta sema ve devran olmak üzere nafil formundaki zikir çeşitlerine mesafeli durduklarını söyleyebiliriz. Öte yandan II. Keyhusrev'in oğulları arasındaki veraset savaşı zamanında ahîler ile Mevlânâ zıt taraflarda bulunmuşlardır. Ahîler Moğol işgaline karşı, Türkmenlerle işbirliği yaparak İzzeddin Keykavus'u desteklerken Mevlânâ Moğol destekli Konya'da Sultan ilan edilen IV. Kılıçarslan'ı destekler. Bu siyasi tavır tarafların ilişkilerini kimi zaman çekişmeli ve ihtilaflı hale getirmiştir. Makalede konu, Mevlânâ'nın Ahîlerle ilişkileri 13. yüzyıldaki siyasi ve sosyal gelişmeler çerçevesinde ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Mevlânâ, Ahîler, zühd, tasavvuf, siyaset

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Introduction

Born in Balkh in 1207, Mawlānā's full name was Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Husayn al-Balhī and his nickname was Jalāl al-Dīn. He is called *Mevlānā* to glorify him. Mevlānā, who left Balkh with his family and came to Anatolia, completed his education in Larende with his father and got married. Receiving his first Sufi upbringing from his father Bahāal-Dīn Veled, a follower of Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā,* as well as his madrasah education, Jalāl al-Dīn came to Konya after his father's death (d. 628/1231) at the invitation of Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhī (d. 639/1241)** and grew up under his edify for nine years. His transformation in Sufism begins with his encounter with Shams al-Tabrizī. After Shams' complete disappearance/murder in 645/1247, his maturity in Sufism begins. The appearance of the *Mathnawī* was encouraged by Husām al-Dīn Chalabi. With this encouragement, the *Mathnawī* was written over a long period in the 1260s. Mawlānā died in 672/1273 (Öngören, 2004, Vol. 24, p. 441-443).

Bahā al-Dīn Waled resided in the madrasas during his travels and in Karaman and Konya, which were his last residences. Following his father's death, Jalāl al-Dīn also worked in the madrasah. If we take this into consideration, it is understood that he turned to the love-centered Sufi understanding after his encounter with Shams-i Tabrizi and organized mass sema rituals. Considering Mawlānā's life, it is known that the formation process of Mawlavism started after him and the institutionalization was completed with his grandson Ulu Arif Chalabi (Önder, 1998, p. 161-178; Kayaoğlu, 2005). Again, depending on the process of writing the *Mathnawī*, it can be said that the reading of the *Mathnawī* was limited to Konya and its vicinity during Mawlānā's lifetime.

The network of political and social relations that Mawlānā, who has a prominent place in the Turkish Sufi tradition with his Sufi understanding, entered into with different people and communities in his time, often attracted the attention of researchers controversial interpretations are made on the subject. One of the communities he had relations with, was the akhīs. The akhī order was a civilian social structure that gathered different professional groups in most of the cities in 13th century Anatolia. Considering the relevant data on the subject, it is understood that the akhīs had a strong structure and social solidarity in Konya, where Mawlānā spent most of his life. This study will try to reveal Mawlānā's relations with the akhīs based on the akhīs who were dealt with Mawlānā himself. In addition, some narratives about the relations before Mawlānā and some narratives about his son and

* Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221): He is the founder of the Kübreviyye, one of the three major orders originating from Central Asia. He determined the principles of his order in his work called Uşūl-u 'Ashara.

** Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Muhaqqiq al-Tirmidhī (d. 639/1241): He is the sheikh of Mawlānā. He has a work called Ma'ārif, which is a record of his Sufi conversations, in which the subjects of voyage and knowledge of Allah are explained with concise words.

grandson after Mawlânâ will also be utilized. An effort will be made to determine the situation by avoiding the current debates in recent history on this subject.

Historical sources of the period such as Ibn Bîbî (1996), K. Aksarayî (2000) and Anonymous *Seljuknâme* (2014) provide first-hand data on the subject. In addition, Aflakî's *Manağib al-'Arefîn* (1989), Mawlânâ's *Letters* (1963), his son Sultan Walad's *Divân* and other Mawlawî sources are our main reference works. In the recent period, Thaeschner (1964), Gölpınarlı (1999), Barın (1991), Bayram (1991), Değirmençay (2012), Demirtaş (2016), Ürkmez (2018), Moghaddam (2019), Haykıran (2022), Hacıgökmen (2011) are among the studies on the subject.

