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İÇİNDEKİLER / TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editör'den

Editor's Note

Reşat Öngören.....X

Araştırma Makaleleri / Research Articles

Kitâbü'l-fihrist, İrşâdü'l-kâsîd, Miftâhu's-saâde ve Tertîbü'l- 'ulûm

Adlı Bibliyografik Eserlerde Tasavvuf İlminin Nasıl Yer Aldığına Dair Bir İnceleme

A Study on the Inclusion of Sufism in the Bibliographical Works

Kitâb al-Fihrist, Irshâd al-qâşid, Miftâh al-sa'âdah, and Tartîb al-'ulûm

SümeYYe ARPACI.....3

A Dergâh for the Nation:

Spiritual Identity and Cultural Continuity in Occupied Istanbul (1918–1923)

Millet İçin Bir Dergâh:

İstanbul'un İşgali Yıllarında (1918–1923) Mânevî Kimlik ve Kültürel Süreklilik

Adile Sedef DÖNMEZ.....21

XVI. Yüzyıl Dinî, Ahlâkî, Tasavvufî Mesnevîlerinde Köpek ve Köpek Metaforu

Dog and Dog Metaphor in XVIth Century Religious, Moral, and Sufi Mathnawîs

Esin (TÜMER) KURNAZ51

Ahmadu Bamba and the Preceding Sufi Heritage:

Tracing the Intellectual Sources of Bamba's Sufi Writings

Ahmedü Bamba ve Selefleri:

Bamba'nın Tasavvufî Yazılarının Fikrî İzlerini Sürmek

Khadim Cheikhouna MBACKE69

The Poetics of Divine Love: Metaphorical Expressions of 'Ishq in Rûmî's Masnavî-i Ma'navî

Îlâhî Aşkın Poetikası: Mevlânâ'nın Mesnevî-i Ma'nevî'sinde Aşkın Metaforik İfadeleri

Arzu Eylül YALÇINKAYA101



Özgün Derleme Makale ve Yazılar / Review Articles & Essays

Vefâtının 300. Yılında İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî ve Muhammediyye Şerhi: *Ferâhu’r-Rûh*

*Ismâil Hakkı Bursevî on the 300th Anniversary of His Passing
and His Commentary on Muḥammadiyya Entitled Farah al-rûh*

Mustafa KARA 129

Yûnus Emre’s Poetry and Philosophy

Yûnus Emre Şiiri ve Felsefesi

Mahmud Erol KILIÇ 135

Ibn ‘Arabî and the Metaphysical Meanings of the Shadow Play in Java

İbn Arabî Metafiziğinin Java Geleneksel Gölge Oyunundaki İzdüşümleri

Lee Shan TSE 143



EDİTÖR'DEN

Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi (TAED), ilk sayısından itibaren tasavvuf düşüncesinin farklı disiplinler ile etkileşimiyle ortaya çıkan ürünlerin, yeni düşünme imkânları doğurması hususuna ehemmiyet vermektedir. Bu anlamda, özellikle genç araştırmacıların çalışmalarının teşvik edilmesi, dergimiz yayın politikası kapsamında önem verdiğimiz bir husustur. O sebeple yedinci sayımızda lisansüstü çalışmalarını yürütmekte olan ya da yakın zamanda tamamlamış olan araştırmacıların yazılarına öncelik verdik. Bu yazılardan ilki, Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi Temel İslam Bilimleri doktora öğrencilerinden **Sümeyye Arpacı**'ya ait. Arpacı yazısında ilimler tasnifine yer veren temel bibliyografik eserlerde tasavvufî öğelerin ve ilm-i tasavvufun nasıl konumlandırıldığını ele alıyor. İkinci araştırma makalesi, Koç Üniversitesi Tarih Bölümü doktora öğrencilerinden **Adile Sedef Dönmez** tarafından hazırlandı. Yazar, işgal altındaki İstanbul'da 1921-1923 yılları arasında yayınlanan *Dergâh Dergisi*'nin, modern Türk kimliğinin inşa sürecinde, hâkim milliyetçilik anlayışlarına bir alternatif olarak mânevî milliyetçiliği şekillendirme çabasını gözler önüne seriyor. Üçüncü sıradaki araştırma makalesini hazırlayan Üsküdar Üniversitesi Öğretim Üyelerinden **Dr. Esin Tümer Kurnaz**, XVI. yüzyıl dînî, ahlâkî ve tasavvufî mesnevîlerinde yer alan hikayelerden seçmelerle, “köpek ve köpek metaforu”na yüklenen sembolik anlamı, ikili bir tasnif çerçevesinde insanı helâke veya kurtuluşa götüren davranışlar üzerinden ortaya koyuyor. Bir sonraki araştırma makalesi, 19 ve 20. yüzyıllarda Batı Afrika'daki İslâmî düşünce tarihinin en etkili isimlerinden biri olan Mürîdiyye tarikatının kurucusu Ahmedu Bamba hakkında. Makalenin yazarı İbn Haldun Üniversitesinden **Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke**, Bamba'nın orijinal el yazması eserleri üzerinden, onun düşünce hayatını şekillendiren tarihsel bağlam, kişiler ve eserler hakkında bilgi veriyor. Bu makalenin, Afrika'daki tasavvufî düşünce ve yaşam konulu çalışmalara önemli katkı sağlayacağına inanıyoruz. Bu sayının son araştırma makalesi, Üsküdar Üniversitesi Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Öğretim Üyelerinden **Dr. Arzu Eylül Yalçınkaya** tarafından kaleme alındı. Yazıda Mevlânâ'nın aşk dilini, ilâhî aşk ve tevhidin tarif edilemez mistik gerçekliklerini ifade etmek ve nefsin tekâmülünü hızlandırmak için nasıl bir araç olarak kullandığı belirlenmekte, *Mesnevî*'de aşkın sadece bir tema değil, bilinçli bir pedagojik araç ve tâlibî, ilâhî birliğin tecrübî bilgisine yönlendiren varoluşsal bir ilke olduğu vurgulanmaktadır.



Yedinci sayının “Özgün Derleme Makale ve Yazılar” kategorisindeki ilk yazısı Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi emekli öğretim üyelerinden **Prof. Dr. Mustafa Kara** tarafından hazırlandı. Yazar Osmanlı tasavvuf geleneğinin önde gelen temsilcilerinden İsmâîl Hakkı Bursevî’nin, Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed’in *Muhammediyye*’sine yazdığı *Ferâhu’r-rûh* isimli şerhi hakkında bizleri kısaca bilgilendiriyor. Bu bölümün ikinci yazısı, Üsküdar Üniversitesi Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Öğretim Üyesi ve halihazırda IRCICA Genel Direktörlüğü görevini yürüten **Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç**’a ait. “Yûnus Emre: Şiiri ve Felsefesi” başlığını taşıyan bu yazısında Kılıç, Yûnus’un Allah-âlem-insan birlikteliğinde insana yaptığı vurgunun önemine dikkat çekiyor ve onun zaman ve mekânı aşan çok katmanlı din yorumunun, Mutlak Hakikat’e erişmeye vesile olan bir işlev taşıdığını vurguluyor. Bu kategorinin son yazısı Cambridge Üniversitesinden **Dr. Lee Shan Tse** tarafından kaleme alındı. Tse, Endonezya’da pedagojik bir eğitim aracı fonksiyonuna sahip olan geleneksel gölge oyunu *wayang kulit*’in, İbn Arabî düşüncesinin karmaşık ve kavranması zor meselelerini açıklamada nasıl bir işlev üstlendiğini ve bu anlamda gölge oyununun, yüzyıllardır sözü geçen coğrafyada İslâmî öğretinin merkezinde ne şekilde yer aldığını açıklıyor.

Yedinci sayının takdim yazısını bitirirken, katkıda bulunan yazar ve hakemlere destekleri için hususi teşekkürlerimi arz ederim. Bir sonraki sayıda daha zengin bir içerikle buluşmak dileğiyle...

Prof. Dr. Reşat ÖNGÖREN



EDITOR'S NOTE

The Journal of the Institute for Sufi Studies (JISS) emphasizes the importance of the outcomes arising from the interaction of Sufi thought with different disciplines, creating new possibilities for thinking since its first issue. In this sense, encouraging the work of young researchers is an important aspect of our Journal's publication policy. Therefore, in this seventh issue, we have given precedence to articles by researchers who are currently pursuing or have recently completed their postgraduate studies.

The first of these writings belongs to **Sümeyye Arpacı**, a PhD student in Basic Islamic Sciences at Ankara Social Sciences University. In her article, Arpacı discusses how Sufi elements and the discipline of Sufism are positioned in foundational bibliographic works that include the classification of sciences. The second research article was prepared by **Adile Sedef Dönmez**, a PhD candidate in the History Department at Koç University. The author reveals the effort to shape spiritual nationalism as an alternative to dominant nationalist discourses during the publication of the *Dergâh Journal* in occupied Istanbul between 1921-1923, in the process of constructing modern Turkish identity. The third research article is written by **Dr. Esin Tümer Kurnaz**, a faculty member at Üsküdar University. Through selected stories from 16th-century religious, moral, and Sufi *mathnawīs*, she explores the symbolic meanings attributed to the “dog and dog metaphor” within a binary classification, highlighting behaviors that lead humans to either destruction or salvation. The next research article focuses on Ahmadu Bamba, one of the most influential figures in the Islamic intellectual history of West Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries and the founder of the *Murīdiyya* Sufi order. The author, **Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke** from Ibn Haldun University, provides insights into the historical context, key figures, and works that shaped Bamba's intellectual life from his own manuscripts. We hope and believe that this article will make a significant contribution to studies on Sufi thought and tradition in Africa. The last research article of this issue was written by **Dr. Arzu Eylül Yalçınkaya**, a faculty member of the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University. The article analyzes how Rumi employs the language of love as a tool to express the indescribable mystical realities of divine love and unity (*tawhīd*) and to accelerate the soul's purification. It emphasizes that in the *Masnavī*, love is not merely a theme but a deliberate pedagogical instrument and an existential principle guiding the seeker toward experiential knowledge of divine unity.



The first piece of the category of “Original Review Articles and Essays” is penned by **Professor Mustafa Kara**, a retired faculty member from Uludağ University’s Divinity School. The author briefly introduces *Farah al-rūh*, a commentary by Ismāil Hakki Bursawī—one of the leading figures of Ottoman Sufism—on Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed’s *Muhammadiyya*. The second article of this section belongs to **Professor Mahmud Erol Kılıç**, a faculty member of the Institute for Sufi Studies at Üsküdar University and currently serving as the Director General of Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA). In his article “Yūnus Emre: His Poetry and Philosophy,” Kılıç draws attention to the importance of Yūnus’s emphasis on the human presence mediating between God and the universe and highlights how his multilayered interpretation of religion transcends time and space and serves as a means to attain Absolute Truth. The last article in this category is written by **Dr. Lee Shan Tse** from Cambridge University. Tse explains how *wayang kulit*, the traditional shadow play in Indonesia with pedagogical functions, has been used to elucidate the complex and challenging concepts of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought. The essay also explores how this art form has remained central to Islamic teaching in the region for centuries.

As we conclude the introduction to the seventh issue, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all contributing authors and reviewers for their support. We are looking forward to sharing more of our content with you in the next issue.

Professor Reşat ÖNGÖREN

Araştırma Makaleleri
Research Articles

Kitâbü'l-fihrist, İrşâdü'l-kâsıd, Miftâhu's-saâde ve Tertîbü'l- 'ulûm
Adlı Bibliyografik Eserlerde Tasavvuf İlminin
Nasıl Yer Aldığına Dair Bir İnceleme

A Study on the Inclusion of Sufism in the Bibliographical Works
Kitâb al-Fihrist, Irshâd al-qâşid, Miftâh al-sa'âdah, and Tartîb al-'ulûm

Sümeyye ARPACI*

Özet

İslam öncesine ait felsefe eserlerinin tercümesiyle başlayan ilimler tasnifi, İslâm âlimleri tarafından da yapılmaya başlanmış ve devam ettirilmiştir. Bu tasnif ile ele alınan, incelenen ilim dallarının sınırları ve ilgi alanları belirlenmeye çalışılmış ve belirli bir teori çerçevesinde okuyucuya sunulmuştur. Bunlardan bazıları salt akıl melekesiyle ulaşılan ilimler iken bazıları da vahyi bilginin en üst hakikat kabul edilmesiyle sınıflandırılan ilimler olmuştur. Böylelikle bu ilmî tasnifler ile ilimlerin hudutları belirlenirken bu ilimlerin kendi aralarındaki ilişkiler de ortaya konulmuştur. İslâm kültür ve medeniyetine ait mirasın literal dökümünü yapması bakımından bibliyografik eserler önem arz etmekte ve kültürel tarihimize ışık tutmaktadır. Çalışmada üzerinde durulan konu, ilim tasnifleri arasında yer bulan tasavvuf disiplini çerçevesinde ilgili eserlerin tasavvufî öğelere, tasavvufî şahsiyetlere ve bir ilim olarak bu tasnifler arasında tasavvufun nasıl konumlandırıldığına dair özet niteliğinde bir bakış ve değerlendirmedir. Makalenin sınırlılığı bakımından günümüze kadar yazılmış bütün bibliyografik eserleri değerlendirmek mümkün olmadığından, incelemeye tâbî tutulan eserler, kronolojik sıralamaya göre İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*, İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin *İrşâdü'l-kâsıd*, Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde* ve Saçaklızâde'nin *Tertîbü'l- 'ulûm* adlı eserleri ile sınırlandırılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, *el-Fihrist*, *İrşâdü'l-kâsıd*, *Miftâhu's-saâde*, *Tertîbü'l- 'ulûm*, ilimler tasnifi

* **ORCID:** 0000-0002-0272-8914. Doktora Öğrencisi, Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi Temel İslam Bilimleri,
E-mail: sumeyye_ysk@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The classification of sciences, which began with the translation of pre-Islamic philosophical works, was also carried out by Islamic scholars. The classification of sciences was an attempt to determine the boundaries and areas of interest of the branches of sciences and to present them through the lens of a certain theory. While some of them were classified as sciences acquired only through reason (*'aql*), others were defined as transmitted or revealed knowledge (*wahy*) to be the font of all truths. While these scientific classifications defined the boundaries of the sciences, they also revealed the relationship between them. Thus, bibliographical works are important in terms of revealing the literal output of the heritage of Islamic culture and civilisation and shed light on our cultural history. The subject of this study is a brief overview and evaluation of the Sufi elements, Sufi personalities and situating Sufism as a science among the classifications of sciences. As it is not practically possible to evaluate all the extant bibliographic works hitherto written, this study focuses on four different books, written in chronological order below: *Kitāb al-Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm, *Irshād al-qāşid* of Ibn al-Akfānī, *Miftāh al-sa'ādah* of Taşköprizâde, and *Tartīb al-'ulûm* of Saçaklızâde.

Keywords: Sufism, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, *Irshād al-qāşid*, *Miftāh al-sa'ādah*, *Tartīb al-'ulûm*, classification of sciences.

Giriş

İslâm düşünce geleneğinde ilimlerin tasnifi, sadece bilgi dallarının sınıflandırılmasıyla sınırlı kalmayan; aynı zamanda bu ilimlerin epistemolojik ve metodolojik mahiyetlerinin de değerlendirildiği, teorik bir çabanın ürünüdür. Antik Yunan düşüncesinden İslâm dünyasına aktarılan ilimler, İslâm âlimlerinin kendi bilgi telakkileri doğrultusunda yeniden ele alınmış ve sistematik tasniflere konu edilmiştir. Bu çerçevede telif edilen bibliyografik eserler, İslâm medeniyetinin bilgi evrenine dair eşsiz birer kaynak teşkil etmekte olup, ilimlerin sınırlarını ve karşılıklı ilişkilerini tespit etme açısından olduğu kadar, kültürel süreklilik ve dönüşümleri tespit etmede de büyük önem arz etmektedir. Makalemiz bu çerçevede değerlendirilebilecek dört temel bibliyografik eserde –İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*, İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin *İrşâdü'l-kâsıd*, Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde* ve Saçaklızâde'nin *Tertîbü'l-'ulûm*– tasavvuf ilminin nasıl konumlandırıldığını, hangi kavramsal çerçevede ele alındığını ve ilmî kategoriler arasında nasıl bir yerde konumlandırıldığını tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu bağlamda yapılan çalışmada, klasik dönem İslâm âlimlerinin tasavvuf ilmini bir disiplin olarak nasıl kavramsallaştırdıkları ve hangi ilimlerle ilişkilendirerek değerlendirdikleri analiz edilmektedir. Çalışma, literatürde sıklıkla felsefî ilimlerle dînî ilimler arasındaki sınır tartışmalarının bir örneği olarak değerlendirilebilecek olan bu dört eserde, tasavvufun müstakil bir ilim olarak kabul edilip edilmediğini sorgulamakta ve her bir müellifin yaklaşımını kendi ilmî ve tarihî bağlamı içinde ele almaktadır. İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist* adlı eseri, tasavvufu müstakil bir ilim olarak adlandırmamakla birlikte, zâhid ve sûfî kimlikli şahsiyetlere ve eserlerine genişçe yer vermektedir. Buna karşılık İbnü'l-Ekfânî, tasavvuf ilmini “ilm-i ilâhî” başlığı altında metafizik bir mahiyetle ele alırken, Taşköprizâde onu bâtinî ilimler kapsamında sistematik olarak değerlendirmiş, Saçaklızâde ise ahlâk ilminin bir parçası olarak ele alıp tasavvufu “kalbin halleri” başlığı altında konumlandırmıştır.

Makale boyunca takip edilen yöntem, karşılaştırmalı analitik okuma ve içerik çözümlemesine dayanmaktadır. İncelenen her bir

eserin ilgili bölümleri, müellifin tasavvufa yaklaşım tarzını anlamaya yönelik olarak yorumlanmış, özellikle terminolojik tercihleri, ilimler arasındaki hiyerarşik sıralama ve referans verilen kaynaklar dikkate alınarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu yönüyle makale, betimleyici olmanın ötesinde, karşılaştırmalı ve çözümleyici bir yöntem benimsemektedir. Ayrıca, her bir müellifin ilmî gelenek içerisindeki konumu ve bu gelenek içerisindeki etkileri de göz önünde bulundurulmuştur. Böylelikle, sadece eser içeriğine odaklanmakla kalınmamış, aynı zamanda eserlerin ilmî ve tarihî bağlamları da dikkate alınarak bir değerlendirme yapılmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, tasavvufun İslâm ilim geleneği içerisindeki yerini tespit etmeye katkı sağlamakla birlikte, aynı zamanda klasik dönem İslâm dünyasında ilimlerin nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığı ve disiplinlerarası sınırların nasıl kurulduğu sorusuna da yanıt aramaktır. Bibliyografik eserlerin birer kültürel hafıza metni olarak düşünülmesi, bu eserlerdeki ilim tasniflerinin sadece entelektüel bir çaba değil, aynı zamanda sosyo-kültürel bir inşa süreci olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda tasavvufun konumu, sadece epistemolojik bir tercih değil, aynı zamanda dönemin ilmî ve siyâsî ikliminin de bir yansımasıdır. Dolayısıyla, bu makale, hem tasavvuf ilminin tarihsel serencamını takip etme hem de İslâm düşüncesinde ilimlerin anlam dünyasına dair daha geniş bir perspektif sunma niyetindedir.

1. İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist* Adlı Eserinde Tasavvuf İlmine Dair Kısa Bir Değerlendirme

İbnü'n-Nedîm olarak tanınan Ebü'l-Ferec Muhammed b. Ebî Ya'kûb İshâk b. Muhammed b. İshâk en-Nedîm'in (ö. 385/995 [?]) hayatı hakkında yeterli bilgi bulunmakla beraber Yâkût el-Hamevî'den (ö. 626/1229) öğrendiğimiz kadarıyla künyesi Ebu'l-Ferec'tir. *Kitâbü'l-Fihrist* adlı eserini

musannifi olup kitap satan bir varrâk olduğu bilinmektedir.¹ Bu “virâka” (kitap istinsah edip ciltlemek, kitap ticareti yapmak) mesleğini babasından öğrenmiştir. Bundan dolayıdır ki birçok kitaba ulaşma ve onları inceleme imkânı bulmuştur. Bu durum onun ilmî gelişimini desteklemiş ve yazdığı eserlere tesirlerini göstermiştir.² Mezhepçe Şîi-Mu'tezilî temayüllüdür.³ Ancak bu duruma kesin gözüyle bakılmamalıdır. Her ne kadar Zehebî (ö. 748/1348) *Tarîhü'l-İslâm* adlı eserinde onu “el-Ahbârî”, “el-Edîb”, “eş-Şîî” ve “el-Mu'tezilî” sıfatlarıyla nitelemiş olsa da İbn Hacer el-Askalânî (ö. 852/1449) onun kitabını mütâlaa edince, kendisinin Râfızî-Mu'tezilî olduğunu anladığını söylemektedir. “O ki Ehl-i Sünnet'i el-Haşviyye; Eşarîler'i Mücbire/Cebriyye; Şîa'dan olmayan herkesi Âmmî/sıradan olarak isimlendirmiştir.” diye de eklemektedir.⁴ *el-Fihrist*'in bütünü incelendiğinde onun, devrinin şartlarına göre tarafsız ve mümkün mertebe bilimsel bir üsluba sahip olduğu anlaşılmaktadır ve müellifinin varrâk olmasından dolayı da birçok eserle ilgilendiği ve farklı birçok mezhepten kişilerin kitaplarından alıntılar yaptığı görülmektedir. Bu sebeptendir ki İbnü'n-Nedîm, kendisine kimi zaman Ehl-i Sünnet, kimi zaman Şîi, bazen de Mu'tezilî dedirtecek türden şeylere yer vermiştir.⁵ Örneğin İmam

1 Yâkût el-Hamevî er-Rûmî, *Mu'cemü'l-üdebâ irşâdû'l-erîb ilâ marîfeti'l-edîb*, thk. İhsân Abbâs (Lübnan: Dâru'l-Garbi'l-İslâmî, 1993), 2427.

2 Nasuhi Ünal Karaarslan, “İbnü'n-Nedîm”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2000, XXI: 171-173.

3 Ebü'l-Ferec Muhammed b. İshak en-Nedîm, *el-Fihrist*, çev. Prof. Dr. Ramazan Şeşen, (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2019), 12.

4 Bkz. Ahmed b. Ali b. Hacer el-Askalânî, *Lisânu'l-mizân*, thk. Selmân Abdu'l-Fettâh Ebû Gude (Lübnan: Mektebetü'l-Matbûâtî'l-İslâmiyye, 1423/2002), VI: 557-559.

5 Betül İzmirli, “en-Nedîm'in [İbnü'n-Nedîm] *el-Fihrist* Adlı Eserinde Süfîlere ve Tasavvufa Yaklaşımı”, *Tasavvur: Tekirdağ İlahiyat Dergisi* 5, 2 (2019): 1186-1187.

Mâlik (ö. 179/795), İmam-ı Âzam Ebû Hanîfe (ö. 150/767), Taberî (ö. 310/923) gibi Sünnî imamları çok överken, Şîî olduğunu iddia ettiği tasavvuf ilminin önemli şahsiyetlerinden kabul edilen Hallâc-ı Mansur'u (ö. 309/922) tenkit ettiği görülmektedir.⁶

el-Fihrist, İbnü'n-Nedîm'in 377 (987) yılında kaleme aldığı, *Fihristü'l-kütüb*, *Fihristü'l-'ulûm* ve *Fihristü'l-'ulemâ'* adlarıyla da bilinen eseridir. Kısaca *el-Fihrist* diye tanınan kitabı İslâm dünyasında bibliyografik eserler türünün ilkidir.⁷ *el-Fihrist*, sosyal bilimler ve özellikle de İslâmî bilimler ağırlıklı bir eserdir. Fuat Sezgin'in eserin konusuna ve kapsamına dair şunlara değindiği görülmektedir:

Tam bir bilimler tarihi denen ilk kitap İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*'idir. Bu kitap tam manasıyla bir bilimler tarihi kitabıdır. Bu adamcağız kitabında sadece Müslümanlardan değil Araplardan, Yunanlılardan, Bâbillilerden, Hintlilerden hatta Çinlilerden bile bahsediyor ve bütün bunları bir objektivite ile anlatıyor. Yani bilimler tarihinin kurucusu İbnü'n-Nedîm'dir.⁸

Tasavvufun müstakil bir ilim disiplini olarak teşekkül süreci, İbnü'n-Nedîm'in yaşadığı dönemden önceki asırlara, bilhassa hicrî 3. asrın sonları ile 4. asrın başlarına tekabül etmektedir.⁹ İbnü'n-Nedîm'in kaleme aldığı *el-Fihrist*, söz konusu sürecin neticelerini yansıtmaları bakımından mühim bir kaynak mahiyetindedir. Müellifin eserinde, ekseriyetle hadisçi yahut kelâmcı vasfıyla zikrettiği birçok ismin, aynı zamanda zühd ve tasavvuf ehli arasında da anıldığı görülmektedir. Nitekim Hasan el-Basrî'nin (ö. 110/728)

hem kelâm ilmi mensupları hem de sûfîler arasında yer aldığı; kezâ el-Hâris b. Esed el-Muhâsibî'nin (ö.243/857) de fakîh, kelâmcı ve zâhid sıfatlarıyla kaydedildiği müşahede olunmaktadır.¹⁰ Bu durum, tasavvufun henüz bağımsız bir ilim sahası olarak kesin sınırlarla teşekkül etmediği, ancak ilmî ve amelî bir temâyüz süreci içerisine girdiği bir devreyi yansıtmaktadır.

Müellifin eserinde nahiv, kelam, fıkıh, mezhepler, felsefe, edebiyat, Kurân ilimlerine dair müstakil başlıklar açtığı hâlde, tasavvuf ilmine yönelik böyle bir başlık açmadığı görülmektedir. Ancak eserin beşinci makalesinin beşinci fenninde “Seyyahlar, Zâhidler, Âbidler, Hatarât ve Vesvese Hakkında Konuşan Mutasavvıfların Haberleri Hakkında” başlığı altında sûfîlerden ve bazı eserlerinden söz edilmektedir. Bu bölümde de “tasavvuf” terimi veya bu anlamı karşılayan herhangi bir ilim terimi kullanılmamaktadır. Bu durum, müellifin tasavvufu müstakil bir ilim olarak görmediğini düşündürmektedir.

Ancak bu tutumu değerlendirirken dönemin ilmî tasnif anlayışı da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Himmet Konur'un belirttiği üzere “tasavvuf” kavramı, 4. (10.) yüzyıldan itibaren, özellikle Ebû Nasr Serrâc'ın (ö. 378/988) *el-Lüma'* ve Muhammed b. İbrâhim Kelâbâzî'nin (ö. 380/990) *et-Ta'arruf li-Mezhebi Ehli't-Tasavvuf* adlı eserlerinde açık biçimde kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu eserlerde tasavvuf hem kavram hem de ilim olarak ele alınmıştır.¹¹ Bu bağlamda, müellifin tasavvufu müstakil bir ilim olarak tanımlamaktan imtina etmesi, yalnızca kişisel bir tercih değil, aynı zamanda dönemin genel ilmî terminolojisinin ve ilim telakkisinin bir yansıması olarak da değerlendirilebilir. Nitekim eğer tasavvuf o dönemde ilim olarak

6 İbnü'n- Nedim, *el-Fihrist*, (Beyrut- Lübnan: Dârul-ma'rife, ty.), 269.

7 Karaarslan, “İbnü'n-Nedîm”, XXI: 171-173.

8 Fuat Sezgin, *Bilim Tarihi Sohbetleri*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2018), 98. Ayrıca bkz. Fuat Sezgin, *İslâm Bilim Tarihi Üzerine Konferanslar*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2018), 108-109.

9 Muhammet Mustafa Çakmaklıoğlu, *Tasavvuf*, (Ankara: Bilay Yayınları, 2020), 28.

10 İbnü'n-Nedim, *el-Fihrist*, 261.

11 Himmet Konur, “Sufi ve Tasavvuf Kavramlarının Tarihi Üzerine”, *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*21, 41 (2020): 104–115.

rüşünü ispat etmiş olsaydı, müellifin diğer ilimlerde olduğu gibi ona da müstakil bir başlık ayırması beklenebilirdi.

İbnü'n-Nedîm, eserinde genellikle “falanca şahsın hattıyla şunları okudum” şeklinde ifadelerle kendisine intikal eden bilgileri zikretmekte, varraklık mesleğinden kaynaklı olarak okuduğu kitapların müelliflerine dair şahsî gözlemlerine de yer vermektedir. Beşinci makalenin beşinci fenninde de benzer bir anlatım tarzı benimsenmiştir. Bu bölümde, Muhammed b. İshak'ın (ö. 151/768) Ebû Muhammed Ca'fer el-Huldî'nin (ö. 348/959) hattıyla naklettiği bilgiler aktarılmakta; Huldî'nin mutasavvıfların reislerinden ve zâhid bir şahsiyet olduğuna vurgu yapılmaktadır. Huldî'nin bizzat hattıyla yazdığına atfen, sûfîlerin mânevî silsilesi şu şekilde verilir: “Ben Ebü'l-Kâsım el-Cüneyd b. Muhammed'den aldım. Cüneyd, Ebü'l-Hasan el-Mugallis es-Sakatî'den aldığını söyledi. O da Serî'nin Ma'rûf el-Kerhî'den, onun da Ferkad es-Sebahî'den, Ferkad'ın Hasan el-Basrî'den, Hasan'ın ise Enes b. Mâlik'ten ve Bedir Savaşı'na katılan yetmiş kişiden aldığını söyledi.”¹² Bu rivâyet, tasavvuf geleneğinde merkezî bir yere sahip olan “silsile” anlayışının erken bir tezahürü olarak değerlendirilebilir. Zira silsile, tasavvufî irşad yetkisinin ve mânevî terbiyenin kesintisiz bir biçimde şeyhten müride intikalini temin eden bir yapıdır ve sûfî gelenekte otoritenin sahipliğini sağlamada temel işlev görmektedir.¹³ Hasan el-Basrî'nin “Bedir Savaşı'na katılan yetmiş kişiyi gördüm, hepsi de yünden elbise giymişti” rivâyeti dikkate alındığında, bu sahâbîlerin zühdî yaşam tarzları sûfîlerin prototipi olarak telakkî edilmiştir.¹⁴ Nitekim

“sûfî” kelimesinin kökeninin “yün” anlamına gelen “sûf” kelimesiyle ilişkilendirilmesi, bu yorumun tarihsel dayanaklarından biri olarak değerlendirilmektedir.¹⁵ Bu bağlamda, İbnü'n-Nedîm'in aktardığı silsile hem tasavvufî gelenekteki mânevî nisbet fikrinin şekillenmesinde hem de sûfî geleneğin sahâbeye dayandırılma çabasında erken bir örnek olarak dikkat çekmektedir. Huldî'nin hattından nakledilen ve “âbid, zâhid, tasavvuf ehli zevât” olarak nitelenen otuz dört ismin zikredilmesi de bu geleneğin kurucu isimlerini belirlemek bakımından kayda değerdir. Müellifin zikrettiği “Ca'fer el-Huldî'nin kendi eliyle yazdığı âbid, zâhid, tasavvuf ehli zevâtın adları şunlardır” dediği 34 kişinin ismi ise şöyledir: el-Hasan b. Ebü'l-Hasan el-Basrî Muhammed b. Sîrîn, Herim b. Hayyân, Alkemetü'l-Esved, İbrâhim en-Nehaî, eş- Şa'bî, Mâlik b. Dînâr, Muhammed b. Vâsî, Atâ es-Sülemî, Mâlik b. Enes, Süfyân es-Sevrî el-Evzâî, Sâbit el-Bünânî, İbrâhim et-Teymî, Süleyman et-Teymî, Ferkad es-Sebahî, İbnü's-Semmâk, Utbetü'l-Gulâm, Sâlih el-Mürrî, İbrâhim b. Edhem, Abdülvâhid b. Zeyd, İbnü'l-Münkedir, Muhammed b. Habîb el-Fârisî, er-Rebi' b. Hasyem, Ebû Muâviye el-Esved, Eyyûb es-Sahtiyânî, Yûsuf b. Esbât, Ebû Süleymân ed-Dârânî, İbn Ebi'l-Havârî, Dâvûd et-Tâî, Feth el-Mevsilî, Şeybân er-Râî, el-Muâfâ b. İmrân, el-Fudayl b. İyâz.¹⁶

Bundan sonra müellif, daha birçok zâhid ve âbid zevâtın ismini ve eserini zikretmektedir ve bunlar için de “Zâhidlerin, Mutasavvıfların Adları ve Yazdıkları Eserler” diye ayrı bir başlık açmıştır. Ancak Yahyâ b. Muâz er-Râzî'yi, el-Yemânî'yi, Bîşr

12 İbnü'n-Nedîm, *el-Fihrist*, 260.

13 Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz. Necdet Tosun, “Silsile”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2009, XXXVII: 206-207.

14 Bkz. Ebû Bekr Muhammed el-Kelâbâzî, *et-Taarruf li mezhebi ehli't-tasavvuf*, thk. Mahmud Emîn en-Nevevî, (Kâhire: Mektebetü'l-Külliyâti'l-Ezheriyye, 1400/1980), 31.

15 Ayrıntılı bilgi için bkz. Reşat Öngören, “Sûfî”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2009, XXXVII: 471-472.

16 Müellif bu isimlerin bazılarını zikrettikten sonra “yukarıda kendisinden bahsedildi” diye not düşmektedir; böylece tekrara düşmeyip bir daha açıklama lüzumu görmemektedir. Daha önceki makalelerinde bahsettiği kişiler de muhtelif ilim ve fenlerde meşhur âlimlerdir.

b. el-Hâris'i bu başlık dışında zikretmektedir.¹⁷ Yahya b. Muâz er-Râzî'yi anlatırken onun bir de ashabı olduğundan bahsettiği görülmektedir.¹⁸ Ramazan Şeşen'in tercümesinde bu kelime *müritle*ri olarak tercüme edilmiş olup isabetli bir tercüme olduğu görülmektedir.¹⁹ Şunu da belirtmek gerekir ki, kanaatimize göre müellifin zikrettiği bazı bilgilere, her zaman kesin bilgi gözüyle yaklaşılmaması isabetli bir yaklaşım olur. Örneğin el-Yemânî hakkında bilgi verirken onun künyesinin "Ebû Hafs" olduğu zikredilmektedir ancak araştırmamıza göre "Ebû Hafs" künyesi ile tanınan kişi melâmet ve fütüvvete dair fikirleriyle tanınan Nîşâburlu sûfî olarak bilinen Ebû Hafs Amr b. Seleme el-Haddâd en-Nîsâbü'rî'dir (ö. 260/874).²⁰ Müellifin kastettiği kişi bu sûfî midir, bilemiyoruz. Haddâd ile İbnü'n-Nedîm'in ölüm tarihleri karşılaştırıldığında görülmektedir ki müellifin bu sûfîyi eserine alması muhtemeldir. Ayrıca el-Yemânî'ye ait olduğunu söylediği *Kitâbü Kıyâmi'l-Leyli ve't Teheccüd*²¹ adlı eser de el-Yemânî'den sonra zikrettiği, kendisi hem muhaddis hem de mutasavvıf olarak tanınan, İbn Ebû'd-Dünyâ'ya (ö.282/895) ait olduğu bilinmekte-

dir. Ancak müellif onun 33 eserini sayarken bu eseri dâhil etmemiştir.²²

İbnü'n-Nedîm'in eserinde zâhidler hakkındaki dikkat çeken diğer bir konu ise Hallâc-ı Mansûr hakkında yazdıkları olmuştur. Müellif, Hallâc için diğer sufilerden farklı olarak ayrı bir başlık açmış ve uzunca bir şekilde onun hayatından, müritlerinden, dünya görüşünden, mensup olduğu mezhepten ve yaşadığı devirdeki siyâsî olaylara nasıl dâhil olduğundan söz etmiştir. Açtığı başlığın ismi şöyledir: "el-Hallâc, Mezhebi, Onun Hakkındaki Hikâyeler, Kendisinin ve Talebelerinin (Müridlerinin) Kitaplarının Adları". Onun hakkında Ebû'l-Hüseyin Ubeydullah b. Ahmed b. Ebû Tâhir'in hatırla okuduğu bazı bilgileri aktarır. Hallâc'ın hilekâr, göz boyayıcı, sûfîlerin yoluna dalmış, onların sözlerini diline dolamış, hiçbir şey bilmediği hâlde her şeyi bildiğini iddia eden biri olduğunu aktarır. Kimya sanatını bildiğini ve cahil, atılgan, vaziyeti kötü, sultanlara karşı sözünü esirgemeyen, büyük işlere kalkışan, devletleri yıkmak isteyen, müridlerinin yanında ilâhlık iddia eden, hulûle inanan, hükümdarlara karşı Şiî, halka karşı sûfî mezhebinde görünen bir kişi olduğunu ekler. Bunların yanında "kendisine İlâh'ın hulûl ettiğini, kendisinin O, O'nun da kendisi olduğunu iddia eden biriydi" der.²³ Nitekim tasavvuf tarihinde Hallâc hakkında ileri sürülen en yaygın eleştiri bu konu üzerinden olmuştur. Onun tevhid ve fenâ görüşünü ifade eden "ene'l-hak" sözü ile hulûl ve ittihadı çağrıştıran ifadeleridir. İbnü'n-Nedîm gibi düşünenler onun bu sözlerinden dolayı kendisinin ilâhlık iddia ettiğini ileri sürmüşlerdir ve onu zındıklık ve kâfirlikle suçlamışlardır. Ancak onu büyük bir velî olarak tanıyanlar ise bu sözü diğer sûfîlerin şathiyeleri gibi görüp çeşitli şekillerde yorumlamışlardır.

17 Stewart bunun nedeninin, İbnü'n-Nedîm'in bu zevâtın kitaplarının adlarını verse de onları tam anlamıyla birer musannif olarak düşünmemesi ve muhtemelen onların eserlerini, sıradan zühhd kitapçıklarının ifadesi olarak kabul etmesi olabileceğini belirtir. Devin Stewart, "The Structure of the Fihrist: Ibn al-Nadim as Historian of Islamic Legal and Theological Schools," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, 3 (2007): 382.

18 İbnü'n-Nedîm, *el-Fihrist*, 260.

19 Zira tasavvufta çoğulu "aşâb" olan "sâhib" kelimesinin, "sohbete katılan arkadaş, mürîd, derviş, yoldaş, musâhib" gibi mânâları bulunmaktadır. Bkz. Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (İstanbul: Kâbalı Yayınları, 2005), 305; Ethem Cebecioğlu, *Tasavvuf Terimleri ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü*, (İstanbul: Ağaç Kitabevi Yayınları, 2009), 535.

20 Tahsin Yazıcı, "Ebû Hafs el-Haddâd", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1994, X: 127-128.

21 İbrahim Hatiboğlu, "İbn Ebû'd-Dünyâ", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1999, XIX: 457-462.

22 İbnü'n-Nedîm, *el-Fihrist*, 262.

23 age. 269-270.

Nitekim onun tam ifadesi şöyledir: “Eğer Allah’ı tanımıyorsanız eserini tanıyınız, işte o eser benim, ben Hakk’ım, çünkü ebediyen Hak ile Hakk’ım.”²⁴ Onu veli olarak kabul edenler, Hallâc’ın bu sözlerini daima onun fenâ, sekr ve tevhid halinde sarf ettiği şekilde yorumlamışlardır. Dolayısıyla diyebiliriz ki İbnü’n-Nedim’in, Hallâc’a ilişkin bu söylenenleri olduğu gibi naklettikten sonra “Allah Teâlâ onların söylediklerinden yücedir, büyüktür.”²⁵ demesi zikrettiği bilgilerin doğruluğunun muhtemel olduğunu düşündüğüne ve Hallâc’ı savunmaya lüzum görmediğine delildir.²⁶ Müellif Hallâc’a ait olduğunu söylediği birçok eserin adını verir: “*Kitâbü Tâsîni’l-Ezel ve’l-Cevheri’l-Ekber ve’ş-Şecereti’z-Zeytûneti’n-Nûriyye, Kitâbü’l-Ahrufi’l-Muhdese ve’l-Ezeliyye ve’l-Esmâ’i’l-Küllîyye, Kitâbü’z-Zilli’l-Memdûd ve’l-Mâ’i’l-Meskûb ve’l-Hayâti’l-Bâkiye, Kitâbü Hamli’n-Nûr ve’l-Hayât ve’l-Ervâh, Kitâbü’s-Sayhûn, Kitâbü Tefsîri “Kul hüve’l-lahu ehad”, Kitâbü’l-Ebed ve’l-Me’bûd, Kitâbü Kırâni’l-Kur’ân ve’l-Furkân, Kitâbü Halki’l-İnsân ve’l-Beyân, Kitâbü Keydi’ş-Şeytân ve Emri’s-Sultân, Kitâbü’l-Usûl ve’l-Fürû’, Kitâbü Sırrı’l-Âlem ve’l-Meb’ûs, Kitâbü’l-Adl ve’l-Tevhîd, Kitâbü’s-Siyâseti ve’l-Hulefâ ve’l-Ümerâ, Kitâbü İlmi’l-Bekâ ve’l-Fenâ, Kitâbü Şahsı’z-Zulümât, Kitâbü Nûri’n-Nûr, Kitâbü’l-Mütecelliyât, Kitâbü’l-Heyâkil ve’l-Âlemi ve’l-Âlimi, Kitâbü Medhi’n-Nebî ve’l-Meseli’l-A’lâ, Kitâbü’l-Garîbi’l-Fasîh, Kitâbü’n-Nukta ve Bedi’l-Halk, Kitâbü’l-Kiyâme ve’l-Kiyâmât, Kitâbü’l-Kibr ve’l-Azâme, Kitâbü’s-Salâti ve’s-Salevât, Kitâbü Hazâ’ini’l-Hayrât,* (bu eser *Elifü’l-Maktû’ ve’l-Elifü’l-Me’lûf*

24 Hallâc-ı Mansûr, *Kitâbü’l-Tavâsîn*, çev. Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, (İstanbul: Fatih Yayınevi Matbaası, 1976), 208.

25 İbnü’n-Nedim, *el-Fihrist*, 270.

26 İzmirli, “en-Nedîm’in [İbnü’n-Nedîm] el-Fihrist Adlı Eserinde Süfîlere ve Tasavvufa Yaklaşımı”, 1206.

adıyla da tanınır), *Kitâbü Mevâbîdi’l-Ârifîn, Kitâbü Halki’l-Halâiki’l-Kur’ân ve’l-İtibâr, Kitâbü’s-Sıdk ve’l-İhlâs, Kitâbü’l-Emsâl ve’l-Ebvâb, Kitâbü’l-Yakîn, Kitâbü’t-Tevhîd, Kitâbü “Ve’n-Necmü izâ Hevâ”, Kitâbü “Ve’z-Zâriyâtü Zervâ”, Kitâbü’n fî “İnne’llezî enzele aleyke’l-Kur’ân lerâdükke ilâ Me’âd”, Kitâbü’l-Dürre ilâ Nasri’l-Kuşûrî, Kitâbü’s-Siyâse ile’l-Hüseyn b. Hamdân, Kitâbü Hüve Hüve, Kitâbü Keyfe Kâne ve Keyfe Yekûnû, Kitâbü’l-Vücûdi’l-Evvel, Kitâbü’l-Kibrîti’l-Ahmer, Kitâbü’s-Semrî ve Cevâbihi, Kitâbü’l-Vücûdi’s-Sânî, Kitâbü lâ Keyfe, Kitâbü’l-Keyfiyyeti ve’l-Hakîkati, Kitâbü’l-Keyfiyyeti bi’l-Mecâz.”²⁷ Uludağ, “İbnü’n-Nedîm’in adlarını vererek Hallâc’a nisbet ettiği kırk altı eser günümüze ulaşmamıştır” demektedir.²⁸*

Sonuç olarak İbnü’n-Nedim *el-Fihrist* adlı eserinde diğer ilimler gibi tasavvuf ilmine müstakil bir başlık açmamıştır. Hatta “tasavvuf” kelimesini dahi kullanmayı tercih etmemiştir. Ancak zâhid, sûfî gibi ifadelerle tanımladığı tasavvuf ilminin temsilcilerinden ve onların eserlerinden bahsettiği bölümü, kelâma ayırdığı makale içinde değerlendirmiştir. Bunun nedeni ise büyük ihtimalle onu diğer ilimler gibi ayrı bir disiplin olarak görmemesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Her ne kadar onu ayrı bir disiplin olarak görmese de bizlere aktardığı bilgiler bibliyografik bir eser olması hasebiyle araştırmalarımıza hem ışık tutmakta hem de kültürümüze önemli katkılarda bulunmaktadır.

2. İbnü’l-Ekfânî’nin *İrşâdû’l-kâsîd* Adlı Eserinde Tasavvuf İlmine Dair Kısa Bir Değerlendirme

Asıl adı Ebû Abdillâh Şemsüddîn Muhammed b. İbrâhîm b. Sâid el-Ensârî es Sincârî (ö.

27 İbnü’n-Nedim, *el-Fihrist*, 271-272.

28 Süleyman Uludağ, “Hallac-ı Mansûr”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1997, XV: 377-381.

749/1348) olan İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin tıp, eczacılık, felsefe, astronomi, geometri, aruz, ahbâr ve tarih sahalarında geniş bilgi sahibi olduğu kaynaklarca belirtilmiştir. Hatta kendisinin geliştirdiği özel yöntemlerle ilaç geliştirdiği de bilinmektedir.²⁹ Tıp, fizyonomi, mineraloji alanında eserlerinin yanı sıra diğer türden başka eserleri de mevcuttur. Ancak bizim çalışma alanımıza dâhil edeceğimiz eseri, bir ilimler ansiklopedisi diyebileceğimiz bibliyografik eser özelliği taşıyan *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd ilâ esne'l-makâsîd* adlı eseridir. Mahiyeti bakımından İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*'inin takipçisi olan eser,³⁰ altmış ilim dalının tanımını ve ana konularını vermektedir. Ayrıca daha sonra kaleme alınacak olan geniş çaplı ilimler sınıflandırması müelliflerinden ve bizim de çalışmamızda en son kısımda değerlendirmeye tâbî tutacağımız Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde ve misbâhu's-siyâde fî mevzû'âti'l-'ulûm*'una ve Kâtib Çelebi'nin *Keşfü'z-zunûn*'a kaynaklık etmiştir. *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*'da zikredilen birçok âlim, İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin yaşadığı yüzyılda yaşamış olan kişilerdir. *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*'ın İslâm ilimler tarihinde çeşitli alanlardaki değişik gelenekleri ve aralarındaki felsefî ve teknik temel farkları kısaca ortaya koyuyor olması da dikkat çekicidir.³¹ Yöntem bakımından Fârâbî'nin (ö. 339/950) *İhsâ'ü'l-'ulûm*'u ile İbn Sînâ'nın (ö. 478/1037) *Kitâbü'l-Hudûd*'unu takip ederek bu eserlerden istifade ettiği görülmektedir.³² Ancak onun kitabının önemli bir özelliği vardır ki o da hem daha sistematik ve kapsamlı oluşu hem

de tanıttığı her ilim için ilgili eserlerin bir listesini vermiş olmasıdır.³³

Eserinin nasıl bir öneme sahip olduğunu anlama açısından ve o dönemin ilmî ve kültürel yapısını ortaya koyup ardından İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin nasıl bir tasavvufî çevrede yaşadığını ve ne tür bir etki içinde kaldığını görmek bakımından, eserin muhakiklerinden olan Abdülmünîm Muhammed Ömer'in *İrşâdu'l-kâsîd*'ın takdiminde, bize aktardıklarının önemli olduğunu düşünmekteyiz. Abdülmünîm, o dönemki kültürel ve ilmî ortamı tanımlarken mutasavvıflarla ilgili olarak dipnot diyebileceğimiz şöyle bir iddia ortaya atar: Mutasavvıfların önde gelenlerinden bazıları o döneme kadar İslâm literatüründe olmayan birtakım nazarî düşünceleri tasavvuf anlayışı felsefesi etrafında bir nazariyatla ortaya koymuşlardır. Abdülmünîm, hicrî ikinci yüzyıldan sonra İslâm beldelelerinde kargaşa ve fitnenin bir dönem hâkim olduğunu ve Suriye'den başlamak üzere daha sonra Asya'ya yayılan bir tasavvuf anlayışının geliştiğini, bunun da kutup olarak kabul edilen zühd ehli kişiler tarafından, Hz. Peygamber'in ahlâk ve amele yönelik birtakım hadisleri şiar edilerek, nefsi dizginleme ve terbiyeye yönelik bir anlayışekseninde geliştirildiğini söylemektedir. Böylelikle bu anlayış, kişinin sadece kendisi ile ilgilenip başkasının günahlarıyla meşgul olmaması gibi öğütler verilmek suretiyle İslâm beldelelerinde ciddi bir yayılma ve kabul görmüştür. Özellikle İslâm'ın "emr-i bi'l-ma'rûf ve nehy-i ani'l-münker" ilkesi, mutasavvıfların bu düsturları yaymasına önemli bir öncülük eden muhakkikin ifadeleriyle salık verilmektedir. İbnü'l-Ekfânî de o dönemde yaşayan fukahâ arasında yer almaktadır.³⁴

29 İhsan Fazlıoğlu, "İbnü'l-Ekfânî", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2000, XXI: 22-24.

30 İbnü'l-Ekfânî, Muhammed b. İbrahim b. Sâid el-Ensârî, *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd ilâ esne'l-makâsîd*, thk. Abdülmünîm Muhammed Ömer, (Kahire: Dârü'l-Fikri'l-Arabî, ty), 45.

31 Cahid Şenel, "İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin 'İrşâdü'l-kâsîd'ı ve 'Nevâmîs'in İlimler Sınıflandırması Literatüründe Yer Edinme Süreci", *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları*, 29 (2016): 189-221.

32 Fazlıoğlu, "İbnü'l-Ekfânî", XXI: 22-24.

33 Ali Arslan, "İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin (ö. 749/1348) İlimleri Tasnifi ve Bu Tasnifte Hadis İlmi", *Bozok Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi [BOZİFDER]*, 18 (2020): 15-39.

34 İbnü'l-Ekfânî, *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*, 15-32.

İbnü'l-Ekfânî eserine mukaddime ile başlamaktadır. Burada ilme tâlip olan kişinin uyması gereken adap ve erkânı anlatmış, kısacası pedagojik eğitime dâhil olan konular diyebileceğimiz mevzuları ele almıştır. Eserde amelî ve nazarî ilimlerin tasnifini yaparak on aslî ilim olarak kabul ettiği ilimlerin isimlerini zikreder. Nazarî olanlar mantık, metafizik, fizik, geometri, aritmetik, astronomi, mûsikî; amelî olanlar ise siyaset, ahlâk, tedbîrî'l-men-zildir.³⁵

Özellikle tasavvuf ilmi ile ilgili bilgileri ve tasavvufun ana kaynakları diyebileceğimiz eser isimlerini gördüğümüz kısım ilm-i ilâhî bölümüdür. Nitekim müellife göre insanın ilmin değerini anlamak için Allah'ın kendisini "ilim sahibi olmakla" nitelemesi, ayrıca peygamberlere ve velilere ilim bahşetmiş olması yeterlidir. İnsan sanki hiçbir şey bilmeyen -elbette mutlak anlamda değil- bilkuvve bir varlıktır ancak ne zaman öğrenmeye başlarsa o zaman bilfiil insan olur. Mutlak anlamda cehâlet durumunda ise insan, hayvandan da aşağı bir seviyede olmaktadır. Bu ilimlerin ise en şerefli, en faziletli ve itibar bakımından en üst düzeyde yer edineni ise kendinde bütün ilimleri toplayan ilm-i ilâhî yani metafizik ilmidir.³⁶ Bu ilim bâtil ile hakîkî olanı ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca insanın kendisini tanımasını ve dâru'l-bekâ'da mutluluğa ulaşmasını sağlamaktadır. İbnü'l-Ekfânî ilm-i ilâhîye giden yolların farklı olduğunu da söylemektedir. Bunlardan birincisi filozoflar zümresidir ki bunlar, araştırma ve nazar yolunu kullanırlar; delil ve burhan ortaya koyarlar. Bunlar arasında Sokrat, Eflatun, Aristo gibi isimler bulunmaktadır. Bir de riyâzetle nefis tezkiyesi yolunu benimseyenler vardır ki bunlar da nüssâk zümresidir. Bunların çoğu dille tavsif edilmekten berî olan zevkî hallere ulaşırlar. Delilleri sadece

35 age. 229-232.

36 Şenel, "İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin 'İrşâdü'l-Kâsîd'ı", 194-195.

keşftir. İslâm milletinde nüssâk, sûfîlerdir. Müellif, en sonda ise şunu belirtmektedir ki iki zümre de fazileti elde etmektedir.³⁷

İbnü'l-Ekfânî eserinde, dînî ilimleri ilm-i ilâhî başlığı altında toplamıştır.³⁸ Ancak müellifin belirttiği şekliyle bütün ilimler bu ilmin içine dâhildir. Eğer insan bu hakikatleri öğrenmezse, kendisi ziyana uğrayacaktır.

Eserde belirtildiğine göre ilm-i ilâhî'nin beş aslî cüz'ü vardır. Bütün mevcûdâtın hakîkâtini anlayabilmek için bu beş cüz'ü anlamak gerekmektedir. Bunlar:

1. Vücûd, mâhiyet, vahdet, kesret, vücûb, imkân, kadîm, esbâb, müsebbibât.
2. İlimlerin birbiri ile olan ilişkisi ve mertebeleri.
3. Allah'ın rubûbiyetle birliği ve tekliği ve sıfatlarının isbâtı. (Zâtının sadece kendinden olması)
4. Nefisler, akıllar, melekler, cinler, şeytanlar ve onların hakikatleri ve durumları.
5. İnsan iskeletinin yaratılış hakikati.

Bu konular hem tasavvufi hem de kelâmî disiplin içerisinde yer alan ve araştırılan konulardır.

İbnü'l-Ekfânî eserinde her ilim dalına ayırdığı bölümde yaptığı gibi bu bölümde de birçok isim ve onların eserlerini zikretmiştir. Bunlar arasında mutasavvıf olarak bilinen ve özellikle de tasavvuf alanında ve tasavvufun sistematik olarak değerlendirilmeye başladığı tarihten itibaren önemli eserler ortaya koymuş kişilerin isimlerini görmek mümkündür. Bu isimlerden bazıları şunlardır:

1. Ebû Hafs Şihâbüddîn Ömer b. Muhammed b. Abdillâh b. Ammûye el-Kureşî

37 İbnü'l-Ekfânî, *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*, 133. Ayrıca bkz. Selime Çınar, "Fârâbî'den Taşköprizâde'ye: İslam Medeniyetinde İlimler Tasnifinin Gelişimi", (Yüksek Lisans, Fatih Sultan Mehmed Vakıf Üniversitesi Medeniyetler İttifakı Enstitüsü, 2014), 34.

38 İbnü'l-Ekfânî, *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*, 132-168.

el-Bekrî es-Sühreverdî (ö. 632/1234) ve *Avârifü'l-Maârif* adlı eseri. Ondan önder şahsiyetlerden biri olarak bahseder ve *Avârif*'te tasavvuf ehlinin adâb-ı şer'iyyelerinin ve ıstılahlarının yer aldığını aktarır.

2. Ebü'l-Fazl Abdülmün'im b. Ömer b. Abdillâh el-Cilyânî el-Gassânî el-Endelüsî (ö. 602/1205-1206). Cilyânî'nin, eserinde, tasavvuf ehlinin görgü kurallarından ve rabbânî nefeslerin rumuzlarından bahsettiğini aktarır.

3. Ebü'l-Kâsım Zeynülislâm Abdülkerîm b. Hevâzin b. Abdilmelik el-Kuşeyrî (ö. 465/1072) ve *er-Risâle* adlı eseri. Müellifin eserinde, tasavvufta önde gelen şahsiyetlerden kabul edilen sûfileri anlattığından bahseder.

4. Ebû Tâlib Muhammed b. Alî b. Atıyye el-Mekkî el-Acemî (ö. 386/996) ve *Kutü'l-kulûb* adlı eseri. Mekkî'nin, eserinde, ilim ve amel yolunda sâlikin ihtiyaç duyduğu konulardan bahsettiğini aktarmaktadır.

5. Muhyiddîn Muhammed b. Alî b. Muhammed el-Arabî et-Tâî el-Hâtimî (ö. 638/1240) ve *el-Fütûhâtü'l-Mekkiyye fî ma'rifeti'l-esrâri'l-mâlikiyye ve'l-mülkiyye* adlı eseri. İbn Arabî'nin sadece bu eserinin değil diğer bütün eserlerinin yukarıda zikrettiklerinden farklı olduğunu söyler ve bu kitaplarda geçen bilgilerin hiçbirinin onlara dahil olmadığını belirtir. Ona göre bu eserlerin içerikleri boş değildir ve büyük bir kısmı rumuzlardan ibârettir. Kim onu dış görünüşü ile aşağılarsa ondan tecrit edilir.

6. Ebü'l-Meâlî Sadrüddîn Muhammed b. İshâk b. Muhammed b. Yûsuf Konevî (ö. 673/1274) ve Fâtiha Sûresi'nin tefsirini yaptığı eser olarak tanıttığı asıl adı *İ'câzû'l-beyân fî te'vîli ümmi'l-Kur'ân* adlı eseri.

7. Asıl adı Ebü'l-Mugîs el-Hüseyn b. Mansûr el-Beyzâvî (ö. 309/922) olan Hallâc-ı Mansur olarak tanınan sûfî. Ancak eserde Hallâc'ın ismi, İslâmî firkaların

anlatıldığı bölümün sonundaki hulûl ve itihâd fırkası içerisinde zikredilmektedir.³⁹

3. Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde* Adlı Eserinde Tasavvuf İlmine Dair Kısa Bir Değerlendirme

Asıl adı Ahmet b. Mustafa b. Halil olan Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi *eş-Şekâ'iku'n-nu'mâniyye fî 'ulemâ'i'd-devleti'l-Osmâniyye* adlı meşhur eserinde, kendi otobiyografisine yer vermiştir. Burada kendi doğumuyla ilgili, 14 Rebûlevvel 901 (2 Aralık 1495) tarihinde Bursa'da doğduğunu belirtir.⁴⁰ Medresede nahiv-sarf okuduktan sonra Kıvâmüddin Kâsım Efendi'nin yanında tahsilini sürdürmüştür. Taşköprizâde'nin, Şeyhzâde Muhyiddin Mehmed Kocavî, Mahmûd b. Kadızâde-i Rûmî, Muhammed et-Tûnisî gibi âlimlerin tedrisinden geçtiği bilinmektedir. Birçok medresede yaptığı müderrisliğin yanında Koca Mustafa Paşa, Sahn-ı Semân, Edirne Üç Şerefeli, Edirne Sultan Bâyezid (951/1544) gibi önemli medreselerde müderrislik yapmıştır. 30 Receb 968 (16 Nisan 1561) tarihinde İstanbul'da vefat etmiştir.⁴¹ İlmiye sınıfına mensup bir aileden gelen Taşköprizâde'nin, birçok âlimin tedrisinden geçerek tahsilini tamamladığı bilinmektedir. Tefsir, fıkıh, kelam, mantık, ahlâk, Arap dili ve edebiyatı, biyografi, ilimler tarihi, tıp gibi değişik alanlarda çeşitli kitaplar yazmıştır. Bunların yanında otuza yakın risâle telif ettiği de bilinmektedir. Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi eserlerini Arapça yazmış ve büyük ölçüde şerh ve hâşiyeye geleneğini de sürdürmüştür.⁴² Kendisi en

39 İbnü'l-Ekfânî, *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*, 147.

40 Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, haz. A. Fikri Yavuz, (İstanbul: Meral Yayınevi, 1972), I: 454.

41 Mustakim Arıcı, Mehmet Arıkan (ed.), *Taşradan Merkeze Bir Osmanlı Ulema Ailesi: Taşköprülüzâdeler ve İsmâüddin Ahmed Efendi*, (İstanbul: İlem Yayıncılık, 2020), 40.

42 Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2011, XV: 151.

çok *Miftâhu's-saâde ve misbâhu's-siyâde fî mevzû'âti'l-'ulûm* ve *eş-Şekâ'iku'n-nu'mâ-niyye fî 'ulemâ'i'd-devleti'l-'Ossmâniyye* eserleriyle tanınmaktadır. Taşköprizâde ömrünün sonlarına doğru *Miftâhu's-saâde*'nin *Medînetü'l-'ulûm* adıyla bir özeti yazmıştır.⁴³ Oğlu Kemâleddin Mehmed Efendi de eseri *Mevzûâtü'l-'ulûm*⁴⁴ ismiyle Osmanlı Türkçesine tercüme etmiştir.

Miftâhu's-saâde Osmanlı âlimlerinin ilmi müktesebatını ortaya koyması bakımından ilim tasniflerinin yapıldığı önemli bir bibliyografik eserdir. Dört mukaddime, iki bölüm ve yedi kısımdan meydana gelmektedir. Bu dört mukaddimenin içerisinde şu konular anlatılmaktadır: Birinci mukaddimede, ilmin fazileti, eğitim ve öğretim; ikinci mukaddimede, öğrenmenin şartları ve öğrencinin vazifeleri; üçüncü mukaddimede, öğretmenin vazifeleri; dördüncü mukaddimede ise tarîku'n-nazar ve tarîku't-tasviye anlatılmaktadır. Mukaddimelerden sonra 'taraf' olarak belirttiği iki bölümü ele alır ve başlıklara bölerek bilgi verir. Bu iki bölümün ilkinde nazarî, ikincisinde ise amelî ilimleri zikretmektedir. Bu iki tür ilmin her ikisine de hâkim olan kişilerin, kurtuluşa ereceğinden bahsetmektedir. Bu iki bölümün altında yedi adet, 'devha'⁴⁵ adını verdiği kısma geçer ve tek tek hepsini başlıklandırır. Bu kısımlar sırasıyla, yazıyla ilgili ilimler (hat sanatı ve Arap imlâsı), dile ait ilimler (sarf, nahiv, belâgat ve edebiyat), mantık ilimleri (mantık disiplinleri ve tartışma yöntemleri), dış

dünyayı konu alan ilimler (metafizik, fizik, matematik, mekanik, tıp, coğrafya ve astronomi dâhil bütün disiplinler), amelî hikmet ilimleri (ahlâk, ev idaresi, siyaset), şer'î ilimler (kıraat, hadis ve usulü, tefsir, kelâm, fıkıh ve usulü) ve bâtin ilimleri (ibadetler, âdetler, helâke götüren ahlâkî kötülükler ve necâta ulaştıran erdemler) şeklindedir.⁴⁶ Bizim incelemeye tâbî tutacağımız bölüm, bâtinî ilimlerin yer aldığı yedinci kısım olacaktır.

Yedinci kısmın gerek ara başlıklandırmasına gerekse içerisinde bahsedilen konulara bakıldığında dikkat çeken husus Gazzâlî'nin *İhyâ'ü 'ulûmi'd-dîn*'de⁴⁷ işlediği konularla tam bir benzerlik arz etmesidir. Eserin genel uslûbu, planlandırılması ve içeriği dikkate alındığında ise akla gelen İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin *İrşâdû'l-kâsıd*'ı olmaktadır. Müellifin eserini telif ederken bu eserden yararlandığı açıktır. Ayrıca etkilendiği ve örnek aldığı diğer bir kitap olarak erken dönem bibliyografik eserlerinden İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*'ini zikretmek mümkündür.⁴⁸

Müellifin, bâtinî ilimlerle ilgili bölümü, kendi içerisinde 4 ara başlıkta topladığı görülmektedir:

Birinci kısımda, "İbadetler" başlığı altında, ilim, akâid kuralları, temizliğin sırları, namazın sırları, zekâtın sırları, orucun sırları, haccın sırları, evrâd-ı ezkârın sırları, evrâdın kısımları, faziletleri ve hikmeti yer almaktadır.

İkinci kısımda, "Âdetler" başlığı altında, yeme âdâbı, nikâh âdâbı, kazanma ve geçim âdâbı, helal ve haram kazanç hakkında, yaratılış sınıflarına göre muâşerât ve sohbet âdâbı, görgü kuralları, sefer âdâbı, semâu'l-vecd,

43 Taşköprizâde İsmâüddin Ahmed Efendi, *Medînetü'l-'ulûm* (İstanbul: Süleymaniye Ktp., Hâlet Efendi, 791; Köprülü Ktp., 1387).

44 Taşköprizâde İsmâüddin Ahmed Efendi, *Mevzûâtü'l-'ulûm*, çev. Kemâleddin Mehmed Efendi, (İstanbul: 1313), 1-2.

45 "Devha" kelimesinin anlamı, dallı budaklı büyük ağaç demektir. Taşköprüzâde de bu adlandırmayla, her bir ana ilim bölümünün birçok dalı, dalların dalları ve budakların olduğunu kastetmiş olmalıdır. Hüseyin Atay, "Bazı İslam Filozof ve Düşünürlerine göre İlimler Sayımı ve Tasnifi", *A.Ü.İ.F. İslami İlimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 4 (1980): 27.

46 Taşköprizâde Ahmed Efendi, *Miftâhu's-saâde ve misbâhu's-siyâde fî mevzûâtü'l-'ulûm*, (Beyrut: Darü'l-Kütübi'l-İlmiyye, 1985).

47 bkz. Ebû Hâmid Muhammed el-Gazzâlî, *İhyâ'ü 'ulûmi'd-dîn*, (Kahire: 1332), 3-4.

48 İlhan Kutluer, "Miftâhu's-saâde", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2020, XXX: 18-19.

emr-i bi'l-mâruf nehy-i ani'l-münker, peygamber ahlâkı yer almaktadır.

Üçüncü kısımda, “Rub‘u'l-muhlikât” başlığı altında, kalbin acayıplığının şerhi, riyâzetü'n-nefs ve tehzibu'l-ahlâk, arzu ve isteklerin kırılması (açlık ve cinsî münâsebet), dilin âfetleri, öfkelenme, haset, kinin zemmi, dünyanın zemmi, malın zemmi ve onu sevmenin kerahati ve cimrilik, riyâ ve şan şöretin kötülüğü, kibir ve ucb, gurur yer akmaktadır.

Dördüncü kısımda, “Rub‘u'l-münciyât” başlığı altında, tevbe, şükür ve sabır, havf ve recâ, zühd ve fakr, tevekkül, muhabbet, şevk, üns ve rızâ, niyet, ihlas ve doğruluk, muhasebe ve murâkabe, tefekkür, zikrû'l-mevt ve dirilme ve nüşûr yer almaktadır.⁴⁹ Müellif bu bölümde anlattığı ilimleri ‘mükâşefe ilimleri’ olarak adlandırmakta ve bu ilimleri ancak Allah’ın bildirdiği kişilerin bilebileceğini söylemektedir. Ayrıca şunu da belirtmektedir ki mânevî mutluluk ve yücelmeyi sağlayacak olan ilimler, Cibrîl hadisinde ifade edilen imân, İslâm ve ihsânı konu alan kelimeler, fıkıh ve tasavvuf ilimleridir.⁵⁰

Taşköprizâde ilimleri övülen (*mahmûd*) ve yerilen (*mezmûm*) ilimler olarak da tasnif etmektedir. Bu tasnifte de bahsedilen ilimlerin insana nasıl fayda sağladığı veya nasıl zarar verdiği konusu esas alınmıştır. Anlaşılmaktadır ki ona göre hangi tasnif yapılırsa yapılsın mühim olan insanoğlunu dünyada da ebedî hayatında da mutluluğa ve refaha ulaştırmasıdır. Bundaki mizân ise dînî ilimlerin herkes tarafından öğrenilmesi, diğer ilimlerin ise ona uyup yardımcı olması noktasındadır. Ebedî mutluluk ise bu ilimlerin amele dönüşmesi ile gerçekleşecektir. Nitekim bunlar ikiz kardeşler timsali birbirinden ayrılmamakta ve birbirlerine yardımcı

olmaktadırlar. Dolayısıyla ilimde derinleşen kimse o ilme uygun amel etmelidir. Çünkü amelde kusur olursa ilimde kemâle ulaşamaz.⁵¹

Müellifin, kalbin acayıplığı başlığı altında kalb, ruh, nefis ve akıl kavramlarını değerlendirdiğini görmekteyiz. Bâtınî ilimler içerisinde kalbin askerlerinden bahsetmekte ve onların çalışma sisteminin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Kalbin bâtinî askerleri olan ruh; hükümdar gibidir, onun ülkesi bedendir; veziri ise akıldır; şehveti, kölesi; öfkesi, emniyet müdürüdür. İnsanın terkiğinde, canavârî, hayvânî, şeytânî ve rabbânî olmak üzere dört kuvvet mevcuttur. Nitekim bu sıfatlardan hangisi insana hâkim olursa, ahlâkı da o surette olur. Canavardan düşmanlık, insanlara saldırmak; hayvan sıfatından hırs, şehvet; şeytânî ve rabbânî sıfattan sevgi, yükseklik, başkanlık, kendini üstün görme, herkese emir verme gibi duygular doğar. Bunlar aslında rubûbiyet sıfatlarındandır. Ancak öfke ve şehvetle ortaklık bakımından şeytânî sıfatlardan olmaktadır. Mesela ilim kuvveti, şehvet ve öfkeye uyarsa insan suretinde şeytan olur. Bunlara uymazsa ilim, hikmet, eşyanın hakikatini bilme, bâsiret gibi rabbânî sıfatlar gerçekleşir. Şehvet itidâle çevrilirse iffet, hayâ, zarâfet, yardımseverlik; öfke gücünü yenince de yiğitlik, kerem, sabır, kendine hâkim olma, sebat, affetme, hilm gibi güzel sıfatlar doğmaktadır.⁵²

49 Taşköprizâde, *Miftâhu's-saâde*, III: 565- 578.

50 Hüseyin Sarioğlu, “Taşköprülüzade’de İlim ve Felsefe”, *Osmanlı Bilim Tarihinde Taşköprülüzadeler Sempozyumu*, ed. Celil Güngör, (Kastamonu: Taşköprü Belediyesi Yayınları, 2006), 60.

51 Fatma Zehra Pattabanoğlu, “Taşköprizâde’nin Felsefe, Kelam ve Tasavvuf İlimlerine Bakışı”, *II. Uluslararası Şeyh Şa’ban-ı Veli Sempozyumu*, (Kastamonu: Kastamonu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014), 533-547.

52 Taşköprizâde, *Miftâhu's-saâde*, III: 323- 325. Şu da belirtilmelidir ki kalbin askerleri konusu gibi eserin içerisinde bulunan bazı konular Taşköprizâde’nin hocası Şeyhzâde Muhyiddin Mehmed Kocevî’ye ait olan *Noktatü'l-Beyân* adlı eserde de yer almaktadır. Bkz. Sümeyye Arpacı, “Şeyhzâde Mustafa Kocevî’nin Noktatü'l-Beyân Adlı Eseri: Neşir ve İnceleme” (Yüksek Lisans, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2019) Kocevî’nin eserinin genelinde de Gazzâlî düşüncesinin esintileri

Müellife göre dünya sevgisi, dolayısıyla da mal mülk sevgisi insanı hüsrana uğratacak sevgilerin başında gelmektedir. Kişi, nefsin ve kalbin riyâzeti için nefsinin ayıplarını bilmeli ve bunlardan elini eteğini çekmelidir, ancak zaruret miktarı bunlarla iştigal olmalıdır. Nefsin tezkiyesi ve tasfiyesi ise uzlet ile mümkündür. İnsan her daim murâkabe ve muhâsebe halinde olmalıdır.⁵³

Sonuç olarak Taşkoprizâde'nin bu eseri, yukarıda zikredilen, ilimlerin tasniflerinin yer aldığı bibliyografik mâhiyetteki İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*, İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin *İrşâdü'l-kâsıd* adlı eserleri gibi bir eser olup, yakın dönem Osmanlı ilim zihniyetini de ortaya koyan önemli bir yapıttır. Özellikle aklî ve dînî ilimleri değerlendirme konusunda câmî bir eser olduğu âşikârdır. Kısacası müellifimiz hem felsefî ilimleri hem de dînî ilimleri *Miftâhu's-saâde*'sinde vaz' etmiştir. Aklî ve dînî ilimler hakkında bilgi verirken ilminden özellikle faydalandığı şahsiyet İbnü'l-Ekfânî, bâtinî ilimler hakkında bilgi verirken etkilendiği kişi ise Gazzâlî olmuştur.

4. Saçaklızâde'nin *Tertîbu'l-'ulûm* Adlı Eserinde Tasavvuf İlmine Dair Kısa Bir Değerlendirme

1070-1080 (1660-1670) yılları arasında Maraş'ta doğan Saçaklızâde Mehmed Efendi, doğum yerine nispet edilerek Mar'âşî olarak tanınmaktadır. İlköğrenimine memleketinde başlayan Saçaklızâde'nin hocaları arasında Hasan Mar'âşî, Dârendeli Hamza Efendi ve *Tibyân Tefsiri*'nin mütercimi Ayıntâbî Mehmed Efendi gibi isimler yer almaktadır. Ayrıca hayatının belli bir evresinde gittiği Şam'da, zamanının büyük âlimi Abdülganî en-Nablûsî'den (ö. 1143/1731) tefsir, hadis ve tasavvuf tahsil ettiği ve Nablûsî'den icâzet ve

mevuttur. Dolayısıyla anlaşılmaktadır ki Taşkoprizâde'nin tasavvufî düşünce yapısının oluşmasında hocalarının da etkisi âşikârdır.

53 Taşkoprizâde, *Miftâhu's-saâde*, III: 542.

hilâfet aldığı bilinmektedir. Böylece tarîk-i Hâlidîyye ve Nakşbendîyye erkânı üzere yetiştigi, zâhirî ve bâtinî ilimleri tahsil ettiği söylenmektedir. Saçaklızâde'nin Maraş'ta 1145 (1732) yılında vefat ettiği, kabrinin de Şeyh Âdil Mezarlığı'nda bulunduğu kabul edilmekte ve vefatına “eş-Şeyh Saçaklı” ve “Tâcü'l-mürşidîn” gibi ibârelerle tarih düşürüldüğü görülmektedir.⁵⁴

Tertîbu'l-'ulûm, ilimler tasnifi konusunda yazılan önemli eserlerden biridir. Özellikle Osmanlı dönemi medrese düzeni, verilen derslerin niteliği, tanıtılması ve eleştirilmesi bakımından ayrı bir konuma sahiptir. Eser, mukaddime ile başlamaktadır. Altında 23 fasla ayrılır. Daha sonra iki maksad zikredilir. Bunlar ise kendi içerisinde tekrar fasıllar olarak başlıklandırılmıştır. Birinci maksad, on fasıl ikinci maksad iki fasıl olarak düzenlenmiştir. Son olarak ise hâtime kısmı yazılmış, o bölüm de dört fasılda toplanmıştır. Müellif mukaddimede faydalı ilimleri sıralar ve onları şer'î ve şer'î olmayan olarak ikiye ayırır. Bu ilimlerle uğraşmanın hükümlerini anlatır. Birinci maksadın konusu faydalı ilimlerin târifleri ve zararlı davranışların beyânı hakkındadır. İkinci maksadın konusu ise ilimlerin mertebeleri ve bu ilimlerle uğraşacak talebenin başlangıç seviyesinde hangi ilimlerle meşgul olacağına dair bilgilendirmedir. Hâtime kısmı ise felsefe ilmine ayrılmıştır.

Müellif, faydalı ilimler olarak Arapça ile ilgili olan bazı ilimleri, aklî ilimleri, ledünnî ilmi, kitap ve sünnet kaynaklı ilimleri, Kur'ân ilimlerini, hadis ilimlerini ve bunlara ek olarak da anatomi, tıp, firâset, rüya tabirleri ve Farsça dilini saymaktadır. Bunların dışında kalan felsefe, sihir, astroloji gibi ilimleri zararlı ilimler kategorisinde değerlendirir. Bu ilimlerin bilinmesinin bir fayda sağla-

54 Tahsin Özcan, “Saçaklızade Mehmed Efendi”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2008, XXXV: 368.

mayacağı, bilinmemesinin de bir zarara yol açmayacağını belirtir.⁵⁵

Müellif, tasavvuf ilmini ahlâk ilmi altında değerlendirmektedir. Ona göre ahlâk ilminin konusu rûhî melekelerdir. İlm-i ahvâlî'l-kalb yanî kalbin halleri ilmi olarak da adlandırılan ahlâk ilmi, üstün ahlâkın ne olduğunu ve onu insanın nasıl elde edeceğini, kötü ahlâkın ne olduğunu ve insanın ondan nasıl uzak duracağını anlatan bir ilimdir. Ahlâk ilminin öğrenilmesindeki maksat kötü ahlâktan arınarak, iyi ahlâka yönelmektir. Tasavvuf ilmi de bu ilmin bir parçasıdır ve üstün ahlâkın en üst derecelerini açıklamaktadır. Bu kısımda Suyûtî'nin (ö. 911/1505) *en-Nukâye* adlı eserindeki tasavvuf tanımını aktarır: "Tasavvuf, kalbi Yüce Allah'ın dışında bulunan bütün varlıklardan tecrid ederek Yaratıcı'ya dönmektir." Saçaklızâde'ye göre ise tasavvuf bu tecrid ilmidir.⁵⁶

Müellif eserinde birçok tasavvufî eserden ve şahsiyetten referanslar vermektedir. Bunlardan bazıları şöyledir: Suyûtî ve *en-Nukâye* adlı eseri, Kuşeyrî ve *er-Risâle* adlı eseri, Sübkî ve *Mu'îdu'n-niâm* adlı eseri, Sühreverdî ve *Avârifü'l-maârif* adlı eseri, Fahreddîn er-Râzî ve *Tefsîru'l-kebîr* adlı eseri, Gazzâlî ve *İhyâ'ü 'ulûmi'd-dîn* adlı eseri, Beydâvî ve *Envâru't-tenzîl* adlı eseri, İmam el-Yâfiî ve *Ravdu'r-Riyâhîn* adlı eseri, Neseî ve *Akâidu'n-Nesefiyye* adlı eseri. Müellifin özellikle Gazzâlî'den yaptığı alıntıları gerek eserin genelinde gerekse tasavvufa ayırdığı bölümde çokça görmek mümkündür.

Müellif, ahlâk ilminin hükmünü anlattığı fasılda bu ilmin bir kısmının farz-ı ayn,

bütününün isefarz-ı kifâye olduğunu zikreder. Ancak tasavvuf ilmi bunların dışında tutulmaktadır. O ne farz-ı ayn ne de farz-ı kifâyedir. Çünkü tasavvuf ehlinin yaşadığı haller, o tecrübeye sahip olan kişiyi bağlar. Bu da bir zorunluluk olmaktan çıkar ve sadece müstehap derecesinde değerlendirilebilir. Müellif bu bağlamda Kuşeyrî'nin şu sözünü aktarır:

Hamdûn der ki, selefin yol alışı (seyr) üzerinde düşünen kimse, kendi eksikliğinin ve insanların elde ettiği derecelerden geri kalmışlığının farkına varır. Bu ilme ait bazı ıstılahlar vardır ki, bunları bilmemek müderris bir âlim için kusurdur. Bu ıstılahlardan bir kısmı şunlardır: Firâk, bekâ, fenâ, seyr, tecellî, şûrb (içmek), reyy (suya kanma), sekr (sarhoşluk), sahv (ayıklık) vb. Kuşeyrî der ki: "Bu grup, ehil olmayanlar arasında sırlarının yayılmasını istemedikleri için kastettikleri manaları kendilerinin dışında kalan insanlardan gizlemek maksadıyla kendi aralarında birtakım lafızlar kullanmaktadır."

Saçaklızâde bu söze binâen şunları söyler: "Onların sözlerinin zâhirinden anlaşılan mânâların şeriâtin o sözlere yüklediği mânâlara muhalif olduğuna, bu durumun bir tevilinin bulunduğu ve bunların şeriâtin bildirdiğine ancak bu tevil sebebiyle muhalif düşmeyeceğine inanman gerekir."⁵⁷

Müellif, ledünnî ilmi, tasavvuf ilminden ayrı tutarak şunları aktarır:

Ledünnî ilme gelince –ki o, göreceğin üzere tasavvuf ilminden başka bir şeydir– bâtın ilmi, mükâşefe ilmi, mevhibe ilmi, sırlar ilmi, gizli ilim, verâset ilmi ve hakikat ilmi olarak da adlandırılır. Bu ilim, er-Râzî'nin *et-Tefsîrü'l-kebîr*'inde şu şekilde sözünü ettiği ilimdir: 'Sûfîler mükâşefe yoluyla elde edilen ilimlere ledünnî ilim adını vermişlerdir.' Râzî,

55 Saçaklızâde Mehmed Efendi, *Tertibu'l-'ulûm*, (Beyrut: Dâru'l- Beşâiru'l-İslamiyye, 1408), 82-83.

56 Adem Akın ve Remzi Demir, "Saçaklızâde Muhammed İbn Ebî Bekr el-Marâşî ve Tertib el-'ulûm Adlı Eseri", *OTAM Dergisi*, 16 (2004): 1-64; Ayrıca bkz. Ahmet Kayacık, "Saçaklızâde'nin İlimler Sınıflamasına Dair Görüşleri", *I. Kahramanmaraş Sempozyumu*, (İstanbul: Maraşder-Kahramanmaraş Belediyesi, 2005), I: 81-88.

57 Saçaklızâde, *Tertibu'l-'ulûm*, 170-171. Krş. Saçaklızâde, *Tertibu'l-'ulûm*, çev. Zekeriya Pak ve M. Akif Özdoğan, (Kahramanmaraş: Ukde Kitaplığı, 2009), 202-203.

bu adlandırmanın Allah Teâlâ'nın şu sözünden yola çıkılarak yapılmış olduğunu kastediyor: *Biz ona katımızdan (min ledünnâ) bir ilim verdik.* Kevâşî bu âyetin tefsirinde şöyle der: 'O, bâtın ilmidir ve ledünnî ilimdir.' *el-Medârik*'te ise şöyle geçer: 'O, gaybdan haber verme ilmidir.' Ben derim ki: Allah'ın Hızır'a öğrettiği şeyleri kastediyor, –ilerde göreceğin üzere– mutlak anlamda bâtın ilminden değil. *et-Tatarhâniyye*'de müellifi şöyle der: 'Mükâşefe ilmi öğrenme ve öğretme yoluyla öğrenilmez; ancak Allah'ın doğru yolu bulmak için temel kabul ettiği mücâhede yoluyla elde edilir.' Nitekim Allah Teâlâ şöyle buyuruyor: *Bizim yolumuzda gayret (mücâhede) gösterenleri, yollarımıza eriştiririz.* Hadiste de şöyle geçer: *Bildiği şeylerle amel edenlere, Allah bilmediği şeylerin ilmini bahşeder.* Ledünnî ilmin karşı kutbunda şerîat ilmi, zâhir ilim ve muâmele ilmi yer alır. (Bu bölüm kitapta kaçınıcı sayfadan alındı? Bir referans gerekir.)

Saçaklızâde bu bölümde anlattığı bazı sözlerinden dolayı tenkitlere mâruz kalmıştır. Özellikle bu düşüncelerini eleştiren şahıs Alemî Ahmed Efendi olmuştur. Saçaklızâde de bu tenkitlere cevap mahiyetinde *Risâletü'l-cevâb* adlı bir eser kaleme almıştır.⁵⁸

Müellif bâtın ilmini iki kısma ayırır. Bunlardan birincisi; Allah'ın kalpte oluşturduğu gayba dair bilgidir. İkincisi; insanın gösterdiği itaatkâr tutum nedeniyle Allah'ın kendisine bahşettiği halleri bilmesidir.⁵⁹

Müellifin tasavvuf kısmında değerlendirdiği bir diğer konu, bâtın ilminin zâhir ilmine aykırı olup olmadığı sorusudur. Burada Gazzâlî'nin "Kim bâtın ilmi zâhir ilmine aykırı derse, bu söz, imandan çok küfre

yakındır."⁶⁰ ifadesini aktararak bu sözün mânâsını açıklar.

Saçaklızade "Sûfîleri Müdâfaa" başlığı altında da bir fasıl açmıştır. Bu fasılda genelde el-Yâfiî'nin eserinden alıntılar yaparak sûfîlere has bazı özel hallerden ve tecrübelerden bahseder. ⁶¹Sonuç olarak diyebiliriz ki Saçaklızâde tefsir, hadis, belâgat, tecvîd, kıraât, ahlâk, tasavvuf, felsefe, münâzara, mantık, edebiyat ve birçok ilmi alanda derin bilgi sahibi olmasının yanı sıra *Tertîbu'l-ulûm* adlı eseri ile de Osmanlı medrese eğitim ve öğretim yapısını çok iyi bilmekte ve bu uygulanan eğitim sisteminin çıkmaz alanlarını ve olumlu yanlarını bizlere sunmaktadır. Gerek müderris gerekse talebenin sahip olması gereken vasıfları, pedagojik çerçevede bizlere sunmaktadır. İlimlerin tasnifini yaparak eğitimde nasıl bir süreç izlenmesi gerektiği ve hangi ilmin, ne zaman ve kimlere öğretilmesi gerektiğini de belirtmektedir. Müellif, tasavvuf ilmine de diğer ilimler gibi bir başlık açmış olup birçok kaynak göstererek konulara açıklık getirmiştir. Özellikle de referans olarak verdiği kaynaklar arasında makalemizin sınırlılığı bağlamında, değerlendirmeye tâbî tuttuğumuz Osmanlı döneminde kaleme alınmış ilimler tasnifi kaynaklarından Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde*'sini de görmek bizler için önem arz etmektedir.

Sonuç

İslam âlimleri tarafından izlenen ilimler tasnifi geleneği hem filozofların ilim tasnifi geleneğine hem de vahiy-akıl merkezli bir geleneğe sahiptir. Böylelikle de yazılan eserler doğal olarak felsefe ve din ilişkisini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu ilimlerin tasnifi ele alınırken özellikle Fârâbî, İbn Sinâ ve Gazzâlî'nin düşüncelerinden çokça etkilendiği görülmektedir. Dînî ilimlerin tasnifinde o alanın yetkin temsilcilerinin isimleri ve eserleri

58 Detaylı bilgi için bkz. Mehmet Gel, "XVIII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı'sında Tasavvufî Bilgiyi Tartışmak: Saçaklızâde ile Alemî Arasındaki Ledünnî İlim ve İlham Tartışmasına Dair Bir İnceleme", *Nazariyat* 4, 3 (2018): 125.

59 Saçaklızâde, *Tertîbu'l-ulûm*, 172.

60 age. 174.

61 age. 175.

zikredilerek aktarımlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmamızda kronolojik sıraya göre incelediğimiz dört eser genelinde özellikle şu belirtilmelidir ki söz konusu eserler, kendi aralarında etkileşim içindedirler. İbnü'l-Ekfânî'nin *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd* adlı eseri, mâhiyeti bakımından İbnü'n-Nedîm'in *el-Fihrist*'inin takipçisi olmuş ve kendinden sonra kaleme alınan Taşköprizâde'nin *Miftâhu's-saâde* eserine de kaynaklık etmiştir. Saçaklızâde de *Tertibu'l-'ulûm* adlı eserinde birçok kere referans olarak *Miftâhu's-saâde*'yi vermiştir.

Dînî ilimler arasında tasavvuf ilminin *el-Fihrist*'te bir ilim olarak değerlendirilmediği ve adlandırılmadığı görülmektedir. Ancak zâhid ve sûfî olarak adlandırılan birçok mutasavvıfın hayatına dair bilgiler ve eserlerinin adları aktarılmıştır. *İrşâdü'l-kâsîd*'da karşımıza çıkan tabloda İbnü'l-Ekfânî, tasavvufu -metafizik de diyebileceğimiz- "İlm-i İlâhî" şeklinde adlandırdığı başlık altında ele almıştır. Müellifin, özellikle tasavvuf ıstılahları konusunda birer klasik haline gelmiş eserleri fazlaca zikrettiği görülmektedir. Taşköprizâde, *Miftâhu's-saâdesi*'nde tasavvuf ilmine "Bâtînî İlimler" biçiminde bir başlık açmıştır. Bu anlamda, tasavvuf alanında hem amel hem adab hem de ıstılâhî bilgi bakımından geniş çaplı bir çalışma ortaya koymuştur. Son olarak Saçaklızâde ise *Tertibu'l-'ulûm* eserinde tasavvuf ilmini "Ahlâk İlmi" altında değerlendirmiş ve onu bu ilmin bir parçası olarak kabul ederek, üstün ahlâkın en üst derecesi olarak görmüştür.

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**A *Dergâh* for the Nation:
Spiritual Identity and Cultural Continuity
in Occupied Istanbul (1918–1923)**

*Millet İçin Bir Dergâh:
İstanbul'un İşgali Yıllarında (1918–1923)
Mânevî Kimlik ve Kültürel Süreklilik*

Adile Sedef DÖNMEZ*

Abstract

This article examines how *Dergâh* Journal articulated a vision of spiritual nationalism, framing national identity as a continuity from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, grounded in cultural inheritance, artistic expression shaped by Ottoman-Sufi traditions, and a deep historical consciousness. Published during the Allied occupation of Istanbul between 1921 and 1923, *Dergâh* positioned itself outside the dominant nationalist paradigms of its time: on one side, militant resistance; on the other, rigid positivist modernization. Instead, it sought an alternative path to reimagine Turkish nationalism. The journal's contributors contended that the true foundation of a nation lies not only in political structures but in the ability to preserve and reinterpret its spiritual, cultural, and artistic heritage. Rejecting both passive Western imitation and reactionary nostalgia, *Dergâh* pursued a dynamic synthesis of past and present, asserting that literature, art, music, and language must evolve organically while remaining anchored in their cultural and spiritual roots. Drawing inspiration from Henri Bergson's (d. 1941) concepts of intuition (*intuition*) and duration (*durée*), the journal envisioned national identity as a living, ever-evolving force. Through its engagement with themes such as linguistic fragmentation, artistic mimicry, and the erosion of historical temporality, *Dergâh* sought to reclaim national consciousness by reviving a cultural and spiritual sensibility deeply rooted in Ottoman-Sufi traditions, envisioning art and thought as living continuities rather than borrowed imitations. This study situates *Dergâh* within the broader debates on nationalism and modernization, highlighting its distinctive attempt to reconcile spiritual depth and artistic vitality with the challenges of shaping modern Turkish identity.

* **ORCID:** 0009-0003-1961-0976. PhD Candidate, Koç University Department of History,
E-mail: addonmez20@ku.edu.tr

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Keywords: Spiritual nationalism, cultural continuity, artistic expression, historical consciousness, Henri Bergson, *Dergâh*

Özet

Bu makale, *Dergâh Mecmuası*'nın (1921-1923) milli kimliği kültürel süreklilik, köklerine bağlı sanatsal ifade ve tarih bilinci üzerinden kavrayan mânevî milliyetçilik anlayışını nasıl şekillendirdiğini ele almaktadır. İstanbul'un müttefik güçler tarafından işgal altında olduğu 1921-1923 yılları arasında yayımlanan *Dergâh*, dönemin hâkim anlatılarından—militan direnişe yaslanan bir milliyetçilik ya da katı bir pozitivist modernleşme anlayışı—farklı bir çizgide durarak Türk milliyetçiliğini yeniden düşünmenin yollarını aramaktadır. Dergiye katkıda bulunan dönemin en yetkin entelektüelleri bu bağlamda, bir milleti ayakta tutan bağlayıcı öğelerin yalnızca siyâsî kurumlar değil, aynı zamanda onun mânevî, kültürel ve sanatsal mirasını koruma ve yeniden yorumlama kabiliyeti olduğunu öne sürer. Batı karşısında edilgen bir taklitçiliği de, geçmişe sıkışıp kalan tepkisel bir nostaljiyi de eleştiren *Dergâh*, geçmiş ile bugünü dinamik bir senteze oturtarak edebiyatın, sanatın, müziğin ve dilin organik bir şekilde gelişmesi gerektiğini, fakat bunun kendi mânevî ve kültürel kökleriyle bağını koparmadan yapılmasının elzem olduğunu vurgular. Henri Bergson'un (ö. 1941) sezgi (*intuition*) ve süre (*durée*) kavramlarından esinlenen dergi yazarları, milli kimliği durağan bir miras olarak değil, yaşayan ve değişen bir varlık olarak ele alır. Dilin parçalanması, sanatın taklitçiliğe saplanması ve tarihsel zaman duygusunun kaybı gibi meseleleri tartışarak, estetik ve entelektüel incelik yoluyla milli bilinci yeniden inşa etmeye çalışır. Bu çalışma, *Dergâh*'ı milliyetçilik ekseninde süregelen daha geniş tartışmalar bağlamına yerleştirerek, mânevî derinliği modern Türk kimliği inşa sürecinin zorluklarıyla uzlaştırma çabasını incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mânevî milliyetçilik, kültürel süreklilik, sanatsal ifade, tarihsel farkındalık, Henri Bergson, *Dergâh Mecmuası*

Introduction

Dergâh is one of the most celebrated periodicals in Turkey's national literary history.¹ Published biweekly between April 10, 1921, and January 5, 1923, for a total of 42 issues, it emerged as a crucial intellectual and cultural platform during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.² Its significance is amplified by the context of its publication—amidst the turmoil of the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) and under Allied occupation (1918-1923) in Istanbul.³ While

occupying forces sought to suppress nationalist sentiment through an extensive censorship apparatus, *Dergâh* subtly but persistently signaled its support for the independence movement.⁴ However, its nationalism was not

1 Abdullah Uçman, "Dergâh," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1994, IX: 172-174.

2 Ekrem Karadoğulları, "Dergâh Mecmuası'nın Türk Edebiyatı ile Milli Mücadeledeki Yeri," *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 11, 27 (2005): 219-226.

3 The Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) was a nationalist struggle led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (d. 1938) against the occupying Allied forces fol-

lowing the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. It resulted in the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate, the expulsion of foreign powers, and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, marking a decisive break from imperial rule and the beginning of a new national sovereignty. See Edward J. Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence: A Military History, 1919-1923* (Santa Barbara: Bloomsbury Publication, 2021), 1-54. For more information on the Occupation of Istanbul please see, Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal and Gizem Tongo, "Representing Occupied Istanbul: Documents, Objects and Memory," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies*, 4 (2022): 91-98.

4 "Sunuş," *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin Vol. I*, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014).

a mere reactionary response to occupation; rather, it was a carefully crafted intellectual project that intertwined cultural revivalism, spiritual depth, and literary innovation.

This paper argues that the contributors of *Dergâh* articulated a threefold nationalistic discourse. First, the primacy of tradition and cultural heritage as the foundation of national identity. Second, a conscious reclamation of Turkish history, customs, and language as defining elements of collective consciousness. Third, the pursuit of nationalizing literature and the arts as a means of fostering an independent intellectual sphere. Through close readings and content analysis of selected *Dergâh* articles, this study examines how these three interwoven dimensions shaped the Journal's vision of Turkish nationalism. Rather than being framed as a rigid ideological construct, *Dergâh*'s nationalism was fluid, adaptive, and intellectually engaged with contemporary debates, including the tension between positivism and religious traditions.

The Journal's very title, *Dergâh*, derived from Persian, carries profound symbolic resonance, drawing directly from the Sufi tradition (*tasavvuf*) in which the *dergâh* (Sufi lodge) functioned as a sacred space for spiritual guidance, intellectual exchange, and cultural creativity. More than a place of worship, the Sufi lodge was a vibrant community of learning where seekers (*dervishes*) cultivated their moral and aesthetic sensibilities, contributing to literary, philosophical, and artistic life alongside their spiritual practice.⁵ Through this semantic choice, the Journal positioned itself as a religious sanctuary, much like its Sufi counterpart, fostering a form of spiritual nationalism that intertwined historical consciousness with mystical, aesthetic, and cultural renewal.⁶

5 Mustafa Kara, "Tekke," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, XL, 2011: 368-370.

6 For an examination of how *Dergâh*'s contributors invoked "spiritualism" as a source of inner strength

Furthermore, it reflected an attempt to reclaim and revitalize the spiritual and cultural ethos of the Eastern world, which its contributors saw as imperiled by the encroachment of materialist and positivist modernity.⁷

Among *Dergâh*'s key contributors were prominent literary and intellectual figures, including Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (d. 1958), Ahmed Hâşim (d. 1933), Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (d. 1974), and İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu (d. 1978), among others.⁸ These writers were part of a new generation of intellectuals—many of whom were affiliated with Dârülfünûn's Faculty of Letters—who sought to redefine Turkish cultural identity by integrating historical consciousness, aesthetic refinement, and spiritual sensibility.⁹ While some contributors, such as Yahya Kemal, drew upon classical Ottoman and Islamic traditions to construct a vision of cultural continuity, others, like Ahmed Hâşim, approached national identity through a more symbolist and impressionist lens, emphasizing intuition and aesthetic experience.¹⁰ İsmail Hakkı

in the face of Western dominance and the pressures of modernization, see Şeyma Afacan, "Searching for the Soul in Shades of Grey: Modern Psychology's Spiritual Past in the Late Ottoman Empire," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 32 (2021): 13-14.

7 Uçman, "Dergâh", 172-174; Abdullah Uçman, "Dergiler Arasında: Dergâh, Hayat, Ma'lûmât ve Bilgi Mecmuaları," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 4 (2016): 519-532.

8 Cemal Melik Dıvarcı, "Müstear İsimleri ve Önde Gelen Yazarları ile Dergâh (1921-1923) Mecmuası," *Folklor Akademi Dergisi* 7, 1 (2024): 340-350.

9 For more information on how *Darülfünûn* functioned as an important educational arena for the transmission of Bergson's ideas, see Nazım İrem, "Undercurrent of European Modernity and the Foundations of Modern Turkish Conservatism: Bergsonism in Retrospect," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, 4 (2004): 79-112.

10 See Gökberk Yücel, "The Reflection of Romanticism in Dergâh Journal: Yahya Kemal's Discussions (1921-1923)," *Milliyetçilik Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, 2 (2022): 71-107; Yordanka Bibina, "Ahmed Hâşim and Symbolism," *Etudes Balkaniques*, 2 (1994): 59-72.

Baltacıoğlu, a reformist thinker and pedagogue, brought a more explicit engagement with cultural philosophy, arguing that Turkish national identity had to be grounded in both an appreciation of its past and an openness to intellectual evolution.¹¹ What united these figures was their rejection of the rigid rationalism and materialist determinism associated with the dominant sociological paradigm of the time.

The intellectual climate in which *Dergâh* operated was marked by a significant philosophical schism: on one side stood the Durkheimian positivists, led by Ziya Gökalp (d. 1924), who sought to construct a national identity through sociological principles, emphasizing the role of collective consciousness, scientific progress, and institutional modernization.¹² On the other side, a growing number of Turkish intellectuals—many associated with *Dergâh*—were drawn to the ideas of Henri Bergson (d. 1941), whose philosophy of intuitionism, creative evolution, and metaphysical realism offered an alternative framework for understanding national and cultural identity.¹³ Unlike the rigid, secularist nationalism advanced by Ziya Gökalp's (d. 1924) Durkheimian sociology, *Dergâh*'s intellectuals were deeply influenced by the Bergsonian perspective and sought to construct a national identity that was deeply

infused with mysticism, metaphysical realism, and cultural romanticism.

Bergson's philosophy, which had gained traction among European intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, presented a direct challenge to the deterministic models of positivist sociology.¹⁴ Central to his thought was the concept of *élan vital*—a dynamic life force that defied mechanistic explanations of human existence.¹⁵ For Bergson, intuition (*intelligence intuitive*) was a more authentic means of grasping reality than analytical reason, as it allowed for a deeper, more organic connection to time, memory, and consciousness. These ideas resonated deeply with Turkish intellectuals who sought to articulate a national consciousness that was not confined to rigid structuralist frameworks but was instead rooted in the fluid, evolving continuity of cultural and spiritual traditions.¹⁶

In the context of early 20th-century Turkey, Bergson's ideas became particularly appealing as a response to the prevailing scientism and secular modernization efforts that sought to sever ties with the Ottoman past.¹⁷ The *Dergâh* intellectuals approached Turkish cultural identity as something that could not be reduced to a set of sociological categories or institutional reforms; rather, it was an organic, lived experience shaped by historical memory, aesthetic sensibility, and spiritual depth. This Bergsonian influence allowed *Dergâh* to position itself as a counterpoint to

11 İsmail Güllü, "Durkheimci bir Sosyolog: İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu'nun Din ve Toplum Görüşleri," *Ekev Akademi Dergisi* 9, 62 (2015): 205-228.

12 M. Sair Özervarlı, "Reading Durkheim Through Ottoman Lenses: Interpretations of Customary Law, Religion and Society by the School of Gökalp," *Modern Intellectual History*, 14 (2017): 393-419; for critics against Gökalp and Durkheim in *Dergâh* see Efe Arık, "Ambiguous Plays of Light (Ziya): The Critics against Ziya Gökalp and Durkheim's Sociology throughout the National Struggle in Turkey and the Journal of *Dergâh*," *Turkish Journal of Sociology* 3, 28 (2014): 139-170.

13 Efe Arık, "Türk Milliyetçiliğinde Spiritüalist Yaklaşım: *Dergâh Dergisi* (1921-1923)," (PhD Thesis, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, 2011), 7.

14 Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 1-13.

15 Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, (New York: Dover Publications, 2010), 88.

16 Mustafa Aslan, "Competing Intellectual Currents within Modern Turkish Conservatism: The Bergsonian Connection," *DIYÂR* 2, 2 (2021): 232-253.

17 Nazım İrem, "Bergson and Politics: Ottoman-Turkish Encounters with Innovation," *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 16, 7 (2011): 873-882.

both the radical secularism of the emerging Republican ideology and the dogmatic traditionalism of religious orthodoxy. Instead of advocating for a wholesale rejection of the past or a blind embrace of modernity, the Journal's contributors sought to construct a nationalism that was rooted in cultural continuity, spiritual renewal, and creative evolution.

1. Occupation and Resistance: The Historical Context of *Dergâh*

The publication of *Dergâh* coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in Ottoman history. While the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923) was ongoing on multiple fronts across Anatolia, the Caucasus, and the Aegean; Istanbul, the imperial capital, remained under Allied occupation. The occupation transformed the city into a contested space of foreign domination, political fragmentation, and intellectual resistance.¹⁸ These years were not only pivotal for the military struggle to establish a new Turkish state but also critical for the ideological and cultural articulation of Turkish nationalism. In Istanbul, the position of the Sultan remained ambiguous, as the imperial administration, aligned with the Allied forces, condemned Mustafa Kemal Pasha (d. 1938) and the nationalist movement in Anatolia as adversaries of Islam.¹⁹ Following the full-scale occupation of Istanbul in March 1920, the Ottoman parliament was effectively incapacitated, operating under heavy Allied

restrictions. In response, Mustafa Kemal convened the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara, which soon emerged as the sole legitimate governing authority in the country.

The Ottoman Empire's sovereignty was increasingly dismantled under the terms of the Mudros Armistice (1918).²⁰ As the war drew to a close, Allied forces swiftly moved into Istanbul, marking the beginning of a prolonged occupation that would deepen societal rifts and redefine political allegiances. The first phase of the occupation, initiated in 1918, saw British, French, Italian, and Greek forces strategically securing key military and administrative points while allowing the Ottoman government to function under surveillance. However, by 1920, the occupation escalated into a full-fledged takeover of the imperial administration, marking the effective dissolution of Ottoman authority in its own capital.²¹ The arrival of Allied forces was a spectacle of military dominance, signaling the empire's submission to Western imperial powers.²² Within weeks of the Mudros Armistice, a formidable flotilla of 55 warships sailed through the Bosphorus, anchoring in full view of the city's residents.²³ This overwhelming show of force was followed by a systematic division of Istanbul into occupation zones: the Italians took control of Üsküdar, the French occupied the Old City and western suburbs, while the British secured Pera, Galata, and

18 Erickson, *The Turkish War of Independence*, 1-58; For a detailed bibliographical information on the period, Daniel-Joseph Macarthur-Seal and Gizem Tongo, *A Bibliography of Armistice-Era Istanbul, 1918-1923* (London: British Institute at Ankara, 2022).

19 Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 50; Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 86-128.

20 David Fromkin, *The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2009), 371-373.

21 Hakan Özoğlu, "Living Conditions of Ottoman Istanbul under Occupation at the End of World War I", *Osmanlı İstanbul'u III*, eds. Feridun Emecen and Ali Akıldız (İstanbul: 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), 365.

22 Bilge Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation: 1918-1923* (Leiden: BRILL, 1999), 2.

23 Ryan Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1908-1922 (The Greater War)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 249.