1. Mawlânâ and Akhî Bedr al-Dîn Guhartash/Gawhartash

Badr al-Dîn Guhartash/Gawhartash, who seems to have been one of the akhîs of Konya (Hacıgökmen, 2011, p. 126-128), is one of the emirs in the close circle of Sultan Alâ al-Dîn. He seems to have been in good relations with Bahâ al-Dîn Walad, the father of Mawlânâ. In fact, when Bahâ al-Dîn was teaching at the Altun-Âbâ madrasah in Konya, he asked him to build a madrasah for his sons (Eflākî, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 44). Badr al-Dîn Guhartash built a madrasah to the north-east of the Alâ al-Dîn hill, later known as *the Madrasa-i Mevlânâ, or Madrasa-i Celâliye*. It is known that Jalâl ad-Dîn Rûmî stayed in this madrasa with his children until his death. After his death, although the Mawlawî lodge was moved to the location of the tomb, the activities of this madrasah continued until the 19th century (Hacıgökmen, 2011, p. 125-126). Again, Badr al-Dîn Guhartash, while he was the castellan in Karahisâr-i Sâhib, personally circumcised Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî's sons Walad and Alâ al-Dîn and organized a big wedding (Eflākî, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 331). This shows that Badr al-Dîn maintained good relations with Mawlânâ and his family until the end of his life.

2. Mawlânâ and Chalabi Husâm ad-Dîn

Perhaps the most vivid example of Mawlânâ's relationship with the akhîs is one of his closest disciples, Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn, who was addressed as "Come, my religion, come, my soul, come, my sultan. You are the sultan of truth" (Eflākî, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 106). Again, Mawlânâ praises Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn at the beginning of the sixth book of the *Mathnawî* (Mevlânâ, 2013, Vol 6, p. 691).

A gönle hayat veren Hüsâmeddin, altıncı bölüme isteğin coştukça coşuyor.

Hüsâmî-nâme senin gibi bir allâmenin cezbesiyle dünyada dolaşır oldu.

Ey manevî [er]. Mesnevî'yi tamamlamak üzere altıncı bölümü sana armağan olarak sunuyorum.

O Husâm al-Dîn, who gives life to the heart, your desire for the sixth chapter becomes more and more intense.

Hüsâmî-nâme became wandering in the world with the lure of an allâme like you.

O spiritual [er]. I present the sixth chapter as a gift to you to complete the Mathnavî.

His name is mentioned in the introduction of the *Mathnawī* as "Akhī Turkoglu", Husām al-Haq ve al-Dīn Hasan b. Muhammed b. Hasan, and in *Manaqib al-'Arefīn* as Hasan b. Muhammad b. el-Hasan b. Akhī Turk (Mevlānā, 2013, Vol. 1, p. 18). Eflākī (1989, Vol. 2, p. 342) says that all of Anatolia's most respected akhīs were disciples of Akhī Turk and Akhī Bashara's grandfathers and that they were honored by them. Mawlawī sources state that Akhī Turk was a member of the great sheikh who said, "I went to bed as a Kurd and got up as an Arab" (Mevlānā, 2013, Vol. 1, p. 18; Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 2, p. 323; Sipehsâlâr, 2020, p. 123). Despite Golpınarlı's (1999, p. 38-29, 115) different opinion, A. Moghaddam (2017, p. 100), in his evaluations, determines that this saying belongs to Tāj al-'Arefīn Abu al-Wafā (d. 501/1107). Although Bayram (1991, p. 95; 2012, p. 241) accepts Ahī Turk as Husam al-Dīn's father, the statements in Mawlawī sources do not support this. Salih Ahmed Dede (2011, p. 107) states that Ahī Turk was the son of Abu al-Wafa, born when he was about seventy years old. Thus, Chalabi Husam al-Dīn's family has been associated with the akhī for four generations and has a respected place in Konya. This information is noteworthy when we take into account the presence in Anatolia of Wafāi dervishes such as Dede Kargın, Baba Ilyas and his descendants, and Sheikh Edebalı.

Accordingly, we are able to trace our knowledge of the akhīsm back to the early 12th century. Although Moghaddam (2017, p. 101) states that Akhī Natur, one of the disciples of Mawlānā's father Bahā al-Dīn Waled, was working in the Kurkculer bathhouse at the age of 110 at the time of Mawlānā, and that he would have been born at least in 560/1160, it seems possible to take this date back further. As a matter of fact, Hasan al-Jafarī, a member of the Futuwwa, who resided in the city of Khoy according to the genealogy of Akhī Sharaf al-Dīn and whom the Arabs called Akhī 'Ali Bessak, the seventh generation grandfather of Akhī Sharaf al-Dīn, comes to Anatolia after 550/1155 upon the invitation of Kilij Arslan I (d. 588/1192). In addition to these known names, Ibn Bībī (1996, Vol. 1, p. 52-53) mentions the akhīs and braves who defended Sultan Gıyās al-Dīn in the incident (595/1196) when Rūkn al-Dīn Süleyman Shah besieged Konya, deposed his brother Gıyās al-Dīn Kaykhusraw and seized power after a four-month siege. He also mentions that when 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāus came to Konya to ascend to the throne, the ahīs were among those who welcomed him (Ibn Bībī, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 140). Ibn al-Asīr, (1987, Vol. 12, p. 228; Moghaddam, 2017, p. 102) on the other hand, reports on the powerful position of the Ahlat fityān in the city and some of their actions based on this.