Şişli.²⁴ The once-unified imperial capital was now a fractured city, its streets patrolled by foreign soldiers enforcing the new order.

The occupation was not a passive military presence—it was a force of suppression that sought to dismantle nationalist resistance and curb political dissent. The Allied administration closely monitored press activity, imposed censorship, and orchestrated arrests of intellectuals and political figures who were suspected of supporting the nationalist movement in Anatolia. The occupation reached its most repressive phase in 1920 when Allied forces stormed the Ottoman parliament, arresting and exiling deputies, while some fled to Ankara to join Mustafa Kemal Pasha's resistance. The Ministry of War was seized and placed under British command, with General Shuttleworth assuming direct control. For the city's intellectuals, writers, and university circles, the occupation was both a direct threat and an ideological battleground. The fear of surveillance, imprisonment, or exile loomed over the literati of Istanbul, many of whom were affiliated with *Darülfünûn* (later Istanbul University). In his memoirs, İsmail Hakkı Sunata (d. 1988), a faculty member at *Darülfünûn*, captured the escalating violence and repression that intellectuals faced:

March 17, 1920. The British searches continue. The occupation of the Ministry of War is ongoing. Two squads of British soldiers patrol the streets from Beyazıt Square to Saraçhanebaşı. The ophthalmologist Esat Bey was killed for resisting the British. Mrs. Halide (Adıvar) has been arrested. They have detained all members of the National Education and Training Society. Hamdullah Suphi (Tanrıöver), Çürüksulu Mahmut Pasha, Müşir İzzet Pasha—all arrested. The number of those

imprisoned is estimated between 1,500 and 4,000.²⁵

The occupation thus transformed Istanbul into a city of paradoxes—on the one hand, a hub of foreign rule and suppression, and on the other, a space of intellectual defiance and cultural negotiation. It was within this volatile environment that *Dergâh* emerged, offering an alternative intellectual refuge where nationalism, tradition, and mysticism converged as a form of resistance against both colonial control and the erasure of Ottoman cultural heritage. The occupation profoundly disrupted the lives of Istanbul's inhabitants, deepening social divisions and sparking intense debates within intellectual circles. While many viewed the presence of the Allied forces as an unwelcome assertion of foreign control, some segments of the local and foreign Christian communities, particularly those who had historical grievances against Ottoman rule, initially welcomed the Entente powers. In certain districts with higher non-Muslim populations, Allied flags—especially those of Greece—were prominently displayed as symbols of shifting power dynamics.²⁶ Between 1918 and 1923, as Britain and its allies consolidated their hold over the city, they reinstated their consular courts and introduced new legal mechanisms, including mixed tribunals and court-martial.²⁷ These institutions were designed both to protect expatriate civilians and Allied soldiers and to suppress individuals or groups deemed a threat to the occupation regime.²⁸

One of the most profound transformations reflected in *Dergâh* was the shift in Istanbul's

24 Pınar Şenşık, "The Allied Occupation of Istanbul and the Construction of Turkish National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century", *Nationalities Papers* 46, 3 (2018): 501-513.

25 İsmail Hakkı Sunata, *İstanbul'da İşgal Yılları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), 79.

26 Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal, "Resurrecting Legal Extraterritoriality in Occupied Istanbul 1918-1923," *Middle Eastern Studies* 54, 5 (2018): 796-787.

27 Ibid. 769.

28 Ibid.

socio-cultural landscape under the Allied occupation. The city's demographic and cultural composition evolved dramatically as prolonged interaction with European imperial forces introduced new moral and social values. The physical presence of Allied soldiers—stationed in military barracks and encampments—reshaped urban life, leading to the militarization of public spaces where civilian and military domains increasingly overlapped.²⁹ According to Pınar Şenışık, Allied control altered patterns of time and space usage, influencing daily routines, leisure activities, and the city's nocturnal life. Istanbulites found themselves in a state of cultural 'in-betweenness,' oscillating between tradition and modernity, East and West, past and present.³⁰

During the Allied occupation of Istanbul (1918–1923), the presence of foreign forces was most visible within the historic walls of the city (*suriçi/intra muros*), particularly around key sites like Topkapı Palace, which held immense military, political, and cultural significance. The visibility of Allied troops and their activities in intramural Istanbul, especially in prominent areas such as Sultanahmet, Sirkeci, and Beyazıt, reinforced the sense of foreign dominance in the heart of the imperial capital, leading to heightened anxieties about cultural displacement and sovereignty among both Ottoman authorities in Istanbul and the nationalist movement in Ankara.³¹ As students and faculty members of *Darülfünûn* (Istanbul University), *Dergâh's*

intellectuals primarily lived and worked in the historical core of the city, where the Allied presence was highly visible and deeply felt. Unlike certain factions within Ottoman society that accepted or even welcomed foreign intervention, *Dergâh's* contributors rejected both the occupation and any proposed form of mandate rule. The experience of living under foreign control instilled in them a profound sense of displacement, which manifested as a longing for a lost past—one that they sought to reclaim through cultural and literary nationalism.³² This nostalgia, however, was not merely sentimental; it became a powerful intellectual force, shaping their vision of Turkish identity through an emphasis on tradition, history, and spiritual heritage.

Beyond these socio-cultural shifts, the occupation also fostered an intense period of political expression through print media.³³ The upheaval and the deep divisions within society created fertile ground for the proliferation of periodicals, particularly newspapers and literary journals. Censorship, negotiations with local authorities, and struggles against military restrictions shaped the press landscape, leading to the emergence of both pro- and anti-resistance publications. Between 1919 and 1923, an estimated 746 periodicals were published in Istanbul, 539 in Turkish, and 225 in other languages, reflecting the city's contested and vocal nature during this period.³⁴

29 Daniel-Joseph MacArthur Seal, "Intoxication and Imperialism: Nightlife in Occupied Istanbul, 1918–1923," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, (2017): 299–313.

30 Şenışık, "The Allied Occupation of Istanbul and the Construction of Turkish National Identity," 506.

31 Nilay Özlü, "Under the Shadow of Occupation: Cultural, Archaeological, and Military Activities at Topkapı Palace During the Armistice Period, 1918–1923," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 71 (2024): 83–113.

32 Özen Nergis Dolcerocca, *Comparative Modernism and Poetics of Time: Bergson, Tanpınar, Benjamin, and Walser* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 93–94.

33 Aysun Akan and Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Mütareke ile Milli Mücadele Basını: Direniş ile Teslimiyetin Sözcüleri ve "Mahşer" in 100 Atlısı* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019), 131.

34 Ibid.

2. Fragmented Loyalties: Intellectual Debates in Occupied Istanbul

The occupation of Istanbul (1918–1923) has a pivotal, yet often underexamined, place in the intellectual and cultural history of modern Turkey.³⁵ Rather than serving merely as a transitional moment between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic, this period crystallized many of the ideological tensions that would shape the Turkish nation-state. As Erdağ Gökner observes, Istanbul under occupation became “the unstable nexus of European colonialism and national modernity,” a city where conflicting imperial legacies and emergent nationalist visions collided.³⁶ Contrary to mainstream Turkish historiography, which tends to subsume this era under the categories of “Armistice Period” or “Emergence of Modern Turkey,” the occupation years constituted the very crucible in which Turkishness was being socially and culturally constructed.³⁷ Şenışık similarly emphasizes that national identity during this time was not a post-war creation but an evolving response to the humiliations of foreign control and the complex socio-political realignments of the moment.³⁸

For intellectuals in both Istanbul and Anatolia, the years of national independence were marked by confusion, disorientation, and a profound sense of crisis.³⁹ Orhan Koloğlu refers to this period as the “years of depression” for Ottoman intellectuals, capturing their existential dilemma in the face of imperial disintegration and foreign

occupation.⁴⁰ Two distinct factions had clearly crystallized: first were those who supported military resistance and aligned with the Kemalist nationalist movement.⁴¹ The second consisted of lobbyists who believed that Turkey’s best path forward was through an American or British mandate, arguing that foreign guidance could ensure stability and modernization.⁴² In this fragmented milieu, print culture flourished as an important medium for intellectuals to put forward their ideological stances: newspapers and periodicals proliferated, some fervently supporting the nationalist cause, while others—pejoratively labeled as “mütareke journalism”—sided with the occupiers or advocated for cautious diplomacy. Yet, the intellectual scene was far from binary.⁴³ Debates were multifaceted, branching into complex discussions over modernization, Westernization, nationalism, Ottomanism, Bolshevism, Anatolianism (*Anadoluculuk*), monarchism, and even proposals for foreign mandates.⁴⁴ Intellectual life was as fragmented as the political arena, which saw tensions between the Ankara and Istanbul governments, wars against Greece and Armenia, and the ever-looming shadow of the Allied occupation.

35 Erdağ Gökner, “Reading Occupied Istanbul: Turkish Subject Formation from Historical Trauma to Literary Trope”, *Culture, Theory and Critique* 55, 3 (2014): 321–341.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Şenışık, “The Allied Occupation of Istanbul and the Construction of Turkish National Identity”, 506.

39 Bilge Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation: 1918–1923* (Leiden: BRILL, 1999), 51.

40 Orhan Koloğlu, *Aydınlarımızın Bunalım Yılı-1918* (İstanbul: Boyut Yayın Grubu, 2000), 2.

41 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (d. 1974) invented the term Kemalism to represent the principles and ideals of the new republic’s economic, social, political, and cultural transformations on June 28, 1929. Kemalism broadly implied the six arrows: Republicanism, Populism, Nationalism, Secularism, Statism and Reformism. For more information, see Nazım İrem, “Turkish Conservative Modernism: Birth of a Nationalist Quest for Cultural Renewal”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 34 (2002): 87–112.

42 Criss, *Istanbul Under Allied Occupation*, 51.

43 For an extensive discussion on press during the occupation of Istanbul, Erol A. F. Baykal, *The Ottoman Press (1908–1923)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 222–227.

44 Mustafa Özdemir, “Mütareke Dönemindeki Siyasal Akımların Türk Basınına Yansımaları,” *ÇTTAD* 7, 16 (2008): 203–226.

With the Allied occupation of Istanbul, these latent doubts crystallized into overt disillusionment: the same powers once admired as models of progress now stood revealed as agents of subjugation and cultural erosion. This rupture intensified a growing skepticism among intellectuals towards the West as a model and increasingly discussed progress as a selective and critical process grounded in one's own traditions and historical consciousness.⁴⁵ The Turkish novel, in particular, became a powerful medium for exploring these dilemmas. The literary landscape became a central participant in nation-building. Fiction served as a mirror to society, offering reflections on the tensions between East and West, modernity and tradition, nationalism, and cosmopolitanism.

In a sharp tone, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's (d. 1974) *Sodom ve Gomore* (1928) frames the occupation as a moral and spiritual crisis, portraying the decay of societal values under foreign domination.⁴⁶ These literary works did not merely depict the times—they participated in shaping the contours of national consciousness, dramatizing the cultural dislocation that many Turks experienced. Halide Edip Adıvar's (d. 1964) *Ateşten Gömlek* (1922) offers a powerful narrative of national awakening through the lens of personal sacrifice and collective struggle.⁴⁷ Set against

the backdrop of Istanbul's occupation and the Anatolian resistance, the novel illustrates how the trauma of foreign domination galvanized a search for national dignity and moral renewal.⁴⁸ Complementing these portrayals, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's (d. 1962) *Sahnenin Dışındakiler* (1950) evokes the shifting social dynamics of the occupied city, depicting Istanbulites who, seduced by theaters and operas, increasingly felt alienated from their cultural roots.⁴⁹ Yet beneath this veneer of Westernized entertainment, Tanpınar reveals an undercurrent of resistance, a growing unease towards the occupiers, and a reassessment of the Istanbul government's legitimacy.

The intensifying debates on nationalism in occupied Istanbul were, in essence, the outcome of divergent positions and intellectual factions that had already emerged prominently within the vibrant intellectual climate following the Young Turk Revolution. In the wake of 1908, Ottoman intellectuals were preoccupied with a pressing and existential question: *How could the Ottoman state be sustained?*⁵⁰ This inquiry dominated the political and intellectual landscape of the late empire, giving rise to competing visions of modernization, governance, and collective identity. Erik Jan Zürcher identifies two central dilemmas that framed this debate: first, determining the appropriate path for

45 Alp Eren Topal and Einar Wigen, "Ottoman Conceptual History," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 14, 1 (2019): 93–114.

46 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Sodom ve Gomore* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1966); Gökner, "Reading Occupied Istanbul", 323.

47 Even within the nationalist camp, ideological fractures ran deep. Halide Edip Adıvar (d. 1964) was one of the most passionate and influential supporters of the independence movement. Despite her fervent advocacy for Turkish sovereignty, she was also a vocal proponent of an American mandate, believing it to be a pragmatic solution for ensuring Turkey's survival. For a recent study on Halide Edip Adıvar's political stance and identity through the analysis of her novels, Erdağ Gökner, "Turkish-Islamic Feminism Confronts National Patriarchy: Halide Edib's Divided Self," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 9, 2 (2013): 32–57. Also see, Hacı Murat Arabacı, "The Activities of Halide Edip Adıvar During the Preparator Stage of The National Struggle and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk," *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 19 (2007): 271–294.

48 Halide Edip Adıvar, *Ateşten Gömlek* (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2019).

49 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Sahnenin Dışındakiler* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2024).

50 Erik Jan Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists: Identity Politics 1908–1938," in *Ottoman Past and Today's Turkey*, ed. Şevket Pamuk, (London: BRILL, 2000), 152.

modernization, and second, identifying the binding force that could unify the state in its moment of crisis. Yusuf Akçura, in his seminal *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Types of Policy) of 1904, had already outlined the contours of this ideological contestation, positing Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism as three alternative solutions to the empire's fragmentation.⁵¹

Ottomanism, the ideological pillar of the 1876 Constitution, championed a pluralist imperial order grounded in legal equality and parliamentary representation for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.⁵² Islamism, by contrast, envisioned a pan-Islamic unity under the aegis of the sultan-caliph, rallying the empire's diverse Muslim communities around a shared religious identity. Turkism, the third current, increasingly gained ground in the late Ottoman period, particularly under the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).⁵³ While early iterations of Pan-Turkism aspired to unify Turkic peoples across the Ottoman and Russian empires, by the early twentieth century, as Zürcher observes, nationalist thought shifted inward, idealizing the Anatolian peasantry as the authentic repository of Turkish identity.⁵⁴

51 Originally published in Cairo, 1904: Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1995).

52 Ottomanism, a vision conceptualized as an effort to unify the multiethnic and multireligious Ottoman Empire under a unifying identity. There is a vast amount of literature that discusses the significance of the Ottomanist ideology within late Ottoman historiography. See Alp Eren Topal, "Ottomanism in History and Historiography: Fortunes of a Concept," in *Narrated Empires: Perceptions of Late Habsburg and Ottoman Multinationalism*, ed. by Johanna Chovanec and Olof Heilo (London: Palgrave, 2021), 77-98; Stefano Taglia, "Ottomanism Then and Now: Historical and Contemporary Meanings: An Introduction," *Die Welt des Islams*, 56 (2016): 279-289.

53 Sina Akşin, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), 243.

54 Zürcher, "Young Turks, Ottoman Muslims and Turkish Nationalists," 154.

Dergâh's contributors reflected this intellectual turn, reframing Turkishness through cultural and historical continuity rather than narrow ethnic or racial determinism.

This ideological realignment unfolded alongside a profound reimagining of space, community, and belonging. Behlül Özkan compellingly argues that the collapse of the Ottoman imperial system necessitated the reconstitution of collective identity around the concept of the *vatan*—the national homeland.⁵⁵ Replacing the transregional identity of the *ümme*, the *vatan* was not merely a geographic entity but a symbolic and political space imbued with narratives of sacrifice, historical destiny, and communal belonging. Özkan's observation that "space, which seems homogenous, which seems to be completely objective in its pure form ... is a social product"⁵⁶ captures the ideological work required to transform the Ottoman imperial landscape into a national homeland. For *Dergâh*, this spatial imagination manifested in an effort to anchor Turkish identity within the cultural and spiritual geographies of Istanbul and Anatolia, treating space itself as an active agent in the shaping of national consciousness.

Yet this intellectual reorientation was far from uniform or uncontested. Umut Uzer underscores the dynamic tension within Turkish nationalism, caught between an ethnic conception of nationhood and a cultural-religious identity deeply interwoven with Islam.⁵⁷ Rather than presenting these positions as mutually exclusive, Uzer highlights

55 Behlül Özkan, *From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 13-56.

56 Ibid. 8.

57 Umut Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism: Between Turkish Ethnicity and Islamic Identity* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2016), 17.

how intellectuals navigated between Ottoman pluralism and the homogenizing demands of nation-building. *Dergâh*'s writings exemplify this negotiation: its contributors sought to harmonize the spiritual unity of Islam with a distinctively Turkish cultural ethos. Earlier, Hakan Kayalı also mapped these ideological currents, particularly the complex entanglements of Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism within the Young Turk era.⁵⁸ These debates provided the backdrop against which the contributors of *Dergâh* operated, grappling with the loss of imperial cosmopolitanism while attempting to craft a cultural nationalism that did not entirely sever ties with its Islamic and Ottoman past. By engaging with these tensions, *Dergâh* advanced a vision of nationalism that transcended rigid ethnic definitions, embracing instead a synthesis of spiritual heritage and cultural authenticity.

The subsequent defeats of the Ottoman Empire and the traumas of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and World War I intensified the urgency of these nationalist debates. According to Peyami Safa (d. 1961), support for Turkish nationalism and the demand for independence surged in the wake of these catastrophes.⁵⁹ The CUP's increasing emphasis on Turkish identity, the prominence of Turkish language and history in print culture, and the galvanizing effect of the War of Independence (1919–1923) all coalesced to consolidate nationalist sentiment.⁶⁰ Vedat Gürbüz identifies the Balkan Wars as a critical inflection point, crystallizing nationalist consciousness and catalyzing a revival of intellectual engagement with Turkish iden-

tity.⁶¹ It was within this context that foundational texts such as Akçura's *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* were republished in 1911, and Ziya Gökalp (d. 1924) emerged as the principal architect of Turkish nationalist ideology.

Gökalp's theoretical contributions were pivotal in defining the parameters of Turkish nationalism.⁶² Rejecting racial and ethnic reductionism, he conceptualized the nation as a cultural and sociopolitical community unified by shared language, values, and historical consciousness.⁶³ Crucially, he distinguished national belonging from religious identity, arguing that the nation must be conceived independently of the Islamic *ümmet*. Gökalp's famous distinction between *hars* (culture) and *medeniyet* (civilization) further refined this vision. While culture formed the unique and authentic identity of the nation, civilization represented the universal achievements of humanity that Turkey could adopt selectively and pragmatically.⁶⁴ This synthesis of cultural nationalism and pragmatic modernism became a cornerstone of early Republican ideology.

Complementing this perspective, Uzer further emphasizes that Turkish nationalism emerged not in opposition to ethnicity *per se*, but as a response to the dual legacies of Ottomanism and Islam, culminating in a form of territorial nationalism that valorized *vatan* and *yurtseverlik* (patriotism).⁶⁵ Ahmet Ağaoğlu, writing in *Türk Yurdu* in 1912, poignantly captured

58 Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-16.

59 Peyami Safa, *Türk İnkılabına Bakışlar* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2016), 65.

60 Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism*, 17.

61 M. Vedat Gürbüz, "Genesis of Turkish Nationalism," *Belleken*, 67 (2003): 495-518.

62 Niyazi Berkes, "Ziya Gökalp: His Contribution to Turkish Nationalism," *Middle East Journal* 8 (1954): 375-390.

63 Ibid. 387.

64 Yücel Bulut, "A Thinker Stuck Between Social and Political: Ziya Gökalp and His Theory of Culture and Civilization," *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi* 36, 2 (2016): 79-110.

65 Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism*, 23.

this synthesis: “Islam is not only a religion for the Turk; it is the ethnic and national religion.”⁶⁶ As Nazım İrem has argued, the intellectuals of the Second Constitutional Period endeavored the Turkification of religion and language grounded in national ethics, integrating Islamic spiritual heritage into the framework of cultural nationalism.⁶⁷ Though reflective of only one strand within Turkish nationalist thought, this integration of cultural identity and spiritual heritage resonated strongly with *Dergâh*’s contributors. Throughout the journal’s writings, we find an intellectual pursuit of nationalism that eschews both rigid ethnic essentialism and narrow religious orthodoxy, favoring instead a model grounded in cultural authenticity and historical continuity. In this way, *Dergâh* articulated a vision of Turkish identity that harmonized spiritual depth with cultural resilience, offering an alternative pathway amid the fractured ideological landscape of the early twentieth century.

The intellectual debates that had developed in the late Ottoman public sphere—over the fate of the empire, the role of Islam, the meanings of homeland, and the contours of cultural identity—had already shaped the deeper currents of nationalist thought that would intensify under the Allied occupation of Istanbul. Far from dissipating with the occupation, the intellectual turmoil of the Young Turk era crystallized under the weight of foreign domination and internal upheaval, finding renewed expression in literature, journalism, and political discourse. *Dergâh* emerged from the heart of this vibrant yet fractured landscape as its contributors struggled with the unresolved cultural and philosophical dilemmas left in the wake

of imperial disintegration and the trauma of war. Yet, unlike the overtly political or state-centered articulations of nationalism that gained prominence in the same period, *Dergâh* advanced a more contemplative and spiritually infused vision—one that wove together historical memory, aesthetic sensibility, and cultural continuity to shape a distinctly Turkish identity. What *Dergâh* offered was both an intellectual response to the crisis of the nation and also an attempt to reimagine belonging and nationhood itself, grounded in the lived experience of time, tradition, and the enduring spirit of place.

3. Spiritual Nationalism in *Dergâh*: A Bergsonian Approach to Turkish Identity

The years during which *Dergâh* was published (1921–1923) were shaped by decades of intellectual debates about how to salvage, reform, or replace the declining Ottoman Empire. The journal emerged at a moment when various ideological movements—Ottomanism, Islamism, Turkism, and Westernization—had already competed for dominance. Rather than wholly aligning with any of these factions, *Dergâh* formulated a synthesis of nationalism that maintained deep cultural and spiritual ties to the past, rejecting both the strict secularism of Westernization and the rigid positivism of Gökâlp’s sociological nationalism.⁶⁸

The influence of Bergsonian thought provided *Dergâh* with a distinct framework for conceptualizing spiritual nationalism, setting it apart from the dominant nationalist discourses of the time. Unlike the rigidly positivist and secularist nationalism associated with Ziya Gökâlp and later Kemalist ideology, *Dergâh*’s contributors sought to infuse nationalism with a spiritual, cultural, and

66 Mehmet Kaan Çalen, “The Relationship between Islam and Nationalism in Ahmet Ağaoğlu,” *Journal of Nationalism Studies*, 2 (2020): 27–46.

67 İrem, “Turkish Conservative Modernism,” 97.

68 Arık, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinde “Spiritüalist” Yaklaşım*, 4.

metaphysical dimension, viewing national identity as an organic, evolving force rather than a construct defined solely by political and institutional frameworks. *Dergâh*'s contributors aimed to imbue politics, art, society, and philosophy with a spiritual outlook, forging a connection between what they described as the national spirit (*milli ruh*) and the key elements of nationalization, civilization, and religion. This perspective positioned *Dergâh* at a unique crossroads, embracing modernity and national consciousness while refusing to sever ties with the traditions, cultural heritage, and spiritual depth that had shaped Ottoman-Turkish identity for centuries.

Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, one of the leading ideologues of early Republican nationalism and a key figure in the development of Kemalist thought, recognized the intellectual and ideological significance of *Dergâh* in shaping nationalist discourse. Reflecting on its role, he stated:

The nationalist feeling and nationalist excitement reached its epitome in *Dergâh*; nationalist consciousness developed in this journal, and while these sentiments were being actualized in Anatolia [through the Turkish War of Independence], they reached their best theoretical version in *Dergâh*.⁶⁹

This statement underscores how *Dergâh* served as an intellectual incubator for Turkish nationalism at a time when the movement was being defined both in the battlefield and in the realm of ideas. While Turkish nationalism was often discussed in pragmatic or institutional terms—centered on military struggle, state-building, and language reforms—*Dergâh*'s contributors emphasized its philosophical, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions, drawing from both Bergsonian intuitionism

and Sufi-influenced mysticism to construct an alternative vision of national identity.

At the heart of *Dergâh*'s distinct nationalist vision was a rejection of positivist nationalism, which had been strongly advocated by Ziya Gökalp and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Gökalp's formulation of nationalism rested on the idea that modern Turkish identity should be defined through institutions, language reforms, and a strictly secularized collective consciousness.⁷⁰ By contrast, *Dergâh*'s contributors sought to preserve the organic, intuitive, and historically rooted aspects of national identity. Heavily influenced by Bergson's philosophy of intuition and creative evolution, they believed that nationalism was not a project that could be imposed by sociological models but rather a spiritual and cultural process that had to emerge from within the collective consciousness of the people.

This emphasis on historical continuity also distinguished *Dergâh* from other nationalist movements. While radical Turkism sought to define Turkishness in purely ethnic terms and Kemalism later attempted to sever historical ties with the Ottoman past, *Dergâh* envisioned national identity as something culturally inherited rather than politically engineered. The contributors saw Turkish nationalism as a movement that did not need to break from the empire's literary, artistic, and philosophical traditions but could instead reinterpret and revive them in a way that would ensure national survival. Literature, poetry, and historical memory played a central role in this formulation, as *Dergâh*'s intellectuals turned to the cultural aesthetics of the past to shape the national consciousness of the present.

A critical aspect of *Dergâh*'s nationalism was its spiritual and mystical dimension.

69 Metin Çınar, "Anadoluculuk Hareketinin Gelişimi ve Anadolucular ile Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Arasındaki İlişkiler (1943-1950)", (PhD Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2007), 57.

70 Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayıncılık, 2010), 19-28.

Unlike the rigidly secular stance that later came to define Turkish nationalism, *Dergâh* attempted to forge Islam and Ottoman-Sufi tradition with national identity, as many of its contributors were drawn to Sufism, seeing it as an essential part of Turkish cultural heritage.⁷¹ This inclination aligned closely with Bergson's emphasis on intuition and the non-rational aspects of human experience, which resonated with Sufi ideas of divine knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and the transcendent unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*). While the contributors did not advocate for an explicitly religious nationalism, they saw spirituality as a necessary counterbalance to materialist and bureaucratic definitions of identity.

Perhaps the most defining characteristic of *Dergâh*'s nationalism was its deep sense of nostalgia. While many nationalist movements of the time were forward-looking, focusing on creating a new political order, *Dergâh* was deeply invested in remembering, preserving, and mourning the past. The trauma of war, occupation, and the impending dissolution of the empire created an intellectual environment where nostalgia became a powerful undercurrent in nationalist discourse. For *Dergâh*, nationalism was not only about constructing the future but also about safeguarding the memory of a world that was disappearing. This perspective led the journal's contributors to craft a nationalism that was at once modern and deeply rooted in historical consciousness, cultural refinement, and spiritual longing.

3.1. In Search of Lost Time: Nostalgia, Tradition, and Longing

Nostalgia is a modern phenomenon shaped by the disjunction between past and present,

a longing for a home that no longer exists or perhaps never truly did. It emerges from an idealized past fixed in the present, revealing a temporal rupture that the nostalgic mind seeks to mend. At its core, nostalgia is not just about place but about time—an attempt to recover lost duration, to reinhabit a past that has been fragmented by the forward thrust of history. The term itself, derived from the Greek *nostos* (return home) and *algos* (pain), was first coined by Johannes Hofer in the seventeenth century, originally describing pathological homesickness.⁷² Yet, nostalgia extends beyond spatial longing—it underscores a temporal void, a yearning for continuity where time and place converge.⁷³ In a Bergsonian sense, nostalgia resists the spatialization of time, rejecting the idea that the past is a closed chapter, instead viewing it as a lived, evolving force that lingers in memory and material traces.⁷⁴ Objects and monuments become vessels of temporal experience, embodying the tension between permanence and decay. Even in ruin, they retain an affective charge, not as static relics but as sites of temporal retrieval, where the past is reactivated in the present. Bergson's

72 Constantine Sedikides, Tim Wildschut, Jamie Arndt and Clay Routledge, "Nostalgia: Past, Present, Future," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, 5 (2008): 304-307.

73 Dylan Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 54.

74 Bergson's philosophy of *durée* (duration) presents time as qualitative, fluid, and continuously unfolding, opposing the rigid, mechanistic segmentation of phenomena into discrete, measurable units. His rejection of the spatialization of thought—where reality is artificially divided, categorized, and controlled—leads to an understanding of culture as an ongoing, lived process rather than a static system of fixed meanings. Central to this is *élan vital*, the creative force that drives improvisation rather than rigid organization, emphasizing movement, transformation, and embodied experience over structural determinism. See Stephen Linstead and John Mullarkey, "Time, Creativity and Culture: Introducing Bergson," *Culture and Organization* 9, 1 (2003): 3-13.

71 Dilek Tığlıoğlu Kapıcı, "Şeyh ve Feylesof: Modern Misticizmin Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemindeki Yansımaları ve Rıza Tevfik," *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları*, 43 (2021): 95-113.

durée—time as qualitative, continuous, and indivisible—offers a framework for understanding nostalgia not as a mere longing for the past but as an intuitive engagement with memory, a movement through time rather than a fixation on it.

Ahmed Hâşim (d. 1933), one of the most influential Turkish poets of the early 20th century, offers in “The Muslim Clock” (*Müslüman Saati*) an elegy for a lost world—one in which time itself was once intimately woven into the rhythms of tradition, religion, and daily life.⁷⁵ One of the most prominent figures in Turkish symbolist and impressionist poetry, Hâşim was known for his evocative imagery and his focus on aesthetic experience over ideological concerns. His poetry, deeply influenced by French literary movements, emphasized personal perception, color, and atmosphere, often reflecting a dreamlike nostalgia.⁷⁶ In addition to his poetry, Hâşim contributed to literary criticism and cultural commentary. Hâşim’s article does not merely mourn the occupation of Istanbul in political terms; rather, he presents the imposition of foreign time as the deepest and most transformative aspect of colonial domination. For Hâşim, the Allied presence in Istanbul is not just a matter of foreign soldiers patrolling the streets; it is an existential rupture, a violent reordering of time and, by extension, of lived experience itself.

At the heart of Hâşim’s critique lies the idea that time is not a neutral, universal measure but a culturally specific experience shaped by religious and historical traditions. He opens

with a striking declaration: “By clock, we mean not the instrument that measures time, but time itself. In the past, we had our ‘hours’ and days according to our style of life, just as we had our own way of living, thinking, dressing, and a taste based on religion, race, and tradition.”⁷⁷

This passage immediately sets “The Muslim Clock” apart from other nationalist discourses of the period, which were primarily concerned with political sovereignty or territorial integrity. Hâşim’s nationalism is, instead, rooted in the concept of temporal sovereignty—the idea that a nation must experience time in accordance with its own traditions, rather than through the artificial imposition of foreign systems. The shift from Ottoman-Islamic timekeeping to the twenty-four-hour European clock becomes, in Hâşim’s analysis, an act of epistemic violence, severing Istanbulites from their past and forcing them into an alien temporality.⁷⁸ Hâşim’s reflections on time resonate deeply with Henri Bergson’s philosophy of time (duration), which distinguishes between lived time (fluid, qualitative, experienced subjectively) and mechanized time (quantitative, segmented, imposed by external systems).⁷⁹ Bergson argues that real time is not something that can be measured mechanically but is something that flows, shaped by human consciousness and perception. Hâşim’s lament for *Muslim time* versus *Western time* reflects this same concern: the loss of Ottoman-Islamic timekeeping is not just a technical change but a rupture in cultural consciousness itself.

For Hâşim, the imposition of European time on Istanbul is akin to the imposition

75 Ahmed Hâşim, “Müslüman Saati,” *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin Vol. 1*, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 121-123; Alim Gür, “Dergâh Mecmuası ve Ahmed Hâşim,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 3, 10 (2010): 316-331; M. Orhan Okay, “Ahmed Hâşim,” *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1989, II: 88-89.

76 Bibina, “Ahmed Hâşim and Symbolism,” 59-72.

77 Hâşim, “Müslüman Saati,” 316-317.

78 For the changing politics of time see Avner Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks Alla Turca: Time and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 151-152.

79 Mullarkey, “Time, Creativity and Culture: Introducing Bergson,” 3-13.

of Western thought, aesthetics, and governance—it restructures life on a fundamental level, divorcing people from the natural, intuitive experience of time that had shaped their daily existence for centuries.⁸⁰ This echoes Bergson’s critique of modernity’s reliance on rational, clock-based structures at the expense of organic, lived experience. Hâşim’s reflection on time reveals a deeper critique of Western-imposed temporal regimes, which he sees as fundamentally altering the lived experience of Istanbul’s inhabitants. He does not simply mourn the loss of Ottoman sovereignty but highlights the displacement of indigenous temporalities—the rhythms, structures, and perceptions of time that once shaped everyday life. As he laments: “The new measure, like an earthquake, destroyed all the barriers of the old day by sweeping up the landscapes of time around us, and by adding the night to the day, it brought into being a new day with little happiness and a lot of hardship, with a long blurry color.”⁸¹

Here, Hâşim describes the transition from Ottoman time to Western time as a violent rupture, akin to an earthquake—a sudden and irreversible transformation that has shattered the continuity of temporal experience. The phrase “adding the night to the day” underscores the erasure of natural, organic time—a temporal order once structured by prayer, celestial movements, and the rhythms of daily life—and its replacement with an artificial, continuous temporality dictated by Western rationalism, industry, and standardization.⁸²

80 For a study of the everyday experiences of Istanbulites through a Sufi lens, see Arzu Eylül Yalçınkaya, “Sufi Practices and Urban Spaces: Everyday Experiences of Sheikh Ken’ân Rifâi (1867–1950) in Late Ottoman Istanbul,” *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 12, 32 (2025): 21–47.

81 Hâşim, “Müslüman Saati,” 316.

82 Özen Nergis Dolcerocca, “Free Spirited Clocks: Modernism, Temporality and The Time Regulation Institute,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 20, 2 (2017): 177–197.

This critique is more than nostalgia for a bygone era; it is a profound observation of colonial modernity’s power to reorder not just space, but time itself. Western hegemony, Hâşim suggests, extends beyond military occupation and political domination to the restructuring of perception, knowledge, and experience, imposing a linear, mechanistic temporality that alienates individuals from their own historical and cultural sense of self. As a result, time is no longer something experienced intuitively, but something externally imposed, transforming life into a blur of indistinct days, devoid of clear boundaries between work, rest, and spiritual fulfillment. Hâşim’s lament, therefore, is not simply for the loss of an empire but for the loss of a world in which time was intimately connected to identity, meaning, and belonging.

Hâşim’s portrayal of the new order of time as an earthquake serves as a profound nationalist critique, one that extends beyond political rhetoric to question the ontological consequences of foreign occupation, a disorienting experience of time, disrupting the spiritual and cultural coherence of Turkish identity. His nostalgia is not just a sentimental longing but also a political assertion, positioning the lost Muslim day—one of clarity and harmony—against the “bitter and endless day of great civilizations,”⁸³ a phrase that encapsulates his view of modernity as an unnatural, imposed force that measures, structures, and ultimately disempowers. Hâşim’s rejection of Western temporality is, at its core, a call for national and cultural independence, one that seeks to reclaim the rhythms of daily life, the continuity of tradition, and the organic flow of time that modernity has fragmented. His concluding words—“Like those who strayed in the desert, we are now lost in time”⁸⁴—capture this existential rupture, evoking both

83 Hâşim, “Müslüman Saati,” 318.

84 Ibid.

Islamic themes of exodus and Bergson's idea of disrupted duration, where time no longer unfolds intuitively but is instead externally imposed and alien.⁸⁵

In a similar but less poetic tone, Falih Rıfkı Atay's (d. 1971) article "Disclaim to Be from the Same City" (*Hemşehrilikten Feragat*) is a powerful lament for what he perceives as the growing estrangement of Istanbul's Turkish population from their own cultural and historical identity. The occupation of the city, in his view, has not only resulted in political subjugation but has also eroded the social and cultural fabric of Istanbul, turning its Turkish inhabitants into passive spectators rather than active participants in their own homeland. He is particularly critical of how Istanbulites have adapted to this new reality, adopting foreign habits and lifestyles rather than asserting their own traditions.

Atay describes how Turks now walk through Beyoğlu—the westernized heart of the city—like embarrassed travelers, detached from their own heritage. He sees this as a fundamental crisis of identity, where Istanbulites have internalized a sense of alienation, gradually forgetting that the city is, at its core, Turkish. This detachment manifests not just in the political sphere but in daily habits, tastes, and aesthetic sensibilities. The once-familiar rhythms of the city have changed, replaced by a culture that no longer feels like home:

The most obvious proof of this is that the Turks have gradually forgotten how much of a Turkish city Istanbul is over the last two years. Even in the streets of Beyoğlu, there are Turks walking like embarrassed

travelers who lost their manners and lost their traditions. The Turks find all the beauties and flavors of their capitals *alaturqa*.⁸⁶

The most visible sign of this transformation, according to Atay, is the way Turks now regard their own traditions as outdated, labeling them *alaturka*, while embracing foreign lifestyles as the new standard. He is not merely lamenting a shift in preferences—he is diagnosing a deeper cultural rupture, where the loss of customs and traditions signals a weakening of national consciousness itself. The occupation is not only a political event; it is also, in Atay's eyes, a form of cultural colonization. He is particularly disturbed by the way Istanbul's public spaces—its streets, its cafés, its shores—have become sites of Western social norms, where foreign customs dictate how people should interact and move within the city. One of the most striking examples he provides is the increasing visibility of mixed-gender leisure in Florya and Maltepe, where Turks, Greeks, and Armenians are seen sunbathing and swimming together:

Russians and foreigners have invented a new Istanbul for two years. These guest foreigners swimming in Florya and frying their skins on the shores of Maltepe are now guides and examples to us, to those who have descended from generations in this city since the conquest.⁸⁷

85 In Islam, the Exodus (Arabic: *al-Khurūj*) refers to the departure of Prophet Musa (Moses) and the Israelites from the tyranny of Pharaoh, as recounted in the Qur'ān. See Babak Rahimi, "The Exodus in Islam: Citationality and Redemption," in *Israel's Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, eds. Thomas Levy, Thomas Schneider and William Propp (New York: Springer, 2015), 377-385.

86 Falih Rıfkı Atay, "Hemşehrilikten Feragat I," *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin*, Vol. 1, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 479-481; For discussions regarding the identity of Istanbul following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Ramazan Erhan Güllü, "Identity Disputes in Occupied Istanbul: Was Istanbul to Become a Turkish City or Remain a Turkish City," *Middle Eastern Studies* 60, 1 (2024): 65-79.

87 Falih Rıfkı Atay, "Hemşehrilikten Feragat I," 479. In the early 1920s, Istanbul saw a significant influx of Russian migrants fleeing the Russian Civil War (1918-1922). By the peak of this migration, the city hosted up to 190,000 Russian refugees, who quickly became a visible presence in its economic, social,

To Atay, this shift represents more than just a change in social habits; it symbolizes the extent to which Istanbulites are no longer in control of their own cultural spaces. The once-private, Ottoman-era engagement with nature—through gardens, *hamams*, and courtyards—has now been replaced by an imposed Western practice, turning the act of enjoying the city's landscape into something foreign. His frustration reaches a peak when he states that foreigners are now teaching Turks how to live in their own city: "They don't teach us the city, they make us forget."⁸⁸ This line encapsulates the depth of his anxiety—not that foreigners are present in Istanbul, but that Turks themselves have abandoned their own cultural agency.

He is not railing against Western influence *per se* but against the idea that Istanbulites are simply absorbing these new customs rather than shaping them into something uniquely their own. For Atay, the erosion of these traditions is not just a sign of cultural change but of national weakness. His critique, however, is not purely reactionary. It is not a call for isolationism or for rejecting all foreign influence. Rather, it is an appeal for cultural and national self-awareness, a call for Istanbul's Turkish population to reclaim their own city before it is transformed beyond recognition. His nationalism is not framed in military or expansionist terms but in cultural ones—his concern is not about territorial sovereignty but about aesthetic and historical continuity.

and cultural landscape. While many sought to leave for Europe due to harsh economic conditions, those with financial means established restaurants, cafés, clubs, and entertainment venues, leaving a lasting imprint on Istanbul's socio-cultural life. In addition to civilian refugees, organized Russian military units were also present in the city, further shaping the dynamics of this migratory wave. For more information: Yelena Lykova, "Russian Emigration to Turkey in the 1920's: A Case Study," *H. Ü İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 25 (2007): 332-335.

88 Atay, "Hemşehrilikten Feragat I," 480.

Atay's nationalism, therefore, is fundamentally different from the more aggressive, exclusionary forms of nationalism that were dominant in the early 20th century. His is a nationalism rooted in memory, tradition, and a poetic sense of belonging. When he nostalgically recalls a past where young people in Istanbul took pride in knowing and loving Turkish Istanbul—contrasting it with the new generation, which admires foreign travelers more than their own heritage: "At that time, there was a love of Istanbul among young people, a love of knowing and loving Turkish Istanbul. Today's generation knows behind the Russians, loves behind the French, and admires the reputation of Anglo-Saxon travelers."⁸⁹

He is thus articulating a vision of national identity that is deeply intertwined with cultural memory. His concern is not that Istanbulites are engaging with Western influences but that they are doing so without grounding themselves in their own history. This sense of loss is not merely sentimental; it is existential. The past, in Atay's view, was not just a different time—it was a different way of experiencing the world, one that was organic, intuitive, and uniquely Turkish. Now, under occupation, time itself has been disrupted, and Istanbulites find themselves caught in a city that no longer belongs to them. His nationalism is not about reclaiming political dominance but about *reviving a lost way of life*. Atay's reflections in *Dergâh* align closely with the Journal's broader intellectual project: the belief that nationalism should not be reduced to political or military action but should be rooted in cultural and spiritual depth. For Atay, the ultimate act of patriotism is not simply defending one's homeland in a military sense but ensuring that its traditions, language, and customs are preserved as living, evolving elements of identity. His

89 Ibid.

work represents *Dergâh*'s unique nationalist vision—one that is neither militant nor reactionary but one that sees cultural preservation as the foundation of national sovereignty.

3.2. Rethinking Nationalism: Aesthetic and Spiritual Patriotism in *Dergâh*

In his article “Beautiful Patriotism” (*Güzel Vatanperverlik*) Falih Rıfkı Atay (d. 1971) articulates a longing for a gentler, more refined form of nationalism, one that is neither aggressive nor performative but instead rooted in culture, literature, and spiritual depth.⁹⁰ Atay's critique emerges in response to the militant nationalist movements that had taken shape in the Balkans, ultimately leading to the disintegration of the Ottoman presence in the region. He expresses concern that the national sentiment of the Turkish people has been shaped by the legacy of violent revolutionaries from Rumelia, who, through their radical separatist movements, contributed to the empire's fragmentation.⁹¹ The memory of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) looms large in his reflections, as these conflicts had been instrumental in fomenting Turkish nationalism while simultaneously marking one of the most devastating losses in Ottoman history.⁹²

Atay presents a fundamental distinction between two forms of nationalism: one that

is aggressive, exclusionary, and rooted in external symbols, and another that is aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritually conscious. He is critical of those who reduce nationalism to mere gestures—waving flags, idolizing heroes, or attaching symbolic meaning to geographic landmarks—arguing that such expressions fail to cultivate a deeper, more enduring national consciousness. Instead, he champions poetry, music, and artistic heritage as the true mediums through which national identity can be nurtured. By emphasizing cultural production over political slogans, Atay aligns his vision of patriotism with *Dergâh*'s broader intellectual project: a nationalism that is cultivated through literature and the arts rather than through militarized fervor.

Atay's critique extends beyond Turkish nationalism to the Greek community in Istanbul, whom he reproaches for their overt and provocative displays of allegiance to the Allied occupation.⁹³ He observes that since the arrival of foreign forces, Greek nationalists have flooded the city with their flags, draping Istanbul in blue and white. His reaction must be understood within the broader context of 1918–1923, a time when certain segments of the Greek population welcomed the Allied presence, seeing it as a potential step toward the realization of *Megali Idea*, the dream of a Greater Greece that included ‘Constantinople’. While Atay critiques these nationalistic excesses, he does not advocate for an oppositional, retaliatory nationalism. Instead, he reflects on the arbitrary nature of national symbols, poetically stating:

More and more, red is the color that the Greeks detest, and blue is a color that the Turks abhor. Blue is the color of the sea, and red is the color of blood. How can we separate from these colors, both of which are in nature?⁹⁴

90 Falih Rıfkı Atay, “Güzel Vatanperverlik,” *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin*, Vol. 1, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 240–241.

91 M. Hakan Yavuz, “Warfare and Nationalism: The Balkan Wars as a Catalyst for Homogenization,” in *War&Nationalism: The Balkan Wars, 1912-1912 and Their Sociopolitical Implications*, eds. Hakan Yavuz and Isa Blumi (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013), 31; Atay, “Güzel Vatanperverlik,” 240.

92 Bilge Kaan Topçu, “Impacts of Balkan Wars on the Birth of Turkish Nationalism: Examples from Nazım Hikmet's Youthful Poems (1913-1930),” *Journal of Balkan Research Institute* 7, 2 (2018): 391–410.

93 Atay, “Güzel Vatanperverlik,” 241.

94 Ibid.

Here, Atay rejects the rigidity of nationalist binaries, pointing out the absurdity of defining identity through arbitrary symbols. His nationalism is not about opposition or exclusion but about cultural and spiritual depth, which he sees as the only viable alternative to the divisive nationalisms that fueled the Balkan Wars. Atay's vision of an elevated, intellectual form of nationalism is further evident in his assertion that true patriotism can only be cultivated by the educated elite of Istanbul, particularly those associated with *Darülfünûn* and, by extension, the contributors of *Dergâh*. He writes:

Wide, free, tasteful, and fuss-free patriotism; and as free as it is, as wide as such a tasteful nationalism—who can replace the old narrow, suffocating nationality and homeland air with this noble and windy air, which refreshes the hearts, other than someone from *Darülfünûn*?⁹⁵

Atay's use of spatial metaphors here—contrasting the “narrow and suffocating” nationalism of the past with a “wide and noble air”—is revealing. He suggests that nationalism should not be rigid, confined, or exclusionary, but rather expansive and rejuvenating, capable of breathing new life into the national spirit. This conceptualization of nationalism is deeply aligned with Bergsonian thought, which emphasizes fluidity, intuition, and organic evolution over rigid, mechanistic structures.

However, there is also a class dimension to Atay's argument. By identifying the intellectuals of Istanbul as the vanguards of this refined nationalism, he implicitly distances *Dergâh*'s vision from the more populist or grassroots iterations of nationalism emerging elsewhere in Anatolia. The Journal's contributors were mostly urban, educated elites who did not have direct ties to rural

communities and whose world was largely centered around the cultural and intellectual milieu of Istanbul. While *Dergâh* positioned itself as an alternative to radical nationalism, its conception of Turkish identity remained intellectually exclusive, emphasizing aesthetic cultivation over mass mobilization.

Atay's article is emblematic of *Dergâh*'s broader attempt to redefine nationalism as a cultural and spiritual project rather than a militaristic or purely political movement. His rejection of performative nationalism, his critique of binary oppositions, and his insistence on literature and the arts as the foundation of national identity all align with *Dergâh*'s commitment to a refined Bergsonian vision of Turkish nationalism. Yet, the article also reflects the inherent contradictions in *Dergâh*'s nationalism—while advocating for a gentler, more inclusive national identity, Atay's emphasis on the role of the Istanbul intellectual elite suggests a limited accessibility to this vision. Nevertheless, his work remains an essential articulation of how *Dergâh* sought to carve out a new, distinctly Turkish nationalism, one that was rooted in history, culture, and aesthetics rather than in aggression and exclusion.

3.3. Constructing a National Consciousness through Literary and Artistic Expression

One of the central intellectual projects of *Dergâh* was the nationalization of cultural elements that had been adopted from the West, a process that extended beyond political and social realms into the fields of art, literature, and music. For the contributors of *Dergâh*, national identity was not merely a matter of political sovereignty but was deeply tied to the aesthetic and creative expressions of the Turkish people. Artistic production, therefore, was not seen as a passive reflec-

95 Ibid.

tion of cultural identity but as an active site of national construction, one that required conscious engagement with tradition, reinterpretation, and creative renewal. This vision was deeply Bergsonian in the sense that it rejected rigid, mechanistic imitation in favor of organic, evolving expressions of cultural identity.

The *Dergâh* intellectuals were critical of unquestioned imitation, particularly in the realm of visual arts. Cavide Hayri Hanım (d. ?), an Ottoman-Turkish composer and vocalist, in her correspondence with Çallı İbrahim (d. 1960)—one of the most renowned painters of the late Ottoman and early Republican period—records a striking critique of Turkish artists' reliance on Western artistic traditions.⁹⁶ İbrahim, himself trained in Paris and well-versed in European academic painting, expresses his disappointment with an exhibition they attended, stating that Turkish painters were working in a way that was entirely adopted from the West, without adding anything of their own: "Only when we take our subjects from our own land, our monuments, our life, and our sorrows, do we truly create art."⁹⁷ His frustration was not with the use of Western techniques—after all, İbrahim had been part of the 1914 Generation, a group of Turkish artists sent to Europe to master oil painting and Impressionist methods—but with the lack of creative synthesis. He lamented that Turkish artists, rather than engaging in a dialogue with their own traditions, were merely replicating European styles without

embedding their work in the historical and cultural memory of their own land.

For Çallı İbrahim, art was more than a mere adaptation of foreign techniques; it was a means of expressing a people's consciousness, lived experience, and deep connection to history. His concerns aligned closely with *Dergâh*'s intellectual project—if Turkish art was to possess a distinct identity, it could not remain a passive reflection of European aesthetics. This perspective is particularly evident in his *Mevleviler Serisi* (1920), where he closely observed the Mevlevi and dervish lodges, approaching them not as exoticized Orientalist motifs but as integral subjects within Turkish artistic expression.⁹⁸ By incorporating their rituals, presence, and spiritual depth into his work, Çallı reclaimed Mevlevi imagery from Western stereotyping, grounding it instead in the cultural and artistic lexicon of Turkey. His vision paralleled *Dergâh*'s broader mission—to construct a national identity that was not imposed from above but emerged organically from Anatolia's historical, cultural, and mystical traditions. Just as the Journal's literary and philosophical contributors sought to establish a spiritually and historically rooted nationalism, Çallı's artistic approach sought to infuse Turkish painting with an authentic aesthetic language, shaped by local experience rather than external artistic conventions.

This same concern extended to literature and music, both of which were key arenas for the nationalization of artistic expression. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (d. 1958), one of the founders

96 Cavide Hayri Hanım, "Ressamlar Diyorlar Ki," *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin*, Vol. 1, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 493-498; Şemseddin Dağlı, "Türk Resminde Bir Sanat Dehası: İbrahim Çallı," *Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi* 27, 47 (2021): 489-497. Also, see Sefa Yüce, "Dergâh Mecmua'sında Resim Teması," *Söylem: Filoloji Dergisi* 5, 2 (2020): 395-404.

97 Cavide Hayri Hanım, "Ressamlar Diyorlar Ki," 493.

98 İlkay Canan Okkalı and İlona Baytar, "Gelenekten Beslenen Modernlik; İbrahim Çallı ve Mevleviler Serisi," *Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi* 26, 44 (2020): 126-137; For the impact of *Mevlevîyye* on Turkish artistic tradition see Ünal Bastaban and Savaş Sarıhan, "The Effects of Mevlana's Philosophy on Aesthetics and Art: Innovative Interpretations Inspired by the Past," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Art and Education*, 5 (2024): 39-50.

of *Dergâh* and a towering figure in Turkish poetry, wrote extensively on the values that Turkish society had lost and the necessity of reconnecting with tradition to create a national aesthetic.⁹⁹ A leading Turkish poet, writer, and intellectual, Beyatlı was instrumental in shaping modern Turkish poetry through his synthesis of classical Ottoman and modern poetic sensibilities.¹⁰⁰ He was deeply concerned with cultural continuity and the aesthetic foundations of nationalism, advocating for the preservation of Ottoman literary traditions while integrating them into a refined, modern Turkish expression. In his article “Sade Bir Görüş,” he argues that literature and art, when entirely borrowed from a foreign source without adaptation, become lifeless, rootless, and ultimately alien to the society that produces them.

Kemal’s assertion that art must be rooted in national consciousness was not merely an aesthetic preference—it was a cultural philosophy. His poetic project, much like *Dergâh*’s broader intellectual mission, was one of reconstruction, of reinterpreting the past in order to shape the future. He was deeply engaged in the idea that a nation’s artistic production must be connected to its historical and spiritual traditions, lest it become a shallow mimicry of foreign trends. This was not a rejection of modernization but rather a Bergsonian view of cultural evolution, where the past was not discarded but reintegrated into an organic, living present.

Kemal’s insistence on grounding Turkish literature and music in native traditions aligned with the larger debate on Westernization in the arts that was taking place in Istanbul’s

intellectual circles during this period. The question of how to engage with Western modernity while maintaining a distinct national identity was not unique to *Dergâh*—it was a central issue in literary and artistic movements throughout the late Ottoman and early Republican era.¹⁰¹ However, what set *Dergâh* apart was its insistence that nationalism was not just a political movement but a cultural and philosophical one. National identity, in their view, was something that had to be continuously cultivated through literature, art, and music, rather than something that could be dictated through laws or political rhetoric alone.

Yahya Kemal’s vision of language was deeply intertwined with his understanding of national identity and artistic expression. For him, language was not merely a tool of communication but the lifeblood of a civilization, the repository of its cultural memory, and the vessel through which its aesthetic and intellectual heritage was transmitted. His reflections in *Dergâh* were part of a broader effort to rescue Turkish poetry and literature from what he saw as decay, fragmentation, and the disorienting effects of cultural rupture. Rather than embracing the revolutionary linguistic reforms that sought to sever ties with Ottoman Turkish, he believed in a gradual evolution of language, one that preserved historical depth while allowing for renewal. His stance reflected a fundamentally Bergsonian approach to cultural continuity, in which the past was not discarded but carried forward in an organic, intuitive manner. In his article “Sade Bir Görüş,” Yahya Kemal presents a striking metaphor for the decline of Turkish poetry and language, likening it to the slow decomposition of a corpse:

99 Mesut Koçak, “Yahya Kemal Estetiğinin Sınırları ya da Alternatif Modernlik: Dergâh Mecmuası Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme,” *Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları*, 27 (2023): 291-17.

100 Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Yahya Kemal: Eve Dönen Adam* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 1996), 72.

101 Orhan Koçak, “‘Westernisation against the West’: Cultural Politics in the Early Turkish Republic,” in *Turkey’s Engagement with Modernity*, eds. Celia Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robins (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 305-322.

Just as a corpse gradually fades, decays, and disintegrates piece by piece until only a skeletal frame remains, so too did Turkish poetry: first, its soul was drained, then slowly its language rotted, its meter was distorted, its harmony became convoluted. In the end, only a dry skeleton remained. For years, even the most skilled artists have been unable to revive this skeleton. This is the primary hallmark of periods of decline: when literature dies, lexicography, meter, syntax, and grammar obsessions spread everywhere; literary theories multiply; novelty becomes an addiction, and as poetry itself perishes, thousands of poets emerge—just like how a corpse, once a living body when it had a soul, turns into a swarm of worms after it decays.¹⁰²

This passage encapsulates Yahya Kemal's profound sense of loss, cultural mourning, and frustration with modernist literary movements that, in his view, had abandoned the organic soul of Turkish poetry in favor of artificial innovations. His critique is directed at the disruption of continuity, a rupture that resulted in the loss of poetic harmony (*âhenk*), linguistic beauty, and the rich rhythmic structures (*vezin*) that had once defined Ottoman-Turkish literature. Instead of an intuitive evolution of poetic language, he observed a process of disintegration, where poets were more concerned with theoretical debates on language reform than with the essence of poetry itself.

Yahya Kemal's reflections align closely with *Dergâh*'s broader intellectual project, which sought to reclaim Turkish literature, music, and art as essential components of national consciousness. He saw language as a living entity, one that carried the soul of a people,

102 Yahya Kemal, "Sade Bir Görüş," *Dergâh: Giriş-Çeviriyazı-Dizin*, Vol. 1, eds. Arslan Tekin and Ahmet Zeki İzgöer (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 55-59.

and he believed that a true national literature could not be built on a rejection of tradition, but on its careful reinterpretation. His critique of literary modernism was not simply an aesthetic one; it was a deeply philosophical concern about memory, heritage, and the integrity of cultural transmission.

At its core, Yahya Kemal's vision of language was Bergsonian in nature—he saw it as something that should evolve intuitively, rather than being forcefully restructured through abrupt breaks and mechanistic reforms. Just as Bergson argued that time and consciousness could not be artificially segmented into rational units, Yahya Kemal believed that language could not be revitalized by sheer theoretical innovation alone. He viewed poetry as an organic manifestation of national consciousness, and if poetry were to be revived, it had to come from a return to intuitive, historical rhythms, not through abstract experimentation divorced from the past.¹⁰³

This concern with historical continuity and linguistic beauty was also reflected in his broader approach to nationalism. Yahya Kemal was not interested in a reactionary return to the past but in a thoughtful synthesis of past and present.¹⁰⁴ His ideal vision of Turkish literature was one that honored the depth and richness of Ottoman literary traditions while embracing a refined, modern Turkish expression. This approach was radically different from the purist linguistic nationalism that sought to purge Turkish of its Arabic and Persian influences; instead, he advocated for a harmonized evolution, where the essence of the past was preserved, even as language adapted to the needs of a new era.¹⁰⁵

103 Orhan Koçak, "Our Master, the Novice: On the Catastrophic Births of Modern Turkish Poetry," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, 2 (2003): 567-598.

104 Ayvazoğlu, *Yahya Kemal*, 72.

105 For a comprehensive study exploring the stages and historical roots of language reform and simpli-

Yahya Kemal's reflections on language and poetry were deeply intertwined with *Dergâh*'s mission to shape Turkish nationalism through artistic and intellectual refinement. He believed that a nation's cultural identity could not thrive on fragmentation, imitation, or enforced modernization; instead, it required a coherent, living continuity where language, literature, and artistic expression seamlessly connect the past to the present, fostering an evolving national consciousness. His critique of poetry, using the metaphor of a decaying corpse, served as a caution against severing ties with linguistic and artistic heritage, emphasizing that genuine artistic expression must originate from within rather than being externally imposed. This perspective resonated with *Dergâh*'s spiritual nationalism, which viewed art as an organic manifestation of a people's collective memory, history, and spirit. In this context, *Dergâh*'s intellectual endeavor stood as a cultural counterpoint to the emerging state-driven nationalism of the post-Ottoman era. While state institutions sought to define Turkish identity through language reforms, historical reinterpretations, and educational policies, *Dergâh* approached nationalism as a philosophical and artistic pursuit, advocating for a profound engagement with the past and resurrection of cultural authenticity rooted in centuries-old cultural and religious values rather than a complete rupture from it.¹⁰⁶ Emphasizing artistic expression as a means to construct national consciousness was not merely a cultural preference but a political stance, rejecting the notion that moderniza-

tion necessitated erasing history. Instead, it declared that authentic national identity arises from a conscious reconciliation of past and present.

This was an inherently Bergsonian vision of cultural identity—one that saw national consciousness as something evolving through intuition, memory, and creative expression, rather than something that could be imposed through rigid ideological frameworks.¹⁰⁷ By positioning literature, painting, and music as central to the formation of Turkish nationalism, *Dergâh*'s contributors were making a profound argument: that a nation is not simply defined by political borders or military victories but by the continuity of its artistic and cultural expression. This was a nationalism of aesthetics, of feeling, of spirit—a vision that set *Dergâh* apart from many of its contemporaries and remains one of its most significant contributions to the intellectual history of modern Turkey.

Conclusion

The intellectual vision of *Dergâh* was grounded in a distinct form of spiritual nationalism—an understanding of national identity that transcended the boundaries of political sovereignty to embrace cultural continuity, historical depth, and aesthetic sensibility. At a moment when Turkish nationalism was being shaped by competing ideologies—ranging from ethnocentric essentialism to positivist modernization—*Dergâh* offered a distinct alternative. It proposed a vision that merged historical memory with intuition, and artistic creativity with cultural rootedness. The nationalism articulated in its pages was not militant or exclusionary, but introspective, fluid, and deeply connected to the spiritual and intellectual traditions of Ottoman and Anatolian life. For the contributors of *Dergâh*,

fiction discussion in the late Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic, Ağâh Sırrı Levend, *Türk Dilinde Gelişme ve Sadeleşme Evreleri* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1972), 178-263.

106 For discussions surrounding language reform and literary landscape, Jale Parla, "The Wounded Tongue: Turkey's Language Reform and the Canonicity of the Novel," *Modern Language Association* 23, 1 (2008): 27-40.

107 İrem, "Turkish Conservative Modernism," 87-112.

a nation could not be sustained by political institutions and territorial boundaries alone. It required the cultivation of a living cultural tradition—expressed through language, literature, and the arts—that carried the moral and imaginative fabric of a people across time. In rejecting both mechanical Westernization and nostalgic traditionalism, *Dergâh* envisioned a dynamic continuity between past and present. The past was neither a relic to be preserved in amber nor a burden to be discarded in the name of progress; it was a generative force—organic, evolving, and essential to the shaping of modern Turkish identity.

Underlying this project was a profound anxiety over cultural alienation. The experience of occupation, rapid social transformation, and accelerated Westernization created a sense of temporal dislocation and the erosion of traditional rhythms. In response, *Dergâh*'s contributors turned to language and literature as key vessels for restoring a sense of national belonging. Language, they believed, was not a mere instrument of communication but the spiritual embodiment of a civilization's soul. The fragmentation of Turkish poetry and the decline of literary coherence were seen as symptoms of a deeper cultural rupture—one that could only be healed through a conscious return to the aesthetic and philosophical sensibilities embedded in Ottoman and Anatolian traditions. Artistic expression was equally central to this vision. The Journal's contributors criticized the passive imitation of Western forms, not for their techniques, but for their failure to resonate with the historical and spiritual texture of Turkish life. True national art, they argued, must be born of an intuitive engagement with one's own tradition—an insight deeply informed by Henri Bergson's philosophy of *durée* and creative evolution. Art, like identity, was not static but a living process shaped by memory, intuition, and time.

In this way, *Dergâh* articulated a holistic model of nationalism—one rooted not in state policy but in cultural sovereignty. It argued that true independence required more than political autonomy; it demanded the power to live by one's own rhythms, to speak in one's own language, and to create from one's own traditions. Through its synthesis of spiritual heritage and artistic expression, *Dergâh* offered a compelling vision of Turkish identity that sought not to erase the past, but to carry it forward—transformed, yet intact—into the uncertain landscape of the modern world.

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XVI. Yüzyıl Dinî, Ahlâkî, Tasavvufî Mesnevîlerinde Köpek ve Köpek Metaforu

Dog and Dog Metaphor in XVIth Century Religious, Moral, and Sufi Mathnawîs

Esin (TÜMER) KURNAZ*

Özet

Klasik Türk edebiyatında hayvanlar pek çok araştırmaya konu olmuş; hayvanlar arasında köpek ise halk arasındaki inanışlardan başlamak üzere mitlere, destanlara, şiirlere kadar geniş bir alanda işlenmiştir. Köpeği diğer hayvanlardan ayıran temel özelliklerin “doğasındaki duygusallık ve öğrenme kabiliyeti” olduğu kabulü ile “insanı insan yapan nitelikler ile köpek” arasında sıklıkla ilişki kurulmasının olağan olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışmada XVI. yüzyılda kaleme alınan dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîler içinde köpek ve köpek metaforuna yer veren hikâyeler tespit ve tasnif edilerek, sembolik olarak ifade ettiği konulara dikkat çekilmeye çalışılmıştır. İncelenen eserler şöyledir: *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Behiştî, Ahmed Sinân Çelebi); *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Üsküplü Atâ); *Pend-nâme* ve *İbret-nâme* (Güvâhî); *Rıdvâniyye* ve *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Ahmed-i Rıdvân); *Âb-ı Hayât* (Hızrî); *Gülşen-i Ebrâr* ve *Ma’den-i Esrâr* (Münîrî); *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt* (Zaîfî); *Gül-i Sad-Berg* (Bursalı Rahmî); *Heşt Behişt* (Behiştî, Vizeli Ramazan); *Gencine-i Râz*, *Kitâb-ı Usûl* ve *Gülşen-i Envâr* (Taşlıcalı Yahyâ); *Nakş-ı Hayâl* (Âzerî İbrâhim Çelebi); *Câmiu’n-Nesâyih* (Hüseyin Ahmed-i Sirozî); *Riyazü’l-Cinân* ve *Cilâü’l-Kulûb* (Cinânî); *İbret-nümâ*, *Heşt Bihîşt* ve *Mir’âtü’l-Ahlâk* (Şemseddîn-i Sivasî); *Riyazü’s-Sâlikîn* ve *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî); *İsimsiz Mesnevi* [*Netice-i Sülûk*] (Cemâlî). Tespit edilen hikâyeler, ilgili mesnevîlerdeki beyit yerleri ile verilmiş olup hikâyelerde üzerinde durulan konular “İnsanı Helâke ve Kurtuluşa Götüren Konular” şeklinde ikili bir tasnif çerçevesinde özetlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuç bölümü, köpek/köpek metaforuna yer veren şairler/eserler ve işaret edilen kavramları özetlemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: XVI. yüzyıl, Türk Edebiyatı, mesnevî, hikâye, köpek, sembol, nefis

* **ORCID:** 0000-0002-9212-9842. Dr. (PhD2), Üsküdar Üniversitesi, İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliği,
E-mail: tumeresin@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Animals have been the subject of many studies in Classical Turkish literature; among them, the dog has been widely featured ranging from folk beliefs to myths, epics, and poems. The main characteristics distinguish dogs from other animals, that is “the sensitivity in their nature and their learning capability,” often lead to the common perception that they possess qualities resembling to those observed in human beings. In this study, the stories that include dog and dog metaphor in religious, moral and sufi *mathnawîs* written in the XVIth century were identified and classified, in order to draw attention to the issues which are symbolically expressed. The following works included in the study are as follows: *Mahzenü'l-Esrâr* [*Makhzan al-asrâr*] by Behiştî, Ahmed Sinân Çelebi; *Tuhfetü'l-Uşşâk* [*Tuhfat al-'ushshâq*] by Üsküplü Atâ; *Pend-nâme* [*Pand-nâma*] and *İbret-nâme* [*İbrat-nâma*] by Güvâhî; *Rıdvâniyye* [*Riḍwāniyya*] and *Mahzenü'l-Esrâr* [*Makhzan al-asrâr*] by Ahmed-i Rıdvân; *Âb-ı Hayât* [*Âb-e Ḥayât*] by Hızrî; *Gülşen-i Ebrâr ve Ma'den-i Esrâr* [*Gulshan al-abrâr and Ma'dan al-asrâr*] by Münîrî; *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt* [*Kitâb-e Bâgh-e Bahashî*] by Zaîfî; *Gül-i Sad-Berg* [*Gol-e Şad-Barg*] by Bursalı Rahmî; *Heşt Behişt* [*Hasht Bahashî*] by Behiştî, Vizeli Ramazan; *Gencîne-i Râz* [*Ganjîna-ye Râz*] and *Kitâb-ı Usûl* [*Kitâb al-uşûl*] and *Gülşen-i Envâr* [*Gulshan-i Anwâr*] by Taşlıcalı Yahyâ; *Nakş-ı Hayâl* [*Naqsh-e Khayâl*] by Âzerî İbrâhim Çelebi; *Câmiu'n-Nesâyih* [*Jâmi' al-naşâ'ih*] by Hüseyin Ahmed-i Sirozî; *Riyazü'l-Cinân* [*Riyâz al-jinân*] and *Cilâü'l-Kulûb* [*Jilâ' al-qulûb*] by Cinânî; *İbret-nümâ* [*İbrat-numâ*] and *Heşt Bihîşt* [*Hasht Bahashî*] and *Mir'âtü'l-Ahlâk* [*Mir'ât al-akhlâq*] by Şemseddîn-i Sivasî; *Riyazü's-Sâlikîn* [*Riyâz al-sâlikîn*], ve *Tuhfetü'l-Uşşâk* [*Tuhfat al-'ushshâq*] by Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî; *İsimsiz Mesnevi*, *Netîce-i Sülûk*, [*An Anonymous Mathnawî*, *Netîce-i Sülûk*] by Cemâlî. The stories identified in the *mathnawîs* are categorized in accordance with the respective locations of their occurrence. The themes of the stories are summarized and studied within a context of two categories: Themes that lead human beings to destruction and/or to salvation. The conclusion part of the study encapsulates the poets and their works that include dog and dog metaphor and the concepts which were pointed out through this study.

Keywords: XVIth century, Turkish literature, *mathnawî*, story, dog, symbol, *nafs* (self)

Giriş

Dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîler içindeki hikâyeler bir yandan Kur'ân ve sünnet kaynaklı kıssa ve rivayetlere yer verirken diğer yandan tasavvuf sahasına dair kavramları açan sûfî şahsiyetlerin izlerini taşır. Hikâyeler aracılığı ile aktarılan ahlâkî değerler Kur'ân ve hadis temeli üzerine inşa edilirken, metodolojik bir aktarım aracı olarak hikâyelerin tercih edilmesi de şairlerin aynı kaynaktan beslendiklerine işaret eder.

Kur'ân'da kutsal diyebileceğimiz nitelik göstermemekle birlikte “*Kelb*” (köpek), Kehf Sûresi'nde (Kehf 18/18 ve 22) insana dost, hizmet eden bir yardımcı olarak olumlu; A'râf Sûresi'nde (A'râf 7/175-176) ise Allah'ın emirlerine karşı gelenlerin hallerine örnek

olarak verilirken olumsuz bir referans içinde geçer.¹ Ayrıca Mâide Sûresi'nde (Mâide 5/4)

1 Ashâbu'l-Kehf kıssası içinde mağarada uyuyanları koruyanlar arasında geçen köpek, mağaradakiler ile dost gözükmetedir:

Uykuda oldukları halde sen onları uyanık sanırdın. Onları sağa sola çeviriyorduk. Köpekleri de mağaranın girişinde ön ayaklarını uzatmış yatmaktaydı. Eğer o insanları görseydin dönüp kaçardın ve görüklerin yüzünden içini korku kaplardı. (Kehf 18/18).

(Sonra gelenler) bilmedikleri konuda karanlığa taşatar gibi tahminler yürüterek, “Onlar üç kişidir; dördüncüleri de köpekleridir” diyecekler; “Beş kişidir, altıncıları köpekleridir” diyecekler. “Onlar yedi kişidir, sekizincisi köpekleridir” diyecekler. De ki: “Onların sayısını rabbim daha iyi bilir. Onlar hakkında bilgisi olan çok azdır. Artık onlar hakkında gerçeği açıklama dışında tartışmaya girme ve kim-seden de onlarla ilgili bilgi isteme!” (Kehf 18/22).

Allah'ın emirlerine karşı gelenlerin durumunu tasvir için verilen örnek ise şöyledir:

av hayvanlarının ve onların yakaladıkları avların helal olması bahsinde anılır.² Hadis-i şerifler aracılığı ile aktarılanlara bakıldığında ise eğitilmiş köpekler (avcı, bekçi gibi) kabul görürken, evde gereksiz yere beslenen köpekler olumsuz değerlendirilir.³

Kendisine kanıtlarımızı verdiğimiz, fakat onları bir kenara atan, bu yüzden şeytanın peşine taktığı, nihayet azgınlardan olan kişinin haberini onlara anlat. Eğer biz isteseydik o kişiyi delillerimizle yüceltirdik. Fakat o dünyaya saplanıp kaldı, hevesinin peşine düştü. İşte böylesinin hali, kovsan da bıraksan da hep dilini çıkarıp soluyan köpeğin haline benzer. Ayetlerimizi yalan sayan topluluğun durumu işte böyledir. Şimdi sen bu kıssayı anlat, umulur ki iyice düşünürler. (A'râf 7/175-176).

- 2 (Ey Muhammed!) Sana, kendilerine nelerin helâl kılındığını soruyorlar. De ki: "Size temiz ve hoş olan şeyler, bir de Allah'ın size verdiği yeteneklerle eğitip alıştırdığınız avcı hayvanların tuttuğu (avlar) helâl kılındı. Onların sizin için tuttuklarından yiyin. Onu (av için) salarken üzerine Allah'ın adını anın (besmele çekin). Allah'a karşı gelmekten sakının. Şüphesiz Allah, hesabı çabuk görendir. Bkz. Gürdal Aksoy, "Kur'an ve Hadislerin Yol Ayrımında İslam'da Köpek ve Köpeğin İnsanlar Alemindeki Statü Serüveni Üzerine", *Academia*, 2024, 3-7, <https://academia.edu>, erişim 23.02.2025; Züleyha Türkeri Baltacı, "Türk Kültüründe Köpek (İnanış, Uygulama ve Anlatılar)", (Yüksek Lisans, Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015), 79-91.

- 3 Köpeklerin temizliği ve onlarla ilgili fikhî kurallar konusunda net ifadeler bulunur. Özellikle av ve koruma gibi pratik kullanımlarında olumlu bir yaklaşım sergilenirken, gereksiz yere beslenmelerinin kişinin sevaplarını eksilteceği söylenir. Bu duruma işaret eden bir hadiste şöyle buyrulur:

İbn-i Ömer (r.a), Resûlullah (s.a.v.)'i şöyle buyururken dinledim, dedi: *Av veya çoban köpeği dışında her kim köpek edinirse her gün o kimsenin ecir ve sevabından iki kırat eksilir.* (Nevevî, Riyâzü's Sâlihîn, 1692).

Hz. Muhammed'in Mekke'nin fethine giderken köpek yavruları nedeni ile yol değiştirdiğini rivayet eden anlatıda yolda yavrularını emziren ve onları sakınan köpeği korumak üzere ashâbından bir kişiyi görevlendirdiği söylenir. Başka bir örnekte ise namaz esnasında geçen köpek ve eşek için Hz. Muhammed'in tutumu aktarılır:

Ebü Cuhayfe Vehb İbni Abdullah (r.a.) şöyle dedi: *Peygamber (s.a.v.)'i Mekke'de Ebtah denilen yerde deriden yapılmış kırmızı çadırında gördüm. Bilâl, elinde Resûl-i Ekrem'in abdest aldığı su kabı ile çadırdan çıktı. Sahâbîlerden bazıları o su ile vücudunu ıslatıyor, bazıları da avuçla alıyorlardı. O esnada*

Peygamberlere ait kıssalarda her canlının birbirinden üstün özellikleri olabileceğine, her canlıya eşit hürmet edilmesi gerektiğine dair verilen örnekler içinde insanın zaman zaman köpekten daha aşağı olabileceğine dair hikâyeler aktarılır.⁴

Resûl-i Ekrem (s.a.v.) üzerinde kırmızı bir elbise ile dışarı çıktı. Bembeyaz baldırları hâlâ gözümün önündedir. Sonra abdest aldı; Bilâl ezan okudu, ben de şuraya ve şuraya, yani sağa ve sola dönerken, Bilâl'in ağzını takip etmeye başladım: Hayye 'ale's-salâh, hayye 'ale'l-felâh diyordu. Sonra Resûl-i Ekrem'in önüne sütre olarak ucu sivri demirli bir asâ dikildi. Peygamberimiz öne geçip namaz kıldırdı. Sütrenin önünden köpek ve eşek geçiyordu da onların geçmesine engel olunmuyordu. (Nevevî, Riyâzü's Sâlihîn, 783).

- 4 Örnek bir hikâye Hz. Mûsâ ile bir köpek arasında geçer:

Hz. Mûsâ bir gün Tur Dağı'na varır ve Cenâb-ı Hak'a yalvarıp yakararak ne kadar dileği varsa hepsini bir bir belirtir. Cenâb-ı Hak; "Yâ Mûsâ! Senden alçak bir kul getir ki, senin bütün dileklerini yerine getireyim." buyurarak mukabelede bulunur. Bu nidâ üzerine Tur Dağı'ndan inip şehre giden Hz. Mûsâ bütün şehri dolaşmasına rağmen bir türlü kendisinden daha düşük birine rastlayamaz. Âciz bir şekilde geri dönerken, yolu bir aşçı dükkânına uğrar. Orada dolaşıp duran uyuz bir köpek dikkatini çeker. Zavallı köpeğin tüyleri dökülmüş, bir deri bir kemik kalmış, kaşınmaktan neredeyse bütün gövdesini kıpkızıl kan bürümüştür. Hz. Mûsâ; "Cenâb-ı Allah'ın huzuruna hiç olmazsa bu köpeği götüreyim, benden değersiz olsa olsa bu olabilir." diye düşünür ve hayvanın boğazına bir ip geçirip şehirden dışarı doğru çıkarır.

Bu arada köpek dile gelir ve Hz. Mûsâ'ya şöyle seslenir: "Ey Allah'ın Peygamberi! Beni nereye götürüyorsun, benimle işin nedir, bu telaşın ne içindir?" Hz. Mûsâ ise; "Kaygılanmana gerek yok, ben seni dövecek veya öldürecek değilim, korkma! Cenâb-ı Hak bana, kendimden alçak birini bulup getirdiğim takdirde dileklerimi kabul edeceğini buyurmuştu. Bütün şehri gezip dolaşmama rağmen benden daha düşkün hiç kimse bulamadım. Tam ümidimi kesip geri dönmeye karar verdiğim bir zamanda seni gördüm. İşte, seni bu nedenle oraya götürüyorum." diye cevap verir. Bunun üzerine köpek Hz. Mûsâ'ya şunları söyler: "Yâ Mûsâ, dinle beni! Sen beni hor hakir gördün ve benim kendinden alçak olduğumu zannettin. Eğer bu düşüncende ısrar edersen, büyük yanlış yaparsın. Yaradan bana pek çok haslet vermiştir ki, bunların hiç birisi sende yoktur."

Köpeğin söyledikleri karşısında şaşırان Hz. Mûsâ, Cenâb-ı Allah'ın köpeğe ihsan ettiği hasletlerin neler olduğunu öğrenmek ister. Köpek sahip olduğu

meziyetleri şöyle sıralar: “Evvelâ ben, sahibimi kayıtsız şartsız beklerim, ölse bile onun kapısından ayrılmam. Sahibime asla kin beslemem ve bûğzetmem. Fakat sen birine hizmet edip de karşılığını alamazsan, hizmet ettiğin kişiye ya kin beslersin ya da düşmanlık yaparsın. Bilirsin ki, araya kin girince dinin de aslı kalmaz.

İkinci olarak, ben kanaat sahibiyim, her zaman nefsimi düşmanlık ederim. Bana ne verirlerse onu yerim, bana verileri asla az bulmam ve beğenmemelik etmem. Bana hiçbir şey vermeseler dahi hizmete devam ederim. Eğer seni bir kişi iki gün çalıştırda karnını doyurmasa; için dışın tasa ile dolar, seni çalıştıranı düşmanlık edersin ya da onu terk edip gidersin. Ben ise ne giderim ne de düşmanlık ederim ne gelirse önüme ona kanaat ederim.

Üçüncüsü; elime ne geçerse onu yerim, bugünüm yarına kalsın demem, dünya için asla kederlenmem, ben henüz dünyada iken dünyayı iken dünyayı terk etmişim, benim gönlümde dünya sevgisi asla barınamaz.

Dördüncüsü, sahibim beni suçlu suçsuz dövse dahi onun kapısını terk etmem. Sen bunları yapabilir misin? Sen benim yerinde olsan, sana haksızlık ettiğini düşündüğün kişi ile karşı karşıya gelirsın, onunla belki tırnak tırnağa savaşırsın.

Beşincisi; hiç kimse benim mirasımı birbiriyle kavga ederek yemeye çalışmaz, benim ardından beddualar da edilmez. Altıncısı; ben gıybet ehli değilim, hakir, miskin ve fakir bir kulum, ancak kendi hâlimi düşünür dururum, hiç kimse hakkında kötü bir şey düşünmem ve söylemem. Son olarak; benim hiç itibarım yoktur, fakat himmetim gayet çoktur. Bu halkın itibarından da dedikodusundan da hasedinden de uzağım, her şeyden elimi eteğimi çekmişim, bir dost ile bir post bana kâfidir. Senin özünde de bu hasletler var mıdır, yoksa dilindeki kuru bir dua mıdır?”

Hız. Mûsâ bu sözler karşısında göz yaşlarını tutamaz ve “Ey sevgili hayvan! Allah beni bağışlasın, sen de bağışla, ben şaşırdım ve hata ettim. Şimdi bana, ne yapacağıma dair bir nasihat ver, zira ben bu işte nasıl davranacağımı bilemez oldum, aklım başımdan gitti!” diyerek köpekten af diler. Köpek; “İzzet şişesini yere çal, kırılınsın, ipi boynuna tak, Yüce Allah’ın huzuruna öylece var ve yere kapan, ona yalvararak; ‘Padişahım, benden daha düşkün bir kulun yok!’ deyip ağla. Belki Cenâb-ı Allah seni affeder.” diyerek mukabelede bulunur.

Hız. Mûsâ köpeğin dediği gibi yapar, gururu kibri bir kenara bırakıp toprak gibi mütevazı bir hâletle köpeğin boynundaki ipi alıp kendi boynuna takar ve Tur Dağı’nda Cenâb-ı Allah’ın huzuruna çıkar. Cenâb-ı Hak, kendisine verdiği sözü sorunca; “Ya Rabbi! Başımdan geçenleri biliyorsun, bütün şehri dolaştım ve gördüm ki, benden daha alçak bir kulun yoktur.” diye cevap verir. Bu cevap üzerine Yüce

Tasavvuf sahasında köpekle ilgili bir örnek, ilk mutasavvıflardan Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî’nin (ö. 234/848 [?]) tövbesine sebep olan hikâye ile verilebilir.⁵ Hücvârî (ö. 465/1072 [?]) ise “Nefis bir köpektir, onun avladığı şeylerin mubah olması için eğitilmesi şarttır” der.⁶

Platon’dan başlamak üzere mitoloji ve destanlarda hayvanların yeri ve sembolik nitelikleri, sunu ve adak oluşları, belâ ve felaketlerdeki rolleri, mitsel formları ve putlaştırılmaları gibi konuların yanı sıra Türk dünyası ve coğrafyasında hayvan masalları gibi akademik araştırmalarda da köpek hikâyelerine dair örneklerle yer verilmiştir.⁷ Köpek figü-

Allah; “Ey muteber kişi! Şayet, ipi köpeğin boynundan almayıp da buraya o vaziyette gelseydin, izzetim hakkı için köpeği Kelim (konuşan; Mûsâ), seni de köpek hâline getirecektim. Şimdi yürü git buradan ve bir daha kimseyi kendinden küçük görme!” buyurur. Atabey Kılıç, *Mürîdî ve Pend-i Ricâl Adlı Mesnevisi* (Kayseri: Akademi Kitapevi Yay., 2001), 55-57.

5 Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî hac vazifesini yetmiş defa ifâ etmiştir. Yine bir gün hac yolunda iken insanlar susuzluktan kırılmaktadır. Bâyezîd, hacıların toplanmış oldukları bir kuyunun başında bir köpek görür. Hayvan bitkin bir halde Bâyezîd’e bakar. Derken birisi “Makbul bir hac sevabına bir bardak suyu kim satar?” diye bağırır. Hiç kimse bu çağrıya aldırış etmez. Adam yaya olarak yapılmış beş hac sevabını, altı, yedi derken yetmiş hac sevabına kadar artırır. Bâyezîd “Ben vereyim” diye seslenir. Bâyezîd, “Ne mutlu bana ki, bir köpek için aldığım bir bardak su ile yetmiş piyade hac sevabı satın aldım” diye içinden geçirip suyu hemen bir çanağa döker, köpeğin önüne koyar. Köpek suya yüzünü çevirir. Bâyezîd hatasını anlar; yüzüstü kapanarak tövbe eder. Kendisine ilâhî bir ses gelir: “Allah için yaptığın bir iş dolayısıyla, daha ne kadar zaman, şunu yaptım, bunu yaptım diyeceksin? Görüyorsun ki bir köpek bile bunu kabul etmiyor.” Bunun üzerine Bâyezîd, “Ya Rabbi! Tövbe ettim. Bundan böyle bir daha yanlış düşünceye kapılmam.” der. Bunun üzerine köpek suyu içmeye başlar. Şems-i Tebrîzî, *Makâlât*, çev. Mehmet Nuri Gençosman (İstanbul: Ataç Yay., 2006), 371-372.

6 Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (İstanbul: Marifet Yay., 1991), 400.

7 Köpek, Platon’un *Devlet*’inde doğası gereği filozof olarak gösterilir. Platon, devlet adamlarının köpek gibi iyi koku alıp tehlikeleri sezecek kabiliyetinde olmasını bekler. Cesaretlerini doğru yerde ve zamanda kullanabildiklerini bunun da insanlar

rü, Anadolu sahası Türk halk hikâyelerinde bazen yardımcı bazen de engelleyici rollerde karşımıza çıkar.⁸ Türk-Fars edebiyat sahasına ait klasiklerde de ana ve yan karakter olarak köpek hikâyelerine sıklıkla yer verilir.⁹

tarafından eğitilebilme avantajı ve dolayısı ile sahibine olan sadakatten kaynaklandığını söyler. Bkz. Necip Uyanık. “Platon’un Devlet Eserinde Siyasal Teorinin Aracı Olarak Hayvan Metaforları”, *Felsefe Arkivi- Archives of Philosophy, Advance Online Publication*, 60 (2024), 1-18.

Bu alanda yapılan akademik çalışmalardan bazıları için bkz. Nedim Bakırcı, “Türk Dünyası ve Coğrafyasında Tespit Edilmiş Hayvan Masalları Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, (Doktora Tezi, Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2004); Baki Öcal, *Rivayetlerde Hayvan Figürleri ile Anlatım* (Ankara: Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi Yay., 2021); Zeliha Gülaç “Kutsal Kitap’ta Hayvanlar”, (Yüksek Lisans, Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2023); Ömer Demirtaş, “Kur’ân-ı Kerim’de Adı Geçen Hayvanlar ve Özellikleri”, (Yüksek Lisans, Bozok Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2019); Celâl Çayır, “Kur’ân-ı Kerimde Zikredilen Hayvanlar ve Zikir Sebepleri”, (Yüksek Lisans, Harran Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1999).

8 Köpeğin; Anadolu’da ve diğer coğrafyalarda yaşayan Türkler’in kültüründeki inanışlara, uygulamalara ve anlatılara mukayeseli yansımaları için bkz. Züleyha Türkeri, “Türk Kültüründe Köpek”, (Yüksek Lisans, Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015).

9 Örneğin, XVIII. yüzyıl içinde Ferîdüddîn-i Attâr’ın (ö. 1221) *Musibetnâme* ve *Esrarnâme*’sinde nefis ile mücadele başlıklarında sıklıkla kullanılır. Nefsini sürekli köpek olarak gösteren ve onu her daim kemik ile besleyen Attâr, *Mantiku’t-Tayr*’da nefisine hükmedemediği için sürekli dert yandığı bir hikâyeyi verir:

Bir şeyhin yanında bir pis köpek vardı; şeyh o köpekten hiç çekinmez, dokunmasın diye eteğini toplamazdı. Birisi, “Ey temiz ve ulu kişi, neden köpekten çekinmiyorsun” dedi. Şeyh şöyle cevap verdi: “Bu köpeğin dışı pis; halbuki benim içimdeki pislik görünmüyor. Onun dışında görünen pislik bu yoksulun içindedir ve gizlidir. İçim köpeğin dışı gibi pis olduktan sonra, niçin ondan kaçayım? O da benimle eş! Pek ehemmiyetsiz bir şey bile yolumu kesiyor; ister dağ olsun ister saman çöpü, hepsi bir! Ferîdüddîn-i Attâr, *Mantiku’t-Tayr*, çev. Abdülbâkî Gölpinarlı, (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yay., 2006), 185.

Aynı yüzyılda Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî’nin (ö. 1273) *Mesnevî-i Şerif*’inde, köpek, “yaratıcısını tanımayan, nefsin heva ve hevesine takılıp kalmış, mânevî değerlere karşı saldırgan, zâlim, câhil, az-

gın kişilik gibi olumsuz; aynı zamanda da akletmek, vefâ, aşk, itaat, Mevlâ’yı aramak, Allah dostu olmak gibi olumlu kavramlara referans verir. Daha detaylı bilgi için bkz. İsmail Hakkı, “Mesnevîde Hayvan Karakterleri (Metaforları)”, *Uluslararası Türk Kültür Coğrafyasında Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 2, 1 (2017): 29-47 ve Ömer Dİlmen. “Mevlânâ’nın Mesnevî’sinde Köpek Metaforu”, *Turkish Academic Research Review*, 5, 4 (2020): 507-535.

Emine Yeniterzi, Mevlânâ’nın câhil insanı anlattığı hikâyeyi “Köpek bile eğitim alınca değişir; eğitilmiş köpek yaban eşeği avlarken, eğitimsiz olanı körlerin peşinden koşar” diyerek verir:

Bir köyde, kör bir dilenciye bir köpek harp aslanı gibi saldırdı. Nasıl şaşılacak şeydir ki köpek öfkele-nip dervişlere saldırır da ay dervişlerin ayak bastıkları toprağı gözlerine sürme diyerek sürer. Zavallı kör dilenci korkusundan ne yapacağını şaşırır. Onu sözleri ile yatıştırmaya çalışır. Ona “Ey avcıların avcısı! Ey av aslanı! Güçlüsün, kuvvetlisin, her şey senin elinde. Benden elini eteğini çek, benim gibi zavallı birine ilişme!” der ve şöyle devam eder: “Senin dostların yaban eşekleri avlamakta, akıl sahibi itler merkep tutar. Bilgisiz itler de âma peşinde koşar.” Yine korkusundan ve kurtulma çabasından “Aslanım! Benim gibi değersiz, zayıf bir av avlamaktan senin eline ne geçer? Arkadaşların dağda yaban eşeği avlıyor, sen de köyde kör bir dilenci yakalıyorsun; bu sana yakışır mı?” der. Mevlânâ şöyle devam eder: “Köpek avlanmada mârifet sahibi olunca sapıklıktan kurtulur da ormanda helâl olan av yakalar. Köpek bilgi sahibi olunca da Ashâb-ı Kehf’ten sayılır. Köpek ava çıkan beyini ve kendi sahibini tanır, bilir. Allah’ım! Her şeyi tanıtan ve içi aydınlatan o nûr nedir? Emri Hak’tan ayrılanlar yetim kalırlar. Bilmemek kör gözden değil, sadece cehâlet sarhoşluğundan doğar. Topraktan kör kim var ki? Ama toprak bile Allah’ın emri ile Hakk’a düşman olanları tanır. Toprak Mûsâ’nın nurunu görüp saygı duyar ve Hak düşmanı Karûn’u tanıyıp onu da yutmuş olur. Kalbi körler görmüş, işitmiş olsa da yine de Şeytan’ın tuzağına düşerler, gerçeği sen ehline sor. Câhil kimseleri de çer, çöp olarak düşün.”

Emine Yeniterzi, “Mevlânâ’nın Kişisel Değişim ve Gelişime Dair Düşünceleri”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Mevlânâ Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1, 2 (2007): 1-13.

Aynı yüzyılda Sa’dî-i Şîrâzî (ö. 1292) *Bostan ve Gülistan*’ında yardıma muhtaç olan köpeğe yapılan iyiliğin Allah katındaki yerini aktardığı bir hikâyeye verir. Bkz. Şîrâzî, Sa’dî, *Bostan ve Gülistan*, çev. Mehmet Kanar, (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yay. 2018), 71-79.

XV. yüzyıl mutasavvıf şairlerinden Dede Ömer Rüşenî’nin (ö. 1487) *Külliyât*’ında köpek metaforunu Mevlânâ’nın *Mesnevî*’sindeki referanslara yakın anlamlarda kullanılır. Bkz. Necip Fazıl Şenarslan, “Rüşenî Dede Ömer Aydınî Külliyyâtı (Miskin-Nâ-

1. XVI. Yüzyıla Ait Mesnevî Hikâyelerinde Köpek/Köpek Metaforu

Klasik Türk edebiyatı XVI. yüzyıl dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîleri içindeki hikâyeler, değerler eğitiminin parçası niteliğinde olup “Güzel Ahlâk”ı aktarır. Bu aktarımlarda köpek veya köpek metaforu ile işlenen konular, insanı Hakk’a yaklaştıran veya O’ndan uzaklaştıran huylar/alışkanlıklar/yaşayış üzerine olup, ahlâkî değerlere referans verir. Hikâyelerde, insanı yücelten, doğru yola sevk eden kısaca “irşad” kavramının fonksiyonunu üstlenen köpek, aynı zamanda zıt yöndeki olumsuz davranışları örneklemek üzere de elverişli bir zemin oluşturur.¹⁰

XVI. yüzyıl dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîleri içinde baş veya yan rollerde köpeğin rol aldığı hikâyeleri tespit etmek üzere irdelenen eserler, *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Behiştî, Ahmed Sinân Çelebi, ö. 917, 926/1511-12, 1520 [?]), *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Üsküplü Atâ, ö. 1523), *Pend-nâme* ve *İbret-nâme* (Güvâhî, ö. 1526), *Rıdvâniyye* ve *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Ahmed-i Rıdvân, ö. 1528), *Âb-ı Hayât* (Hızrî, ö. 1534), *Gülşen-i Ebrâr* ve *Ma’den-i Esrâr* (Münirî, ö. 1549 sonrası), *Kitâb-ı Bağ-ı Behişt* (Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, ö. 1552, 1555 sonrası), *Gül-i*

me, Şobân-Nâme, Der Kasemiyât ve Münâcât, Der Medh-i Mesnevî-i Ma’nevî-İ Mevleviyyet, Ney-Nâme, Kalem-Nâme, Divan) Dil İncelemesi-Metin-Dizini”, (Doktora Tezi, Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları, 2020).

Aynı yüzyılda Molla Câmî’nin (ö. 1492) *Baharistan*’ında sarhoş bir adama ders veren köpeğin hikâyesi aktarılır. Bkz. Molla Câmî, *Gülîstan ve Baharistan*, haz. Mustafa Memluk (İzmir: Renkli Bahçe Yay., 2012), 99-100.

- 10 XVI. yüzyılda yazılmış dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîler içindeki hikâyelerde yer alan hayvanlar akbaba, aslan, at, bülbül, ceylan, deve, domuz, eşek, fare, inek, kaplan, kaplumbağa, karga, kartal, kaz, keçi, kedi, köpek, kurbağa, kurt, tilki, yılan olup; hayvanlardan oluşan hikâye sayısı 130’dan fazladır ve bu hikâyelerde en fazla rol alan hayvan köpektir. Detaylı bilgi için bkz. Esin Tümer Kurnaz, *16. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatında, Dinî, Ahlâkî, Tasavvufî Mesnevîlerdeki Hikâyeler (Tespit, Tahlil ve Köken Araştırması)*, (Doktora Tezi, Üsküdar Üniversitesi Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2024), 612-647.

Sad-Berg (Bursalı Rahmî, ö. 1567-68), *Heşt Behişt* (Behiştî Vizeli Ramazan, ö. 1571-72/79), *Gencîne-i Râz* ve *Kitâb-ı Usûl* ve *Gülşen-i Envâr* (Taşlıcalı Yahyâ, ö. 1582), *Nakş-ı Hayâl* (Âzerî İbrâhim Çelebi, ö. 1585), *Câmiu’n-Nesâyih* (Hüseyin Ahmed-i Sirozî, ö. 1592), *Riyazü’l-Cinân* ve *Cilâü’l-Kulûb* (Cinânî, ö. 1595), *İbret-nümâ* ve *Heşt Bihişt* ve *Mir’âtü’l-Ahlâk* (Şemseddîn-i Sivasî, ö. 1597), *Riyazü’s-Sâlikîn* ve *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, ö. 1600), *İsimsiz Mesnevi/Netîce-i Sülûk* (Cemâlî, 16.yy) olup; köpek/köpek metaforu tespit edilen eserler ve hikâyelerin beyit yerleri şöyle özetlenebilir:

Ahmed-i Rıdvân, *Rıdvâniyye* (929-944) ve *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (1156-1198 ve 1404-1423); Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, *Kitâb-ı Bağ-ı Behişt* (1426-1437, 2601-2609, 2875-2889, 2784-2801); Taşlıcalı Yahyâ, *Kitab-ı Usûl* (604-619); Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Riyazü’s-Sâlikîn* (2290-2309) ve *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (2025-2049); Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *Heşt Bihişt* (1470-1499) ve *İbret-nümâ* (1165-1174, 1191-1198, 1233-1264, 1935-1959, 2047-2065).

Kur’ân-ı Kerîm’de Allah’ın sevdiği kulların nitelikleri; iyilikte bulunma, günahlardan tövbe etme, maddî ve mânevî temizliğe riâyet etme, kötülüklerden sakınma, sabretme, tevekkül etme ve adaletli olma olarak sayılırken sevmeliklerinin nitelikleri de meşrû sınırları aşma, bozgunculuk yapma, alabildiğine nankör ve günahkâr olma, inançsızlık, zulüm, kibir, böbürlenme, israf ve şımarıklık olarak sıralanır.¹¹ Aynı bakış açısı ile çalışmada, hikâyeler içinde baş veya yan rollerde gördüğümüz köpeğin olumlu/olumsuz sergilediği tavırdan ziyade işaret ettiği anlama yönelik bir tasnif tercih edilmiş olup bu sınıflandırma, insanı “helâke” ve “kurtuluşa” götüren konular çerçevesinde iki temel alanda yapılmıştır.

11 Abdülhamit Birişık, “Rahmet”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2007, XXXIV: 419.

1.1. İnsanı Helâke Götüren Konular İçinde Köpek

Kur'ân-ı Kerîm, önceden yaşamış toplulukları helâke götüren konuları, çeşitli kavimler ve peygamberler üzerinden verir. Kıssalar; Nûh, Âd, Semûd ve Lût kavimlerinin helâk olmadan önce elçilerin uyarılarını anlatır. Helâk, kavimlerin ölçüden kaçmış tutumları, inançsızlıkları, zulmü benimseyen tavırları nedeni ile gelirken, toplumlara zulmedenin Allah değil bilakis kendileri olduğu uyarısı Tevbe Sûresi'nde verilir.¹² Toplumlara helâke götüren konuların bireylerin kişisel tutumlarının sonucu olduğu bilgisi ile kendini bilmeyen, haramı alışkanlık haline getirmiş, gösteriş ve riya düşkünü, sadece nefesine hizmet eden insanın kendine zulmettiği açıktır. Böyle insanların ilâhî emaneti taşıyamadığına dikkat çeken şairler, hikâyelerinde köpeği bazen kendine zulmeden insanı uyaran rolde bazen de söz konusu kötü huyların temsili olarak kullanırlar.¹³ Kendini bilmemek, cahillik, nefis, haram, gösteriş, riya, kisve gibi konular içinde köpek hikâyesinin bazen nesnesi bazen öznesi olur.

1.1.1. Kendini Bilmeyen İnsanı Gösteren Köpek

Taşlıcalı Yahyâ, *Kitab-ı Usûl*, (604-619)

Köpeğin biri, bir ayna dükkânının önünden geçerken aynaların her birinde kendi timsali-

12 Bunlara kendilerinden öncekilerin, Nûh, Âd ve Semûd toplumlarının, İbrâhim'in kavminin, Medyen halkının ve yıkılıp giden beldeler ahalisinin haberleri gelmemiş miydi? Onlara peygamberleri apaçık delillerle geldiler. Demek ki Allah onlara zulmetmiş değildi, asıl onlar kendilerine zulmetmişlerdi. (Tevbe 9/70).

13 XVI. yüzyılda Latîfî tarafından yazılmış olan *Tezkiretü's-şuarâ ve Tabsiratü'n-nuzemâ* isimli şairler tezkiresinde, "fitne" kelimesinin bilinen anlamlarının yanı sıra, halk arasında "küçük köpek" anlamında kullanıldığı da söylenir. Bkz. Yasemin Karakuş, "Klasik Türk Şiirinde 'Fitne' Kelimesinin 'Köpek' Anlamıyla Kullanımına Dair", *Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 7, 2 (2021): 389-400.

ni görür. Gördüğü şekillerin başka bir köpek olduğunu zannederek, havlar ve aynalara saldırmaya başlar. Kendi kendisiyle kavga ederek komik duruma düşer.¹⁴

Şair, devam eden beyitlerde işi kavga ve gürültü çıkarmak olan zâlimlerin hâlini köpeğe benzetir. "Mazlum zulme uğrayarak sevap kazanırken zâlim de zulmüyle azaba hak kazanır" diyen şair, zalimin bu şekilde davranmasının sadece âhiretine değil, aynı zamanda dünyasına da zarar vereceği öğüdüyle hikâyeyi tamamlar.

Aynalarda kendini tanımayan köpek, kendini bilmeyen insanı temsil eder. Kendini bilmeyen kişi karşısındakine karşı saldırgan/kaba, aynı zamanda da komik duruma düşer. Kişinin kendi kabul edilemez düşünce, duygu ya da dürtülerini başkasına atfetmesi (yansıtm), psikoanalitik kuram ile savunma mekanizmaları çerçevesinde incelenirken, tasavvufî perspektiften bu durum, içsel bir kusurun dışarıya atfedilmesi, bireyin kendini savunmak veya aklamak için başkasını suçlaması, gerçekle yüzleşmekten kaçınması gibi hâller "nefsin hilesi" olarak yorumlanır.

1.1.2. Harama Düşenin Durumunu Gösteren Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *Heşt Bihişt*, (1470-1499)

Adamın biri kör kütük sarhoş olur, ayakta duramaz, yolda yığılır kalır. Midesi bulanır, kusar. Kalkmak ister ama başaramaz. Üstü başı çamur içinde yatarken bir sokak köpeği gelip ağzını yalar. Adam onu dostlarından biri zannedip dualar eder. Köpek bu sefer adamın yüzüne işer. Adam yüzünü yıkadığı için teşekkür eder. Köpek işini bitirip giderken, sarhoş "Dur gitme ben de sana iyilik yapmak isterim" diye bağırır ve ancak o anda bu işleri

14 Mehmet Akif Alkaya, "Kitâb-ı Usûl Taşlıcalı Yahyâ", (Yüksek Lisans, İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1996), 272-273.

yapanın bir köpek olduğunu anlar. Düştüğü duruma âh edip, inler. O sırada, “Yoldan çıkmak yakıştı mı sana, ağzını köpekler yalar, yüzünü sidikler yıkar” diye nidâ gelir.¹⁵

Takip eden beyitlerde şair, “İçkiyle ölenin cenazesini köpek yıkar, suyu da köpeğin idrarıdır” der ve haram ve pis olanlara heves edenlerin sonunun yine pislik olacağını belirtir. Devamında ise sembolik mânâyı verir ve sarhoşluğun dünya sevgisi, kusmanın inkâr, sarhoşun ağzını yalayanların onu metheden riyakârlar, yüzüne gelen idrarın da utanma suyu olduğunu açıklar.

Tasavvufta dünya sevgisi (*hubbu'd-dünyâ*), kalbi Allah'tan alıkoyan en büyük perdelerden biri, hatta pek çok mânevî hastalığın kaynağı olarak kabul edilir. Bu sevgi, fiziksel dünyaya değil, dünyanın kalbi meşgul eden cazibesine ve tutkularına bağlanma hâline yöneltmiş bir eleştiridir. Riyâ, ahlâkî bağlamda çıkar sağlama amaçlı övgüyü içerir ve hikâye özelinde de sarhoşu öven kişilere eleştiri niteliğinde köpeğin davranışı olarak verilir. Sarhoşu ayıltan yine köpek olup dünya zevki ile perdelenmiş kulun utanıp kendine gelmesine vesile olur.

1.1.3. Gösteriş ve Riyâ Düşkünlüğünü Gösteren Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *İbret-nümâ*, (1935-1959)

Din zevkini az çok tatmış adamın biri, mescide gider ve geceyi ihyâ etmek üzere ibadete başlar. Mescide birisi gelir. Ancak hava çok karanlık olduğu için kimin geldiğini görmeyen adam, kendisinin ne kadar iyi bir kul olduğunu görsün diye sabaha kadar namaz kılar, zikir çeker. Derken yavaş yavaş gün ağarır. Adam gecenin karanlığında mescide girenin köpek olduğunu anlar. Köpek için geceyi ihyâ ettiğini, Allah rızası için uyanık

kalmadığını bilen adam pişmanlık içinde gözü yaşlı kalır.¹⁶ (Çöm 2007: 384-386).