After all these, it is understood that the existence of the akhīsm was confirmed in the 12th century. Therefore, we can say that tradesmen were among the elements that make up the city in urban culture, that they formed an association and that certain rules were probably applied among them. Although Baykara (1985, p. 98-106) states that the tradesmen before the 13th century were represented by the *iğdiş*'lik organization formed by the merchants and the *iğdişs*, when we take into account the title of *akhī* identified above and the frequently used terms such as *fetā*, *fityān*, *rind*, *rünûd* in the sources, it seems likely that the tradesmen and merchants acted together around certain rules. Based on the fact

that those who attained the rank of mastery in trades and craftsmanship were called *akhî* in the later Futuwwatnâmes, it is understood that they were called *akhîs* (Razavî, v. 16b; Cahen, 1986). Sultan Izz ad-Din Kaykaus I's entry into the futuwwa organization led by al-Nâsir by wearing a futuwwa robe through Majd al-Din Ishaq and the reinforcement of the futuwwa activities with the arrival of Sh. Suhrawardî in Anatolia is a new process. One of the most important features of this process is the inclusion of the military class, which would later be known as *Gâziyân-ı Rûm*, into futuwwa, and even their acceptance as natural members of futuwwa (Köprülü, 1991, p. 84-88). It seems that the *akhîs* with the titles of *dizdar*, *shahne*, and *emîr* in 13th century sources are related to this. In this process, we can say that *akhîsm* and futuwwa became intertwined, and their rituals became written and widespread. In this development, the title of the founder of the Ahi organization in Anatolia is given to *Akhî Evran*, who is largely a mythological hero for the time being. Thus, *akhîsm* was influenced by Arab futuwwa and Persian chivalry, synthesizing them with Turkish national culture and transforming into its own unique form. Although some researchers consider *Akhîsm* to be a order organization, it has a different organization from the classical order structure and gives its followers from various social strata the opportunity to enter different orders (Munteanu, 1993, p. 373).

We see an example of this again in the person of Chalabi Husam al-Dîn. His father was an *akhî* in Konya and had spiritual influence over the entire population and therefore owns property and assets. He was probably the sheikh of the Hangâh-i Ziyâ'a built by the Vizier Ziyâ al-Dîn Karaarslan. After the death of his father, Chalabi Husam al-Dîn seems to have hesitated in the face of proposals for him to become the head of the *ahîs* and chose to serve Mawlânâ with all his men. Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn had a great affection for Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî. He even wanted to leave Shafi'ism and convert to Hanafism, which was Rûmî's sect, but Mawlânâ did not allow him to do so (Eflâkî, Vol. 2, p. 347). Considering that fame, position and wealth do not bring anything to a person, he wants each of his men to be busy with their own earnings and to make a living with the income from their own properties, and he gives way to his servants and fetas. Husâm al-Dîn donated everything he had to J. Rûmî and had nothing left (Eflakî, Vol. 2, p.324; Gölpınarlı, 1999, p. 115-116; Demirtaş, 2021, p. 20-21)

This information will contribute to a more accurate understanding of the events and debates around Hangâh-i Ziyâ and Hangâh-i Lâlâ, of which Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn was the subject. In the event that seems to have taken place after 659/1260, according to Eflâkî, the sheikh of Hangâh-i Ziyâ, which probably belonged to the *akhîs*, died. Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî (1963, 115, 262) wrote a letter to the Mongol-appointed vizier Tâc al-Dîn Mu'tez, requesting that the sheikhship of the hangâh be given to Husam al-Dîn. At Tâc al-Dîn Mu'tez's initiative, Chalabi Husam al-Dîn was appointed as the sheikh of the hangâh with the approval of Rukn al-Dîn Kilij Arslan IV. Aflakî states that Ahî Aḥmad did not accept the appointment of Husam al-Dîn as sheikh due to the hatred and animosity of bigotry in his nature. For the sheikhdом, a great ceremony of sitting on a high office is performed (Eflakî, Vol. 2, p. 342-345; Gölpınarlı, 1999, p. 117-118; Ürkmez 2017, p. 253-254; Demirtaş, 2021, p. 20; Kurt, 2021,