Tasavvufî bağlamda gösteriş için yapılan ibadet, insanlar görsün beğensin diye yapılan amel anlamına gelen riyâ, nefis-i emmâre veya nefis-i levvâme mertebelerinin hastalıklarından sayılır ve klasiklerin hemen hepsinde en tehlikeli perdelerden biri olarak gösterilir. Gazzâlî *İhyâ'ü 'ulûmi'd-dîn*'de konuya dair psikolojik ve pedagojik açıdan dikkat çekici tahliller yapar ve amellerin kabul edilmesine etkisi bakımından riyanın farklı derecelerini sıralar. (Çağrııcı 2000: 22, 10-13). Hikâyede köpek, ihlâs yani amellerde niyetin sadece Allah'ın rızâsı üzerine olması gerektiği konusunda uyarıcı rol üstlenir.

1.1.4. Kisveye Aldanmamak Gerektiğini Gösteren Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *İbret-nümâ*, (1233-1264)

Sırtında abası ile gezen bir sofı, elindeki asa ile karşısına çıkan köpeğe bir darbe indirir. Feryat eden köpek, Şeyh Ebû Said'e gider, şikâyetçi olur. Şeyh sofuyu çağırarak durumu sorar; sofı namaz kıldığı elbiselerini kirlettiği için köpeğe vurduğunu söyler. Şeyh köpeğe döner ve “Kıyamette hakkın kalmasın, gön-lünü hoş etmek için söyle yapayım” deyince köpek, “Ben onun abasına bakınca emin olmuş ondan kaçmamıştım, meğer dışı sofı ama içi başka bir şeymiş. Sıradan bir insan gibi giyinseydi zaten kaçardım” diyerek, kendisini döven adamın derviş kıyafetini çıkarmasını ister.

Hikâye, içi dışı bir olamayanlara genel; öznesi sofı, nesnesi aba olması dolayısı ile de sûfile-re özel bir eleştiriyi aktarır. Tasavvuf geleneği içinde “kisve” (dergâh kıyafeti, sarık, cübbe,

15 Alim Yıldız, *Heşt Bihişt*, (Sivas: Sivas Belediyesi Yayınları, 2015), 216-218.

16 Erol Çöm, “16. Yüzyıl Ahlâkî Mesnevîleri ve Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî *İbret-nümâ* Adlı Mesnevîsi (İnceleme-Metin)”, (Doktora, Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007), 314-316.

hırka vs.), zahiren bir aidiyet ve terbiyeyi temsil etse de zamanla bazı çevrelerde görünüşe indirgenmiş bir kimlik gösterisine dönüşmüş, sûfîler tarafından da yoğun biçimde eleştirilmiştir. Hikâyede mânevî olgunluğu hâiz olmayan sofunun şekilde kaldığını ortaya çıkaran köpek, insanlaştırılarak dile gelmiş ve hakkını aramıştır. Herhangi bir elbise değil de namaz elbisesinin kirlenmesi dikkat çeken bir detaydır. Şairler, XVI. yüzyılda kisvenin mânevî olgunluk yerine sosyal ayrıcalık göstergesi olarak kullanılmasını diğer hikâyelerinde de eleştirir, içi dışı bir olmanın ahlâkî ve mânevî önemine dikkat çekerler.

1.1.5. Nefsin Gerekliliğini Gösteren Köpek

Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Tuhfetü'l-Uşşâk* (2025-2049)

Nefsine yenik düşen Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî'nin canı yemek çeker, pişirir ve nefsinde “Ey nefis yemekler hazır; dışarı çık, bakalım dayanabilecek misin?” der. Bunu der demez ağzından bir köpek çıkıp yemeğe başlar. Bâyezîd'in “Allah’a şükürler olsun! Bir daha seni yerine koymam” demesi üzerine şöyle bir ses duyar: “Senin senliğin onun iledir. Sakın onu terk etme; ağzını aç yerini bulsun, yoksa sen yerinirsin.” Bunun üzerine Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî ağzını açar, köpek de önceki mekânına döner.¹⁷

Hikâyede nefisten vazgeçmemek gerektiği konusuna dikkat çeken köpektir ve nefsten temelli kurtulmanın insana yararı sorgulanır. Mutasavvıflar nefsi saldırgan köpeğe, kurnaz tilkiye, pisboğaz domuza, iğrenç fareye, korkunç yılan ve ejderhaya, bazan Firavun'a ve Nemrud'a, bazen puta, bazen zindana, bazen cehenneme, bazen hak hukuk bilmeyen hırsıza, bazen cadıya, bazen da insanı baştan çıkaran kadına benzetmişlerdir. Sûfîler bir

yandan nefis mertebelerinden, nefsin muhabbesinden bahsederek nefsi sürekli kınarken öte yandan ne kadar kötü olursa olsun nefsi ıslah ve terbiye edip disiplin altına almanın istikamet açısından önemini vurgular ve eğitilmiş nefisten âhiret amelleri için yararlanmanın mümkün olduğunu söylerler.¹⁸ Aslında temiz kabul edilmeyen köpeğin eğitilmiş olduğu takdirde tuttuğu avın temiz ve helâl oluşu gibi eğitilmiş ve disiplin altına alınmış nefsin de gerekli olduğu söylenir.¹⁹ Nefsin insanın fitrî ve bedenî hayatının devamına hizmet eden yönleri açısından da tutulması zarurîdir.²⁰ Hatta nefsin hazları olduğu gibi hakları da vardır.²¹

1.1.6. Nefsin Simgesi Olan Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *İbret-nümâ*, (2047-2065)

Anlayışı kuvvetli bir rahip, kendini riyâzete adan ve bir kiliseye kapatır. Ebu'l-Kâsım Hemedânî kiliseyi görür, kapalı olduğu için kiliseye giremez, seslenir ama cevap alamaz. Aradan bir ay geçtikten sonra rahip pence-reden başını uzatır ve “Kimsiniz, benden ne istiyorsunuz?” diye sorar. Şeyh de kilisede tek başına ne yaptığını sorar. Rahip “Nefsime şehir içinde çer çöp toplayan, her pisliğe meyleden köpek gibi gördüm ve başka kimseye zarar vermesin diye buraya hapsedtim. Çoluk çocuğu bırakıp burada o köpeğin bekçisi oldum. Şimdi havlamasını kesti. Arzu edersen sen de köpeğini bağla, zindana at” diye cevaplar.²²

18 Süleyman Uludağ, “Nefs”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2006, XXXII: 526-529.

19 'Ali b. 'Uthmân al-Jullâbî Hujvîrî, *Kashf al-Mahjûb: The Revelation of the Veiled*, çev. R. A. Nicholson, (London: Luzac & Co., 2025), 110-111.

20 Hâce Yusuf Hemedânî, *Rutbetü'l-Hayat*, çev. Necdet Tosun, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1998), 58.

21 Nefsin hakları için bkz: H. Mehmet Soysaldı, “İslam'da Günah Kavramı”, *İlmi Akademik Araştırma Dergisi Tasavvuf* 3, 7 (2001): 151.

22 Çöm, “16. Yüzyıl Ahlâkî Mesnevîleri ve Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî İbret-nümâ Adlı Mesnevîsi”, 395-397.

17 İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî Tuhfetü'l-Uşşâk*, (İstanbul: MEB Yayınları, 2003), 277-278.

Tasavvufî istılahta; nefsin yeme içme, mal mülk, makam mevki, şan şöret gibi dünyevî talep ve tutkularını denetim altında tutmak için yemeyi içmeyi, uyumayı, konuşmayı azaltarak zaruret ve ihtiyaç kadarı ile sınırlamak riyâzetin esaslarını oluşturur. Hikâyede kiliseye kapanan rahip için nefsin arzularını, taleplerini, dünya tutkusunu yani riyâzete neden olan esasların hemen hepsi köpek ile simgelenmiştir, diyebiliriz. Rahip, nefis denetimi için kiliseye kapanmış, nefsinin dünyevî arzularını bu yolla kesmiştir.

1.1.7. Cahili Anlatırken Başvurulan Köpek

Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî, *Riyazü's-Sâlikîn*, (2290-2309)

Câhil bir vezir kitap okurken bir duaya rastlar. Duayı, “Derdine çare arayan şu duayı okur, ardından köpek gibi bağırırsa, isteği kabul olur” şeklinde anlar. Sabah akşam bu duayı şuursuzca okumaya başlar. Okuyup bitirince de köpek gibi havlar. Günlerden bir gün hocalardan biri paşaya gelir. İçeriden köpek sesi geldiğini duyar, “Paşanın yanına çoban köpeğini kim getirdi” diye düşünür, bir anlam veremez. Bir süre bekler, ardından odaya girer. Paşanın köpek gibi havladığını görünce, şaşkınlık içinde nedenini sorar. Câhil vezir, “işte nedeni budur, kitap böyle der” diyerek olayın kaynağını gösterir. “İşte şu kitabı alın görün kitapta bu şekilde yazıyor, sen de okuyup üresin” diyen vezirin uzattığı Türkçe metni okuyan hoca, görür ki ahmak vezir, “ürmek” kelimesinin üfürmek anlamında kullanıldığını anlayamamıştır.²³

Hikâyede hayvanlar içinde köpeğin seçilmiş olması, sembolik bir göndermeden ziyade câhil vezirin bağlamdan kopuk okuma yapması ve bu hatadaki gramerin ses uyumu nedeniyle demek yanlış olmaz.

23 Mehmet Arslan ve İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, *Gelibolulu Âlî Riyazü's-Sâlikîn*. (Sivas: Dilek Matbaacılık, 1998), 164-166.

1.2. İnsanı Kurtuluşa Götüren Konular İçinde Köpek

Kur’ân ve Sünnet’e uyarak, aşırılığa kaçmadan doğru yolda olmayı anlatan “istikamet ve sırât-ı müstakîm” insanı insan yapan değerleri kazandırır ve onun kurtuluşuna vesiledir. Kişinin her türlü aşırılıktan ve kötü alışkanlıktan sakınarak doğruluk üzere bulunması olarak ifade edebileceğimiz *istikâmet* kelimesi için Arapça sözlüklerde “dinî ve ahlâkî hükümlere uygun bir hayat sürme, her türlü aşırılıktan sakınma, Allah’a itaat edip Hz. Muhammed’in sünnetine uyma” şeklinde özetlenebilecek açıklamalar yapılmıştır. Kur’ân-ı Kerîm’de dokuz âyette istikamet masdarından fiiller yer almakta aynı zamanda otuz yedi âyette aynı kökten olan “müstakîm” kelimesi geçmektedir. Âyetlerde geçen şekli ile kelimenin kök mânâsındaki “doğruluk, aşırılıklardan uzaklık, sebat ve kararlılık” anlamlarının korunduğu görülür.²⁴

Mevlâna, âlemin gaye sebebi olan insanın en güzel biçimde yaratıldığını, aklını kullanarak hayvanlardan ayrılabilceğini, bu anlamda sorumlu olduğunu, *Hakikat-i Muhammedî*’yi kendine rehber edinerek belli bir mücâhede ve mücâdele sürecine girmesini öğütler.²⁵ İnsanı kurtuluşa götüren konuları *İhyâü Ulûmid-Dîn*’in son cildinde “Rub’u’l-münciyyât” başlığı içinde toplayan Gazzâlî (ö. 1111), kurtuluşa dair özellikleri tövbe, sabır ve şükür, havf ve recâ, fakr ve zühd, tevhit ve tevekkül, muhabbet, şevk, üns ve rızâ, niyet, ihlâs ve sıdk; murakabe ve muhasebe, tefekkür, ölüm ve âhîret hayatı başlıklarıyla verir.²⁶

Rahmet, vahdet, eşitlik/hak, iman, rıza, gönül gözüne sahip olmak, kulun âcizliğini bilmesi

24 Mustafa Çağrı ve Süleyman Uludağ, “İstikamet”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2001, XXIII, 348-349.

25 Hasan Hüseyin Bircan, “Mevlâna’da İnsan ve Kurtuluş”, *Journal of Islamic Research* 27, 1 (2016): 1-11.

26 Mustafa Çağrı, “İhyâü Ulûmî’d-Dîn”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2000, XXII, 10-13.

konular içinde köpek hikâyelerin bazen öznesi bazen de nesnesidir.

1.2.1. Hakk'ın Rahmetini Göstermeye Vesile Olan Köpek

Ahmed-i Rıdvân, *Rıdvâniyye*, (929-944)

Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt*, (1426-1437)

Adamın biri susuzluktan yanmış biçimde yürürken bir kuyu görür ve hemen içine girip susuzluğunu giderir. Kuyudan çıkar çıkmaz susuzluktan dili kararmış ölmek üzere olan bir köpek ile karşılaşır. Ölmek üzere olan köpeği kurtarmak için yeniden kuyuya iner. Çizmesini suyla dolduran adam çıkar çıkmaz köpeğe su içirir ve onu susuzluk ateşinden kurtarır. Köpeği hayata döndüren adam sadece bu sebep ile Hakk'ın sayısız rahmetine nâil olur.²⁷

Sa'dî-i Şirâzî'nin *Bostân*'ının tamamına yapılan ilk manzum Türkçe tercüme olan Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed'in *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt* mesnevîsinde aynı hikâyeye ufak farklarla verilir. Hikâyenin bu versiyonunda adam köpeği kurtarmak için başındaki külahı kova, tülbentini ip yapar ve köpeği susuzluktan kurtarır. Hikâyenin sonunda ise cennet ile müjdelendiği haberi Hz. Muhammed tarafından kendisine doğrudan bildirilir.²⁸

Ahmed-i Rıdvân bunun herhangi bir anlatı olmadığını, Ebû Hüreyre'den nakledilen bir hadîs-i şerîf olduğunu belirterek hikâyenin kaynağını verir. Ebû Hüreyre'den nakledilen hadîs-i şerîf, Buhârî, Müslim, Mâlik, Ahmed, Ebû Davud, Ebû Ya'lâ, İbn Hibbân

ve Beyhakî'nin kaynaklarında olup, sahih ve hasen olarak işaret edilmektedir. Ebû Hüreyre tarafından nakledilen rivayetin ilk geçtiği kaynak olarak İmâm Mâlik'in *Muvatta'sı* verilir.²⁹

Sebepsiz yere evde beslenmesinin sakıncalı olduğu söylenen, salyası ve tüyleri nedeniyle pis olarak nitelenen köpeğin, hikâyede Cenâb-ı Hakk'ın rahmetini anlatmak üzere rol alması dikkat çekicidir. Tasavvufî bağlamda iyilik sıradan bir ahlâkî davranıştan öte, hakikat yolculuğunun ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır ve kulun Hakk'a yakınlaşmasının (kurbet) aracıdır. Tâlip, fiil ve davranışlarında iyilik merkezinde durarak bu yakınlığı arzular. Bu bağlamda yapılan eylemin karşılığı ise sayısız rahmet, cennet müjdesi gibi Hak katından gelir.

1.2.2. Varlıksal Eşitliği Göstermeye Vesile Olan Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *İbret-nümâ*, (1191-1198)

Horasanlı Türkmen Mâşûk-ı Tûsî bir öğle vakti yolda karşılaştığı köpeğe taş atar ve köpeğin canını yakar. Köpek hızla kaçarken yeşiller içinde heybetli bir atlı, kamçısı ile Mâşûk-ı Tûsî'ye kuvvetlice vurur ve "Hayvanı niçin incittin, hepimizin mâdeni bir değil mi, hepimiz aynı Allah'ın kulları değil miyiz?" der.³⁰

Tasavvufî düşüncede herkesin aynı cevherden yaratılmış olması, bütün insanlığın ontolojik (varlıksal) olarak eşitliğini, birliğini ve ilâhî kaynağa ortak nispetini ifade eder. Bu yaklaşım, hem vahdet-i vücûd anlayışını

27 Nebi Yılmaz, "Ahmed-i Rıdvân ve Rıdvâniyyesi", (Yüksek Lisans, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2007), 110-113.

28 Nilgün Büyüker, "16. Yüzyıl Şairlerinden Rumelili Zaîfî ve Manzum Büstân Tercümesi: Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt (Metin-Nesre Çeviri-İnceleme)", (Doktora, Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2017), 249-250.

29 Senet tahlili için bkz. Mehmet Akif Coşkun, "Hz. Peygamber'den Nakledilen Kıssalar ve Hadis Usûlü Açısından Değerlendirilmesi", (Doktora, Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2018), 400-403.

30 Çöm, "16. Yüzyıl Ahlâkî Mesnevîleri ve Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî İbret-nümâ Adlı Mesnevîsi", 309-310.

hem de sosyal ve ahlâkî eşitlik olgusuna referans verir. Kesretteki farka takılanlar hataya düşebilir. Vahdet içindeki birliğe ise hikâyede olduğu gibi bir bilen dikkat çeker.

1.2.3. Hak Etmeyene İtibar Etmemeyi Gösteren Köpek

Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt*, (2601-2609)

Bir köpek, bir köylünün ayağını çok kötü ısıtır. Adam ayağının acısıyla bütün gece inler, uyuyamaz. Köylünün kızı babasının acısına şahit olunca önce çok üzülür. Ardından babasına köpek ısırdınca ne yaptığını, neden karşı koymadığını, neden köpeği ısırmadığını sorar. Adam gülümseyerek; “Evet ben de onu ısırabilirdim ama beni zorlasalar bile o köpeğin ayaklarına dişlerimi dokundurmak istemem. Köpeklerle köpek olmak bana yakışmaz” der.³¹

“Köpeklerle köpek olma” sözü, ahlâkî ve özellikle tasavvufî bağlamda nefsin tahrikine kapılmamayı, kötülüğe kötülükle karşılık vermemeyi ve ahlâkî mertebeyi muhafaza etmeyi anlatır. İslam ahlâkında ve tasavvufî edepte, sabır, tahammül ve vakar (ağırbaşlılık) yüksek faziletlerdir. Hikâye, bu faziletlerin sınanıldığı yerlerde imtihanı kaybetmemek gerektiğini hatırlatır. Bireyin eylemlerinde karşıdakinin değil, kendi ahlâkî seviyesinin belirleyici olduğuna dikkat çeken olayda köpek zarar veren eylemi/kötülüğü, köylü ise onun seviyesine düşmeye tenezzül etmeyen ahlâkî temsil eder.

1.2.4. İmanın Önemini Anlatmaya Vesile Olan Köpek

Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî, *İbret-nümâ*, (1165-1174)

Günlerden bir gün Hoca Zengî’ye gelen bir adam, “Siz mi daha iyisiniz yoksa şu çanak

yalayan köpek mi?” diye sorar. Şeyhin etrafındaki mürid ve muhipleri soruyu soran küstah adamı dövmek isterlerde de şeyh onlara engel olur ve “Bunu kimse bilemez, imanımı koruyarak bu dünyadan göçersem ben hayırlıyım, imansız ölecek olursam köpek benden hayırlıdır” buyurur.³²

Kalp ile tasdik, dil ile ikrar ve organlarla amel şeklinde tanımlanan iman, Kur’ân’da tasdik, sadece dilin ikrarı, tevhid, peygamberi onaylama, namaz mânâlarında kullanılır. Kur’ân’da Allah’a, peygamberlerine ve âhiret gününe inananların, sâlih amel işleyenlerin kurtuluşa ereceği³³ ve insanların bu konularda irade hürriyetine sahip kılındıkları³⁴ anlatılır.³⁵ İnsan akıl ve irade sahibi olduğundan dolayı sorumludur. Bu yüzden sûfilere göre şuurla inkâr, şuursuz fitrattan daha aşağıdır. Hikâyede köpek şuursuz fitratı anlatmak üzere kullanılmıştır, diyebiliriz.

1.2.5. Âkıbeti Sorgulamaya Vesile Olan Köpek

Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt*, (2875-2889)

Şair, Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî’nin San’an’da sahrada bir av köpeği gördüğünü naklederek hikâyeye başlar ve şöyle devam eder: Köpek açıklık-

32 Çöm, “16. Yüzyıl Ahlâkî Mesnevîleri ve Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî İbret-nümâ Adlı Mesnevîsi”, 307.

33 *İman eden ve iyi işler yapanlara, kendileri için zemininden ırmaklar akan cennetler bulunduğu müjdesini ver. Onlara cennetteki meyvelerden biri rızık olarak her sunulduğunda, “Bu daha önce de bize rızık olarak verilendir” derler. O kendilerine, benzer şekilde verilmiştir. Ayrıca orada kendileri için tertemiz eşler de vardır ve orada onlar sonsuza kadar kalıcıdırlar.* (Bakara 2/2-5).

34 *Ve de ki: Gerçek, rabbinizden gelendir. Artık dileyen iman etsin dileyen inkâr etsin. Biz, zâ limler için alevleri kendilerini çepeçevre kuşatan bir ateş hazırladık. (Susuzluktan) imdat dileyecek olsalar buna, erimiş maden gibi yüzleri haşlayan bir su ile cevap verilir. Ne fena bir içecek ve ne kötü bir barınak!* (Kehf 18/29).

35 Mustafa Sinanoğlu, “İman”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2000, XXII: 212-214.

31 Büyüker, “16. Yüzyıl Şairlerinden Rumelili Zaîfî ve Manzum Büstân Tercümesi”, 337-338.

tan zayıflamış, bedeni perişanmış. Domuz gibi keskin dişleri, kurbağa gibi kör olmuş. Cüneyd, köpeğin ava gidemeyecek âcizlikte olduğunu görünce ona azığının yarısını vermiş. Ardından Cüneyd'in aklından şunlar geçmiş: O mu ben mi daha iyiyim, kim bilir? Görünüşte bugün ben ondan iyiyim ama kader nasıl yazıldı bilemem. Eğer imanım zayıflarsa, Allah'ın af tacını alabileceğim miyim? Eğer bedenden mârifet elbisesi ayrılırsa itten beter olurum. Çünkü it bu kötü nâm ile ölürse ona "yürü, cehenneme git!" demezler.³⁶

Allah, ilâhî sıfatlar, fiiller, isimler ve tecelliler hakkında mânevî tecrübeyle doğrudan elde edilen bilgi anlamına gelen mârifet için sûfîler, bu bilginin sülûk vasıtasıyla yaşanarak elde edileceğini işaret ederler. Aynı zamanda bu bilgilerin aynı konularda akıl, istidlâl ve kıyaslarla yahut belli metinleri okumakla elde edilen bilgilerden daha üstün olduğunu söylerler. Öte yandan İslâm ahlâk literatüründe mârifet-i nefis, insanın kendi ruh dünyasının ahlâkî boyutunu, karakter yapısını, ahlâka temel oluşturan yeteneklerini ve zaafalarını tanımasını ifade etmektedir. Bu çaba, ahlâkî eğitim ve gelişmenin, yani kişinin ruhunu kötü huylardan arındırıp erdemlerle bezemesinin ilk şartıdır.³⁷ Buradan hareketle hikâyede geçen mârifet elbisesi, kalbin ilâhî hakikatle donanmış, kötü huy ve alışkanlıklardan temizlenmiş hâlini temsil eder, demek hatalı olmaz. Tasavvufî gelenekte kul bir yandan bu elbiseyi korumak ile yükümlü iken diğer yandan âkıbetinden de emin değildir. Bu idrak ile tevâzu ve ihlâsını korumanın yanı sıra nefsanîyet tuzaklarından uzak durmak üzere sorumluluk taşır. Oysa hikâyenin işaret ettiği gibi köpek idrak sahibi değildir, bu sorgulamayı yapamaz; dolayısı ile sorgulanmaz.

36 Büyüker, "16. Yüzyıl Şairlerinden Rumelili Zaîfî ve Manzum Büstân Tercümesi", 358-359.

37 Süleyman Uludağ, "Mârifet", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2003, XXXVIII: 54-56.

1.2.6. Gönül Gözü ile Bakmaya Vesile Olan Köpek

Ahmed-i Rıdvân, *Mahzenü'l-Esrâr*, (1404-1423)

Hiz. İsâ, bir köşeye çekilip oturmaz, birkaç dostu ile sürekli gezer, dolaşır. Bir gün, kargaların üzerine üşüştüğü ölü bir köpek görürler. Köpek çok kötü kokmakta, etrafa rahatsızlık vermektedir. Birisi "Bu köpek leşi insanın gözünü kör eder ve gönül gözünün nurunu söndürür" deyince diğerleri de leşi lanetlemeye başlarlar. Hiz. İsâ ise ölü köpeğe bakar ve "Ne güzel inci gibi dişleri var" der. Sonra da etrafındakilere "Çevrenize bakıp ayıp ve kusurları görmek yerine kendi nefsinize bakın. Karşıya bakarken güzelliklere odaklanın" der.³⁸

Tasavvufî anlayışta başkalarının ayıplarını örtmek ve her yerde güzeli görmek hem ahlâkî kemâlin hem de kalbin saflaşmasının işaretidir. Bu iki özellik, tasavvufta "hüsni-zan", "setr-i ayb" ve "cemâlî bakış" gibi kavramlarla ifade edilir. Bunlar, nefsin terbiyesi ve ilâhî ahlâkla ahlâklanma sürecinin ürünüdür. Allah nasıl kullarının ayıplarını örtüyorsa, kul da kardeşinin kusurunu teşhir etmek yerine örtmeli, dua ve şefkatle yaklaşmalı, önce kendi kusurlarıyla meşgul olmalıdır. Sûfîlere göre, kişinin başkasındaki kusuru görmesi, kendi iç âleminin yansıması hatta nefsin hilesi olup kibrin ve benliğin eseridir. Tıpkı hikâyede öğütlediği gibi kusuru örtücü göz ile bakabilme kabiliyeti öncelikle kendi nefesine odaklanmak ile olur ve bu anlamda köpek leşi cemâlî bakış için zor sınavlardan biri olarak gözükmetedir.

38 Avni Gözütok, *Hayâtî (Metin-Dizin-Tıpkı Basım)*. (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Yay., 2001), 157-159.

1.2.7. Kulun Âcizliğini Anlatmaya Vesile Olan Köpek

Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed, *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt*, (2784-2801)

Eski püskü giyinen, tek başına virânesinde yaşayan bir ârif, dünyadan elini eteğini çekmiş, oturur. Günün birinde adamın biri ârifin evinden bir köpek uluması duyar. Adam garipser çünkü eski püskü giyinen derviş, hayvanı bırak insan dostu bile değildir. Eve gider, köpeği arar ama evde âriften başkası yoktur. Yaptığından utanmıştır ki içeriden ârifin ayak seslerini işitir. Ârif, adamı içeriye davet eder. “Burada uluyanı köpek zannettin, ancak o bendim. Çünkü Allah’ın biçareliği kabul ettiğini gördüm; kibri bıraktım, akli baştan attım. Köpekten daha zavallısının olmadığını gördüm ve Allah’ın kapısında köpek gibi çok bağırdım.”³⁹

Tasavvuf klasiklerinde üstünde durulan konulardan biri olan kulun âcizliği, 11. yüzyıl sonrasında Tanrı ile beşer, XVII. yüzyıl sonrasında ise Âlem-Âdem-Tanrı ilişkisi üzerinden tartışılmıştır. Bu tartışmalarda her şeye muktedir olduğunu sanan insanın hüsrânına dair örnekler Kur’ân ve sünnet ışığında değerlendirilmiş, âcizliğin idraki imanının kemâli olarak gösterilmiştir.⁴⁰ Kul, âcizliğini anlarsa, rahmet ve keremin sahibinin Allah olduğunu idrak eder. Böylece ne kendi ameline güvenip kibre düşer ne de kulluğunu yeterli görür. Hikâyede köpek uluması bu âcizliğin idrakine işaret ederken, ârif kendi hâlini köpekten daha zavallı olarak vurgular.

1.2.8. Kadere İnanmaya Vesile Olan Köpek

Ahmed-i Rıdvân, *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr*, (1156-1198)

Yetenekli bir avcının, her kokuyu alan iyi bir av köpeği vardır. Sadık köpek, bir gün gözüne kestirdiği bir avın peşine düşer. Uzun süre kovalar ve gözden kaybolur. Avcı, köpeğinin ayak izlerini takip ederek peşine düşer, durmaksızın her yerde onu arar ama bulamaz. Çok üzülür, arkasından ağlar, yokluğuna alışmaya çalışır. Derken avcı bir gün bir tilki görür. Tilki ona üzülmemesi gerektiğini, ölenin sadece bir köpek olduğunu, kendisi hayatta olduğu için mutlu olmasını ama sevgili dostuna vefa gösteremediğini, onun için canını tehlikeye atıp da onu kurtaramadığını söyler. Sözlerinde suçlayıcı bir taraf da vardır. Avcı “Bu dünya böyledir, üzüntü de var, sevinç de var. Gün doğmadan neler doğar, köpeğim de geri gelir” diyerek tilkiye pabuç bırakmaz. Sözlerini bitirirken aslan gibi bir köpek gelir, tilkiyi öldürür. Gelen avcının köpeğidir. Köpek; “Eğer geç kaldımsa beni affet. Allah’ın kaderi ile gittim ve döndüm çünkü tilkinin eceli gelmişti. Yokluğum tilkinin gözünü açtı, gönlüne şüphe düşürdü. Oysa Allah daha biz dünyaya gelmeden rızımızı belirlemiştir. Senin yediğin Allah’ın sana nasip olarak gönderdiği, giydiğin de vücuduna giydirdiği. Çünkü Allah insanın rızıkına kefil olduğuna dair söz verdi. Olmayınca üzölmeye gerek yok. Kaderde ne yazılı ise insanın başına gelir, ondan kaçılmaz” der.⁴¹

Allah’ın nesneleri ve olayları, özellikle sorumluluk doğuran beşerî fiilleri, ezelde planlayıp zamanı gelince yaratması, inanç dünyasında imanın şartlarından biridir. Allah’ın bütün nesne ve olayları ezeli ilmiyle bilip belirlemesi şeklinde tanımlanan kader, ezeli planın önceden yazıldığına, bu âlemde

39 Büyüker, “16. Yüzyıl Şairlerinden Rumelili Zaîfî ve Manzum Büstân Tercümesi”, 351-352.

40 Mustafa Çağrııcı, “Ucb”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2012, XLII: 36-37.

41 Gözütok, *Hayâtî*, 136-140.

sebeplere takılmanın doğru olmayacağına da işaret eder.⁴² Avcının tilkiye “Bu hayatta sevinç/hüzün beraber yer alır” demesi, köpeğin kaybolması karşısındaki tevekküllü davranışını ve kader planına olan inancını gösterir. Köpeğin avcıya söyledikleri ise Kur’ân’da birçok âyette işaret edildiği gibi rızkın Allah’tan olduğuna dairdir. Âyetler sadece insanın değil, tüm mahlûkatın rızkının Allah’ın garantisinde olduğuna işaret eder.⁴³ Sûfîlere göre rızık endişesi, kulun nefesine ve dünyevî tedbirlerine aşırı güvenmesinden doğar. Hakiki mü’min, sebeplere başvurur ama kalben yalnız Allah’a güvenir. Köpek, sözlerinde bu güveni anlatmaktadır.

Sonuç

XVI. yüzyılda kaleme alınan dinî, ahlâkî, tasavvufî mesnevîler içinde köpek veya köpek metaforuna yer veren hikâyelerin tespitine ve tasnifine ilişkin sonuçlar özetle şöyledir:

- 24 mesnevî içinde 8 eserde, hikâyenin konusu içinde baş/yan karakter olarak “Köpek” içeren hikâyeler tespit edilmiştir. Bu eserler, *Rıdvâniyye* ve *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Ahmed-i Rıdvân), *Kitâb-ı Bâğ-ı Behişt* (Zaîfî Pîr Muhammed), *Kitab-ı Usûl* (Taşlıcalı Yahyâ), *Riyazü’s-Sâlikîn* ve *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî), *Heşt Bihişt* ve *İbret-nümâ* (Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî)’dır. 8 eser içinde 16 hikâye tespiti yapılmıştır. Bunlardan 7 tanesi konusu itibarı ile insanı helâke götüren, 9 tanesi ise insanı kurtuluşa götüren konular içindedir.
- 24 mesnevî içinde 16 eserde, hikâyenin konusu içinde baş/yan karakter olarak “Köpek” içeren hikâye tespit edilmemiştir. Bu eserler, *Mahzenü’l-Esrâr* (Behiştî,

Ahmed Sinân Çelebi), *Tuhfetü’l-Uşşâk* (Üsküplü Atâ), *Pend-nâme* ve *İbret-nâme* (Güvâhî), *Güvâhî* (Hızrî), *Gülşen-i Ebrâr* ve *Ma’den-i Esrâr* (Münîrî), *Gül-i Sad-Berg* (Bursalı Rahmî), *Heşt Behişt* (Behiştî, Vizeli Ramazan), *Gencîne-i Râz* ve *Gülşen-i Envâr* (Taşlıcalı Yahyâ), *Nakş-ı Hayâl* (Âzerî İbrâhim Çelebi), *Câmiu’n-Nesâyih* (Hüseyin Ahmed-i Sirozî), *Riyazü’l-Cinân* ve *Cilâü’l-Kulûb* (Cinânî), *Mir’âtü’l-Ahlâk* (Şemseddîn-i Sivâsî), *İsimsiz Mesnevi*, *Netice-i Sülûk* (Cemâlî)’tür.

- 24 mesnevî içinde baş/yan rol olmayıp, diğer hayvanlar ile adı anılan ve/veya bir rolü olmayıp sadece huylarına sıfat olarak atıf yapılan hikâyeler bulunmuş ancak çalışma sınırları içinde bu hikâyeler tespit ve tasnife alınmamıştır. Örneğin XVI. yüzyıl içinde sultanların, beylerin av ritüelleri içinde köpek vazgeçilmez bir figür olarak pek çok hikâyede geçer veya sürüleri bekleyen, kapı bekleyen köpek, sadık dost olarak anılır.
- İnsanı helâke götüren konular içinde köpek/köpek metaforu ile işlenen başlıklar nefis odaklı olup, nefs-i emmâre (kötülüğü emreden nefis) veya hayvanî nefis mertebesi olarak da gösterilen nefis konularına (kendini bilmemek, kibre düşmek, gösteriş ve riyâ, kisveye önem vermek, harama meyil vb.) yöneliktir. Bu başlık altındaki hikâyelerden nefsin bir araç olarak kullanılması ve eğitilmesinin gerekliliği genel sonucu elde edilir.
- İnsanı kurtuluşa götüren konular içinde köpek/köpek metaforu ile işlenen hikâyeler, akıbetin bilinmemesi, kulun âcizliği, Hakk’ın rahmeti, her canlının Allah katında eşit oluşu, iman ve kader konularında öğütler verir, uyarır. Bu

42 Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Kader”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2001, XXIV: 58-63.

43 *Yeryüzünde rızık Allah’a ait olmayan hiçbir canlı yoktur...* (Hûd 11/6).

hikâyelerde insandan aşağı bir varlık olarak köpek, kulun Allah katındaki durumuna referans ile verilir. İlâhî olan ile beşer arasındaki ilişkide beşerin durumu ve aczi için köpek/köpek metaforları kullanılır.

- Hikâyeler genelinde köpek olumsuz bir olay örgüsü içinde verilse de insanı insan yapan değerleri öğütleyen olumlu sonuçlara vesiledir.

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Aḥmadu Bamba and the Preceding Sufi Heritage: Tracing the Intellectual Sources of Bamba's Sufi Writings*

Ahmedü Bamba ve Selefleri:

Bamba'nın Tasavvufî Yazılarının Fikrî İzlerini Sürmek

Khadim Cheikhouna MBACKE**

Abstract

This study examines the intellectual formation of Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke (d. 1927), founder of the *al-Murīdiyya* Sufi order in Senegal, whose teachings have significantly shaped West African Islamic thought and practice. While the socio-political influence of *al-Murīdiyya* has been widely acknowledged, the intellectual foundations of Bamba's Sufi thought remain insufficiently explored. This research hypothesizes that Bamba's thought was profoundly shaped by classical Sufi figures such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), 'Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rānī (d. 973/1565), Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), Ibn 'Atā' Allah as-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309), as well as Mauritanian scholars including Sīdī Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu (d. 1226/1811) and Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār ad-Daymānī (d. 1166/1753). Notably, Bamba distanced himself from speculative and philosophical Sufism, instead emphasizing a practical, ethically grounded Sufism centered on spiritual discipline, moral reform, and communal service. Through textual analysis and historical contextualization, this study investigates how these intellectual and spiritual currents informed Bamba's synthesis of Sufi pedagogy and reform, contributing to a localized yet universal model of Islamic spirituality.

Keywords: Sufism, West Africa, Senegal, Aḥmadu Bamba, al-Murīdiyya Sufi Order

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** **ORCID:** 0000-0002-4858-8101. MA, Ibn Haldun University, Department of Islamic Studies,
E-mail: mbacke.khadim@ihu.edu.tr

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Senegal’de Mürîdiyye tarikatini kuran ve öğretileriyle Batı Afrika İslam düşünce ve pratiğini derinden etkileyen Ahmedü Bamba Mbacke’nin (ö. 1927) fikir dünyasının teşekkülünü incelemektedir. Mürîdiyye’nin sosyo-politik etkisi yaygın olarak kabul edilmekle birlikte, Bamba’nın tasavvuf anlayışının entelektüel arka planı yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu araştırma, Bamba’nın düşüncesinin Ebû Hâmid el-Gazzâlî (ö. 505/1111), Abdu’l-Vahhâb eş-Şa’rânî (ö. 973/1565), Ahmed Zerrûk (ö. 899/1493), İbn Atâullah el-İskenderî (ö. 709/1309) gibi büyük sufilerin yanı sıra, Muhtâr b. Ahmed Küntî (ö. 1226/1811) ve Muhtâr ed-Deymânî (ö. 1166/1753) gibi Moritanya kökenli âlimlerin etkisiyle şekillendiği hipotezine dayanmaktadır. Bamba, hususen spekülâtif ve felsefî tasavvuftan uzak durarak, mânevî disiplin, ahlâkî ıslah ve toplumsal hizmet merkezli pratik ve etik temelli bir tasavvufu ön plana çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma, metin analizi ve tarihsel bağlamlandırma yoluyla, söz konusu entelektüel ve mânevî akımların Bamba’nın tasavvufî eğitim ve ıslah anlayışına nasıl yön verdiğini incelemekte ve kökleri yerel ancak nitelikleri evrensel olan bir İslâmî mâneviyat modeline katkılarını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, Batı Afrika, Senegal; Ahmedü Bamba, Mürîdiyye

Introduction

The study of Islamic intellectual history is enriched by figures whose contributions have shaped religious thought and left enduring legacies within specific socio-cultural contexts. One such figure is Shaykh Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, the founder of the *al-Murîdiyya* Sufi order in Senegal. Revered for his deep spirituality and transformative teachings, Bamba emphasized unwavering faith, devotion, and a disciplined spiritual journey toward Allah. His life, deeply rooted in the pursuit of knowledge, religious observance, and moral excellence (*iḥsân*), profoundly influenced the Sufi tradition in West Africa, particularly in Senegal.

Over the past few decades, a growing body of scholarship has explored the multifaceted dimensions of Aḥmadu Bamba’s life and the development of *al-Murîdiyya*. These works have shed light on the historical, spiritual, literary, and social aspects of his legacy. Despite the richness of this scholarship, one critical area remains underexplored: the intellectual sources and Sufi figures that shaped Aḥmadu Bamba’s Sufi writings and spiritual vision.

This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the intellectual and spiritual founda-

tions underpinning Aḥmadu Bamba’s Sufi writings. Understanding these foundations is crucial for situating Bamba’s thought within the broader Sufi tradition and assessing the originality of his contributions. This study argues that Bamba’s Sufi vision was shaped by a creative and selective engagement with classical Sufi texts and ideas, deeply rooted in earlier traditions yet distinctly adapted to his historical and cultural milieu in colonial Senegal.

To pursue this inquiry, the study is guided by two central research questions: How did Aḥmadu Bamba engage with and adapt existing Sufi traditions to articulate his teachings? What are the key sources cited or echoed in his literary corpus, and how do they reflect his intellectual and spiritual lineage? By addressing these questions, the research aims to achieve two primary objectives. First, it seeks to identify and analyze the Sufi sources embedded in Bamba’s written works—his poetry, letters, treatises, and sermons—with special attention to his engagement with classical Sufi literature. This textual analysis is intended to reveal recurring themes

and references that indicate his intertextual dialogues with past Sufi masters. Second, the study aims to establish a conceptual map of Bamba's intellectual heritage that can serve as a foundation for future research on *al-Murīdiyya*'s significance within both West African Islam and the global Sufi tradition.

The study begins with a biographical overview of Aḥmadu Bamba, followed by situating his writings within the broader Sufi tradition through examining his approach towards earlier Sufi literature. The research further explores Bamba's major Sufi works, then provides a detailed analysis of the texts and scholars that influenced his Sufi thought. The study concludes with reflections on Bamba's contributions to Islamic intellectual and spiritual history, offering a foundation for future research on the global significance of *al-Murīdiyya*.

1. Aḥmadu Bamba: A Short Biography

Aḥmadu Bamba's complete name is Aḥmad or Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabībullāh.¹ He is renowned by various nicknames in Senegal, such as *Serigne Touba* (the *Sheikh* of Tūbā), *Borom Touba* (the owner of Tūbā),

Seugn Bu Mak Bi (the greatest *Sheikh*), and *Khadīm ar-Rasūl* (the Prophet's Servant).² He was born in 1854³ in Mbacké Bawol, a city built by his great-grandfather Muḥammad al-Khayr in 1781.

Aḥmadu Bamba was descended from a distinguished family known for their piety, knowledge, nobility, and righteousness. His father, well-known as Momar Anta Sali, was a noble scholar, recognized by Muslims as an *imām*, and admired by the kings and princes for his wisdom, knowledge, sincerity, and sound judgment.⁴ He established a prominent Islamic school and served as a respected judge and an advisor to Prince Latjor Joob (d.1886).⁵ Aḥmadu Bamba's mother is Sokhna Maryam Bousso (Mām Jāra), renowned as *Jāratullāh* (the Almighty's neighbor) for her piety and devoted worship.⁶ Bamba grew up immersed in Qur'ānic education and had substantial knowledge of *sharī'a* sciences and language under his family's guidance. His thirst for knowledge led him on numerous journeys across the country to seek wisdom and experiences of different scholars.⁷

Aḥmadu Bamba began his educational activities as an assistant teacher in his father's school, where he displayed extraordinary teaching and writing skills, earning admiration, especially from his father, who eventually entrusted him with overseeing a significant portion of the school's administration and teaching. Following his father's passing, he continued this role for a year. Then, in the early days of 1883, he gathered the students

1 Important sources for Ahmadu Bamba's Biography are as follows:

a. Muhammad Abdullah al-'Alawi, *Nafahāt al-Miskīyya fī al-Sīrati al-Mbakkiyya*, ed. Mohammed Bamba Drame and Abu Madyan Shu'ayb Thiaw, (Rabat: Dār al-Amān, 2019).

b. Muhammad al-Bashir Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm fī Sīrati al-Sheikh al-Khadīm*, ed. Dr. Muhammad Shakrun, (Cairo: Dar Al-Muqattam for Publishing and Distribution, 2017).

c. Muhammad al-Amin Diop ad-Daghani, *Irwaa'u an-Nadīm min 'Adhbi Ḥubbi al-Khadīm*, edited by a group of researchers, (Rabat: al-Ma'ārif al-Jadīda Printing Press, 2017).

d. Rawdu al-Rayahin, *al-Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke Abdullah awa Khadīmu Rasūlihī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr for Printing and Publishing, 2022).

e. Muhammad al-Murtada Mbacke, *al-Murīdiyya al-ḥaqīqa wa al-wāqī wa āfāq al-mustaqbal*, (Rabat: al-Ma'ārif al-Jadīda Printing Press, 2011).

2 See 'Abdou Diouf, *Murīdiyya: A Revivalist Sufi Order in Senegal*, (MA, Ibn Haldun University School of Islamic Studies, 2021), 9.

3 Some reports have said that he was born in 1853, while others suggest 1855, 1856, and 1857. See Rawdu, *Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba*, 19.

4 Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm*, 47.

5 Ibid.

6 Diouf, *Murīdiyya*, 10.

7 Rawdu, *Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba*, 27.

and said: “Let whoever has accompanied us for only learning (mere learning of knowledge) go where they wish and seek what suits them. And whoever desires what we desire, let them hasten in our path and abide by our command.” This declaration caused a significant stir among those deciding whether to stay or depart, eventually resulting in a select few remaining and becoming the initial nucleus of the *Murīdiyya* Sufi order.⁸

Aḥmadu Bamba stated that Prophet Muḥammad instructed him as follows: “Raise your companions through high determination (*himma*), not only teaching.” Embracing this directive, Aḥmadu Bamba encouraged his followers to exert themselves through rigorous exercises, fasting, frequent remembrance of God, strict observance of purity, and seclusion from people, particularly women, surpassing others in their commitment.⁹

A resentment among Bamba’s detractors began to grow, as large numbers responded to his call and rallied around him. This led to suspicions and allegations made to the French colonial authorities dominating the region.¹⁰ Conflicts ensued between the Sheikh and the colonial power, which resulted in his exile to Gabon from 1895 to 1902, then to Mauritania from 1903 to 1907, followed by a period in the area of Djolof in Senegal from 1907 to 1912, and eventually the house arrest in the city of Diourbel from 1912 until his passing in 1927. His body was laid to rest in his city, Touba, where his shrine became a renowned place of pilgrimage.¹¹

Aḥmadu Bamba’s contributions to Sufism reflect his broader mission to fight against ignorance and religious innovations (*bid‘a*) through the dissemination of knowledge and

spiritual reform. At the heart of his intellectual legacy is a vast body of Sufi literature that includes poetic and didactic works aimed at guiding disciples (*murīds*) on the spiritual path. He produced foundational texts such as *Masālik al-jinān* (Pathways of Paradise), which explores the principles and branches of Sufism, and *Ḥuqa-l-bukā’u* (On Weeping Over Deceased Sufis), which addresses the ethics of Sufi life and the relationship between the shaykh and the disciple. Other notable works include ethical guides like *Nahj qaḍā’ al-ḥāj* (The Path to Fulfilling the Need), abridgements of classical texts such as *Munawwir aṣ-ṣudūr* (Illumination of the Hearts), and devotional poems like *Maghāliq an-nīrān* (The Locks of Hell) and *Jālibat al-burūr* (The Bringer of Good Fortunes). His teachings extended to reflections on detachment from the world in *Silk al-jawāhir* (Gems on the String), and he composed numerous collections of letters, *fatwās*, and legal opinions addressing various aspects of Islamic thought. A significant portion of his oeuvre also comprises praise poems dedicated to Allah, Prophet Muḥammad, and spiritual themes, many of which can be found in manuscript form. Through this rich corpus, Bamba not only revived and systematized Islamic knowledge but also provided a comprehensive Sufi framework that continues to shape the *Murīdiyya* tradition.

2. Aḥmadu Bamba and the Preceding Sufi Heritage

Aḥmadu Bamba employed *Baghdādī* Sufism to address existential issues facing a society oppressed by two dominant forces: the aristocratic power and the French colonial power.¹² However, Aḥmadu Bamba engaged with *Baghdādī* Sufism critically, extracting

8 ad-Daghānī, *Irwā’u an-Nadīm*, 75.

9 Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm*, 63.

10 ad-Daghānī, *Irwā’u an-Nadīm*, 109–111.

11 See Muhammad al-Murtada Mbacke, *al-Murīdiyya*, 81; ad-Daghānī, *Irwā’u an-Nadīm*, 128.

12 See Muhammad Gallay Ndiaye, “al-Jadal al-‘aqīm bayn al-anā wa-l-ākhar fī qirā’at at-turāth al-khadīmiyy,” *al-Wa’y al-Murīdiyyu* 1, (2008): 40.

its essence and aligning it with the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. He emphasized grounding Sufi discussions in these foundational texts, which is evident in his *fatwās* and correspondences. Bamba carefully chose reliable references in Sunnī Sufism, avoiding the inclusion of questionable or incorrect opinions attributed to specific Sufi figures. His approach prioritized purity and authenticity in Sufi teachings that also influenced his writings and teachings, which will be elaborated on later in this study.¹³

Aḥmadu Bamba followed a unique methodology in dealing with these sources and references, which can be outlined as follows:

1. Representing the most essential purposes of serious scientific research, such as:
 - a. Collecting scattered pearls of wisdom within the pages of Sufi books and compiling them into a single classification, similar to his work *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*.
 - b. Many students overlook the importance of abbreviating lengthy books due to their difficulty and complexity, resulting in a lack of understanding of their subject matter. Commenting on the references he used when composing his book *Masālik al-jinān* he said: "But their books were lengthy, which most of this generation neglected."¹⁴
 - c. Explaining complex issues in Sufism and reorganizing them creatively to simplify and clarify concepts.
 - d. Discovering new insights and correcting errors made by some individuals due to shortcomings in understanding language and context or deviating from the truth. In *Masālik al-jinān* he said:

13 See Ahmad Mokhtar Lo, "Manhaj Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba fī tahdhīb al-fikr aṣ-ṣūfī wa tanqiyatih," *The African Scholars Journal of Islamic Studies* 4 (2021): 382.

14 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, ed. Rawdu-r-Rayahin, (Rabat: Maṭba'at al-Ma'ārif al-Jadīda. 2017), 59.

Some claim to seek closeness to Allah, abandoning worship until they perish, leading them astray due to misunderstanding, defiling their minds, and lacking knowledge. This is because they interpreted the term 'certainty' at the end of Surah *al-Hijr*, – meaning Allah's statement, 'And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty' – to mean attaining certainty, when, in fact, it means death.¹⁵

The editors of *Masālik al-jinān* highlight that Aḥmadu Bamba's contribution to the book went beyond mere versification of Muḥammad al-Yadālī's (d. 1166/1753) *al-Khātima*; instead, he presented it within the context of his personal Sufi perspective, integrating his educational methodology for social reform and religious renewal. The book, therefore, serves as a summary of the distinctive *Murīdī* Sufi thought shaped by Aḥmadu Bamba's unique contributions.¹⁶

2. Selecting and categorizing Sufi sources, relying only on the most authentic and reliable ones that align closely with the *Sunnah*. Philosophical Sufi works, such as those by Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922), are excluded due to their controversial nature. Despite the different views among scholars regarding these figures, ranging from efforts to seek excuses for to efforts to exonerate them, Aḥmadu Bamba chose to refrain from mentioning their names in his writings. He avoided mentioning them in his books, and did not rely on their work to determine or formulate his thoughts or take any position indicating agreement or condemnation towards them.¹⁷

3. Avoiding Sufi Esoteric Discourses (*Shaṭaḥāt*): One common criticism levelled at both classical and contemporary

15 Ibid. 177.

16 Ibid. 21.

17 Lo, *Manhaj Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba*, 386-387.

Sufi thought is the proliferation of peculiar behaviors and statements among the general public. These often contradict the principles of *sharīʿa* and the fundamentals of religion, leading their proponents to be accused of straying from the faith and facing condemnation and curses from believers, especially among the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*.¹⁸ The phenomenon of “*shaṭḥ*” is attributed by researchers to the prevailing intellectual trend in Sufi thought since the third century of the Hijra. ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān Badawī (d. 2002) states: “We find genuine *shaṭḥ* for the first time with Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/875) in the third century of the Hijra, where he employs the original form of this phenomenon, namely speaking in the first-person narrative.”

Aḥmadu Bamba’s writings clearly reflect a deliberate avoidance of relying on Sufi authorities associated with this school, demonstrating caution by adhering strictly to the purified *sharīʿa* and distancing himself from such influences. We do not find any indication of adopting or promoting such *shaṭaḥāt* in his writings. Instead, he opposes them, elucidating a sound approach to dealing with the Sufi heritage based on careful selection and discernment. In a *fatwā* about some Sufi concepts and terminologies, he responded, saying:

As for your question about apparent annihilation (*al-fanāʾ az-ẓāhir*) and inner annihilation (*al-fanāʾ al-bāṭin*), apparent annihilation means not stepping out of the circle of the purified *Sharīʿa*, while inner annihilation is your stillness under the carpet of illuminated *Ḥaqīqa*. (...) In the distinction between *al-Aḥadiyya* and *al-Wāḥidiyya*: *al-Aḥadiyya* is the removal of everything else from the heart besides Him, and *al-Wāḥidiyya* is the removal of

the love of inclination towards anything other than Him from the heart. (...) And in the distinction between *al-Maḥw* and *Maḥw al-Maḥw*: *al-Maḥw* is the absence of seeing anything other than the reward of Allah, Blessed and Exalted, and *Maḥw al-Maḥw* is the absence of seeing what emanates from you to your Lord of good deeds.¹⁹

In this *fatwā*, Aḥmadu Bamba did not conventionally interpret these terms as the proponents of *shaṭḥ* understood them. Instead, he associated them with precise *sharīʿa* meanings devoid of any implication of union (*ittiḥād*) or incarnation (*ḥulūl*).

It is important to clarify that while Aḥmadu Bamba avoided explicitly citing the works and scholars of this school in his Sufi writings, this does not mean he refrained from mentioning them in all his writings. He mentioned some of them in his supplicatory poems, praying to Allah for their sake. This is exemplified in his renowned poem *Khamsatu-r-rijāl*, where he invoked Allah through the intercession of Prophet Muḥammad and five esteemed Sufi figures, including Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 234/848?).²⁰

Thus, Aḥmadu Bamba’s approach to Sufism was characterized by a careful selection of the Sufi heritage, distinguishing between its beneficial and problematic aspects. He sought ways of grounding Sufi concepts on their foundational sources, which are the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, and thus, reviving practical Sufism in Senegal while avoiding philosophical interpretations. In addition to *Baghdādī* Sufism, he integrated elements from his African heritage

18 Ibid. 388.

19 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, ed. the Khadmīyya Association for Researchers and Scholars, (Rabat: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʾārif al-Jadīda, 2018), 85.

20 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān saʿādāt al-murīdīn*, ed. ar-Rābiṭa al-Khadīmiyya, (Rabat: Dār al-Amān li an-Nashr wa at-Tawzīʿ, 2021), 339-341.

that aligned with Islamic *sharīʿa*²¹ into his teachings, infusing his Sufi thought with an African essence.

3. Aḥmadu Bamba's Sufi Writings: Influential Figures and Sources

This section delves into the key figures and sources that profoundly influenced Aḥmadu Bamba's Sufi writings throughout his life, focusing on the books he frequently referenced. This analysis is essential for elucidating the fundamental characteristics of Bamba's Sufi thought. By examining these foundational influences, we gain deeper insight into the development and distinct characteristics of his spiritual and intellectual legacy.

The section will begin by discussing the key figures in Bamba's life, focusing on their role in his spiritual and intellectual progression until he declared that he had been ordered to pledge allegiance exclusively to Prophet Muḥammad. This discussion will highlight the sources Bamba frequently referenced in his Sufi writings. Each stage contains numerous sub-stages, which will be carefully analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Bamba's spiritual evolution and literary contributions. The approach adopted here is to provide a brief overview of each scholar's life, followed by a concise discussion of their presence in Aḥmadu Bamba's writings, and concluding with examples of their influence.

3.1. Before Pledging Allegiance to Prophet Muḥammad (1854-1893)

This stage is considered one of the most significant phases in Aḥmadu Bamba's life.

21 See Moustapha Diope al-Kokkiyyu, *al-'Umda fī naẓariyyati al-khidma*, (Rabat: Maṭba'atu al-Ma'ārif al-Jadīda, 2019), 163; Gallay Ndiaye, *Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba: Sabīl as-salām*, (Rabat: Maṭba'at al Ma'ārif al-Jadīda, 2011), 10.

During this period, his Sufi personality was formed, and he proclaimed his call for renewal, while outlining the principles of his Sufi order. Moreover, this stage marked the prolific production of his scholarly legacy, including his most renowned works on Sufism and other fields. Additionally, this period witnessed numerous political and social changes that Aḥmadu Bamba interacted with, playing a prominent role in shaping his Sufi thought, as previously discussed. Reflecting on the course of Aḥmadu Bamba's life during this stage and the developments that occurred in his Sufi persona, we can divide this period into three sub-stages: the stage of upbringing and the initiation into the Sufi path, the stage of seeking knowledge and authorship, and finally, the Stage of Collecting Sufi *wirds* and searching for sheikhs.

3.1.1. The Stage of Upbringing and Initiation into the Sufi Path

This stage, covering roughly from Aḥmadu Bamba's birth in 1854 to 1866 when he turned twelve, overlaps with the subsequent stage. During this period, his mother, Sokhna Maryam Bousso, had a prominent role, as she had a profound influence on Bamba's education and spiritual life. The significant influence of his father, Muḥammad ibn Ḥabībullah, during this period is also remarkable, noting that under his guidance, Bamba engaged in ascetic practices, fasting, and constant remembrance of Allah.²²

3.1.2. The Stage of Seeking Knowledge and Authorship

This stage extends from Aḥmadu Bamba's early pursuit of knowledge until his father's passing in 1881, marked a crucial phase in his scholarly development. This period laid the foundation for his Sufi journey

22 See Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm*, 130-132.

and marked the beginning of his profound engagement with Sufi literature. In this stage, Aḥmadu Bamba's intellectual development was influenced by prominent figures such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), 'Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rānī (d. 973/1565), Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), Ibn 'Aṭā' Allah as-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309), and Mauritanian scholars like Sheikh Sīdī Mukhtār al-Kuntīyyu (d. 1226/1811) and Muhammad ibn al-Mukhtār ad-Daymānī (d. 1166/1753). These scholars played crucial roles in shaping Aḥmadu Bamba's understanding of Sufism and contributed significantly to his Writings.

3.1.2.1. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) is considered one of the renewers (*mojaddid*) of the fifth century of the Hijra. He represents a symbol of moderate Sunnī Sufism, adhering to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* while rejecting esoteric and gnostic views that influenced some Sufis through the impact of philosophy or ancient Eastern religions.²³ Al-Ghazzālī had a notable impact on Aḥmadu Bamba in his early stages of spiritual development, and this influence continued into the later stages of his life, with al-Ghazzālī consistently present in Bamba's Sufi thought. Some aspects of this influence can be summarized as follows:

1. The first Sufi book acquired by Aḥmadu Bamba in his early days was al-Ghazzālī's *Bidāyat al-Hidāya* (The Way of Salvation). He thoroughly read and studied this book, then versified it into poetry in 1875 to facilitate memorization for his students. He named this work *Mulayyin aṣ-Ṣudūr* (The Soother of Hearts). Later, during his stay in Mauritania in 1906, he abridged and refined the book and change the title to

Munawwir aṣ-Ṣudūr (The Enlightener of Souls). This book was the primary source for Aḥmadu Bamba's early involvement in Sufism. Bamba narrates a captivating tale of his first book acquisition, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*. He recounts seeing it with a Mauritanian in the region of Sālum and negotiating its purchase for a dirham. Wanting to honor his commitment, Aḥmadu Bamba took the Mauritanian to collect the price from a well-known merchant who was a disciple of his father. However, upon seeing Aḥmadu Bamba's ragged clothing, the merchant reprimanded him and provided a new white garment, urging him to discard the old one. Aḥmadu Bamba outwardly complied yet secretly retained his old garment. After the encounter, he returned to the Mauritanian, exchanged the new garment for the book, and dedicated himself to studying it diligently.²⁴

2. In his early life, Aḥmadu Bamba extensively engaged with the works of al-Ghazzālī, particularly focusing on *Minhāj al-Ābidīn* (The Path of the Worshipers) and *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences).²⁵ This led to his heavy reliance on these works and their author, especially *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm ad-Dīn* which served as a primary source for Aḥmadu Bamba's work *Masālik al-jinān*. Additionally, al-Ghazzālī's *Minhāj al-Ābidīn* was also an essential source for some of Aḥmadu Bamba's writings, *fatwās*, and valuable advice, such as *Faṭḥ al-Manān fī Jawāb 'Abd ar-Raḥmān* (The Gift

23 See Shams ad-Dīn adh-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām an-nubalā'* (Beirut: ar-Risāla Foundation, 1985), 322-346.

24 See ad-Daghānī, *An-Nubdha al-mubāraka*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.), 8-9.

25 Serigne Elhadj Mbacke, *Waxtāne Serigne Touba*, (Unpublished manuscript in Wolof language, private collection of Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.), I: 35.

of the Gracious (God) in Response to ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān) and *Silk al-Jawāhir fī Akhbār as-Sara’ir* (The String of Jewels on the Accounts of Inner Secrets).

If we delve into the book *Masālik al-jinān*, which is regarded as Bamba’s most comprehensive work on Sufism, representing his profound insights on the practical aspects of Sufi thought, we see him frequently referring to al-Ghazzālī to the extent that he specifically uses the term “*qāla*” (he said) to refer to al-Ghazzālī, while mentioning other scholars by their names. In the introduction of this book, Bamba states: “But when I mention ‘he said’ with the pronoun (he), it refers to the famous al-Ghazzālī. And for others among these people (the Sufi scholars), I explicitly mention their names.”²⁶

Examples of his reference to al-Ghazzālī include his statement in his book *al-Jawhar an-Nafīs* (The Precious Jewel): “The reality of *riyā’* (showing off) according to the wise people, is performing worship intending to seek people’s praise. And *riyā’* according to our Imām al-Ghazzālī, is the abundance of righteous deeds with virtues, so that he may attain in the hearts of people an amazing status in life.”²⁷ In his poem *Tazawwud ash-Shub-bān* (Provisions of the Youth) he refers to al-Ghazzālī’s definition of Sufism and states that: “The definition of Sufism according to al-Ghazzālī, is stripping our hearts for Allah, with disdain for anything other than Him, out of the heart and body, may Allah guide us.”²⁸ Additionally, in his *Masālik al-jinān* he cites al-Ghazzālī’s perspective on Sufism: “As for Sufism, it is an obligatory duty according to al-Ghazzālī, without falsehood.”²⁹

26 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 60.

27 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān al-‘ulūm ad-dīniyya*, ed. ar-Rābiṭa al-Khadīmiyya (Rabat: Dār al-Amān li an-Nashr wa at-Tawzī’, 2022), 224.

28 Ibid. 577.

29 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 108.

In his book *Silk al-jawāhir*, Aḥmadu Bamba extensively relied on the books *al-Minhāj* and *at-Tibr al-masbūk* by al-Ghazzālī. An example can be found in one of his statements in *Silk al-Jawāhir*:

And al-Ghazzālī said in *al-Minhāj*: ‘Know that I asked some of our teachers about the practice of our saints in reciting Surat *al-Wāqī’a* during times of hardship. Is it not intended thereby that Allah Almighty would alleviate their hardship and grant them some worldly provision as customary? So how can the desire for worldly enjoyment be legitimate through actions of the Hereafter?’³⁰

Similarly, in the same work, Bamba stated:

And in *at-Tibr al-masbūk* by al-Ghazzālī – may Allah be pleased with him – he states that Moses (peace be upon him) was supplicating to his Lord on the mountain, saying in his supplication: ‘O Lord, show me Your justice and fairness.’ So, Allah said, ‘O Moses, you are a bold and impulsive man who cannot endure patiently.’ Moses replied, ‘O Lord, I am capable of patience with Your help.’³¹

3. In Aḥmadu Bamba’s view, al-Ghazzālī was more than a great Sufi scholar from whom knowledge was acquired; he was also deeply revered and regarded as a spiritual guide in Sufism. This is evident in how Aḥmadu Bamba often refers to al-Ghazzālī as “our Sheikh” or “our Imām” in his writings. For example, in *Masālik al-jinān*, he says: “Like our Sheikh, the reformist al-Ghazzālī.” And in the poem *Jālibat al-masarra wa dāfi’at al-maḍarra* (The Bringer of Delight and the Repeller of Harm),

30 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, ed. ar-Rābiṭa al-Khadīmiyya (Touba: n.p., 2020), 87-88; Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, *Minhāj al-‘ābidīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Muqattam, 2017), 348.

31 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 55; al-Ghazzālī, *at-Tibr al-masbūk*, 48-49.

he states: “Our Imām, our Sheikh al-Ghazzālī.” In addition, as a sign of his belief in al-Ghazzālī’s spiritual authority, Bamba included him among the five names from whom he wished to be his intercessors. In his famous poem “*Khamsatu ar-rijāl*” (The Five Men), he says:

O our Lord, to You I complain of my state,
through the Prophet and the five men:
My sheikh and savior ‘Abdu-l-Qādir al-Jīlanī,³² the possessor of knowledge and gnosis. Then Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī,³³ the venerable saint, the resolute. Then Ṭayfūr ibn ‘Isā³⁴ the saint. Then Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī. The fifth is Ma‘rūf al-Karkhī,³⁵ the prominent saint. O our Lord, O our Lord, O our Lord, O our Lord, O our Lord, respond to us. Through Muṣṭafā, the best of creations, Aḥmad, bring them to me at my death tomorrow. Save me through their status from disgrace and guide me through them to the right path. And rectify what has become corrupt in my affairs. Their status makes my path easy.³⁶

Therefore, it is evident from the foregoing discussion that al-Ghazzālī significantly influenced Aḥmadu Bamba, both as a scholar and

as a Sufi. This influence is prominently evident in Bamba’s Sufi writings from the early to the later stages of his life. This influence is manifested in the continuous reference to al-Ghazzālī in his writings and his reliance on his books and concepts in analyzing and interpreting matters of religion and Sufi thought. Furthermore, the influence is evident in the incorporation of al-Ghazzālī’s rejuvenating approach and ideas in a manner that harmonizes with Aḥmadu Bamba’s vision, making it effectively responsive to his time and environment.

3.1.2.2. Aḥmad Zarrūq

Sheikh Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā al-Barnasī (attributed to the Berber tribe of Barānis) al-Fāsī, known as Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), was a prominent *faqīh*, a Sufi leader, and a Sheikh of the *Shādhiliyya* order. He authored works in various fields.³⁷ Aḥmad Zarrūq is also considered one of the Sufi figures to whom Aḥmadu Bamba frequently referred to in his writings, particularly in some of his advice to his disciples, as will be demonstrated. Among Zarrūq’s books that Aḥmadu Bamba often referred to in some of his compositions and *fatwās* are: ‘*Uddat al-murīd aṣ-ṣādiq* (The Preparation of the Sincere Disciple), *Urjūza: ‘ūyūb an-naṣf wa dawā’uha* (The Poem: The Flaws of the Self and Their Remedies), *an-Naṣīḥa al-kāfiyya* (The Sufficient Advice), *an-Nasā’ih az-Zarrūqiyya* (Zarrouqian Advice), and *Qawā’id at-Taṣawwuf* (Principles of Sufism).

One example of his reference to Zarrūq in his writings is his elucidation of the principles of Sufism in his admonition entitled *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, where he said:

Take this, O Maḥmūd, if [Allah] the Exalted wills, it will heal a seeker and a desired

32 Sheikh ‘Abdu-l-Qādir al-Jīlanī (d. 561/1166), the founder of the *Qādiriyya* Sufi order.

33 Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī *al-Kabīr*, Ṭayfūr ibn ‘Isā ibn Surooshān (d. 234/848?), one of the prominent Sufi masters in *Khurāsān*.

34 Ṭayfūr ibn ‘Isā ibn Ādam ibn ‘Isā *az-Zāhid*. He shares his name with his father, and place with the previously mentioned figure. (See Abū ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt as-Ṣūfiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 68; ‘Abdu-l-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *ar-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd b. al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1974), 6.

35 Ma‘rūf ibn Fayrūz al-Karkhī al-Baghdādī (d.200/815), one of the renowned early ascetics and Sufi masters.

36 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān sa‘ādāt al-murīdīn*, 339-341.

37 See ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1957), I: 155.

one from distress. If you inquire about Sufism, to be counted among those who have gnosis. Then Sufism has well-known principles, nine things according to the people of gnosis. The first is adherence to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the chosen, the one of correctness. And abandoning desires and innovations (*bida'*). Likewise, venerating the humble, devout sheikhs. Excusing the faults of all creatures. Perpetuating the *wird* for the sake of Allah. Among them is the abandonment of all permissions (*rukhas*) and the abandonment of interpretations, for this is what 'Zarrūq' explicitly stated. He said, 'These are the principles; whoever neglects them is deprived of reaching [Allah].'³⁸

This statement originates from the book *'Uddat al-murīd aṣ-ṣādiq*, where Zarrūq quotes Abū al-Qāsim an-Naṣrābādhī (d. 367/978) saying: "The foundation of Sufism is adherence to the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, abandoning desires and innovations, venerating the sanctities of the sheikhs, excusing the faults of creatures, perpetuating the regular *wirds*, and abandoning permissions and interpretations." Then Zarrūq added: "I say, these are the principles; whoever neglects them is deprived of reaching Allah."³⁹

Another example of his referral to Zarrūq's books is his mention of *al-Waṣiyya*⁴⁰ (The Letter) in the same previous poem, in the context of mentioning some qualities of the seeker:

And it came from them that five qualities lead the seeker to attainment and union. The first is adherence to congregational

prayer, for it enriches the follower. And the second is avoidance of stubborn people, in private and in public, and from corrupt individuals. Except for advising them gently (...), Zarrūq mentioned this in '*al-Waṣiyya*.' May he remain content and dignified.⁴¹

3.1.2.3. Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī

Jalāl ad-Dīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Khuḍayrī as-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) was an eminent Sufi⁴² and Islamic scholar known for his expertise in jurisprudence, *hadith*, *Usūl al-Fiqh*, history, and literature. He authored nearly 600 works, including *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, *al-Alfiya fī muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*, and *Tafsīr al-jalālayn*.⁴³ In his writings, Aḥmadu Bamba frequently references the works of as-Suyūṭī. One notable example is *al-Jāmi' aṣ-ṣaghīr*, a collection of *hadith* arranged in alphabetical order by as-Suyūṭī. Aḥmadu Bamba cites a *hadith* from this book in his poem *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, where he states:

We have received from the best of creation – peace, and blessings be upon him, the bestower of gifts - that preoccupation with the faults of creation, hardness of heart due to the rejection of truth, love for the world, and lack of modesty, and injustice - where there is no limit. Five qualities render deeds null, and a sixth for them is prolonged hope. Narrated by Sheikh Jalāl ad-Dīn in '*al-Jāmi' aṣ-ṣaghīr*' with clarification.⁴⁴

38 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣughra*, ed. the Khadmīyya Association for Researchers and Scholars, (Rabat: Maṭba'at al-Ma'ārif al-Jadīda, 2018), 188-189.

39 Abū al-Abbās Aḥmad Zarrūq, *'Uddat al-murīd aṣ-ṣādiq* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2006), 37.

40 A letter composed by Zarrūq addressed to two of his students, embedded within the collection titled *an-Naṣā'ih az-Zarūqiyya* (The Zarūqian Counsels).

41 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣughra*, 196-197.

42 For more information about as-Suyūṭī's Sufi affiliations, see Ferzende İdiz, *İmam Suyuti: Tasavvuf Risaleleri* (Istanbul: Nizamiye Akademi Yayınları, 2017); Éric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie* (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, Institut Français de Damas, 1996), 516.

43 See Khayruddīn az-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām* (Beirut: Dār al-Ilm Lilmalāyīn, 2002), III: 301.

44 Ibid. 192.

Bushrā al-ka'ib fī liqā' al-ḥabīb (Consoling the Bereaved Through Reunion with the Deceased) is another book by as-Suyūṭī, in which he discusses the conditions of the intermediate realm (*barzakh*). It is summarized from his larger work, *Sharḥ aṣ-ṣudūr bi sharḥ aḥwāl al-mawtā wa-l-qubūr* (The Expanding of the Chest or Commentary on the State of the Deceased in the Grave). Aḥmadu Bamba extensively quoted from this book in his work *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, especially in the second chapter, where he collected *hadiths* and reports related to the trials and tribulations of the grave. For example, he states: “as-Suyūṭī said in *Bushrā al-ka'ib bi liqā' al-mawlā al-ḥabīb*: ‘It was narrated from Bilāl ibn Sa’d that...’”⁴⁵ and “In ‘*Bushrā al-ka'ib*’ also Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā narrated...”⁴⁶

Aḥmadu Bamba also cited verses of as-Suyūṭī in his treatise *Miftāḥ al-ghuyūb* (The Keys of the Unseen) while discussing the deeds beneficial to a person in the grave, without mentioning the name of the book. Upon investigation, it was found that as-Suyūṭī mentioned these verses in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Here is the text quoted by Bamba:

Indeed, the esteemed Imām as-Suyūṭī – may Allah be pleased with him – compiled several qualities, urged by the Prophet – peace and blessings be upon him – in the form of a report, with his statement – peace and blessings be upon him –: ‘When a person dies, his actions are sealed except for ten qualities.’ He versified them as follows: ‘When the son of Adam dies, no actions continue upon him except for ten: Knowledge that he disseminated, a supplicating offspring, planting palm trees, and ongoing charity, inheriting a Qur’ān, endowing a stream, digging a well, or the provision of water, a house for the travel-

er, built for refuge, or a place erected for remembrance, teaching the noble Qur’ān, so grasp these from the narrations with precision.”⁴⁷

3.1.2.4. ‘Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha’rānī

Sheikh Abū al-Mawāhib ‘Abdu-l-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmed ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥanafī, attributed to Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, ash-Sha’rānī al-Maṣrī (d. 973/1565), was one of the most prominent scholars of his time and among the esteemed masters of Sufism. He authored numerous works in various fields.⁴⁸ ash-Sha’rānī is considered one of the Sufi figures who had a prominent presence in the writings of Aḥmadu Bamba during this stage of his life. It has been established that Bamba, at the beginning of his path, extensively studied the books of ash-Sha’rānī, especially his book *Kashf al-ghumma* (Lifting the Hardship).⁴⁹ Among the books of ash-Sha’rānī frequently referred to by Bamba are *Laṭā’if al-minan* (The Subtle Blessings), known as *al-Minan al-kubrā*, *al-Anwār al-qudsiyya fī ma’rifat qawā’id aṣ-ṣūfiyya* (The Sacred Illuminations on the Knowledge of the Principles of Sufism), *al-Kawkab ash-shāhiq fī l-farq bayn al-murīd aṣ-ṣādiq wa ghayr aṣ-ṣādiq* (The Supreme Star on the Difference between the Sincere and Insincere Wayfarer), *Tanbīh al-mughtarrīn* (The Advices of the Great Ones), and *Mukhtaṣar at-tadhkira fī aḥwāl al-mawtā wa-umūr al-ākhirā* (Summary of Reminder of the Conditions of Dead and The Affairs of Afterlife).

Perhaps the most significant book of Aḥmadu Bamba, where the influence of ash-Sha’rānī’s

45 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 133.

46 Ibid. 134.

47 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū’at al-kubrā*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.), 578-579.

48 See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, VI: 218.

49 Serigne Elhadj Mbacke, *Waxtāne Serigne Touba*, I: 35.

works is evident, is the poem entitled *Huqqa al-bukā'u*, in which he extensively refers to several books of the latter. For example, when describing the qualities of “the sincere disciple” in this poem, he says: “Among their qualities is immersion in the knowledge of *sharī'a* alongside the knowledge of truth before the discipline of the self. Because disciplining the self with guiding people before delving into these two sciences is conducive to arrogance and misery.”⁵⁰ These two verses encapsulate the meaning of ash-Sha'rānī's statement in *al-Kawkab ash-shāhiq*: “Among the ethics of sincere disciples is that none of them seeks to enter the path of a group until after immersing himself in the sciences of until he is allowed to proceed to another matter.”⁵¹

In the same poem, Aḥmadu Bamba also mentions the pillars of sainthood (*al-wilāya*): “The pillars of the house of the Sufis are four, on them is founded the structure of *al-wilāya*: Silence and prolonged hunger followed by wakefulness, and isolation, through the company of sheikhs of indications.”⁵² Here, Aḥmadu Bamba rephrases two verses with the same meaning found in ash-Sha'rānī's book *al-Anwār al-quḍsiyya fī ma'rifat qawā'id aṣ-ṣūfiyya*.⁵³ Thus, one can trace the verses of this poem and find many of them referenced in the works of ash-Sha'rānī.

An example of Bamba mentioning the name of ash-Sha'rānī in his writings is the statement in his poem *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*: Top of Form

50 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, “*Huqqa al-bukā'u*” in *al-Muntqā min qasā'id al-'Abdullāh wa khadīmi rasūlih*, ed. ar-Rābi'a al-Khadīmiyya (Rabat: Dār al-Amān li-n-Nashr wa at-Tawzī', 2024), 370.

51 'Abdu-l-'Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rānī, *al-Kawkab ash-shāhiq fī l-farq bayn al-murīd aṣ-ṣādiq wa ghayr aṣ-ṣādiq* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1991), 33.

52 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Huqqa al-bukā'u*, 370.

53 'Abdu-l-'Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rānī, *al-Anwār al-quḍsiyya fī ma'rifat qawā'id aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, 2nd Edition, (Cairo: Dār Jawāmi' al-Kalim), 39.

Indeed, the principles of the Sufi people are seven, all of which our Lord has adorned us with. Holding fast to the Book of Allah and emulating the Messenger of Allah. Eating *halāl* and avoiding sin, the fifth is safeguarding oneself from harm. The sixth is fulfilling rights and repentance from transgression. These are affirmed by our master ash-Sha'rānī, The knower, the verifier, the divine.⁵⁴

Another example of his referral to ash-Sha'rānī's books is his statement in the same preceding poem:

The qualities of the sincere disciple, in brief, [are] four, I have organized [them] for fear of delusion. [The first is] sincerity in the love of the Sheikh forever, then obedience to his command wherever it is found. And absolute abandonment of objection [toward his deeds], even inwardly, as they narrated. And alongside it is the submission of choice, due to his good opinion without denial. So, whoever combines these qualities among the disciples will attain certainties. Look for this in the *Laṭā'if* of ash-Sha'rānī, you will find it [there] like rubies and corals.⁵⁵

Another primary reference for this poem, which we did not mention before, is the book *Tā'iyat as-sulūk ilā malik al-mulūk* and its commentary, both authored by the scholar Sīdī Aḥmad 'Arab ash-Sharnūbī, who passed away in 994/1586. Although the book's name is not explicitly mentioned in the poem, comparing the two works reveals many similarities, sometimes even leading to repeating some verses with minor variations.

3.1.2.5. al-Kuntiyyu and His Son

During this period, the names of Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu (d. 1226/1811)

54 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣughhrā*, 189.

55 Ibid. 192.

and his son Sheikh Muhammad al-Khalifa al-Kuntiyyu (d. 1241/1826) also emerged. Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār ibn Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr al-Kuntiyyu was considered one of the most prominent scholars of Shinqīṭ, the Sahara, and West Sudan. He was the Sheikh of the *al-Kuntiyya* branch of the *Qādiriyya* Sufi order in his time. He was a knowledgeable, devout, politically influential, wise man and a social reformer.⁵⁶ His son Sheikh Muḥammad, who was nicknamed as “*al-Khalīfa*” for succeeding his father in the leadership of the *Qādiriyya al-Kuntiyya* Sufi order for fifteen years, was a devout worshipper and a knowledgeable jurist. He authored numerous works in various fields.⁵⁷

Aḥmadu Bamba’s relationship with these two figures was a strong spiritual bond, as they were primarily his spiritual mentors in the *Qādiriyya* order. Bamba received the *Qādiriyya* *wird* from his father, Sheikh Muḥammad, who, in turn, received it from Sheikh Samba Tukloor Ka. Sheikh Samba received it from Sheikh Sīdiya al-Kabīr in Mauritania,⁵⁸ who was initially a disciple of Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu and later of his son, Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khalīfa. This highlights the depth of the relationship between Aḥmadu Bamba’s family and the Kunta family.

Aḥmadu Bamba frequently relied on the books of these two sheikhs in his writings during this period, especially in his book *Masālik al-jinān*. In the introduction of the book, he stated that one of his references in its composition was *Junnat al-murīd* (The Paradise of the Disciple), a work on Sufism by Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khalī-

fa.⁵⁹ Additionally, in his poetic composition *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, he relied on the book of the latter titled *aṭ-Ṭarāʾif wa at-Talāʾid fī Karāmāt ash-Sheikhayn al-Wālida wa-l-Wālīd* (The Rare and Precious Accounts of the Miracles of the Two Shaykhs: the Mother and the Father), which is a biography of his parents, enriched with extensive Sufi knowledge. As for Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār, we find his book *al-Kawkab al-waqqād* (The Shining Star -a book focusing on *wirds* and Sufi masters-) presented in Aḥmadu Bamba’s book *Masālik al-jinān*. Additionally, his book *Naṣīḥat al-batt li jamīʿi Kunta* (some advice to his people) can be considered a primary reference for Aḥmadu Bamba’s *Faṭḥ al-man-nān fī jawāb ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān*.

Examples of al-Kuntiyyu’s presence in Aḥmadu Bamba’s writings are numerous and often both the father and the son are mentioned together. Notably, in *Masālik al-jinān*, while discussing predecessors who wrote about Sufism he states: “I found Sufis, the chosen ones, have authored books that have secrets. Like (...) our Sheikh al-Kuntiyyu the one with the lights, the Aid of humanity, the Pole of guidance, al-Mukhtār. And our Sheikh al-Khalīfa, the supported by the truth from the Lord of the worlds, Muḥammad.”⁶⁰ Similarly, in recounting the dispute on reciting the Qurʾān loudly or silently, he said: “The debate among the noble sheikhs regarding reciting the Qurʾān loudly versus secretly remains ongoing. (...) Some sought a middle ground on this matter, (...) and it was the choice of our Sheikh al-Mukhtār, upon him be the satisfaction of the Creator. So, my brother, refer to *Junnat al-murīd* by our righteous Sheikh al-Khalīfa the wise.”⁶¹

Examples of his specific reference to Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu include his

56 See Ahmad ibn al-Amīn ash-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tarājumi udabāʾi shinqīṭ* (Cairo: ash-Sharika ad-Duwalīyya li aṭ-Ṭibāʾa, 2002), 361.

57 See Abū Bakr al-Wulāṭī, *Minah ar-Rabb al-Ghafūr* (Nouakchott: Maktabat al-Qarnayn, 2014).

58 See Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm*, 233.

59 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 60.

60 Ibid. 58.

61 Ibid. 85.

words in *Faṭḥ al-mannān fī jawāb ‘Abd ar-Raḥmān*:

And in ‘*Naṣīḥat al-batt li jamī‘i Kunta*,’ by our great Sheikh, Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār - may Allah be pleased with him and make us among his followers - he said: ‘I advise you to fear Almighty Allah and control your tongues; for indeed, the tongue is the worst of enemies and the truest of friends. If you control it or remember Allah with it, you will be safe.’⁶²

He also mentioned in the book *Masālik al-jinān* where he discusses the difference between *mu‘jiza* (miracles) and *karāma* (spiritual gifts): “What suffices as a *mu‘jiza* for the Prophet may be permissible as a *karāma* for the Saint. Because he is His inheritor, for the prophets are the proofs of our Lord to creation. (...) But the *‘iṣma* (infallibility) of the prophets is obligatory, unlike that of the saints. This is a statement of Sīdī al-Mukhtār in *al-Kawkab al-waqqād*, do not overlook it.”⁶³ Here, he narrates the statement of Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu indicating that: “Everything that could be a *mu‘jiza* for the Prophet could also be a *karāma* for the Saint (...) The prophets are infallible, and the saints are protected. They share in *‘iṣma*, except that the infallibility of the prophets is obligatory while the immunity of the saints is permissible.”⁶⁴

Examples of his reference to Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khalīfa include his words in “*Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*” after discussing the five etiquettes of the Sufis: “These five [etiquettes] confined the Sufi’s etiquettes in

a concise form. All of this was mentioned in *aṭ-Ṭarā‘if* by our Sheikh al-Kuntiyyu, the knowledgeable.”⁶⁵ In the same work, where he discusses the importance of time management for the *murid*, he says: “The sincere seeker revolves according to the dictates of his time [i.e., the present] and does not covet the time that lies ahead, for that [i.e., the anticipation of the future] prevents rectification of what is present. So, contemplate *Junnat al-murīd* by our esteemed Sheikh al-Kuntiyyu.”⁶⁶ The text of Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khalīfa in *Junnat al-murīd* states:

The true seeker revolves according to the dictates of time, without turning his attention to another time or circumstance for the betterment of what that time or circumstance has given him, for it is incumbent upon him to fulfill the rights of time, to adhere to the proper conduct within it, and not to anticipate another time. For his inclination toward another time prevents him from fulfilling the rights of the first time in which he has been established, and accomplishing what is required of him, contrary to what is expected.⁶⁷

In the Sufi compilations of Aḥmadu Bamba, there are several poetic books in which he versified works authored by previous Sufi scholars. When Bamba rewrites these books in poetic form, he aims to facilitate their memorization for students. He goes beyond mere versification, often condensing the original text, explaining it, or adding further insights. In the following sections, we will mention the Sufi figures who had a notable impact on Bamba’s writings, as they -at least- had one book that was the foundation for one of Bamba’s Sufi compositions.

62 Rawḍ ar-Rayāḥīn, *Min waṣāyā Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke*, (Rabat: Maṭba‘at al Ma‘arif al-Jadīda. 2018), 75-90.

63 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 82-83.

64 Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu, *al-Kawkab al-waqqād fī dhikr faḍl al-mashā‘ikhi wa haqā‘iq al-awrād* (Riyadh: King Saud University Library - Manuscripts Department, no. 7246, nd.), 1.

65 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū‘at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 195.

66 Ibid. 191.

67 Sheikh Muhammad al-Khalīfa al-Kuntiyyu, *Junnat al-murīd dūn al-marīd* (Morocco: Dār Abī Raqrāq, 2012), II: 214.

3.1.2.6. Sheikh Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār al-Yadālī (ad-Daymānī)

Sheikh Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ad-Daymānī al-Yadālī (d. 1753) was one of the scholars of the Shinqīt region. He was a prominent jurist, well-known for his righteousness. He followed the *Shādhiliyya* Sufi order. He authored numerous works, some even attribute around fifty to him.⁶⁸ His book *Khātimat at-Taṣawwuf* (The Conclusion of Sufism) is considered the main reference that Aḥmadu Bamba relied upon in composing his book *Masālik al-jinān*. *Khātimat at-Taṣawwuf* is a book of *tawḥīd* following the method of the Sufis, the people of spiritual insight and gnosis. Aḥmadu Bamba also relied on another book on *tafsīr* by al-Yadālī entitled *adh-Dhahab al-ibrīz fī tafsīr kitāb Allah al-ʿazīz* (The Pure Gold in Interpreting God's Holy Book).

In the introduction of *Masālik al-jinān*, Aḥmadu Bamba elucidates his preference of *Khātimat at-Taṣawwuf*: “Most of this generation abandoned their (the early Sufis) books, due to their length. Therefore, I chose, seeking help from Allah, to versify the book written by al-Yadālī, as it gathered all that was scattered among the predecessors, and being as the conclusion of Sufism.”⁶⁹ He also mentions the name of the book and its sources he relied upon: “I named it *Masālik al-jinān fī Jamʿi Mā Farrqah ad-Daymānī* (The Paths of Paradise in Compiling What ad-Daymānī Scattered), as everything he mentioned in the *Khātimat*, I have brought in this book in the form of verses. Then from *adh-Dhahab*, I derived some benefits to complete this work. And perhaps, in it, I may add some more from others for completeness.”⁷⁰

68 See ash-Shinqītī, *al-Wasīt*, 223.

69 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 59.

70 Ibid. 60.

3.1.2.7. Sheikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥājī ash-Shinqītī (ad-Dalḥājī)

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥājī (d. 1252/1836) was among the prominent scholars renowned for his expertise in linguistics, jurisprudence, the sciences of the Qurʾān, and genealogy. He authored works such as *Tahrīr an-naẓar fī sharḥ asmāʾ as-suwar* (An Analytical Commentary on the Names of the Sūras) and *Tuḥfat al-walīd fī aḥkām at-tajwīd* (The Gift of the Child on the Rules of Tajwīd). ad-Dalḥājī died few years before Aḥmadu Bamba's birth. He belonged to the *Īdulḥāj* tribe, one of the famous Mauritanian tribes, who collectively pledged allegiance to Aḥmadu Bamba and joined his Sufi order.⁷¹

ad-Dalḥājī wrote a treatise on ethics and morals, which Aḥmadu Bamba versified in 212 verses and named *Nahj qaḍāʾ al-ḥāj fī mā min al-adab ilayhi al-murīd yāḥtāj*. This treatise combines noble character traits and exquisite manners that draw the servant closer to his Lord. It covers topics such as self-discipline, behavior towards others regardless of their status, and manners towards parents. Additionally, it addresses the etiquette of seeking knowledge, such as sincerity, piety, reverence for one's teachers, and a diligent approach to learning. Aḥmadu Bamba states in the introduction of this book that:

Today, I stand ready to respond to some of the devoted *murīds* who requested a structured guide to refine their manners, which is a necessary task. (...) So, I hastened to fulfill their request, seeking contentment and reward [from Allah]. Its content is the prose of our saint, al-Ḥājī, and its through. I hope to fulfill the need. (...) I named it *Nahj Qaḍāʾ al-Ḥāj* (The Path to Fulfilling

71 See Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Nahj qaḍāʾ al-ḥāj, fī mā min al-adab ilayhi al-murīd yāḥtāj*, ed. Dāʾirat Fath al-Ghaffār (Rabat: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʾārif al-Jadīda, 2017), 19-20.

the Need) in harvesting the teachings of our Sheikh, ad-Dalhājī.⁷²

At this stage, alongside the previously mentioned books, there are additional sources that Aḥmadu Bamba referenced in his writings. These sources also played a notable role in shaping his Sufi ideas. However, because they are cited less frequently than the earlier works, they will be discussed separately in the next section.

3.1.2.8. Lesser-Cited Sources in Aḥmadu Bamba's Sufi Writings

In this section, I will discuss the infrequently mentioned sources that are explicitly referenced—either by name or by the author's name—in Aḥmadu Bamba's Sufi writings. The methodology employed involves providing a brief overview of the author, then introducing the titles and the themes of the book(s) referenced in Bamba's writings, and finally to indicate where reference to this book was made.

It is worth noting that Aḥmadu Bamba frequently incorporates the expressions of early Sufi figures, whose sayings are widely spread in classical Sufi texts, such as *ar-Risāla* by 'Abdu-l-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072), *al-Luma'* by Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāj aṭ-Ṭūsī (d. 378/988), *at-Ta'arruf* by Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d. 380/990), *Ṭabaqāt aṣ-Ṣūfiyya* by Abū 'Abd ar-Raḥmān as-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), *Qūt al-Qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Mak-kī (d. 386/996), and others. Furthermore, statements of renowned Sufis such as Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 161/778), al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyāḍ (d. 187/803), Yaḥyā ibn Mu'ādh (d. 258/872), are always mentioned in Bamba's works without specifying the source from which the sayings were derived. Consequently, it is not easy to trace the sayings back to a specific source, as they are presented in many books.

⁷² Ibid. 25-26.

1- *Shajarat al-yaqīn wa takhlīq nūr sayyid al-mursalīn wa bayān ḥāl al-khalā'iq yawm ad-dīn* (The Tree of Certainty and the Creation of the Light of the Prophet and the States of the Creature on the Day of Judgment)

This book, attributed to Imām Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī⁷³ (d. 324/935), is a doctrinal work that addresses issues related to the Day of Judgment. Its attribution to Imām al-Ash'arī is subject to debate, and it has been printed under various titles and attributed to different authors. Much of the content in the second section of Bamba's *Dīwan silk al-jawāhir* is taken from this book, including some chapter titles, as indicated by his statements: "... concluded from *Shajarat al-Yaqīn* by al-Ash'arī,"⁷⁴ and "...and in *Shajarat al-Yaqīn* by al-Ash'arī..."⁷⁵

2- *Tanbīh al-ghāfilīn bi-ahādīth sayyid al-anbiyā' wa-l-mursalīn* (The Warning of the Heedless with the Sayings of the Head of the Prophets)

It is a book of sermons, ethics, and spiritual guidance, authored by Abū al-Layth Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad as-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), the Hanafī jurist, *hadīth* scholar, and ascetic known as Imām al-Khudā. He is also the author of a Qur'ānic exegesis called *Baḥr al-'Ulūm* (The Ocean of the Sciences) and a

⁷³ The founder of the Ash'arī school of thought. He was one of the diligent theologian *Imāms*. He was born in Baṣra. He initially followed the Mu'tazilite doctrine and advanced in it but later recanted and openly opposed them. He passed away in Baghdād. It is said that his authored works reached to three hundred books, including *ar-Radd 'alā al-Mujassima*, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, and *al-Ibāna 'an uṣūl ad-diyaanat*. See az-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām*, IV: 263.

⁷⁴ Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 148.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 150.

book on Islamic mysticism named *Bustān al-ʿarīfīn* (The Garden of the Gnostics).⁷⁶ Aḥmadu Bamba frequently referred to this book in his writings, especially in his advice poem, *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, where he stated:

It was mentioned that the fortress against Satan consists of three things, which my statement has bestowed. The first is the mosque, the second is the continuous remembrance of Allah at all times, and the third is the recitation of the Qurʾān with purity and contemplation of its meanings. This was mentioned by Sheikh as-Samarqandī, the prominent and esteemed scholar.⁷⁷

3- *Makārim al-akhlāq* (Nobilities of Character):

This book was authored by Amīn ad-Dīn Abū ʿAlī al-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan aṭ-Ṭabrīsī (d. 548/1153), an esteemed linguist and commentator within the Imāmī Shia school. He is attributed to Tabaristan. Among his works are *Majmaʿ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān wa-l-furqān* and *Jawāmiʿ al-jāmiʿ* also in *tafsīr*.⁷⁸ This book is considered one of the renowned Shia sources dedicated to ethics and morality. Aḥmadu Bamba referenced it in one of his responses found in *al-Majmūʿat al-kubrā*, where he said: “And in *Makārim al-akhlāq* by aṭ-Ṭabrīsī – may Allah be pleased with him – some wise men advised a man, saying to him: ‘O man, do not approach your wife at the beginning, middle, and end of the month, for insanity, leprosy, and madness hasten towards her and her child...’”⁷⁹

76 See az-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, VIII: 27.

77 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 193.

78 See az-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, V: 148.

79 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmūʿat al-kubrā*, 646.

4- *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* (Benefits of Intimate Knowledge)

It is one of the classical Sufi books, authored by Abū Ḥafṣ Shihāb ad-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Bakrī as-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), a Shāfiʿī jurist, commentator, and preacher, among the great Sufis. He was a leading Sufi master in Baghdād and the author of several works including *Nughbat al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* and *Jadhb al-qulūb ilā muwaṣalat al-maḥbūb*.⁸⁰ Aḥmadu Bamba mentioned the name of this book in his poem *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, where he quoted the words of Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh from it, saying: “They say that the noble angels weep for the seeker (*murīd*) if he is gourmand, [they do that] out of mercy for him. Find that in the book of *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*.”⁸¹

5- *at-Tadhkira fī aḥwāl* *al-mawtā wa umūr al-ākhirā* (Summary of Reminder of the Conditions of Dead and The Affairs of Afterlife)

It is one of the most renowned books on the conditions of the deceased and matters of the Hereafter. It was authored by Abū ʿAbdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abū Bakr al-Andalusī al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272). He was a Mālikī jurist and one of the eminent scholars in *tafsīr*, known for his piety and devoutness. He originally hailed from Cordoba, then journeyed eastward and settled in Munyat ibn Khasīb in the north of Asyut, Egypt, where he passed away. Among his notable works are *al-Jāmiʿ li aḥkām al-Qurʾān* in twenty volumes, and *al-Asnā fī sharḥ asmāʾ Allah al-ḥusnā*.⁸² Aḥmadu Bamba mentioned this book in *Miftāḥ al-ghuyūb*, discussing the

80 See az-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, V: 61-62.

81 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 191.

82 See az-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, V: 322.

form of the “*Sirāt*” (the bridge over Hell), saying: “Regarding its arches, in the *Tadhkirat* of Sayyid al-Qurṭubī –may Allah be pleased with him– some scholars stated: None will traverse the *Sirāt* until they are questioned at seven arches. As for the first arch, one will be asked about faith in Allah, the Exalted...”⁸³

6- *Bahjat an-nufūs* (The Beauty of the Souls)

This book was authored by Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullah ibn Abī Jamra al-Azadī al-Andalusī (d. 695/1295), a renowned scholar, commentator, *hadith* specialist, Mālikī jurist, and Sufi. He was known for speaking the truth, commanding good, and avoiding people. Among his works is the abridgment of *Sahīḥ al-bukhārī* titled *Jam‘ an-nihāya fī bidāyat al-khayr wa ghāyat al-ghāya*.⁸⁴ The book *Bahjat an-nufūs* is a commentary on his *Jam‘ an-nihāya*. Aḥmadu Bamba mentioned this book in his *Masālik al-jinān* where he discusses “*tafakkur*” (contemplating), stating: “Ibn Abī Jamra, a pillar of religion, may Allah be pleased with him at all times, explicitly stated that *at-tafakkur* in times, is the best of deeds for the believer.”⁸⁵

7- *al-Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā’iyya* (The Book of Wisdoms)

One of the works Aḥmadu Bamba drew upon in *Masālik al-jinān*, alongside the works of al-Yadālī, al-Ghazzālī, al-Kunṭiyyu and his son, is the *al-Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā’iyya* by Tāj ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah as-Sakandarī (d. 709/1309). The latter was a prominent Mālikī jurist and a *Shādhilī* Sufi, regarded as one of the pillars of the *Shādhiliyya* Sufi order. He was a knowledgeable scholar whose

lessons were attended by many people. He left many writings behind, the most famous of which is his book *al-Ḥikam*, mentioned earlier, a small book compiling many Sufi aphorisms.⁸⁶

An example of Aḥmadu Bamba’s reference to *al-Ḥikam* in *Masālik al-jinān* is as follows: “As for the one who rejects the importance of the *wird*, mocking it out of dislike and disdain, He is ignorant, as stated by the scholar Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah in his text *al-Ḥikam*.”⁸⁷ This statement encapsulates the meaning of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah’s saying: “Only the ignorant belittles the *wird*.”⁸⁸ In another passage from the same book, Bamba says: “Our Sheikh, the knowledgeable one, Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah, said at the beginning of *al-Ḥikam* that among the signs of reliance on action is a decrease in hope when committing faults.”⁸⁹ This is the equivalent of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah’s saying: “Among the signs of reliance on action is a decrease in hope when committing faults.”⁹⁰

8- *al-Madkhal ilā tanmiyat al-a‘māl bi taḥsīn an-niyyāt wa at-tanbīh ‘alā baḍ al-bida’ wa-l-‘awā’id* (Introduction to the Increase of the Deeds through Perfection of the Intentions)

This book reveals the flaws and innovations (*al-bida’*) practiced by people. It was authored by Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-‘Abdarī al-Fāsī al-Mālikī, known as Ibn al-Ḥāj (d. 737/1336). He was one of the renowned scholars known for his asceticism and righteousness. Among his many works are *Bulūgh al-qaṣd wa-l-munā*

83 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū‘at aṣ-ṣughrā*, 583.

84 Sirāj ad-Dīn ‘Umar ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-‘awliyā’* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994), 439.

85 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 94.

86 See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, II: 121.

87 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 83.

88 Tāj ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah as-Sakandarī, *al-Ḥikam al-‘Aṭā’iyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Andulus al-Jadīda, 2010), 36.

89 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 119.

90 Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah, *al-Ḥikam*, 3.

fī khawāṣṣ asmāʿ Allah al-ḥusnā, Shumūs al-anwār wa kunūz al-asrār (The Suns of the Lights and the Treasures of the Mysteries), and his most famous book, *al-Madkhal ilā tanmiyat al-aʿmāl*.⁹¹ The name of Ibn al-Ḥāj appears frequently in the jurisprudential, Sufi, and doctrinal writings of Aḥmadu Bamba. He relied on him for his *fatwā* regarding whether it is permissible to pour *Zamzam* water into a well for blessings, as he states in *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣughra*: “Know that blessing is only by following the Prophet’s (peace and blessings be upon him) example. Ibn al-Ḥāj warned against those innovations introduced there...”⁹²

**9- *Rawḍ ar-rayāḥīn fī hikāyāt aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*
(Paradise of the Basils in the Stories of the Righteous Ones)**

This book is a collection of stories, accounts and anecdotes of great Sufi saints. It was written by ʿAfīf ad-Dīn Abū as-Saʿādāt, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullah ibn Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī ash-Shāfiʿī (d. 768/1366). He was a Sufi poet who authored books on jurisprudence, language, history, and mathematics. His notable works include *ad-Durr an-naẓīm fī khawāṣṣ al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (The Pearls Strung in the Qurʾān) and *Asnā al-mafāḥir fī manāqib ash-Sheikh ʿAbdu-l-Qādir* (The Most Brilliant Glory in the Virtues of ʿAbd al-Qādir).⁹³ Aḥmadu Bamba relied heavily on this book in a letter of advice to one of his followers, which is fully mentioned in *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣughra*. He frequently cited many anecdotes of saints from it. He generally mentions the story in full and then gives the title of the book which he refers to. Bamba also referred to this book in *Dīwān*

91 See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, XI: 284.

92 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmūʿat aṣ-ṣughra*, 83.

93 See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-Muʿallifīn*, VI: 34.

silk al-jawāhir as follows: “It is narrated from al-Yāfiʿī about some saints who said: ‘I asked Allah to show me the stations of the people in the graves...’”⁹⁴

**10- *Kitāb an-nūrayn fī iṣlāḥ ad-dārayn*
(The Book of the Two Lights in Reforming the Two Realms)**

This book discusses ways of refining the souls and enlightening the hearts. Its main purpose is to encourage the journey towards Allah. The book was authored by Jamāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn ʿOmar, famously known as al-Ḥubayshī (d. 780/1378), a Shāfiʿī jurist from Yemen. Among his works are *al-Baraka fī faḍl as-saʿy wa-l-ḥaraka* (Blessings in the Virtue of Striving and Motion) and *Masāʾil aṭ-ṭalāq* (The Matters of Divorce).⁹⁵ Aḥmadu Bamba mentioned him several times in his book *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*. He is also referred to as “al-Yamanī,” like “in *Kitāb an-nūrayn* by al-Yamanī...”⁹⁶ Additionally, he is called as “al-Ḥubayshī,” as in the following statement: “...as mentioned by al-Ḥubayshī in *Kitāb an-nūrayn*.”⁹⁷

11- *ar-Rawḍ al-fāʾiq fī al-mawāʾiz wa ar-raqāʾiq* (The Superior Garden of Sermons and Spiritual Advice)

This book is a work of sermons and guidance, comprising speeches, *hadiths*, stories, and the virtues of pious people. It was authored by Sheikh Abū Madyan Shuʿayb ibn Saʿd al-Makkī al-Maṣrī (d. 810/1408), known as “al-Ḥarīfīsh.” He was a renowned scholar, ascetic, and Sufi preacher.⁹⁸ Aḥmadu Bamba

94 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 183.

95 See az-Zarkalī, *al-Aʿlām*, VI: 193.

96 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 165.

97 Ibid. 128.

98 See Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-Muʿallifīn*, IV: 302.

extensively relied on this book in a letter of advice to one of his followers, which is fully included in *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*. He often cited many stories of saints from it. An example of his statement is as follows: “In *ar-Rawḍ al-fā'iq* it is mentioned that as-Sarī as-Saqāṭī—may Allah have mercy on him—passed by a man lying on the ground, drunk, with wine spilling from his mouth, saying: ‘Allah, Allah.’ as-Sarī then raised his gaze to the sky and said...”⁹⁹

**12- *al-Ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn min kalām sayyid al-mursalīn*
(The Fortified Fortress)**

This is a book about the supplications and invocations transmitted from the Prophet Muḥammad. It was authored by Imām Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ad-Dimashqī ash-Shafī'ī, known as Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833/1429). He was a prominent Qur'ān reciter and memorizer of *hadith* of his time. He was born and raised in Damascus, where he established a school called “*Dār al-Qur'ān*.” He traveled to Egypt several times.¹⁰⁰ Aḥmadu Bamba cited this book frequently in his *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, often referring to Ibn al-Jazarī as “ad-Dimashqī,” in his statements like: “In *al-Ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn* by ad-Dimashqī...”¹⁰¹ and “...as stated by ad-Dimashqī in *al-Ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn*.”¹⁰²

**13- *ad-Durr ath-thamīn wa-l-mawrid al-mu'īn*
(The Eighth Pearl and the Helpful Source)**

This is a commentary on the book *al-Murshid al-mu'īn 'alā ad-darūrī min 'ulūm ad-dīn* (The Concise Guide to the Basics of the

Deen) by the Mālikī jurist 'Abdu-l-Wāḥid ibn 'Āshir (d. 1040/1631). This book was authored by Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Mayyāra al-Fāsī (d. 1070/662). He was a Mālikī jurist from Fez, renowned as a scholar with deep expertise in various sciences, and known for his trustworthiness, piety, and devoutness. Among his works are *Fath al-'alīm al-khallāq bi-sharḥ Lāmiyat az-Zaqqāq* (Discovering the All-Knowing Creator through the Commentary of Zaqqāq's *Lāmiyat*) and *al-Itqān wa-l-iḥkām fī sharḥ Tuhfat al-Hukkām* (Precision and Perfection in Explaining the Gift of Rulers).¹⁰³ The book includes an introduction to the Ash'arī credo and a conclusion on the principles of Junaydī Sufism. It was mentioned in Aḥmadu Bamba's poem *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*, where he discusses the struggle against the self, saying: “It is established among the scholars that the wise [people] have unanimously agreed, that there is no path to happiness on the Day of Judgment when the terror appears, except by restraining the self from every desire, and from all passions, with great restraint. Look for this in *ad-Durr ath-thamīn* by our Sheikh Mayyāra, the astute scholar.”¹⁰⁴

**14- *Kitāb an-Naṣīḥa*
(The Book of Advice)**

It is a poem on Sufism and noble ethics, consisting of 128 verses. It was authored by Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn 'Abdu-l-'Azīz ibn Rashīd ibn Muḥammad al-Hilālī as-Sijilmāsī (d. 1175/1761). He was a Mālikī jurist known for his piety and asceticism. He wrote a commentary on the *Mukhtaṣar* of Sheikh Khalīl and authored other works in various fields. Renowned for his devoutness and renunciation of worldly pleasures, he performed the pilgrimage twice and studied under scholars

99 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 249.