p. 103-104). J. Rūmī carries the prayer rug of the sheikhdōm. As the prayer rug is laid out, Akhī Ahmad suddenly gets up from his seat, picks up the prayer rug and hands it to someone and says: "I do not accept this man as a sheikh in this region". All hell breaks loose and Akhī Muhammad Sebzvārī, Akhī Kayser, Akhī Choban and others from the Akhīs of Konya take up their knives and swords, and the emirs among the followers advance on to kill the insolent rishis. A riot breaks out. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī then leaves the ceremony. Although he was apologized to, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī rejects Ahmad, saying, "He is not of our kind."

It can be assumed that the ceremony described here is the ceremony of elevation of an akhī to the position of sheikh in the akhī-futuwwa organization. In other words, it is the elevation of a master who has reached perfection in his profession to the leadership of his own professional group. It is understood from Eflākī's narrations that Hangāh-ı Ziyā was in opposition to his deceased sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. It seems that Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, taking advantage of this death and using his power in the eyes of the political authority, wants to put his disciple Akhī Turkoglu on the prayer rug. In this case, either Akhī Turkoglu continued his relationship with the ahids or he had the right to become the sheikh of the hangāh based on the influence of his family. However, due to the question marks that arose in his service to the ahīs, Akhī Ahmad, the leader of the Konya ahīs, intervened in the ceremony by using his leadership authority. This situation brings confusion during the ceremony. It would be an ambitious argument to see this event as Mawlānā's attempt to take over the hangāh (Bayram, 1991, p. 95; 2012, p. 241). It is understood that Aflakī's statements that Akhī Aḥmad's attempt to be punished with death after this incident was prevented by Mawlānā's intervention and that he was no longer admitted to important meetings are related to the zealousness of the order. Again, we can date what he narrated about Akhī Aḥmad's death to before 673/1274 if we take another narrative into account. In the following narrative, it is possible that he is the same person as Akhī Aḥmad, whom Eflākī (1989, C. 2. 415) says died later in a narrative in which Sultan Walad and Shaykh Sadral-Dīn got involved in. Eflaqī's report that after the death of Akhī Aḥmad, most of the Akhī youth became followers of Mawlānā, and that his son Akhī ʿAli became a disciple of Sultan Walad, however, will come much later in the hangah debates. On the other hand, as will be discussed below, Akhī Aḥmad, who intervened with Akhī Aḥmad Shah in a civil disturbance in Konya in 684/1285, seems to have had a say in the administration of the city. If Aflaqī's statements of his death are exaggerated, it seems that the same Akhī Aḥmad retained his influence until his death. Or, considering these and other similar rumours, it can be said that more than one Akhī Aḥmad lived in Konya during this period.

3. The Difference of the Temperament between Mawlānā and the Akhīs

Another issue that needs to be evaluated in relation to this incident is that the worldview of the akhīs is relatively different from the worldview presented by Sufism and the general perspective, and the difference in the way of living religious life. Aside from the interpretations based on the relationship between the Ahīsm and Sufism within the

framework of the concept of futuwwa, the Akhîsm are the practical example of the Hanafi understanding of asceticism. In some studies, the efforts to understand the akhîs as rationalists, the Mawlawis as intuitionists and explorers, the akhîs as practitioners, the Mawlawis as mystical theorists, and the ahîs as exemplary people in their behavior and the Mawlawis as people who try to convince are also related to this phenomenon (Taeschner, 1964, Gölpınarlı, 1983, p. 304-305; Bayram, 1991, p. 89-91; Munteanu, 1993). We can explain the phenomenon we conceptualize as *Hanafi asceticism* as an attitude that is continuous in worship and piety, accepts one's own bread, individual responsibilities, sees one's work as a religious obligation, earns halal and eats one's labor, keeps out of harams, is solidaristic and socially sharing in terms of earnings and expenditures, produces information about current problems by staying away from the controversies of daily politics, and takes a correct stance. The characteristics that distinguish this attitude from similar Sufi thoughts and movements are the rejection of the knowledge obtained through discovery, inspiration and intuition, which are the main sources of knowledge in Sufi thought and the rejection of the charismatic leader culture created and produced around those who claim to have this knowledge, and the distance from rituals practiced with the congregation outside of basic worship such as nafilah. However, it should be noted that we cannot generalize that this attitude of asceticism was adopted and practiced at the same level by all akhîs or the akhî organization. As a matter of fact, as we have stated above, akhîsm, which is not exclusively an order, gives its adherents the opportunity to belong to different orders. Thus, we can speak of akhîs who belonged to Qadîrî, Rifâî, Bektashi, and Khalwatî sects, as well as akhîs who adhered to Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî from the time he was alive and adopted Mawlawism after the formation of the order. Again, we should not ignore the direct influence of Malâmism, from which the Turkish Sufi tradition was nourished by the Khorasan culture. Accordingly, we can state that the akhîs, who adopted halal earning, eating their own bread, not being dependent on others and generosity as their motto, adopted or opposed Sufism according to their temperament.

In fact, this phenomenon of differentiation is not directly between akhîs and Sufis. It is obvious that there were different Sufi orientations among the Sufis from the early period. As a matter of fact, Rûmî's relations with the environment to which he belonged brought some troubles after his encounter with Shams al-Tabrizî and probably resulted in Shams' death. After this, his mystical state is characterized in a later source as *âşıklık*. According to the narrative, when Sari Saltuq, who visited Anatolia, could not see Mawlânâ and Mahmud Hayrânî among the saints, he asked why. Ahmad Faqîh replies, 'one of them is an lover and one of them is a fan, that is why they did not come to the assembly of reason'. This answer of Ahmad Faqîh points to the three schools of thought in the Turkish Sufi tradition. The Yassawî-based understanding that places reason at the center, the Qubrawî-based understanding which was based on the love represented by Mawlânâ, which was transformed with Shamsi Tabrizî, is the understanding of abdâlism, which means the continuation of the state of constant ecstasy (vacd and istigraq) adopted by some Rifâ'îs

and different Sufi groups in the person of Mahmūd Hayrānī (Yıldırım, 2011, p. 606; Ürkmez, 2018, p. 97). A narrative between Mawlānā and Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī points to this differentiation. According to the narrative, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī was having a conversation in a gathering of sheikhs, ākābir and distinguished emirs. When it was time to pray, they asked him to serve as imam and Rūmī said, "We are from the abdal. We sit and stay wherever we can. Sufis and steadfast people are suitable for imamate", he points to Shaykh Sadr al-Dīn for imamate and follows him and says, "Whoever prays behind a God-fearing man is like praying behind the prophet". There upon the Sheikh humbly and excitedly submits (Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 606).

It is possible to see traces of this difference in the attitudes and expressions of some of the akhīs Aflakī reports, especially Akhī Ahmad. In one narration, Akhī Aḥmad, one of the most respected figures of the period, addressed 'Alā al-Dīn, describing samā as a bid'ah and stating that he had neither read nor heard of any record that semā was permissible (Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 303). In another narration, a parent who lost a son during the reign of Sultan Walad asks for the presence of ghūyendes and kavvāl (hymnist) at the funeral and for ghazals to be recited in front of the dead. Probably the same Akhī Ahmad objected and reacted against this because it was bid'ah and not permissible. Sultan Walad states that the foundations of this custom were laid by a great person like Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and that it will continue among the lovers until the Day of Judgment. Akhī Ahmad had to remain silent. When the matter is presented to Shaykh Sadr al-Dīn, who is present in the same assembly, he agrees with Sultan Walad (Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 2, p. 414-415). Eflākī reports that Akhī Aḥmad died seven days later with the news of Sultan Walad.

A similar attitude to Akhī Ahmad is shown by a man named Akhī Mustafa during the time of Sultan Walad. According to Eflākī's narration (1989, Vol. 2, p. 431-433), a man named Mustafa, who was named by Rūmī at the request of his father, Akhī Siddiq, became an Akhī at a later age and joined the elite, but he disobeyed and became a rebel and intimidated the people of Konya. When the situation became a matter of complaint before Sultan Walad, Sultan Veled advised him. Akhī Mustafa: "We know the precautions of this matter better than our Master. Do not interfere in these matters, your realm of wisdom is one thing, ours is another." Again, after a long samā ritual, Akhī Mustafa says that the Mawlawīs are taking too long. When his attitude comes to Chalabi Arif he whirled sama with hymnist and he enters Akhī Mustafa's threshold, grabs the nozzle of the fountain, turns the carpet in the room upside down, and pours the oil from the oil lamp. No one can make a sound. Then he says "Mawlawīs have no business in this house" and leaves. After this, no semā is performed in Akhī Mustafa's house, and those around him disperse. If Aflakī's report that he was among the akhīs killed in Yahshi Khan's raid on Konya four days later is correct, it is understood that this event took place in 712/1312.