100 See az-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām*, VII: 45.

101 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 89.

102 Ibid. 128.

103 See az-Zarkalī, *al-A'lām*, VI: 11.

104 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 193.

from the Hijaz and Egypt. He also wrote a book about his travels.¹⁰⁵

Aḥmadu Bamba mentioned this poem in his book *Masālik al-jinān* while discussing the benefits of knowledge, saying: “In the poem of our Sheikh al-Hilālī—may Allah, the Glorious, be pleased with him—: ‘knowledge [is what] engenders fear of the All-Knowing (Allah); whoever lacks this fear is a reprehensible ignorant.’”¹⁰⁶ He also referenced it in his treatise on advice *Faṭḥ al-mannān* when talking about eating lawful and unlawful food, stating: “al-Hilālī—may Allah be pleased with him—said: ‘Whatever the tongue reaps, a person will find on the Day of Judgment.’”¹⁰⁷ In another context of the same book, he quoted: “Ahmad al-Hilālī—may Allah be pleased with him—said in his poem: ‘Every piece of flesh that has grown from unlawful means, the fire [Hell] is more deserving of it, as is established [in a *ḥadīth*].’”¹⁰⁸ Additionally, Aḥmadu Bamba relied on this book in various parts of his work *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*.

15- *al-Waṣīyya* (The Testament)

This is a poetic composition on the virtues of ethics and the beauty of manners. It was authored by Sheikh Ḥammād ibn Allamīn al-Majlisī ash-Shinqīṭī (d. 1255/1840). He was a renowned linguist and genealogist. Proficient in the science of biography and Arab lineage, he was also deeply engaged in various Islamic sciences. He was known for his asceticism and devotion. Among his works is *Rawḍ an-nihāya fī sharḥ Naẓm al-Ghazawāt* (The Commentary on the Rules of Combat).¹⁰⁹ Aḥmadu Bamba quoted verses

105 az-Zarkalī, *al-A‘lām*, I: 157.

106 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 70.

107 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū‘at al-kubrā*, 30.

108 Ibid. 32.

109 See ash-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ*, 352.

from this book in his work *Masālik al-jinān* under the chapter on etiquette and virtues, saying: “And the author of *al-Waṣīyya* also said, addressing his son with virtue: ‘Embark on the virtues of ethics, with deeds pure from hypocrisy...’”¹¹⁰

16- *Tadhkirat al-mustarshidīn wa-falāḥ aṭ-ṭālibīn* (Memorial of the Disciples and Salvation of the Seekers)

It is a poem on advice and etiquette, consisting of 204 verses. It was authored by Sheikh ‘Umar ibn Sa‘īd Tāl al-Fūtiyyu (d. 1280/1864), one of the prominent Sufi scholars in Senegal and West Africa and a notable figure in the *Tijāniyya* order. He led the largest armed *jihād* movement in West Africa against the pagans and the French. He met his demise during fierce battles against his enemies, and it is said that he disappeared under mysterious circumstances on February 12, 1864, in the “Banjagara” cliffs in Mali. He left many books behind, the most famous of which are: *Rimāḥ ḥizb ar-raḥīm fī nuḥūr ḥizb ar-rajīm* (The Lances of God’s Party against the Throats of the Satanic Faction), *Bayān mā waqa‘a* (A Clarification of the Events That Took Place), and this book in question *Tadhkirat al-mustarshidīn*.¹¹¹

Aḥmadu Bamba quoted a verse from this book in his work *al-Jawhar an-naḥīs*, where he discusses the etiquette of prayer: “And his (the prayer’s) state should be like the saying of ‘Umar [al-Fūtiyyu], who is adorned with piety and knowledge: ‘And be when you enter the prayer, like a person who is in his death bed.’”¹¹²

110 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Masālik al-jinān*, 148.

111 See Muhammad al-Muntaqā Ahmad Tāl, *al-Jawāhir wa ad-durar fī sirat ash-Sheikh al-Ḥāj ‘Umar* (Tunis: Dār al-Burāq, 2005).

112 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān al-‘ulūm ad-dīniyya*, 251.

17- *Shudhūr al-adhkār al-māḥiya li al-awzār wal-muhayyi'a li ḥuṣūl al-anwār wa-l-asrār* (Fragments of Remembrances that Wipe Out Sins and Prepare for the Attainment of Light and Secrets)

This is a book on *adhkār* (remembrances) and *wirds*, authored by Sheikh Sīdiya ibn al-Mukhtār ibn al-Hīb al-Abīrī al-Mūrītānī (d. 1284/1868). He was a prominent Sufi scholar who studied under Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu and his son Muḥammad al-Khalīfa. He then established his own scholarly and Sufi circle in his hometown, attracting students from all over the Islamic West (Arab and African regions). He also opposed to the French colonial attempts to occupy the country. He authored numerous letters addressed to his contemporaries, *emirs* of his time, tribal leaders, and the French governor of West Africa. Additionally, he wrote treatises on social and ethical guidance, the science of Qur'ānic recitation (*tajwīd*), and commentaries on grammar and other subjects, all of which are currently in manuscript.¹¹³

Aḥmadu Bamba referred to this book in *Faṭḥ al-mannān fī jawāb 'Abd ar-Raḥmān* while discussing the importance of piety and fearing Allah, stating: "In *Shudhūr al-adhkār* by our Sheikh Sīdiya ibn al-Mukhtār—may Allah be pleased with him and us through him—it is mentioned that the benefits are based on beliefs and that piety is the source of all wisdom and the sum of all goodness and blessings. Whoever seeks knowledge should fear Allah..."¹¹⁴ He also quoted this book multiple times in his *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir* where he explains the properties of certain verses, sūrahs, and names, he said: "And in *Shudhūr*

al-adhkār al-māḥiya li al-awzār by our Sheikh Sīdiya—may Allah have mercy on him and benefit us with his blessings: And among what is used for safety from enemies..."¹¹⁵

An analysis of the books referenced in Aḥmadu Bamba's writings reveals that they constitute a substantial part of the Sufi heritage that shaped his thought. Notably, none of the works associated with philosophical Sufism are included among these sources, which underscores his deliberate avoidance of that particular school of thought. Furthermore, Aḥmadu Bamba's intellectual openness is evident, as he did not hesitate to draw from a Shia text, despite doctrinal differences.

3.1.3. The Period of Collecting Sufi *Wirds* and Searching for Sheikhs

This stage is what some researchers call "the stage of wandering among the sheikhs," it extends from the death of his father in 1881 to his direct allegiance to the Prophet Muḥammad in 1893. It is considered one of the most crucial stages in the life of Aḥmadu Bamba, as he embarked on numerous journeys -some lasting up to nine months- during this period between different regions within Senegal and Mauritania. During these travels, he visited many scholars and saints, both living and deceased, sought permission (*ijāza*) from scholars, and received *wirds* from the sheikhs of the Sufi orders.¹¹⁶ He was given the *Shādhiliyya wird*, the *Tijāniyya wird*, and renewed the *Qādiriyya wird*, the sect into which he eventually initiated.¹¹⁷ Aḥmadu Bamba describes this period in the following poem where he recounts his journey on the path of Sufism:

115 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān silk al-jawāhir*, 98.

116 See ad-Daghānī, *Irwā'u-n-nadīm*, 86.

117 See Rawḍu, *Sheikh Aḥmadu Bamba*, 107-111.

113 See ash-Shinqīṭī, *al-Wasīṭ*, 240-243.

114 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at al-kubrā*, 24.

Since I reached the age of reason, I have been a seeker of knowledge of Allah, repentant. I wandered among the scholars and saints with my intention, actions, and words, so that my life's efforts would not go to waste, for the sake of a good reckoning. Until I devoted myself in the year 1311/1893 to serving "the best of creatures" [Prophet Muḥammad] the Highest.¹¹⁸

He also announced his reformist thoughts during this period, now known as the principles of "*al-Murīdiyya* Order." He began raising his followers in a Sunnī Sufī way after receiving permission from Prophet Muḥammad in 1883.¹¹⁹ This period highlights personalities that influenced Aḥmadu Bamba's character and writings significantly, three of them standing out in particular, Sheikh 'Abdu-l-Qādir al-Jīlānī¹²⁰ (d. 561/1165), Sheikh Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī¹²¹ (d. 656/1258), and

Sheikh Aḥmad at-Tijānī¹²² (d. 1230/1815). We will briefly examine Aḥmadu Bamba's associations with these figures and their representation in his corpus.

3.1.3.1. The Three Sheikhs: al-Jīlānī, ash-Shādhilī, and at-Tijānī

When examining the writings of Aḥmadu Bamba, one can observe a deep respect and love for the Sufī saints (*awliyā*). He consistently upholds their stature without diminishment, offering unwavering reverence and recognition to each. The esteemed position of the *awliyā* in Aḥmadu Bamba's perspective is evident in his following words: "The love of all the *awliyā* is incumbent, and anyone who opposes the chosen ones is prohibited. [May] upon all the *awliyā* [be] the contentment of the One [Allah], who made them His mercy in every era."¹²³ Furthermore, his son Sheikh Muḥammad al-Bashīr quoted Aḥmadu Bamba as follows: "The honor of the *awliyā*, prophets, and diligent scholars is poisoned; speaking ill of them is like drinking the poison of venom."¹²⁴

118 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Bidāyat as-sulūk* (Touba: Maktabat Dār al-Quddūs, 1972), 7.

119 See Ibid. 38-39.

120 Abū Ṣāliḥ 'Abdu-l-Qādir ibn Mūsā ibn 'Abdullah al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1165), the founder of the *Qādiriyya* Sufī order. He was knowledgeable in numerous fields of study, including Qur'ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth* sciences, Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, jurisprudential differences, principles of *fiqh*, and Arabic grammar. He recited the Qur'ān in various form of recitations and issued legal opinions according to the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī schools of law. See al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-'awliyyā*, 120.

121 Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul Jabbār ash-Shādhilī al-Maghribī (d. 656/1258) was a Sufī scholar, and the founder of the *Shādhiliyya* Sufī order. He began his spiritual journey studying under Imām 'Abd as-Salām ibn Mashīsh (d. 625/1228?) in Morocco, who had a profound influence on his scholarly and Sufī life. Later, he traveled to Tunisia and secluded himself for worship on Mount Zaghwān, where he deepened his spiritual practices and studied under Abū Sa'īd al-Bājī (d. 628/1231). He then journeyed to Egypt and settled in Alexandria, where he attracted followers and disciples, and his Sufī order gained prominence in Egypt. He was renowned as one of the spiritual luminaries of his time. He passed away in the valley of Himaythara in the desert of Aydhāb while travelling to Mecca in the year 656/1258. See Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-'awliyyā*, 458; Salāḥ ad-Dīn as-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfī bi al-wafayāt* (Beirut: Dār Ihya' at-Turāth, 2000), XXI: 141.

122 Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār at-Tijānī (d. 1230/1815) was born in the village of 'Ain Mādī (Algeria). He memorized the Qur'ān at the age of seven and delved into the study of various Islamic sciences and literature. He began issuing legal opinions (*fatwās*) at the age of sixteen. He was a Mālikī jurist, an interpreter of the Qur'ān, a *ḥadīth* scholar, and a prominent Sufī. He embarked on spiritual journeys during which he met numerous saints and righteous individuals from whom he gained knowledge. In the year 1196/1782, the Prophet Muḥammad granted him permission to spread the *wird* that was assigned to him, in the village of Abī Sam'ūn in Algeria. He later moved to Fez, which became the main center for the *Tijāniyya* Sufī order, from where it spread to various regions. See Sīdī 'Alī Ḥarāzīm Barāda, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī wa bulūgh al-amānī fī fayḍ sīdī Abī al-'Abbās at-Tijjānī* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-Maḥmūdiyya, 1318 AH), 19-40.

123 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Jālibat as-Sa'āda*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhuna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.)

124 Mbacke, *Minan al-Bāqī al-Qadīm*, 103.

Despite Aḥmadu Bamba's profound love and respect for the *awliyā'*, he did not consider them all to be of equal stature. While recognizing the distinctive merits of each, he identified three figures - al-Jīlānī, at-Tijjānī, and ash-Shādhilī- as his principal spiritual mentors and practiced their *wirds* for a long time before receiving his own. Bamba often mentions them together in the same verse or poem where he talks about his spiritual guides during this period, as in these verses: "I have accepted the Messenger of Allah- may Allah's endless prayers and peace be upon him- as a prophet and a messenger. I have accepted his Book and the Ka'ba as a guide and a *qibla*. I have accepted the *awliyā'* as mentors guiding me to my Lord. With a particular adherence, with perfection, to al-Jīlānī, ash-Shādhilī, and at-Tijjānī."¹²⁵ Aḥmadu Bamba took pride in having these three as his spiritual guides in Sufism and frequently mentioned it in his writings: "My mentors are our master al-Jīlānī, and ash-Shādhilī along with at-Tijjānī."¹²⁶

There are numerous examples in his writings where he mentions these three mentors. Given space limitations, a single illustrative example will be provided for each. Bamba gives reference to the words of Sheikh 'Abdu-l-Qādir, where he enumerates the pillars of Sufism:

Our Master, the Imām al-Jīlānī, said- [may he] continue to be pleased and revered: Indeed, Sufism is built upon eight pillars: The generosity of al-Khalīl (Abraham), the contentment (*riḍā'*) of Ishāq (Isaac), the patience of Ayyūb (Job), who surpassed, the allusions of Zakariyyā (Zechariah), such is the solitude of Yaḥyā (John), the

wool of Mūsā (Moses), so count it, the asceticism of 'Īsā (Jesus), and the poverty of our beloved Maḥmūd, blessings and peace be upon him.¹²⁷

The origin of this quotation is indeed found in the book *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* (The Revelations of the Unseen) by Sheikh 'Abdul Qādir al-Jīlānī in prose and cited as it is.¹²⁸

In regard to the words of Sheikh Aḥmad at-Tijjānī, an example of such a statement can be found in his definition of Sufism in a preceding poem. He said: "Our Sheikh, *ar-raḍīyyu*, at-Tijjānī, who remains among the people like coral, said: Verily, Sufism is obedience to the command of the One whose majesty endures while avoiding all that He has forbidden, outwardly and inwardly, from where He is pleased, exalted is He, not from where you are pleased, so understand with intellect."¹²⁹ The origin of this quotation is to be found in at-Tijjānī's *Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī* (The Gems of Meanings): "The reality of Sufism is obedience to the commands and avoidance of prohibitions, both outwardly and inwardly, from where Allah is pleased, not from where you are pleased."¹³⁰

References to Sheikh Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī's teachings appear with less frequency in Aḥmadu Bamba's corpus compared to the two aforesaid sheikhs. This could be attributed to the limited availability of Shādhilī's books during that period, as the Shādhiliyya order did not have a significant presence in Senegal compared to the other two Sufi orders. However, it would not have prevented Aḥmadu Bamba from acquiring books of *Shādhiliyya* from Mauritania or

125 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān as-ṣalawāt 'alā an-nabī al-hāshimī*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.)

126 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *A Poem Embroidered with the Letters of Bism Allāh ar-Raḥmān ar-Raḥīm*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhouna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.)

127 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 190.

128 See Sheikh 'Abdul Qādir al-Jīlānī, *Futūḥ al-ghayb* (Dhaka: Markaz al-I'lām al-Ālamī, 2014), 126-127.

129 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 190.

130 Sīdī 'Alī Ḥarāzīm Barāda, *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997), I: 286.

Mauritanian traders in his country, as he previously did when purchasing some rare Sufi books. Nevertheless, the impact of some other sheikhs of the *Shādhilīyya* order is quite eminent in Bamba's writings, as he relied on the works of al-Yadālī and Ibn 'Aṭā' Allah, as we explained earlier. The following passage from the aforementioned poem demonstrates the incorporation of ash-Shādhilī's teachings in Bamba's works, where he addresses the causes of spiritual blindness (*al-baṣīrat*). He said: "The reasons for the blindness of insight are three, all of them are veils. Say: abundance of disobedience, pretense in obedience, and covetousness for creation. So, look for these in *Rūḥ al-bayān* after '*fahum lā yarji'ūn* (but they will not return)' in the *al-'awān* (al-Baqara 2/18)."¹³¹

This statement includes the words of Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī Bursawī (d. 1137/1725), the author of the book *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*—where he said: "And the causes of blindness of insight are three: the sending of the senses in the disobedience of Allah, covetousness for the creation of Allah, and pretense in the obedience of Allah."¹³² In this text, said the source this statement is not mentioned, but in the book *Īqāz al-himām fī sharḥ al-Ḥikam* (The Awakening of Spiritual Aspirations in the Commentary of the *Ḥikam*) the author Ahmad ibn 'Ajība (d. 1224/1809) attributed it to Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī stating: "Sheikh Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī -may Allah be pleased with him- said: 'Blindness of insight is in three: the sending of the senses in the disobedience of Allah, covetousness for the creation of Allah, and pretense in the obedience of Allah.'"¹³³

131 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Majmū'at aṣ-ṣuḡhrā*, 191.

132 See the commentary on the 19th verse in Sūrat al-Baqara in the book *Rūḥ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* by Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī Bursawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2008).

133 Ahmad ibn 'Ajība, *Īqāz al-himām fī sharḥ al-Ḥikam* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2023), I: 108.

Thus, considering that ash-Shādhilī passed away five centuries before Ḥaqqī's birth, it strongly suggests that the original statement was from ash-Shādhilī's tradition.

3.2. The Period from Pledging Allegiance to Prophet Muḥammad to His Passing (1893- 1927)

The year 1893 marks a significant landmark in Bamba's personal and spiritual development, which is evidenced in various aspects of his life: his personality, his writings, his public statements, and even the methods he employed in educating his followers. The main reason behind this shift lies in the cognitive rupture he experienced in that year, when he declared his abandonment of all Sufi sheikhs and *wirds* and confined himself to Prophet Muḥammad as his only spiritual guide, along with the Qur'ān as his sole *wird*. The following excerpts from his writings during this timeframe clearly manifest the change in his thought:

Today, I pledge allegiance to the chosen Messenger, to do service (*khidma*) for him, and I ask Allah for fidelity. I pledge to Allah to take the Book [Qur'ān] in service to the chosen one [Muḥammad], the gate of Truth. The most deserving of all creatures of my service, in prose and verse, is the Messenger of Mercy [Muḥammad].¹³⁴

He also said: "It has become clear to everyone with reason, that my means [Sheikh] is the Messenger [Muḥammad]."¹³⁵ "His [Allah's] noble book has become my *wird* and has expelled my adversaries."¹³⁶ "The book of my

134 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Futūḥ al-mukarram*, ed. 'Abdu-l-Qādir Mbacke Sheikh Maymūna (n.p., 2010), 10.

135 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *al-Manāhil aṣ-ṣāfiya*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhuna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.)

136 Ahmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān al-Qur'āniyya*, ed. 'Abdu-l-Qādir Mbacke Sheikh Maymūna (n.p., 2010), 285.

Lord has become my intimate friend, after the Prophet [Muḥammad] became my leader.”¹³⁷

These citations reveal a decisive shift in Bamba’s spiritual affiliations, marking his exclusive alignment with Prophetic guidance and the cessation of other influences. Moreover, all his writings and actions would be directed towards serving Prophet Muḥammad. While this study has previously analyzed the figures shaping Bamba’s early works, it now investigates how this doctrinal shift manifested in his writings during this critical period.

3.2.1. The Period of Shift in Aḥmadu Bamba’s Writings

This period represents one of the most prolific phases in Aḥmadu Bamba’s life in terms of writing. However, most of these writings consist of poems in which he praises Prophet Muḥammad, sends blessings upon him, or expresses gratitude to Allah for the blessings bestowed upon him. This phase is therefore notable for its absence of scholarly literature on Aḥmadu Bamba, particularly in the field of Sufism. Moreover, the books on Sufism he authored during this period mostly consist of the rewrites of his earlier works with some moderations. For instance, he rewrote his book *Mulayyin aṣ-Ṣudūr*, which was originally an adaptation of al-Ghazzālī’s *Bidāyat al-Hidāya* and renamed it *Munawwir aṣ-Ṣudūr*. Similarly, he rewrote his book *Masālik al-jinān*, which was originally an adaptation of *Khātimat at-Taṣawwuf* by al-Yadālī and retitled it *Masālik al-jinān fī Khidmat al-Muṭahhar al-Janān*.

A comparative analysis of Bamba’s engagement with Sufi textual traditions reveals both continuities and divergences between his earlier and later works, particularly in terms of autonomy and the method of reference.

An example of continuity is the reference to certain Sufi figures in Aḥmadu Bamba’s writings, although less frequent compared to the earlier stage. Al-Ghazzālī remains a key reference point, with Bamba’s *Munawwir aṣ-Ṣudūr* directly engaging with *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*, as previously mentioned. Likewise, we see Bamba relying on al-Ghazzālī, Ahmad Zarrūq, and Abū al-Abbās al-Hilālī es-Sijilmāsī (d. 1175/1761) in his book *Masālik al-jinān aww Mawāhib al-Mannān*,¹³⁸ which is his third book with this title.

The points of divergence all stem from the shift of his thought and change in his approach during this period. This period reveals Bamba’s mature intellectual persona -that of an autonomous Sufi thinker, firmly grounded in tradition yet intellectually independent. This marks a notable difference from his earlier phase as a young seeker of knowledge, when his seminal Sufi writings primarily engaged in synthesizing existing scholarly traditions. This emerging independence is manifested most clearly in his responses and *fatwās*, where he gradually moves away from textual reliance on earlier authorities. From this point on, he offers answers and *fatwās* directly from his own personal opinion.

During this period, his thoughts may at times reflect those of other Sufis; however, this may merely be a resemblance, or it could be attributed to the fact that Sufism encompasses a range of expressions and insights that emanate from Allah to the hearts of His saints, each of whom conveys them according to their own spiritual state. Therefore, expressions may converge due to the unity of the source. Evidence of this can be found in a narrative where Aḥmadu Bamba gave a response to a question, and then one of the attendees remarked that the response was taken from *al-Hikam* of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah. Aḥmadu Bamba

137 Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Futūḥ al-mukarram*, 13.

138 See Aḥmadu Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān al-‘ulūm ad-dīniyya*, 418-420.

replied, “*Bal innahū min ‘aṭā’i Allah, ‘wa-mā kāna ‘aṭā’u rabbika maḥzūra*”¹³⁹ (Rather, it is from the gifts of Allah, and the gifts of your Lord are not prohibited). This explains his decision to revise some of his earlier works while omitting references to previously cited scholars. It also implies that he reached a state of direct inspiration from Allah and the Prophet Muḥammad, the ultimate sources of all wisdom and understanding.

Another sign of this shift is his avoidance of traditional honorifics like ‘our Sheikh’ or ‘my Sheikh’ when referring to scholars—a practice common in his earlier works. Instead, in this later phase, he no longer acknowledges any spiritual guide apart from the Prophet Muḥammad. When mentioning other scholars, he does so with profound reverence, praying for divine blessings and mercy upon them. However, since his allegiance was devoted solely to Prophet Muḥammad, he no longer referred to them as his sheikhs. We observed hints of this in his discussion of the three sheikhs, but the distinction becomes even more evident when comparing two texts from different books: *Masālik al-jinān fī Jam‘ Mā Farrqahū ad-Daymānī*, which he authored in the first phase, and *Masālik al-jinān fī Khidmat al-Muṭahhar al-Janān*, which he authored in the second phase. In the first book, he mentioned the names of some scholars who wrote about Sufism, saying:

I found Sufis, the chosen ones, have authored books that have secrets. Like our sheikh, the reformist al-Ghazzālī, and Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allah, the one with greatness. And our Sheikh “al-Kuntiyyu” the one with the lights, the Aid of humanity, the Pole of guidance, “al-Mukhtār.” Our Sheikh “al-Khalīfa” the supported one by the truth from the Lord of the worlds, “Muḥammad.” And our Sheikh the *Mu-*

fassir, Muḥammad, who belongs to the *Daymān* tribe.¹⁴⁰

Here, we notice that he referred to four as his sheikhs. However, in the introduction of his second book, which is a reworking of the first, he said:

I found Sufis, the chosen ones, have authored books that contain virtues. Like the Sheikh, the one with abundant talents, al-Ghazzālī, may the one who brings down revelation be pleased with him. And the Sheikh with abundant talents, al-Kuntiyyu, may the hidden bestower be pleased with him. And like “al-Khalīfa,” his supported son [by Allah] Muḥammad, who has always been a master. And like the saint, the miracle of the Merciful, Ibn as-Sa‘īd, the accomplished one from the *Daymānī* lineage.¹⁴¹

Here, despite being described as “sheikhs,” they are no longer referred to as “his sheikhs” as before. Nonetheless, the verses show the extent of his respect and reverence for them.

Conclusion

The intellectual growth of Aḥmad Bamba was deeply influenced by his education, his interactions with scholars, and the scholarly traditions he engaged with. Bamba was born into a scholarly family, and from a young age, he was immersed in Islamic education. His early involvement in Qur’ānic studies, jurisprudence, and Sufi ethics formed the intellectual foundation for his later contributions to Islamic thought. Bamba’s formation of *al-Murīdiyya* Sufi order represented a transformative moment in Senegalese Sufism.

This research delved into the influential scholars and sources that shaped Aḥmad Bamba’s Sufi thought, emphasizing how his

139 Serigne Elhadj Mbacke, *Garabu Touba*, (Unpublished manuscript, private collection of Khadim Cheikhuna Mbacke, Senegal: Touba, nd.), II: 74.

140 Ibid. 58.

141 Aḥmad Bamba Mbacke, *Dīwān al-‘ulūm ad-dīniyya*, 407.

spiritual and intellectual journey was deeply rooted in practical application rather than philosophical Sufism. It detailed Bamba's relationship with key figures through direct mentorship and the study of their works and traces the phases of his intellectual development before he pledged allegiance to the Prophet Muḥammad. The period from 1854 to 1893 was a transformative phase in Aḥmadu Bamba's life, during which his Sufi identity was shaped, and he began to outline his principles for spiritual renewal. This phase saw Bamba's deep intellectual engagement with Sufism and other disciplines, producing significant works that would later define his scholarly legacy.

Prominent Sufi figures, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, Sheikh Ahmad Zarrūq, Jalāl ad-Dīn as-Suyūṭī, 'Abdu-l-Wahhāb ash-Sha'rānī shaped Bamba's intellectual formation. These scholars offered him a rich array of spiritual and ethical teachings that he would later synthesize with his Sufi works. In addition to these classical figures, Bamba's intellectual development was further shaped by the Kunta family, a major source of Sufi thought in West Africa. The Kunta family, including figures like Sheikh Sīdī al-Mukhtār al-Kuntiyyu and his son Sheikh Muḥammad al-Khalīfa al-Kuntiyyu, provided Bamba a framework for understanding ethics, piety, and the practical application of Sufi teachings. as seen in his works like *Masālik al-jinān* and *Dūnaka yā maḥmūd*. Key influences included some Mauritanian scholars like Sheikh Muḥammad ibn al-Mukhtār al-Yadālī, whose *Khātimat at-Taṣawwuf* Bamba versified, and Sheikh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥājī ash-Shinqīṭī, whose treatise on manners and ethics became a key reference for Bamba's *Nahj qaḍā' al-ḥāj*.

In addition to these primary books, which Bamba cited frequently, he also drew from

various less-cited sources to enhance his understanding of piety, knowledge, and spirituality. These works include texts such as *'Awārif al-ma'ārif* by al-Suhrawardī, *al-Ḥikam al-'Aṭā'iyya* by Ibn 'Aṭā' Allāh as-Sakandarī, *Rawḍ ar-rayāḥīn* by al-Yāfī'ī, *Tā'iyyat as-Sulūk ilā malik al-mulūk* and its commentary by ash-Sharnūbī, *Tadhkirat al-mustarshidīn* by 'Omar al-Fūtiyyu, and *Shudhūr al-adhkār* by Sheikh Sīdīya al-Kabīr, among others. The absence of philosophical Sufi texts from his references underscores his purposeful avoidance of that debated tradition. Yet his scholarly openness shines through in his unhesitating use of Shia sources, transcending sectarian differences.

This period of Bamba's life, marked by his travels and spiritual education, culminated in the foundation of *al-Murīdiyya* Order in 1883, during which he sought spiritual guidance from key Sufi figures like Sheikh 'Abdu-l-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Sheikh Abū al-Ḥasan ash-Shādhilī, and Sheikh Aḥmad at-Tijānī. Their influence was crucial in shaping Bamba's teachings and the development of *al-Murīdiyya*. However, Bamba's spiritual journey came to a climax in 1893, when he formally abandoned all intermediaries and devoted himself entirely to serving Prophet Muḥammad. This shift is considered a crucial phase in the growth of *al-Murīdiyya* order, where Bamba emphasized "*al-khidma*" (service) to the Prophet. This guiding principle would define his spiritual legacy.

Despite his spiritual independence, Bamba continued to honor and praise his former sheikhs and recognized their contributions to Sufism. His poems and writings during this time reflect his unique position as someone who was both deeply connected to the Prophet and still respectful of the legacy of earlier Sufi masters. This balance allowed him to maintain his independent spiritual

path while fostering mutual respect with the followers of the other orders.

Bamba's writings during this period further illustrate his spiritual maturing. He produced fewer scholarly works but engaged heavily in poetry, often praising Prophet Muḥammad and expressing gratitude for the divine blessings he received. His later works were more personal and independent, marked by a reduced reliance on earlier Sufi texts and a greater emphasis on direct spiritual experience. While his writings occasionally echoed the teachings of other Sufi figures, this was less about citing them as authorities and more about reflecting the universal spiritual truths he had received directly from Allah and the Prophet. In his revised versions of earlier texts, Bamba refrained from invoking specific Sufi sheikhs as his direct mentors, further emphasizing his singular devotion to Prophet Muḥammad as his only spiritual guide. This shift underscores the extent to which Bamba's identity and spiritual practice had evolved, setting him apart as a uniquely independent figure in the Sufi tradition.

The primary focus of Bamba's intellectual and spiritual journey was the integration of practical Sufism into everyday life. Different from many other Sufi scholars who emphasized mere theoretical knowledge or philosophical discourse, Bamba's approach was fundamentally practical. His teachings centered around practical action, particularly in the areas of worship, work, and service. His intellectual contributions were not abstract ideas but were deeply rooted both in his own experience and that of his followers.

Can Bamba's approach be viewed within the context of Neo-Sufism? Neo-Sufism, as discussed by scholars like Fazlur Rahman, Bernd Radtke, Nehemia Levtzion, and John Voll, emerged as a response to challenges in the 18th and 19th centuries, with Sufi leaders

focusing on *sharī'a*, organized brotherhoods, and societal roles.¹⁴² Despite the problematic nature of the term,¹⁴³ Bamba's thought, as we have outlined in this study, shares many similarities with the general characteristics associated with the term Neo-Sufism. Thus, *al-Murīdiyya* order might reflect the trend of neo-Sufi brotherhoods adapting to political and colonial contexts while preserving a devotional core.

Further research into Aḥmadu Bamba's understanding of key Sufi terms is essential for gaining a deeper insight into his unique spiritual practices and approach to Sufism. Additionally, a more comprehensive investigation into Bamba's works in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology, and Arabic language would contribute to a broader understanding of the intellectual foundations of his teachings beyond the realm of Sufism. A comparative examination of Bamba's Sufi teachings in relation to other influential West African Sufi traditions would reveal commonalities, divergences and unique contributions of his methodology. These studies would offer a more nuanced understanding of Bamba's historical significance and clarify distinctive features of his spiritual paradigm.

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142 See John Voll, "Neo-Sufism: Reconsidered Again," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/La Revue canadienne des études africaines*, 42 (2013): 314-330.

143 For the term's main characteristics, see R. S. O'Fahey, and Bernd Radtke. "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," *Der Islam* 70, 1 (1993): 52-87.

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The Poetics of Divine Love:
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İlâhî Aşkın Poetikası:
Mevlânâ'nın Mesnevî-i Ma'nevî'sinde Aşkın Metaforik İfadeleri

Arzu Eylül YALÇINKAYA*

Abstract

Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's (d. 672/1273) *Masnavī-i Ma'navī* is replete with metaphors of love that function as epistemological and ontological instruments, serving both to impart knowledge and to reflect the structure of reality. This study examines how Rūmī employs the language of love as a means to express ineffable mystical realities of divine love and union, and to catalyze the transformation of the soul. Rūmī's poetic metaphors—such as likening love to the astrolabe of God's mysteries or to a consuming flame, images that frame love as both a navigational tool to the Divine and a fire that purifies by consuming the self—convey the paradoxical nature of divine love, wherein intense longing and self-annihilation lead to spiritual fulfillment. Through allegorical narratives and symbolic imagery, Rūmī articulates profound insights into the soul's journey toward the Divine and its inner metamorphosis through love. The analysis highlights the indispensable role of metaphor in expressing what is beyond ordinary language, illustrating that in the *Masnavī* love is not merely a theme but a deliberate pedagogical tool and an existential principle guiding the seeker toward experiential knowledge of divine unity.

Keywords: Sufism, metaphor and symbolism, 'ishq (divine love), metaphorical expressions of love, *Masnavī-i Ma'navī*, allegory, *fanā*'.

* **ORCID:** 0000-0001-6834-799X, Dr., Üsküdar University Institute for Sufi Studies,
E-mail: arzuylul.yalcinkaya@uskudar.edu.tr

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Özet

Celâleddîn Rûmî'nin (ö. 672/1273) *Mesnevî-i Mânevî*'si, hem bilgi aktarmaya hem de hakikatin yapısını aksettirmeye hizmet eden epistemolojik ve ontolojik araçlar olarak işlev gören aşk metaforlarıyla doludur. Bu çalışma, Mevlânâ'nın aşk dilini, ilâhî aşk ve tevhidin tarif edilemez mistik gerçekliklerini ifade etmek ve nefsin tekâmülünü hızlandırmak için nasıl bir araç olarak kullandığını incelemektedir. Mevlânâ'nın şiirsel metaforları -örneğin onun, aşkı, Allah'ın esrarının usturlabına ya da hem Hakk'a giden yol gösterici bir araç hem de benliği yakarak arındıran yakıcı bir aleve benzetmesi gibi- ilâhî aşkın paradoksal doğasını aktarır ki bunun içinde kişiyi mânevî itminâna götüren yoğun iştihak ve ifna-yı nefis yer alır. Mevlânâ, alegorik anlatılar ve sembolik imgeler aracılığıyla, ruhun Hakk'a doğru yolculuğuna ve aşk yoluyla içsel dönüşümüne dair derin anlamları dile getirir. Bu çalışma, günlük dilin ötesinde olanı ifade etmede metaforun vazgeçilmez rolünü vurgulamayı ve *Mesnevî*'de aşkın sadece bir tema değil, bilinçli bir pedagojik araç ve tâlibi, ilâhî birliğin tecrübi bilgisine yönlendiren varoluşsal bir ilke olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, metafor ve sembolizm, ilâhî aşk, ilâhî aşkın metaforik temsilleri, *Mesnevî-yi Mânevî*, alegori, fenâ.

Introduction

In the vast and profound world of Sufi literature, the concept of love (*‘ishq*) has occupied a central role, serving as both a cosmic principle and an existential reality. Sufi poets and philosophers alike have engaged deeply with the notion of love, depicting it as the force that binds creation to the Divine.¹ Yet within this discourse, love is not a singular or uniform experience; rather, it unfolds in a spectrum, encompassing both the transient affections directed toward worldly attachments and the ultimate, all-encompassing love that draws the soul toward God. Classical Sufi thought differentiates between *‘ishq al-majâzî*, the metaphorical love that manifests in human desires and inclinations—including one's attachment to the self (*nafs*)—and *‘ishq al-haqîqî*, the true love that transcends all finite objects of affection and is directed solely toward the Divine.² In the realm of mystical discourse, the concept of love is sel-

dom articulated through direct definitions. Rather, it is encoded within layers of symbolism, allegory, and poetic imagery, rendering it accessible only to those who can decipher its hidden meanings. This dynamic is evident in the works of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî (d. 672/1273),³ whose *Masnavî-i Ma'navî*—often revered as a masterpiece of Persian mystical poetry—presents love not as a theoretical construct but as a lived reality that finds its truest articulation in experiential form.⁴ Rûmî inherits and expands upon this literary legacy in the *Masnavî*, crafting interconnected layers of narrative and symbolic discourse that probe deeply into love's existential and ontological realities, particularly through motifs such as the annihilation of self (*fanâ*) and the ceaseless longing (*shawq*) toward union with the Beloved. This dual focus reveals the paradoxical nature of love in Rûmî's vision: at once intimately personal and cosmically all-encompassing—a paradox that the body of the paper will unpack in detail.

1 Süleyman Uludağ, "Aşk (Tasavvuf)," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1991, IV: 11–17; Omneya Ayad, "Divine Love and Direct Witnessing in the Thought of Ibn 'Ajība," *The Maghreb Review* 45, 4 (2020): 839–855.

2 William C. Chittick, *Divine Love* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013), viii, 41–51.

3 Reşat Öngören, "Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* 2004, XXIX: 441–448.

4 Semih Ceyhan, "Mesnevî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2004, XXIX: 325–334.

Unlike philosophical treatises that attempt to define love in abstract terms, Rūmī resists explicit conceptualization, adhering instead to the Sufi understanding that true knowledge cannot be transmitted through discursive reasoning but must be realized through experience.⁵ At the heart of Rūmī’s discourse is an understanding of love as an ontological principle that underlies existence itself. He writes that “love is the astrolabe of God’s mysteries,”⁶ suggesting that love is the instrument by which one navigates and uncovers the deepest truths of the Divine. In Rūmī’s cosmology, love is not confined to personal sentiment; it is the very force that “makes the wheel of the Heavens turn,” without which “the world would be inanimate”—a creative power woven into the fabric of reality. The ontological dimension of love in the *Masnavī* thus emerges through myriad examples: each parable and lyrical digression ultimately points back to love as the source and sustainer of the universe, echoing the Sufi notion that divine love is the *raison d’être* of creation. Rūmī is careful to note that worldly loves are but pale reflections of the one true Love, *‘ishq al-ḥaqīqī*. As he indicates, to love anything apart from God is “metaphorical love” that must eventually lead the seeker to the Real Beloved. This perspective sets the stage for Rūmī’s intricate use of symbolism, where every earthly tale of longing or devotion in the *Masnavī* becomes a doorway to understanding the love of God.

5 While Rūmī’s corpus—encompassing the *Dīwān-i Kabīr* and didactic prose works such as *Fīhi Mā Fīhi*—frequently engages with the theme of love, it is in the *Masnavī* that love unfolds through a complex interplay of metaphors, narratives, and archetypal lovers. See Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaluddin Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 32–42.

6 Reynold A. Nicholson, (ed. and trans.), *The Mathnawī of Jalālūddīn Rūmī: Edited from the Oldest Manuscripts Available, with Critical Notes, Translation, and Commentary*, (London: Luzac & Co., 1926), I: 109–114.

Because divine love in Rūmī’s vision transcends ordinary definition, metaphor and narrative become essential tools for expressing what cannot be directly stated in prose. The *Masnavī*, opens with the plaintive song of the reed flute, separated from its reed-bed—a metaphor for the human soul’s estrangement from the Divine and its yearning to return. This iconic image immediately situates the reader in the symbolic world of Rūmī’s poetry, where literal events and characters signify deeper spiritual realities.⁷ Throughout the *Masnavī*, Rūmī relies on such figurative narratives to articulate the process of mystical transformation. The imaginal dimension of love manifests clearly in how seemingly mundane stories—a lover’s heartache or a moth’s fatal attraction to a flame—are imbued with transcendent meanings concerning the soul’s journey toward God.⁸ For Rūmī, these metaphors are not decorative; they are necessary, for the truth of love transcends earthly desires and attachments and eludes ordinary rational discourse. The transformations depicted in these tales (the moth annihilated in the flame, or the self-dissolved in the beloved’s presence) illustrate what Rūmī sees as love’s power to fundamentally change one’s state of being. In his view, love is a transformative force that carries the soul from the realm of separation to the realm of union. The *Masnavī*’s rich imagery—drawn from everyday life, nature, and Islamic lore—serves to bridge the gap between ineffable spiritual truth and the reader’s own experience, preparing one to grasp insights that logic alone cannot convey.⁹

Rūmī’s insistence on the primacy of experience is closely tied to his epistemology of love. He maintains that love can never be

7 *Masnavī*, I: 1–18.

8 Emine Yeniterzi, *Sevginin Evrensel Mühendisi Mevlânâ* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2011), 7–11.

9 Amir H. Zekrgoo and Leyla H. Tajer, “The Seven Avatars of Love: Deliberations on Rūmī’s Mathnawī,” *Mawlana Rumi Review*, 9 (2018): 67–75.

understood through abstract definitions or dry intellectual proofs; it must be *tasted* and lived. As one scholar observes, for Rūmī love is “something that has to be experienced to be understood.” No amount of second-hand description can substitute for the direct knowing that comes when the heart is enraptured by the Beloved. Rūmī dramatizes the limitations of reason and language in multiple passages of the *Masnavī*. He cautions that “however much we describe and explain love, when we fall in love, we are ashamed of our words,” and that while “explanation by the tongue makes things most clear, ... love unexplained is clearer.” Intellectual discourse falters at the threshold of this mystery: when the pen of reason reaches the subject of love, “it splits in twain... paper [is] torn.” Only love itself, Rūmī concludes, “can explain love and lovers.” This epistemological stance—that true knowledge of divine love comes only through loving—is a cornerstone of Sufi thought. By emphasizing the limits of rationality, Rūmī prepares the reader to approach the *Masnavī* not as a set of doctrinal teachings, but as an invitation to personal transformation. The poems aim to engender an experience in the reader, using words as catalysts for an inner realization that ultimately transcends words.

Scholarly studies on the *Masnavī* have long recognized Rūmī’s mastery of metaphor and his intricate use of representational language, tracing its roots within the broader Sufi tradition. His metaphors and allegorical expressions do not merely ornament the text; they serve as epistemological tools, guiding the reader toward an embodied understanding of divine love. Existing research has examined individual representations—the reed flute,¹⁰ such as water, light, fire, and intoxication,

10 Şener Demirel, “Sembol, Sembolik Dil ve Bu Bağlamda Mesnevî’nin İlk 18 Beytindeki Sembolik Unsurlar,” *Turkish Studies - International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 7, 3 (2012): 915–947.

exploring their ontological and mystical implications.¹¹ Studies specifically addressing love and the lover in the *Masnavī* have also contributed to this field, emphasizing their role in articulating mystical transformation and the evolving states of the seeker. However, while these studies offer valuable insights, a systematic examination of the metaphorical framework through which Rūmī constructs the themes of love (*ishq*) and the lover (*āshiq*) remains absent.¹² However, while these studies provide crucial insights, they often isolate such images from the broader narrative framework within which they operate. The *Masnavī*, as a poetic and didactic work, does not present a static repository of allegories but constructs a fluid and interconnected web of metaphorical relationships, in which love, and the lover emerge as central figures. The text does not simply describe love; it enacts it, structuring its discourse in a manner that compels the reader to engage with love’s paradoxes experientially rather than conceptually.

This study seeks to explore how Rūmī’s *Masnavī* articulates a definition of love not through explicit theological discourse but through an evolving system of metaphors and literary representations.¹³ Rather than extracting a singular definition of love, the body of the paper will closely examine key tales and metaphors in the *Masnavī* to show

11 Hasan Çiçek, “Kadīm Üç Felsefe Problemi Bağlamında Mevlânâ’nın *Mesnevî*’sinde Metaforik Anlatım”, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 44, 1 (2003): 293-311; Ali Alizadeh Amoli and Bahaeddin Eskandari, “Cognitive Metaphors of the Unity of Existence in Rumi’s *Masnavi*,” *Journal of Language Studies* 2, 1 (2024): 167-190; Abdullah Öztürk, “Mevlânâ’nın *Mesnevî*’sinde Gece Sembolü,” *Eskiye* 5, 2 (2020): 77-96.

12 Musa Kaval, “Mesnevî’de Aşk ve Âşık,” *EKEV Akademik Dergisi - Sosyal Bilimler* 15, 49 (2011): 117-128.

13 Emel Sünter Yalçın, “Mesnevî’de Aşk,” *Türk-İslâm Medeniyeti Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3 (2007): 223.

how Rūmī's poetic method illuminates love's transformative power. The key question driving this inquiry is: Can we discern from Rūmī's metaphorical language an implicit articulation of how he conceptualizes love? Although he refrains from defining it in explicit terms, his verses, rich with allegory and mystical signification, appear to construct a poetic framework that reveals his understanding of love's nature, function, and ultimate purpose.¹⁴ By situating Rūmī's use of metaphors within the broader tradition of Sufi discourse, this analysis aims to illuminate the epistemological and existential dimensions of love as presented in the *Masnavī*.

1. Sufi Tradition and the Symbolic Language in Rūmī's *Masnavī*

The Sufi tradition has long been characterized by its distinctive use of symbolic language, an involved system of metaphors and allegories through which the ineffable dimensions of divine reality are expressed.¹⁵ This reliance on symbolic discourse emerges from a fundamental epistemological conviction: the ultimate truths of existence—those concerning God, love, and the human soul—transcend the limitations of conventional language.¹⁶ Moreover, as al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) notes in his *Risāla*, this esoteric knowledge was intentionally veiled to protect it from those unprepared to grasp its deeper significance.¹⁷ Indeed, within this framework of caution and reverence, from the earliest periods of Sufism, symbolic language was employed as both a necessity and a protective strategy.

As Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988) observed, Sufi discourse often relied on *ramz* (symbolism) and *ishāra* (allusion), forms of speech that concealed mystical knowledge from the uninitiated while allowing the enlightened to discern deeper meanings.¹⁸

The Sufi adoption of symbolic language is respected as deepening of Islamic tradition's inherent epistemology, in which hidden realities (*bāṭin*) are suggested through outward forms (*ẓāhir*). The influence of the Qur'ānic and Prophetic precedent for symbolic discourse is also evident in early Sufi canon, where scriptural references are seamlessly woven into a broader mystical semiotics. The Qur'ān itself provides the foundational precedent for this mode of communication, frequently using parables (*amthāl*) and metaphorical language to articulate realities that defy human comprehension.¹⁹ For instance, the Qur'ānic statement, *Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth*,²⁰ is not a literal description but a metaphysical metaphor that suggests divine immanence and illumination. This principle is equally evident in the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, whose use of symbolic gestures and metaphoric speech sought to convey truths inaccessible to discursive reason alone. Similarly, *ḥadīth qudsī* traditions often employ symbolic imagery, such as the famous saying, *I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known*.²¹ Thus, from its inception, Islamic spirituality articulated itself through symbols and metaphors, preparing the spiritual soil from which the rich garden of Sufi poetry would flourish.

14 Coleman Barks, *The Essential Rumi* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 193-199.

15 A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958), 5-19.

16 Sadık Kılıç, *İslâm'da Sembolik Dil* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995), 56.

17 Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. Abdülhalim Mahmūd, (Matabah Muassasat Dāraḥşab, 1989).

18 Semih Ceyhan, "Remiz", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2007, XXXIV: 566-568; Süleyman Uludağ, "İşaret", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2001, XXIII: 423.

19 Necdet Çağıl, "Hakikat-Mecaz Kutuplaşması Bağlamında Kur'an'da Temsili (Simgesel) Anlatım," *İslami İlimler Dergisi* 8, 1 (2013): 93-112; Murat Sülün, *41 Temsil ile Kur'an Gerçeği* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2017), 30.

20 Nūr 24/35.

21 Aclünī, *Keşfü'l-Hafā*, II: 132.

These textual precedents established a fertile foundation for Sufi hermeneutics, which approaches sacred language as dynamic expressions whose layers of meaning progressively unfold through contemplation and direct spiritual realization.²² As a result, Sufis have sought alternative means of expression, employing poetic and imaginal forms that gesture beyond the constraints of ordinary speech. Thus poetry emerged as the primary medium for Sufi self-expression, precisely because it accommodates ambiguity, paradox, and multiplicity of meaning—all essential features of the mystical path.²³ Unlike rational discourse, which seeks to categorize and define, poetry allows for a simultaneity of meanings, reflecting the paradoxical nature of divine love: it burns and nourishes, annihilates and fulfills, veils and reveals. The inherent flexibility of poetry made it an ideal instrument for Sufi instruction, where literal explication was often deemed insufficient to convey the depths of spiritual experience.²⁴ Poetry became the most natural vehicle for this symbolic discourse, offering the fluidity necessary to capture the paradoxical nature of divine love. This symbolic tendency is further reflected in early Sufi poetry, where divine love is typically expressed through intense imagery—fire representing purification, the ocean signifying divine vastness, and the nightingale and the rose symbolizing the lover’s longing for the Beloved.²⁵ Unlike discursive prose, poetry allows for simultaneous

meanings—layered expressions that veil and unveil at the same time, mirroring the Sufi understanding of reality as both hidden and revealed. As the tradition matured, poets such as Sanā’ī (d. 525/1131?), ‘Attār (d. 618/1221), and finally Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī developed this symbolic language into a comprehensive system, where metaphors were not mere literary embellishments but instruments of spiritual transformation.

Among the most illustrious figures to embrace this symbolic mode of expression is Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, whose *Masnavī-i Ma’navī* stands as a preeminent testimony to the ways in which symbolic language serves as both a pedagogical tool and a vehicle for mystical illumination.²⁶ Love (*ishq*), a central theme of this voluminous work, is never described in straightforward doctrinal terms but is instead given shape through metaphors and symbolic representations. Fire, ocean, intoxication, and madness—these and other evocative images structure the discourse, not merely as literary flourishes but as ontological markers that embody the transformative power of divine love. Unlike rational theological discourses that define love within doctrinal frameworks, Rūmī presents love as something that must be experienced rather than explained—an all-encompassing reality that shapes the soul’s journey.²⁷ A defining feature of Rūmī’s approach is his highly dynamic use of metaphor, where love shifts fluidly between different images, depending on the aspect being emphasized. Rather than describing love as a static concept, Rūmī immerses the reader in its unfolding mys-

22 Annabel Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur’an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107-124.

23 Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, *Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr: Tasavvufi Makaleler*, trans. Sadık Kılıç, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2002), 191–207.

24 Mahmood Jamal, “Introduction,” *Islamic Mystical Poetry, Sufi Verse from the Early Mystics to Rumi* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), i-xxii.

25 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 309-327.

26 William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 19-35; Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 32-42.

27 İbrahim Gamard, “Jalaleddin Rumi and His Place in the History of Sufism,” in *The Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, (London: Routledge, 2020), 103-117.

tery, enacting its fluidity through the movement of his verse. This interplay of shifting metaphors—fire and moth, ocean and ship, intoxication and madness—establishes love as both a process of self-annihilation and an ecstatic fulfillment.