Gordlevski (1998, p. 199) interprets this situation as "The older generation of the akhīs were generally respectful of Mawlawism, but after the death of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, they began to look down on it". However, this interpretation should be viewed with caution, as

both the developmental process of Mawlawism and the existence of akhîs who remained loyal to Mawlânâ and his sons after his death do not confirm this interpretation. As a matter of fact, there are akhîs such as Akhî Sad al-Dîn, Akhî Yusuf, Akhî Muhammad Seydaveri, Akhî Muhammad Shah, Akhî Amir Ahmad of Bayburtlu and Akhî Amir Haj(i) whom Sultan Walad praises in his *Divan* (Şeker, 2011, p. 61-67; Değirmençay, 2012, p. 55-56). On the other hand, when the information given in al-Burgâzî and Ibn Battûtâ about samâ is taken into account, it is seen that Akhî Ahmad's objections to the permissibility of samâ are individual. Al-Burgâzî (2023, 121-125) cites the words of the past sages about samâ and lists the evidence from the Prophet on the permissibility of semâ'. This narrative constitutes a more rational first example of the narrative that would later constitute the Alawite and Bektashî acceptance of the majlis of the Kırklar (Forties). The mention of the same acceptance in Razawî (v. 62b) shows that samâ was known and practiced among the akhîs and continued for centuries.

4. Mawlânâ and Akhî Amir Ahmad Bayburtî (d. after 715/1315)

Another Akhî Ahmad mentioned by Aflakî is Akhî Amir Ahmad Bayburtî (d. after 715/1315). Jalâl al-Dîn Arif, who traveled to the Eastern provinces upon the will of his father Sultan Waled, "Do not neglect Herbende Sultan (Olcaytu)," met Akhî Emir Aḥmad in Bayburt, and his relationship with Mawlânâ is narrated through the mouth of Akhî Amir Aḥmad. Accordingly, Ahmad, who wanted to meet Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî in his youth due to Rûmî's reputation, could not go to Konya because his parents did not allow him to do so. However, he prayed the wishing prayer with great aspiration, recited Surah al-An'am forty times and fell asleep. In his sleep, Jalâl al-Dîn Rumi visited their house, cut a piece of Ahmed's hair with scissors and said, "May God bless you, this is the sheikh of *Mathnawî*." When Ahmad woke up, he found his cut hair on the pillow and after wandering around like a madman for a few days, he took his seat with a great ceremony and began to recite *the Mathnawî* (Eflakî, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 421-423).

The event mentioned here must have occurred just before Mawlânâ's death, probably in the 672/1270s. Considering the writing of the *Mathnawî* and the development of Mawlawîsm, this seems unlikely. However, as will be pointed out below, if Akhî Amir Ahmad was present in Konya, his recitation of the *Masnawî* can be dated to the time of Sultan Walad. This narrative probably takes place during the journey of Ulu Arif Chalabi in 715/1315, and Akhî Amir Ahmad pledged allegiance to Arif Chalabi and participated in his journey. It is understood that Akhî Amir Ahmad, who is described as *Zekiyyüddin* and *Zekiyyü'l-Kavvâl* in some other texts, was also a disciple of Sultan Walad and met him. There are couplets praising him in Sultan Walad's *Divan* (Değirmençay, 2012, p. 64). There is a mausoleum in Bayburt in the name of Akhî Amir Ahmad Zanjanî and a zawiya that was active until the 19th century (Yurttaş, 2014, p. 77-78; Eravcı, 2014, p. 78). However, although he was from Bayburt, there is also a mausoleum, outbuildings and a waqf in Sivas in the name of Akhî Amir Ahmad (Barın, 1991, p. 37-82; Yıldız, 2014, p. 76). Considering that the waqf is dated 733/1332-33, it can be said that Akhî Amir Ahmad lived until these dates if he was the same

person. Or there may be a second Akhī Amir Ahmad. For now, with our current knowledge, it remains unclear how Akhī Amir Ahmad was connected to Sivas.

The Anonymous *Seljuknāme* (2014, p. 67-68) mentions a person named Akhī Amir Ahmed who lived in Konya. According to the narration, this person fell ill. Akhī Ahmad Shah has twelve thousand sultanī debt from this person. When he heard that he was ill, he went to visit him with the elders of the city. When Akhī Amir Ahmad sees him, he gets sicker and worries "what will he say?". Akhī Ahmad Shah sits by his bedside and says that he forgives his debt of twelve thousand sultanīs, citing those present as witnesses. Those present, the Akhī's children and household are happy and pray. It is possible that the person mentioned here is Akhī Amir Ahmad, whom we have discussed above. Because we know that he had a desire to go to Konya in his youth. Therefore, it can be considered natural for him to be in Konya for a while, when he gets old.

5. Mawlānā and Akhī Ahmad Shah (d. 697/1298)

Akhī Ahmad Shah, whom Aflākī (1989, Vol. 2, p. 184-185) introduces as *Malik al-fityān* and *Nādiret al-zamān*, is another Ahmad. He was the leader of the akhīs of Konya and a wealthy man with several thousand rites and warriors under his command. During the Cimri/Stingy incident (677/1278), the akhīs, under the leadership of Ahī Ahmad Shah, contributed to the defense of the city (*Seljuknāme*, 2014, p. 50-51; Ibn Bībī, 1996, p. 210-213, Turan, 1993, p. 566-567). In 684/1285, the conflict between Sahib Ata and the mother of Gıyās al-Dīn Keyhüsrev II and Akhī Ahmad Shah, Akhī Ahmad and the qadi of Konya intervened and calmed the conflict (*Seljuknāme*, 2014, p. 53). In 691/1292, the Ilkhanid Han Geyhatu came to Konya with an army of fifty thousand people, but when Mawlānā, whom he saw in his dream, prevented him from attacking the city, he visited the city with a force of two-three thousand people. The notables of the city, especially Akhī Ahmad Shah, brought valuable gifts and presented them to the prince. Geyhatu wanted to meet Akhī Ahmad Shah alone. During the meeting, he addressed him as "Akhī Ata" and said that he had chosen him as his *father*. Although they met alone, when Geyhatu described the person standing next to him and asked him who he was, Akhī Ahmad Shah realized with his intelligence that he was talking about Mawlānā and said, "O sultan of the world! Only the blessed eye of the khan can see him. He is Jalaluddin, the son of Bahā al-Dīn of Balkh, who is buried in this land." Geyhatu said that he had seen him in his dreams and that he would not harm Konya for his sake. Together they visit Sultan Walad and have a conversation with him (Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 2, p. 185-186; Turan, 1993, p. 588-589).

Another narration that shows that Akhī Ahmad Shah was a capable person in the administration of the city is as follows: Upon the death of Sāhib Fakhr al-Dīn Ali, Fakhr al-Dīn Qazvinī was appointed as Sahib. His arrival in Konya and initiation of new practices caused disturbances in Konya (689/1290). Akhī Ahmad Shah came with the city's chamberlains and fatas to the Sultan and voiced his complaints. Sahib Qazvinī responded to Akhī Ahmad Shah with harsh words and left. When al-Sāhib's actions were exposed, he

was dismissed and executed. According to the narrations, Sâhib Qazvinî who is understood to have served for two years, stays in Konya for twenty-four days. However, this was longer than twenty-four years for the dervishes of Konya (*Seljuknâme*, 2014, p. 57-59; Turan, 1993, p. 593-594).

When Akhî Ahmad Shah's brother died in 694/1294, no one opened their shops in Konya for forty days and fifteen thousand people stayed with their heads uncovered at the funeral. No such mourning is done for anyone (*Seljuknâme* 2014, p. 68). The anonymous *Seljuknâme* (2014, p. 69) also states that in 696/1296 Ahî Ahmad Shah expelled the envoy of Ghazan Khan who committed atrocities in Konya. However, Sharab-Sâlâr, probably to curry favor with Ghazan Khan, killed Akhî Ahmad Shah (697/1298). Turan (1993, p. 619) states that he must have been buried with a similar funeral and mourning with considering the mourning at his brother's funeral. A few months later (698/1298), on the orders of the new sultan Ala al-Dîn Ferâmurz, Akhî Caruq, probably the ameer of Nigde, killed Akhî Ahmad Shah's murderer (Moghaddam, 2017, 73, p. 152).

In another narration, Aflakî (1989, Vol. 2, p. 490) states that when he and Ulu Arif Chalabi arrived in Tabriz, a great feast was held at the house of Akhî Kazzâz Ahmad Shah, one of the city's notables, and a sama majlis was organized. Since Ulu Arif Chalabi's journey took place in 715/1315, it seems that this Ahmad Shah was different from the Ahmad Shah of Konya mentioned above.

6. Political Attitudes of the Akhîs

Although they did not have an official role in the state mechanism, akhîs participated in the official ceremonies of the sultans such as the julus, allegiance, welcome, celebration and condolences alongside civilian and military officials (Ibn Bibî, 1996, Vol.1, p. 52-53, 140; Moghaddam, 2017, p. 146-151). This is an indication of their place in the social structure of cities as well as their loyalty to political authority. Considering that the tradesmen were one of the main elements of the city, this situation should be considered natural. As a matter of fact, Ibn al-Asîr (1987, Vol. 12, p. 228; Moghaddam, 2017, p. 102), while talking about the events of 604/1207, informs that the Ahlat fityân controlled the city, that they deposed one sultan and brought in another, that they had disputes among themselves and caused trouble to the people. From the events mentioned above, it is understood that the akhîs of Konya had an important place in the politics of the city. The relations of some of them with the Wafâids and the Babaî rebellion in the context of their loyalty to Chalabi Husam al-Dîn's ancestors are ambiguous.

The best known information about the political attitudes of the akhîs is their effective struggle in the defense of cities, especially Kayseri, during the Mongol invasion and their stance against the Mongol invasion (Ibn Bibî, Vol. 2, p. 75-77; Turan, 1993, p. 440-441). In the struggle for the throne after the death of Gıyâs al-Dîn II, the akhîs of Konya preferred to remain neutral in the disputes between the viziers and said, "We do not interfere in the struggle among you and we do not rebel against the sultan and commit blasphemy" (Turan,

1993, p. 466). However, the fact that they were against a Mongol-backed sultan changed their decision not to take sides in this struggle and they started to fight against the Mongols together with the Turkmens gathered around 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykaus court (Demirtaş, 2021, p. 55-57).

It is known that after Gıyās al-Dīn Kaykhusraw II, Mawlānā, from the beginning, sided with the Mongols in order to eliminate the damage to the city, and in this regard, he supported Rukn al-Dīn Kilij arslan, who was appointed by the Mongols. When we take into account Mawlānā's relations with the akhīs during his lifetime, it should be stated that it is not very accurate to reflect this politically different fronts as an enmity between Mawlānā and the akhīs. Moreover, as we have seen in the example of Akhī Ahmad Shah, the akhīs of Konya also fulfilled their duties regarding the protection of Konya. From the information in the sources, it is understood that the akhīs, who often acted jointly with the official authority, and their fityān/youth and runūdun were sometimes used in the rivalries between the state bureaucracy (*Seljuknāme*, 2014, 50, 54, 58, 60; Eflākī, 1989, Vol. 2, p.246, 303)

It does not seem possible with the available data to reflect the events in the 13th century during the Mongol invasion, as an Akhī Evran-Mawlānā struggle as Bayram (2012) claims. Since a comprehensive response to Bayram's claims on this subject has already been given, we will not repeat them (Kaplan, 2021). For now, it should be stated that Akhī Evran remains a mythological figure in the context of the relationship between akhīsm and futuwwa, even though he has the title of founder. In a manuscript about him in the Mawlānā Museum in Konya, it is reported that Akhī Evran Sultan is counted as a tomb along with Sheikh Ewhā al-Dīn Kirmānī among the virtuous people lying in Konya (Şeker, 2011, p. 48-49). Sheikh Ewhād al-Dīn's tomb is located in Konya, while Akhī Evran's tomb is in Kırşehir. There is a mausoleum for Akhī Evren Sultan in Kutahya. Although 15th century sources report Akhī Evran's acquaintance with Sadral-Dīn Qonawī, his residence in Denizli, Konya, Kayseri and Kırşehir, and the fact that he had a large zawiyya, information about him is limited to manaqibs (Moghaddam, 2017, p. 144-145; Sarıkaya, 2021). Therefore, what he did during his stay in Konya remains unknown for now.

Conclusion

Gölpınarlı's (1983, p. 305) comments on Mawlānā's akhī circles seem to be accurate and correctly identify the phenomenon. Accordingly, referring to the relationship between Mawlānā and Husam al-Dīn Chalabi, he states that in the early days Mawlānā and his companions socialized with the people of futuwwa. However, although there were some akhīs who could not tolerate Mawlānā's enthusiasm and condemned him, the akhī youth loved him and considered him as one of their own. This fusion continues during the reigns of Sultan Walad and Ulu Arif Chalabi, and both of them have disciples and caliphs with the title of ahi. Expert comments on the subject are in this vein.

When we consider 13th century Konya, it is seen that the akhîs, who controlled an important social class in the city, made efforts together with other notables in order for the city to overcome the events with minimal damage both in the development of political events and during the Mongol invasion. Although the akhîs of Konya endeavored to stay away from the conflicts within the palace bureaucracy, it is understood that the youth and runud were sometimes used in these events. On the other hand, the opposition to the Mongols that began in Kayseri in defense of the country led the akhîs together with the Turkmens to side with 'Izz ad-Din Kaykaus II. In this situation, a confrontation with those who sided with the other prince became inevitable. Despite the controversial interpretations about him, Akhî Evran's place among the akhîs of Konya remains unclear among the mythical/mythological data for now.

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