2. Metaphorical Expressions of Love in Rūmī's *Masnavī*:

2.1. Love as the Ocean: The Boundless and Transformative Power of *Ishq* in Rūmī's *Masnavī*

Rūmī's depiction of love (*ishq*) in the *Masnavī* is deeply rooted in a symbolic framework that transcends conventional descriptions, offering an experiential and transformative model of divine love instead. In Rūmī's *Masnavī*, love is not a mere sentiment or abstract principle but the very fabric of reality—the primordial force that gives rise to creation and sustains all existence. Among the most enduring and potent metaphors in Rūmī's *Masnavī* is that of love as an ocean—an unfathomable and inexhaustible expanse, whose depths remain beyond the reach of the intellect. This image captures the incomprehensibility and all-consuming nature of divine love, which engulfs the lover (*āshiq*) entirely, dissolving all traces of selfhood into the overwhelming presence of the Beloved (*ma'shūq*).

“When the envoy brought her (to him), the captain straightway fell in love with her beauty. Love is an (infinite) ocean, on which the heavens are (but) a flake of foam: (they are distraught) like Zalikhā in desire for a Joseph. Know that the wheeling heavens are turned by waves of Love: were it not for Love, the world would be frozen (inanimate).”²⁸

Here, Rūmī presents love not merely as an aspect of existence but as its very animating principle. Love is the undercurrent that sets

the cosmos in motion, sustaining all things in a ceaseless state of flux and transformation. The heavens, seemingly immutable and distant, are described as nothing more than fleeting foam upon love's oceanic expanse—impermanent, transient, and wholly contingent upon the deeper reality that is love itself. In this cosmological vision, love operates as the force that prevents stagnation, ensuring that creation remains dynamic and perpetually unfolding.²⁹

Rūmī conveys this boundless force through the following lines:

“The servant (of God) desires to be freed from Fortune; the lover (of God) nevermore desires to be free. The servant is always seeking a robe of honour and a stipend; all the lover's robe of honour is his vision of the beloved. Love is not contained in speech and hearing: Love is an ocean whereof the depth is invisible. The drop of the sea cannot be numbered. The Seven Seas are petty in comparison with that Ocean. This discourse has no end, nor can it be grasped through mere desire.

29 Rūmī's depiction of love as an infinite ocean in the *Masnavī* resonates deeply with his poetic elaborations in the *Dīwān-i Kabīr*, where the *baḥr al-'ishq* (ocean of love) emerges as a central metaphor for the boundless and transformative power of divine love. While the *Masnavī* portrays love as the cosmic force that animates existence and keeps the universe in perpetual motion, the *Dīwān-i Kabīr* presents this ocean as the site of complete immersion, where the lover dissolves into the Beloved's limitless expanse. In the *Masnavī*, the heavens, described as mere foam upon love's waves, depend entirely on this force for movement and vitality. Similarly, in the *Dīwān-i Kabīr*, Rūmī expands upon this imagery, emphasizing the annihilating and regenerative nature of love: “Love is the water of life—immerse yourself in it. Every drop of this ocean contains another life, another eternity.” Just as the world would fall into stillness without love's motion in the *Masnavī*, the lover in the *Dīwān* recognizes that love is the only reality, dissolving worldly attachments and ushering the seeker into an eternal realm. See Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî. *Rubailer (Rubā'īyyāt)*. trans. Şefik Can. 2 vols (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1990–1991), 2090, 946, 1389, 857, 1911, 614.

28 *Masnavī*, V: 3852–54.

Love is an ocean whose depths remain unfathomable.”³⁰

In this passage, Rūmī extends beyond mere analogical expressions between love and the ocean, collapsing any distinction to illustrate that love itself manifests as the ocean. Rather than employing a simile (*tashbīh*), which would retain a conceptual separation, he engages with metaphor (*isti‘āra*), whereby love is not like the ocean—it is the ocean. This metaphorical fusion underscores the boundless and immersive nature of divine love, suggesting that the human experience of love is akin to being in the ocean’s embrace, a profound existential and ontological melding. This subtle yet profound distinction aligns with the ontological framework of Sufi thought, wherein love is not merely an emotion or a psychological state but the very force that animates existence. The ocean, vast and unpredictable, mirrors the nature of divine love—limitless in depth, transformative in its movement, and ultimately inescapable. Just as the ocean dissolves all that enters it, love eradicates the illusion of individual selfhood, leaving only the unifying presence of the Beloved.³¹

Yet, the ocean Rūmī describes is not a tranquil expanse; rather, it is turbulent, boiling, and tempestuous, mirroring the restless, transformative power of love: “Love makes the sea boil like a cauldron. Love crumbles the mountain like sand.”³² Here, love emerges as a dynamic current of immense upheaval, resonating deeply with the Sufi doctrine of *fanā’* (self-annihilation in the Divine), which articulates a profound fusion with the ultimate reality. The boiling sea represents the paradox of divine love: it nourishes and destroys, grants life while demanding sacrifice, simul-

taneously drawing the seeker toward union (*waṣl*) while subjecting them to the agonies of longing (*shawq*) and separation (*firāq*). This oscillation between fulfillment and yearning—between presence and absence—defines the mystical conception of love in the Sufi tradition. Through this imagery, Rūmī does not simply describe love’s effects; he immerses the reader in its turbulence. Love is not something that can be understood from a distance—it must be plunged into, surrendered to, and endured. The seeker cannot remain an observer on the shore; they must cast themselves into the waves, allowing love to submerge them entirely.³³

If the ocean represents the vastness and peril of divine love, the ship emerges as its counterpoint—a metaphor for guidance, surrender, and the salvific power of love. Rūmī frequently likens the lover to a voyager at sea, carried upon a ship that navigates the uncertain waters of love’s trials:

“Intelligence is (*like*) swimming in the sea; he (*the swimmer*) is not saved: he is drowned at the end of the business. Leave off swimming, let pride and enmity go; this is not a Jayhūn (Oxus) or a (*lesser*) river, it is an ocean. And, moreover, (it is) the deep ocean without refuge; it sweeps away the seven seas like straw. Love is as a ship for the elect; seldom is calamity (*the result*); for the most part it is deliverance. Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment; intelligence is opinion, while bewilderment is (*immediate*) vision. Sacrifice your understanding in the presence of Muṣṭafā.”³⁴

Here, the ship functions as a symbol of divine guidance, recalling the Qur’ānic motif of Noah’s Ark, which saves the faithful while

30 *Masnavī*, V: 2728–2732.

31 Süleyman Uludağ, “Deniz”, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü*, (İstanbul: Kalcı Yayınları, 2007), 104.

32 *Masnavī*, V: 2735.

33 The lover is not the captain but a passenger, carried by forces beyond their control: “The lover is tossed upon the waves of longing / Drifting without anchor/ Pulled by unseen tides toward the horizon of love.” (*Masnavī*, III: 4435–4457).

34 *Masnavī*, IV: 1403–1408

leaving behind those who reject divine mercy. Yet, Rūmī's metaphor extends beyond conventional eschatological narratives. In his cosmology, love's ship is not granted to all; it is available to those who surrender to its currents. Some remain on the shore, bound by reason, fear, and attachment to worldly concerns. Others cast themselves into the sea, trusting that love will either carry them to safety or obliterate them entirely. The metaphor also highlights the contrast between those who seek security in reason and those who abandon themselves to love. Rationality, in Rūmī's cosmology, is like the shore—a stable ground that offers the illusion of safety but ultimately prevents the soul from journeying toward the Divine. The lover, by stepping onto the ship, renounces this false security, embracing the uncertainty of the open sea in pursuit of union (*waṣl*). This distinction reflects a key aspect of Sufi epistemology: true knowledge is not attained through reason alone but through surrender. Love, like the sea, cannot be charted, predicted, or controlled; it must be yielded to. The ship, then, represents both the means of salvation and the necessity of trusting in the unseen, a principle central to the Sufi path. Beyond the structured imagery of the ship as salvation, Rūmī also depicts the lover as a helpless voyager—one who is at the mercy of love's currents, unable to control their destination.

The ship of love is not navigated by human hands but moves according to the pull of the Beloved.³⁵

This passage also introduces a critical epistemological distinction which echoes throughout the *Masnavī*. Rūmī explicitly contrasts intelligence (*'aql*) and bewilderment (*ḥayrat*), suggesting that conventional reason is insufficient for navigating the

depths of divine love. The intellect, like a swimmer, may temporarily remain afloat, but ultimately, it will be overcome by the vastness of love's ocean. The ship of love, by contrast, represents surrender—the relinquishing of self-will and rational calculation in favor of a deeper, experiential knowing (*ma'rifa*). The lover, rather than attempting to master the sea, must yield to the guidance of the ship, which moves not by his own will but by the unseen hand of the Beloved. Within this framework, the ship also signifies the role of the *qutb* (the spiritual pole or perfected guide). As Rūmī states elsewhere in the *Masnavī*, “the Qutb of the time,” or *'arīf*,³⁶ is the ship of salvation”³⁷ underscoring the Sufi understanding that true spiritual navigation requires the guidance of one who has already traversed love's perilous waters.³⁸ This notion is rooted in the classical Sufi concept of the *murshīd al-kāmil* (the perfected guide), one who transcends book knowledge and rational inquiry, having attained divine knowledge (*'ilm al-ladunnī*) through unveiling (*kashf*).³⁹ Yet, even aboard the ship, the journey remains perilous. The sea of love is

36 In the *Masnavī*, Rūmī expounds on the distinction between intellectual (*'aqlī*) and transmitted (*naqlī*) knowledge, as well as the divergence between the scholar (*'ālim*) and the gnostic (*'arīf*). This thematic focus is further accentuated in his work *Fīhi Mā Fīhi*, which comprises a compilation of his conversations (*soḥbat*). For an example, see Muhammed Celâleddin Rūmī *Fihimâfih*, trans. Meliha Anbarcıoğlu (İstanbul: Konya Mülâhakatı Eski Eserleri Severler Derneği, 2006), 38-39.

37 *Masnavī*, IV: 1418.

38 Mojaddedi offers a fresh theological perspective by comparing Rūmī's concept of intimate divine friendship (*dūstī*) with classical Sufi love theories and connects Rūmī's poetic imagery of the Lover-Beloved with the notion of *walāya* (friendship/sainthood), showing how Rūmī recasts ecstatic love for God in terms of spiritual companionship. This work from a reputable press situates Rūmī's metaphors of love within broader Sufi thought. Jawid Mojaddedi, *Beyond Dogma: Rumi's Teachings on Friendship with God and Early Sufi Theories* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 55–63.

39 Süleyman Uludağ, “İnsan-ı Kâmil”, 185.

35 Bekir Köle, “Mevlânâ'nın Mesnevî'sinde Gemi Metaforu,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, 42 (2016): 1869-1877.

vast and untamed, and those who embark upon it must endure its tempests. The lover is not promised a safe arrival; rather, they must withstand the storms of longing, separation, and despair (*huzn*). The ship does not move according to the will of the passenger; it is directed by the Divine, and the lover's task is not to steer but to submit.

Through these interwoven metaphors of ocean and ship, Rūmī articulates a vision of love that is both overwhelming and redemptive. Love is an all-encompassing force—an ocean that drowns all distinction between self and the Beloved, a sea that boils with the intensity of longing, a tempest that both devastates and delivers. And yet, amid this boundless expanse, the ship of love remains, carrying those who surrender toward an unseen destination. This duality—between immersion and guidance, obliteration and deliverance—is central to Rūmī's depiction of divine love.

3. Love as Fire, Love as Magnetism: The Dual Pull of Devotion in the *Masnavī*

Rūmī's portrayal of love (*'ishq*) in the *Masnavī* is deeply paradoxical, shifting fluidly between seemingly contradictory elements—water and fire, expansion and annihilation, journey and stillness. While earlier, he likened love to an unfathomable ocean, boundless and consuming, elsewhere he casts it as fire—burning, refining, and ultimately obliterating all that is not the Beloved. Unlike the tranquil ocean, love as fire signifies a relentless energy, a transformative trial that purges the lover (*āshiq*) of all illusions. Fire, in Rūmī's cosmology, is not simply a destructive force; it is a furnace that shapes the soul, reducing its impurities while illuminating its essence. Just as a crucible tempers gold, so too does love's fire refine the lover into a being fit for divine proximity. The reed, from

which the *nay* (flute) is crafted, is hollowed out and burned within so that it may produce music—just as the lover must be emptied of selfhood to become an instrument of divine song. Wine, another potent symbol of spiritual intoxication, carries the same fervor; it consumes reason, dissolves boundaries, and fills the soul with ecstatic surrender. Thus, Rūmī declares: “’Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed, ’tis the fervour of Love that is in the wine.”⁴⁰ He pushes this theme further, equating true love not with comfort or understanding, but with a state of complete immersion, an all-encompassing burning:

“How much more of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning! Become friendly with that burning! Light up a fire of love in thy soul, (and) burn thought and expression entirely (away)! O Moses, they that know the conventions are of one sort; they whose souls and spirits burn are of another.”⁴¹

Here, love's fire manifests as an existential reality, actively transforming perception by surpassing conceptual thought and unifying all distinctions. The transformative power of love is not something the seeker can merely observe—it is something that must be *become*. This notion echoes the Sufi idea of *fanā* (annihilation), in which the self is completely effaced in the presence of the Divine.⁴² This transformative process represents an essential metaphysical reality, for authentic love requires the total assimilation of the lover into its own luminous essence. The lover is drawn into this fire, consumed in its heat, yet paradoxically sustained by it. The imagery of fire in the *Masnavī* operates on multiple levels: it is both the trial and the

40 *Masnavī*, I:10

41 *Masnavī*, II: 1762-1765.

42 Carra de Vaux, Bernard. “Fanā,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, First Edition Online, 2012, accessed March 18, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_eil_SIM_2270.

fulfillment, the means of purification and the mark of divine proximity. This metaphor actively embodies an existential reality; the lover fully merges with love's fire, experiencing it as his very being. Unlike an ordinary flame, which destroys indiscriminately, the fire of love burns selectively, reducing the self (*nafs*) while leaving behind only the Beloved's light. In this way, love's fire functions as the mechanism of *fanā* (annihilation in the Divine). The lover must undergo complete obliteration, mirroring the fate of the moth (*parvāna*) drawn irresistibly to the candle.

The well-known Persian motif of the moth and the flame encapsulates the lover's condition: he does not approach the fire cautiously, nor does he attempt to control its blaze—he surrenders to it completely, knowing that true illumination comes only in self-loss. “To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment: tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village.”⁴³ Yet, fire is not the only force at work in Rūmī's poetic cosmology. Alongside the image of the moth drawn to the flame, Rūmī presents another metaphor—that of straw helplessly attracted to amber—which conveys love's magnetic pull. In contrast to fire, which actively consumes, amber exerts an invisible force, drawing the lover toward the Beloved without resistance. This interplay of fire and magnetism—annihilation and attraction—defines the Sufi understanding of love. Love is not merely a choice or an intellectual pursuit; it is an elemental force, one that moves the lover in ways beyond his comprehension.⁴⁴

By employing *isti'āra* (metaphor) rather than mere *tashbīh* (simile), Rūmī intertwines love and fire so intimately that they become indistinguishable, rendering the flame both the

journey itself and the lover's ultimate destination. This is the essence of *'ishq*, a love that is neither passive nor possessive but one that unmakes the lover entirely. Love's fire does not merely reduce to ashes—it transmutes, refining the lover until nothing remains but the radiance of the Beloved.

3.1. Flame and *Parvāna*

One of Rūmī's most evocative metaphors for love is that of the moth (*parvāna*) drawn toward the flame (*nār-i 'ishq*). The moth (*parvāna*) serves as one of the most vivid symbols of this surrender, a recurring motif in Persian mystical poetry. This dynamic is poignantly captured in the allegorical narratives common to Eastern literatures, where the moth's dance around the candlelight (*sham'*) has long been emblematic of the lover's spiritual journey towards the Beloved.⁴⁵ Unlike other creatures that recoil from fire, the moth is drawn to it, seeing in the flames not destruction but fulfillment. As Rūmī's imagery suggests, the true lover does not merely endure the fire—he seeks it, knowing that to burn is to be transformed. In this sense, love is not a passive sentiment but an active trial, a process of purification that demands total sacrifice.

The notion that death within the fire is not an end but a passage into a higher state is central to Rūmī's conception of love. He affirms this mystical reality, where love's annihilation is paradoxically a means of renewal:

43 Masnavī, II: 1765.

44 Sadık Armutlu, “Şem ü Pervâne”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 2010, XXXVIII: 495-497.

45 The allegorical love story of the moth (*parvāna*) and the candle (*sham'*) has been interpreted through Sufi symbolism by several prominent mystics. Notably, Manşūr al-Hallāj (d. 922) presented this motif in his *Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, where he explores profound mystical themes. See Manşūr al-Hallāj, *The Tawasin of Mansur al-Hallaj*, trans. Aisha Abd ar-Rahman at-Tarjumana (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2002), 16; Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, *Sawāniḥ: Inspirations from the World of Pure Spirits*, trans. Nasrollah Pourjavady (London: KPI, 1986), 180.

“Inasmuch as in death he sees a hundred existences, like the moth he burns away (his own) existence.”⁴⁶

“I am seated at the edge of a fire with an exceedingly unpleasant blaze and flame; Ye are hastening towards it like moths, (while) both my hands have become moth-flaps (to beat you off).⁴⁷

“Listen to what passes between the rose and the nightingale, though in that case there is no overt speech. On mute eloquence and the understanding of it. Listen also to what passes between the moth and the candle, and pick out the meaning, O worshipful one. Albeit there is no speech, there is the inmost soul of speech. Come, fly aloft, do not fly low, like the owl.”⁴⁸

Here, Rūmī invites the reader to move beyond literal meanings and instead contemplate the unspoken truths revealed in nature. The silent exchange between the rose and the nightingale, like that between the moth and the candle, conveys the depths of love’s mystery. The rose’s allure and the nightingale’s lament, the moth’s destruction and the candle’s flame—each relationship speaks to a fundamental law of attraction and sacrifice.⁴⁹ Love’s essence, Rūmī suggests, is not bound by language; it is known through experience, through surrender, and ultimately, through obliteration. Rūmī implicitly urges the soul to ascend beyond the domain of the ordinary, affirming that only by embracing the luminous fire can one soar toward the transcendent heights of authentic love.

46 *Masnavī*, I: 3965.

47 *Masnavī*, I: 2855.

48 *Masnavī*, I: 3624-3626.

49 The motif of the rose and the nightingale, originating in Persian literature, entered Arabic literary tradition and subsequently reached European literature through Andalusia and Sicily, thus becoming a common literary symbol bridging Eastern and Western cultures. One of the earliest examples attributed to this theme is the *Bulbulnāma*, traditionally ascribed to Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār. Mustafa Özkan, “Gül ü Bül-bül,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1996, XIV: 222-223.

In this imagery, Rūmī captures the essential paradox of divine love: it is a force that both attracts and destroys. The moth does not approach the flame out of ignorance but out of necessity; its very being compels it toward the light, even as it knows that this journey will end in its own dissolution. Similarly, the *‘āshiq* does not love in order to preserve himself but to erase himself, to be absorbed completely into the Beloved. Here, Rūmī does not merely liken love to fire; he equates the two. Love is the very flame that consumes all that is other than God.

By employing metaphor (*isti‘āra*) rather than simile (*tashbīh*), Rūmī unites the lover and love, the moth and the flame, the subject and object into a single existential reality. The lover fully embodies love, merging with the very essence that once appeared distinct. This notion aligns with Sufi ontology, in which love functions as an all-encompassing force that guides the seeker beyond individual identity into divine unity. The flame resides within the moth as its hidden essence, and to burn is to embrace one’s true nature, dissolving into the greater reality of love’s infinite expanse.

The fire of love does not merely destroy—it purifies, refining the lover in the same way that gold is purified in fire. This echoes the classical Sufi notion that selfhood (*nafs*) must be incinerated before the divine presence can fully manifest. What appears to be destruction is, in fact, illumination; the moth’s annihilation is not the end but the moment it merges with the light it seeks. Through the profound deployment of metaphor (*isti‘āra*), Rūmī unifies the lover and the beloved, the moth and the flame, the perceiver and the perceived, into a single luminous reality. The lover surpasses mere experience and fully embodies love itself, merging seamlessly into that Reality which previously appeared separate from his own being.

“The moth, though it burns itself by striking the candle and perishes, is still called to surrender to this fiery embrace; yet, if a creature were to withstand the candle’s light without hurling itself into the flames, it could not truly be called a moth. Similarly, the candle itself must possess the capacity to consume the moth in its fiery glow, for if the light does not incinerate, it is not a candle. Thus, those who lean upon God without striving to reach Him are not truly human; likewise, if God is comprehended and known, then what is understood is not truly God. Humanity is defined by the relentless endeavor around the divine light, never finding peace or respite therein. God is the One who both annihilates and transcends understanding, yet no intellect can fully grasp Him.”⁵⁰

Rūmī’s metaphor, which links the moth to the flame, does not merely illustrate a passive journey but underscores a profound engagement with the path of annihilation—a theme vividly portrayed through the allegory of the moth. This motif aligns with the quintessential Sufi aspiration towards *fanā’* (annihilation) where the self dissolves within the divine.⁵¹ As we contemplate this merging, we must ask: While the moth’s destruction in the flame signifies union, what of the agency that

propels it towards this fiery end? Is it merely destiny, or is there a deeper volition at play within the soul of the moth? These questions, essential yet unresolved, weave through the narrative of the *Masnavī*, reemerging in varied forms such as the interplay between the straw and the amber, inviting the reader to ponder the complexities of divine love and human destiny.

3.2. The Lover as Straw to Amber

If the moth represents the lover’s active pursuit of love’s fire, the image of the straw (*kāh*) drawn helplessly toward amber (*kāhrubā*) illustrates the opposite: the passivity of surrender. In classical Islamic thought, amber’s natural magnetism was often employed as a symbol for divine attraction (*jadhba*), the irresistible force by which the Beloved draws the lover into His presence. This dynamic of longing and response unfolds within a reciprocal framework, where the lover’s yearning is met by an equally profound, albeit veiled, attraction from the Beloved. Rūmī expands on this notion by invoking a broader cosmic order, where love functions as the binding force between all things. In illuminating this universal attraction, Rūmī pens:

“The earthenware (basins) of two lamps are not joined, but their light is mingled in (its) passage. No lover, in sooth, is seeking union without his loved one seeking him; but the love of lovers makes the body (thin as) a bowstring, (while) the love of loved ones makes it comely and fat. When the lightning of love for the beloved has shot into this heart, know that there is love in that heart. When love for God has been doubled in thy heart, without any doubt God hath love for thee. No sound of clapping comes forth from one hand of thine without the other hand. The thirsty man is moaning, “O delicious water!” The water moans too, saying, “Where is the wa-

50 Rūmī, *Fihimāfih*, 30.

51 From the passage in *Fihimāfih*, Rūmī seemingly elucidates the allegorical interaction between the straw and the amber as reflective of the moth and the flame—a pervasive theme of mystical union within Sufi literature. This interpretation, as Rūmī himself confirms, extends the narrative to embrace a broader metaphysical discourse, harmonizing individual dissolution with divine presence. As the moth sacrifices its being to the flame, so does the lover relinquish selfhood in the consuming fire of love, a dynamic vividly portrayed in this allegory. “Do not prolong this; it is through your profound love that you have not vanished, you do not perish... If you vanish, if you perish, then you exist with His existence, you revive with Him.” This profound symbiosis, where annihilation begets eternal existence, encapsulates the quintessential Sufi journey toward divine absorption.” Rūmī, *Fihimāfih*, 180-182.

ter-drinker?" This thirst in our souls is the attraction exerted by the Water: we are Its, and It is ours. The Wisdom of God in destiny and in decree made us lovers of one another. Because of that foreordainment all the particles of the world are paired as mates and are in love with their own mate. Every particle of the universe is desiring its mate, just like amber and the blade of straw. Heaven says to the earth, "Welcome! To thee I am (in the same relation) as the iron and the magnet."⁵²

This passage from the *Masnavi* articulates a fundamental principle of Sufi metaphysics: love moves in a reciprocal rhythm, woven into the very structure of existence. The lover's yearning arises in response to the Beloved's call, just as the straw gravitates toward the amber's unseen pull. Rūmī dissolves the illusion of separation between seeker and sought, unveiling love as both a human longing and a cosmic law that sustains all things. This attraction is not merely emotional but ontological, manifesting the deeper reality that the existence of each being is fundamentally relational. Just as two hands must meet to create a clap, every act of love is met with a corresponding attraction from its source. The lover and the Beloved, much like the thirsty one and the water, engage in an eternal dialogue, drawn toward each other in a relationship that precedes individual volition.

"(The desire of the soul is for ascent and exaltedness; the desire of the body is for gain and the means of procuring fodder. That exaltedness too hath desire and love towards the soul: from this (fact) understand (the meaning of He loves them, and they love (Him). If I explain this, 'twill be endless: the Mathnawi will amount to eighty volumes. The gist is that whenever anyone seeks, the soul of the object sought by him is desiring him. (Whether it be) man, animal, plant, or mineral, every

object of desire is in love with everything that is without (has not attained to) the object of desire. Those who are without their object of desire attach themselves to an object of desire, and those desired ones draw them (on); But the desire of the lovers makes them lean, (while) the desire of the loved ones makes them fair and beautiful. The love of the loved ones illumines the cheeks; the love of the lover consumes his soul. The amber loves (the straw) with the appearance of wanting naught, (while) the straw is making efforts (to advance) on that long road."⁵³

Unlike the moth, which actively seeks its annihilation, the straw has no will of its own. It is utterly powerless before the pull of love, moving not by choice but by necessity. This reflects a fundamental shift in the Sufi conception of love—from one of effort (*mujāhada*) to one of surrender (*taslīm*).⁵⁴ In the earlier stages of the spiritual path, the seeker believes that he is striving toward the Beloved through ascetic discipline, devotion, and longing. Yet, as he progresses, he comes to realize that his journey was never his own; he was always being drawn, not by his own volition, but by the unseen hand of the Beloved. This shift from agency to passivity mirrors the Qur'ānic declaration: *He draws toward Himself whomever He wills*.⁵⁵ In this light, the lover's longing is not self-generated but is itself a divine gift. His love was never his own possession but was placed within him as a sign of the Beloved's pre-eternal desire to be known. This is a theme echoed in Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of *ta'alluq*—the idea that all love originates from God and returns to Him, with the lover serving only as the passive medium through which love manifests.

Through these two metaphors—the moth and the flame, the straw and the amber—Rūmī

52 *Masnavi*, III: 4391-4405.

53 *Masnavi*, III: 4439-4447.

54 Uludağ, "Mücâhede", 259.

55 Şûrâ 42/13.

articulates the paradox of love's nature. On one hand, the lover appears to rush toward the Beloved with reckless abandon, seeking annihilation in the fire of longing. On the other, he is shown to be entirely passive, drawn inexorably toward his fate without the ability to resist. These two images do not contradict one another but instead reveal love's dual reality: it is both an act of devotion and an inevitability beyond human agency. While Rūmī does not resolve this paradox explicitly, his poetic structure itself enacts it. The shifting nature of his metaphors mirrors the fluidity of love's movement, resisting any fixed definition. The lover is neither fully active nor fully passive; he both seeks and is sought, burns and is consumed, moves and is moved. Love, in Rūmī's cosmology, is not a mere emotion but the fundamental law of existence—the unseen force that governs all things, leading every soul toward its destined reunion with the Beloved.

4. Love's Enchantment and the Bewildered Lover: Sorcery and Madness

Rūmī's poetic cosmos is one of perpetual transformation, where love emerges not as a static ideal but as a force that unravels and remakes the lover's perception of reality. Within this intricate symbolic network, love is simultaneously depicted as an act of enchantment and as a state of divine intoxication.⁵⁶ The lover (*āshiq*), under the spell of love, oscillates between bewilderment (*ḥayrat*) and ecstasy (*wajd*), as reason (*'aql*)

is dismantled, and perception is restructured. Love does not merely alter the lover's state of mind; it reconfigures the very fabric of his being, suspending him between the veils of illusion and the unveiling (*kashf*) of truth.⁵⁷ The theme of love as sorcery (*sihr*) has deep roots in Sufi poetry, particularly in the Arabic and Persian traditions. As Meisami has observed, classical Persian poets such as 'Aṭṭār and Sanā'ī employed the imagery of enchantment to describe the radical transformation of the lover's awareness, wherein love functions as a invocation that erases the conventional boundaries of perception. Similarly, Ernst notes that early Sufi authors drew upon Qur'ānic and folkloric traditions of sorcery to symbolize the overwhelming, reality-shifting effects of divine attraction (*jadhba*), wherein the lover loses control over his own will and becomes subject to a force beyond himself. In Rūmī's *Masnavī*, this metaphor reaches its full expression, depicting love as both an illusion and the very means of penetrating illusion.⁵⁸

Throughout the *Masnavī*, love emerges as a force that transcends ordinary perception, at times depicted through the evocative metaphor of a sorcerer whose enchantment reshapes reality, illuminating truths accessible only beyond the realm of reason. Here, love actively embodies a profound sorcery whose enchantment reveals hidden realities and illuminates the deeper dimensions of existence. Central to Rūmī's cosmology is the understanding of love's spell as an initiatory veil (*hijāb*), steering the lover beyond the confines of illusion (*ghurūr*) into the luminous realm of higher truth. Before being overtaken by love, the *sālik*, spiritual seeker, perceives the world through the limitations of rational

56 Chittick notes that Rūmī describes the joy of spiritual union through "a great variety of images, most of them connected with love and wine." He cites a ghazal in which Rūmī writes "When I come to the gathering, He (the Beloved) is the wine and the sweetmeats... When I go to a banquet at the time of joy, He is the *sāqī* (cupbearer), minstrel, and cup," meaning that the Divine Beloved is both the giver and the substance of mystical intoxication Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love*, 233–238.

57 *Masnavī*, V: 3257–3283.

58 Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 221–236.

understanding. Once love exerts its transformative influence, however, the constraints of reason yield to intuitive knowing, arising directly from spiritual experience. Rūmī further illustrates love’s enchanting power through vivid and poetic imagery:

“Love and imagination weave (create) a hundred (forms beautiful as) Joseph: in sooth they are greater sorcerers than Hārūt and Mārūt. They cause a form (of phantasy) to appear in memory of him (your Beloved): the attraction of the form leads you into (conversation with it). You tell a hundred thousand secrets in the form’s presence, just as a friend speaks (intimately) in the presence of a friend. No (material) form or shape is there; (yet) from it proceed a hundred (utterances of the words) “Am not I (thy Beloved)?” and (from you) a hundred “Yeas.”⁵⁹

The reference to Hārūt and Mārūt, the fallen angels sent to test humanity with knowledge of sorcery, highlights love’s paradoxical nature—both its power to liberate and its potential to ensnare.⁶⁰ Love, like the enchantment of these celestial beings, can unveil the highest truths or lead the seeker into the perilous depths of bewilderment. This dual potential underscores Rūmī’s vision of love as a transformative force that does not simply dissolve perception but reconstructs it, guiding the lover through an initiation that is as disorienting as it is illuminating. In this framework, love’s magic is not an illusion to be dispelled but an instrument of unveiling—an alchemy of perception that reveals the Beloved where once there was only absence.

This is the paradox of love: it both blinds and illuminates, disorients and guides. The lover, caught in its spell, no longer distinguishes

between self and other, real and unreal. His perception, once anchored in certainty, now drifts in the tides of love’s unseen currents. This transformation mirrors the classical Sufi doctrine of *jadhba* (divine attraction), in which the Beloved (*ma’shūq*) actively pulls the lover toward Himself, rendering all personal effort meaningless.⁶¹ The imagery of love presented here as an enchanting force closely parallels the Sufi concept of *maḥw* (obliteration), wherein the lover’s identity is dissolved through direct encounter with the divine presence, transcending intellectual reasoning. The enchanted lover does not merely perceive a new reality—he is absorbed into it, becoming inseparable from the force that has overtaken him. Yet, if love’s magic is an enchantment, what becomes of the self that once clung to reason? Does the lover retain any agency, or is he entirely dissolved into the fabric of love’s possession? Rūmī does not resolve this tension; rather, he deepens it, emphasizing that the very state of bewilderment is a form of knowledge. Love, like sorcery, does not offer clarity—it dismantles the structures of perception, compelling the lover to navigate a reality where all distinctions between self and Beloved are erased.

5. The Lover as a Drunkard: The Ecstasy of Love’s Wine

If love as sorcery conveys the bewilderment of perception, love as intoxication represents the complete surrender of selfhood. The imagery of wine (*sharāb*), the cupbearer (*sāqī*), and intoxication (*mastī*) has long been a staple of Arabic and Persian poetry, originating in the convivial verse of pre-Islamic poets and later becoming central to the

59 Masnavī, V: 3260-63.

60 Roberto Tottoli, “Hārūt and Mārūt,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition Online, accessed May 3, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30337.

61 Arin Salamah-Qudsi, “The Concept of Jadhba and the Image of Majdhūb in Sufi Teachings and Life in the Period between the Fourth/Tenth and the Tenth/Sixteenth Centuries,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, 2 (2018.): 255–71.

bacchic themes of Abbasid-era court poetry.⁶² This profane motif was reinterpreted by Sufi poets as a means to express ineffable spiritual experiences, particularly the states of ecstasy (*wajd*) and annihilation in the Divine (*fanā*). Early Sufis recognized that direct exposition of mystical truths was inherently limited by language and rational discourse; thus, they turned to figurative expression, adopting familiar poetic symbols to convey the overwhelming experience of divine love. The first notable Sufi appropriation of wine symbolism appears in the ecstatic utterances of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 261/874 or 234/848), who described his mystical states using intoxication metaphors, marking the beginning of a tradition that would flourish in Arabic, Persian, and later, Turkish Sufi poetry.⁶³ Schimmel notes that this transformation of secular imagery into a mystical lexicon was deliberate; it allowed Sufis to communicate the rapturous states of divine union in a language that was at once veiled and revelatory. Over time, poets such as Abū Nuwās (d. 198/813), Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) in Arabic, 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī in Persian, and Yūnus Emre (d. 720/1320) in Turkish integrated this motif into their verse, each adding layers of meaning to its spiritual connotations.⁶⁴

The earliest Sufi poets, inspired by themes of divine joy and abundance found in their spiritual tradition, adopted the motif of the cupbearer (*sāqī*), the wine, and the barroom

as allegorical expressions of mystical inebriation (*sukr*)—a state in which the self is overwhelmed by the presence of the Divine. For Sufi poets, wine symbolizes divine love—an authoritative force that overwhelms the self, dissolves the boundaries of ego, and leads to mystical absorption in God. The cup, in turn, represents the heart that receives this divine outpouring, while the cupbearer serves as the intermediary who imparts spiritual knowledge, often identified with the spiritual master (*shaykh*) or God Himself. The tavern, frequently referenced in Rūmī's poetry, becomes a metaphor for the space where worldly constraints are shed, allowing the seeker to taste the ecstasy of divine proximity.⁶⁵ With this symbolic foundation established, we turn to Rūmī's *Masnavī*, where the imagery of wine and intoxication is intricately woven into the fabric of his mystical discourse.⁶⁶

From the very outset of the *Masnavī*, Rūmī links wine with the fire of divine love. In the famous *Song of the Reed* prologue, he declares: "Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed, 'tis the fervour of Love that is in the wine."⁶⁷ Here, the ferment of love is explicitly identified as the "wine" that inspires spiritual fervor. The image of wine represents the enrapturing sweetness of Divine Love, an inebriant that induces spiritual ecstasy. Rūmī's choice of metaphor is deliberate—rather than depicting love as a concept to be grasped intellectually, he presents it as an experience that overwhelms the senses and dissolves ordinary perception. The motif of wine appears throughout his poetry as a symbol of mystical intoxication, signifying a state in which rational boundaries collapse, allowing the soul to move beyond ordinary cognition. This intoxication, however, is not mere

62 Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 221–236.

63 Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), 102–105; Th. Emil Homerin, *The Wine of Love and Life: Ibn al-Fāriḍ's al-Khamriyah and al-Qāysarī's Quest for Meaning* (Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, 2005), 1–15; Leonard Lewisohn, "Jāmī and the Wine of Love," in *The Heritage of Sufism: Volume II: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999), 311–328.

64 Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 43–45.

65 Reynold A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, 102–105.

66 Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love*, 212–217.

67 *Masnavī*, I: 10.

loss of reason but a *sukr* that elevates the lover beyond the confines of selfhood. In this state of rapture, Rūmī offers a prayerful appeal to God to be drawn into the tavern of true lovers: “Take hold of our ear and draw us along to the assembly where the joyous revellers drink of Thy wine. Forasmuch as Thou hast caused a waft of its perfume to reach us, do not stopple the head of that wineskin, O Lord of the Judgement!”⁶⁸ In these lines, the seekers have caught only a whiff of God’s wine and are already enraptured, begging God to pull them in completely and not cut off the supply. In this symbolism, the “perfume” of this celestial wine alludes to an initial grace—a hint of divine love that ignites an irrepressible yearning. Such mystical drunkenness entails a conscious *emptying* of mundane senses and intellect. Rūmī often encourages the loss of “head” (*intellect*) in love’s inebriation so that a higher perception can take over. In other words, by drinking the wine of love, the mystic’s ordinary mind is obliterated, making room for the “supra-rational” insight of the soul.⁶⁹

68 *Masnavī*, V: 305–307.

69 Rūmī dramatically illustrates this in a bold paradox: “I am drunken...not with wine of the grape. Be drunken in love, for love is all that exists” (a sentiment echoed throughout his lyric and didactic poetry). The “drunkenness” here is entirely spiritual – Rūmī is careful to distinguish it from literal alcohol. Indeed, he elsewhere admonishes that one should drink from God’s cup, not from Dionysian spirits. In Rūmī’s ghazals, symbolism takes on a markedly distinct, more immediate, passionate, and intensified form compared to the instructive tone and structured symbolism found in the *Masnavī*. Particularly, symbols such as wine, the cupbearer (*sāqī*), and the cup (*kāsa*) are depicted with an elevated emotional resonance, diverging significantly from their more pedagogical employment in the *Masnavī*.

“All the time / I am forging an idol/and then in front of your eyes / I melt down all the idols / I conjure myriad forms infuse them with spirit / When I see your form / I cast them all in flames.” These verses articulate the transformative path to divine love through symbolic imagery powerfully and directly. The ghazal continues, illustrating the profound im-

Indeed, intoxication in Rūmī’s path of love is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve *fanā*’ – the complete dissolution of the individual self in the Divine. Repeatedly, Rūmī’s verses link the theme of dying to oneself with that of drunken love, declaring: “I am drunken with desire for non-existence, not for the existent, because the Beloved of (the world of) non-existence is more faithful.”⁷⁰ This startling line encapsulates the essence of *fanā*: Rūmī craves the obliteration of his ego (“non-existence”) because only by becoming *nothing* can he be united with the truest Beloved, God, who dwells in the realm of the Unseen. The lover’s *inebriation* here is directed not towards any earthly pleasure but toward erasing the illusion of independent existence. In Nicholson’s commentary, we find that Rūmī “is not more crushed than non-existence, from the mouth of which all these peoples have come forth” – a reference to the mystical notion that creation emerges from the void of God’s essence. Rūmī’s “drunkenness” is thus a passionate self-negation: under love’s influence he actively seeks to *destroy* his own selfhood, trusting

part of the symbolic wine on consciousness: “Are you / wine-pouring vintner? / foe to consciousness? / or sworn to destroy each home that I build?” (Ghazal, 1462). Thus, the symbolic language in Rūmī’s ghazals possesses a more dynamic and emotionally profound resonance, sharply contrasting with the gradual and instructive symbolism typical of the *Masnavī*. The *Masnavī* itself, often called “the Qur’ān in Persian,” uses the language of taverns and cupbearers as a cipher for mystical truths, embedding the wild imagery of intoxication within a framework of piety and orthodoxy. Rūmī’s audience would have understood this symbolic language in context, appreciating that the joy of spiritual *sukr* (intoxication) actually reinforces devotion rather than negating it. She notes how Rūmī’s verses lead the reader through an emotional performance – from yearning and rapture to an eventual awe-struck silence – thereby “elevation of the soul through mystical intoxication” as a real and transformative process. Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Swallowing the Sun* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007), 70.

70 *Masnavī*, V: 310-314.

that what will remain is the Beloved alone. In Sufi psychology, this is the state of *fanā fī'l-maḥbūb* (annihilation in the Beloved). By emptying himself, the lover makes space for God to subsist in him (*baqā'*).

Rūmī illustrates this process with rich paradoxical imagery, where proclaims that what appears to the world as “death” is in fact the soul’s true life in God: “(But) those who quaff the cup of death are living through His love: they have torn their hearts away from life and the Water of Life.” To “quaff the cup of death” means to willingly drink one’s own annihilation. The reward of this fearless self-sacrifice is to *live by God’s love* eternally.⁷¹ Rūmī pointedly says that such lovers turn away even from the “Water of Life” – the legendary fountain of immortality – because they have found a better wine in God’s love. In other words, physical immortality or worldly paradise (symbolized by the Water of Life) becomes worthless once one has tasted the immortal love of the Divine:

“Endeavour to gain freshness (spiritual grace) from God’s cup (of love): then you will become selfless and volitionless. Then all volition will belong to that Wine, and you will be absolutely excusable, like a drunken man. Whatsoever you beat will (then) be beaten by the Wine; whatsoever you sweep away will (then) be swept away by the Wine. The drunken man who has quaffed wine from God’s cup— how should he do aught but justice and right? The magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘Stop! He that is drunken hath no care for his hands and feet. The wine of the One (God) is our (real) hands and feet; the apparent hand is (but) a shadow and worthless.’”⁷²

This is a direct allusion to the Qur’ānic story of the Water of Life, which Rūmī reinterprets: true life is not gained by drinking an

elixir to extend one’s earthly existence, but by relinquishing one’s mortal self to merge with the Eternal Beloved. Rūmī continues in the same passage to describe how undergoing continual “spiritual death and resurrection” by the grace of God has made the prospect of literal death utterly non-threatening to him: “Thou didst bestow on me a (spiritual) death and a resurrection continually, that I might experience the conquering power of Thy bounty. This dying became (as formidable) to me as sleeping, from my confidence that Thou, O God, wouldst raise me from the dead.”⁷³ Here Rūmī testifies that through love he dies and is reborn *multiple times in this life* – each ego-death followed by a rebirth in the spirit by God’s “bounty”. Because of this repeated experience, dying has become “as easy as falling asleep” for him, with full faith that God will awaken him into true life. This beautifully reflects the Prophet’s saying (which Rūmī explicitly cites) that “None ever died without wishing that he had died (to self) earlier,” (*Masnavī* V: 600-605) since the righteous only regret not reaching God sooner. Rūmī has so embraced *fanā'* that he perceives the death of the ego as a gentle slumber and a gateway to union, rather than a terror. Keshavarz, in her analysis of Rūmī’s poetry, stresses that this notion of *self-annihilation* is far from bleak or nihilistic. Instead, it is depicted as an ecstatic consummation of love – a transformation in which the lover “dies” to all that is false and is resurrected in a new identity grounded in God.⁷⁴ The seemingly morbid imagery of decapitation, burial, or drowning in Rūmī’s verses is consistently accompanied by images of rebirth, golden treasure, or wine, signaling the joyous outcome of *fanā'*. For example, when Rūmī’s speaker cries out

73 *Masnavī*, V: 4222–4224.

74 Fatemeh Keshavarz, *Reading Mystical Lyric: The Case of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 89–95.

71 *Masnavī*, V: 4220.

72 *Masnavī*, V: 3110-3115.

that he is drunk on “non-existence,” reading this as the lover’s exhilaration at shedding the constraints of the ego to partake in the infinitude of the Beloved’s being.⁷⁵ Indeed, in another verse he links it directly with the primordial act of creation: “He who drank of the cup of Alast (the Pre-Eternal ‘Am I not your Lord?’) last year, this year he suffers the pain and headache (in consequence of having drunk).”⁷⁶ This refers to the mystical idea that all souls tasted the “wine” of God’s love at the beginning of time (when God’s voice declared *alastu bi-rabbikum* – “Am I not your Lord?” – and all souls replied *balaa* – “Yes!”). That first draught has left us *spiritually hungover* – longing and aching to return to that intoxicating moment of nearness to God. Thus, even our present spiritual quest is driven by a faint memory of that *fanā*’ in the divine presence. In Rūmī’s view, the soul’s highest ambition is to regain that state by dying to self *now*. Ultimately, annihilation in love is for Rūmī the doorway to abiding in God (*baqā*). Once the “mirror” of the heart is polished free of self, it reflects nothing but the Divine. The *Masnavī* therefore portrays *fanā*’ not as loss, but as supreme gain – the “death” that opens into union.

6. Love as Illness, the Lover as Patient: The Affliction That Leads to Healing

In Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī’s *Masnavī*, love appears as a double-edged ailment – a malady that wounds the lover even as it heals the soul. Rūmī portrays love’s suffering through a literary-mystical lens, describing the heart

75 The *Masnavī* uses storytelling to reinforce this lesson: tales such as “the candle and the moth” or “Jesus and the dying sick man” all underscore that to burn (or die) for love is to truly live. In one place, Rūmī uses the metaphor of a moth circling a candle – the moth’s fatal attraction to the flame mirrors the lover’s yearning to obliterate himself in God’s light, and when he finally burns, he becomes light himself.

76 *Masnavī*, V: 830-836.

inflamed by love as if stricken by illness. Yet this “illness” is a Divine intervention and mercy, meant to transform the lover and prepare the soul for union (*waṣl*) with the Beloved. Embracing classical Sufi imagery and epistemology, Rūmī develops the paradox that the pain of love, however debilitating, is ultimately redemptive. The *Masnavī*’s stories and verses repeatedly depict how the affliction of passionate love refines the self, drawing the lover away from worldly illusions toward spiritual truth. Love’s “sickness” thus becomes the very remedy for all other sicknesses of the self, aligning Rūmī’s thought with a long Sufi tradition that celebrates *‘ishq*, passionate love, as the path to God. In this vision, the lover is not merely one who suffers for love—he is defined by this suffering, shaped by it, and ultimately redeemed through it. Love does not grant comfort; it unsettles, disrupts, and ultimately annihilates all that is other than the Beloved (*ma’shūq*). Just as gold is purified through fire, so too must the soul be refined through love’s affliction:

“Nowise was it possible (for him) to open his lips in discussion, but never for a moment did soul cease to converse with soul. It came into his mind that ’twas exceedingly mysterious— “all this is reality: whence, then, comes the form (appearance)?” (’Tis) a form that frees thee from (the illusion of) form, a sleeper that awakens everyone who is asleep (to the Truth). The words (spoken by him) deliver (thee) from words (of idle disputation), and the sickness (of love inspired by him) lets thee escape from the sickness (of sensuality). Therefore, the sickness of love is the (very) soul of health: its pains are the envy of every pleasure.”⁷⁷

Here, Rūmī’s imagery is unmistakable: pain is not simply a byproduct of love but its essen-

77 *Masnavī*, VI: 4590-4599.

tial condition. Love unsettles the soul, forcing it out of complacency and toward transformation. The lover, once burdened with the weight of his own existence, is broken open, made raw by longing (*shawq*), and stripped of all that is lifeless within him. This suffering, however, is not destructive—it is regenerative. The fire of love does not consume aimlessly; it purifies, reshaping the lover into something wholly new.

“Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart: there is no sickness like heartsickness. The lover’s ailment is separate from all other ailments: love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God. Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, in the end it leads us yonder. Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation of Love, when I come to Love (itself) I am ashamed of that (explanation). Although the commentary of the tongue makes (all) clear, yet tongueless love is clearer. Whilst the pen was making haste in writing, it split upon itself as soon as it came to Love.”⁷⁸

This conception of love aligns with the broader Sufi understanding of suffering as a divine intervention, a means of drawing the seeker (*sālik*) closer to the ultimate truth. Tribulation is not seen as punishment but as guidance, a veiled mercy that redirects the lover toward his true origin. The greater the suffering, the deeper the purification; the more intense the affliction, the nearer the soul is drawn to the Beloved. The *‘āshiq* does not seek relief from his suffering, for the very nature of his pain is transformative. This aligns with the Sufi conception of tribulation (*balā*) as a necessary means of spiritual refinement.⁷⁹ Love is the fire that burns away the dross of the self, leaving only the purified essence of the soul.⁸⁰

78 *Masnavi*, I: 109–114.

79 Uludağ, “Belâ”, 71–72.

80 The *‘āshiq*’s longing (*shawq*), his separation (*firāq*), and his despair are not signs of his demise but the

Yet, if pain is intrinsic to love, why does the lover not seek relief? Why does he not attempt to escape his suffering? The answer lies in the paradoxical nature of love itself—its wounds are not wounds in the ordinary sense; they are openings through which divine reality enters.

Rūmī pushes this paradox further by declaring that whether one’s love is “from this earthly side or from that heavenly side, in the end it leads us yonder”⁸¹ the lover’s suffering thus contains its own cure: embedded in the very affliction is an awakening to higher reality. He addresses Love as a “sweet madness” (*an affliction*) that “healest all our infirmities” (a remedy). “Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain – thou that art the physician of all our ills, the remedy of our pride and vain-glory, our Plato and our Galen!”⁸² The true lover does not flee pain; rather, he recognizes pain as the indispensable evidence of love’s presence and the means to its fulfillment. Rūmī encapsulates this in a concise oxymoron when he elsewhere refers to love as “pain with remedy.” The greater the lover’s agony, the greater the potential for wholeness hidden within it. Thus, the *Masnavi* portrays

necessary conditions for his eventual union (*waṣl*) with the Beloved. Rūmī’s likening of love to an illness also echoes Qur’ānic and *ḥadīth* traditions that speak of trials as divine tests. Just as a physical illness may serve to purge the body of impurities, so too does love to cleanse the soul. However, whereas the common patient longs for recovery, the *‘āshiq* desires only to remain in this state of affliction, knowing that his suffering brings him ever closer to the Beloved. Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (New York: NYU Press, 1989), 115–120.

81 *Masnavi*, I: 111.

82 *Masnavi*, I: 23–24 ; Rūmī uses the metaphor of the reed flute (whose song symbolizes the agony of love) as something that contains both poison and its antidote – again portraying love as both the ailment and its cure. In he writes: “Who ever saw a poison and an antidote like the reed? Who ever saw a sympathizer (to our pain) and a longing lover like the reed?” *Masnavi*, I: 12. Together these verses show love itself is a hurt that heals, a “poison” and a “remedy” in one.

the heart wounded by love as the heart made receptive to grace – a state of weakness that becomes strength, an illness that becomes healing.

Despite its grandeur, love is also the cause of anguish, a force that unsettles the soul and drives it toward longing. The lover's suffering, however, is not a meaningless affliction but a necessary purification, a refinement that prepares the soul for union with the divine: "Pain (*dard*) is the ancient remedy made new again; pain breaks every dried and lifeless branch. Love is the fire that renews the weary heart, for in pain's presence, weariness cannot remain."⁸³ Here, pain and love are interwoven: love is the cause of longing, but that very longing is what refines and elevates the soul. The suffering of love, when properly understood, is not a punishment but a transformative force, an alchemical process that strips away all that is impure. Rumi's imagery of broken branches and renewed growth emphasizes that through the trials of love, the lover is continually rejuvenated, made anew through the intensity of yearning.⁸⁴

A further extension of this motif is Rūmī's depiction of love as an illness, a paradoxical affliction that does not weaken but strengthens, does not destroy but purifies.⁸⁵ He pens:

83 *Masnavī*, VI: 4302–4304.

84 Keshavarz provides a literary analysis of Rūmī's metaphors of suffering and healing, situating them within the broader context of Persian mystical lyricism. She discusses how Rūmī's poetic structure reinforces the experience of love as both an affliction and a means of transcendence. She examines how Rūmī portrays love's transformative power through medical and alchemical imagery, demonstrating that affliction (*dard*) is not accidental but central to the lover's journey. Fatemeh Keshavarz, *Reading Mystical Lyric: The Case of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 89–95.

85 For a broader discussion of the role of illness metaphors in Persian mystical poetry, see J.T.P. De Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Persian Poems* (London: Curzon Press, 1997), 134–140.

"Love's illness is unlike any other/The more it afflicts, the greater its cure."⁸⁶ Rūmī portrays the lover as a willing patient, one who not only endures love's suffering but embraces it as part of the cure. There, a lover rebukes a counselor who offers conventional advice, insisting that no scholarly "doctor" can understand his condition. "Do not thou threaten me with being killed, for I thirst lamentably for mine own blood."⁸⁷ The lover here is "sick" with love and accepts even death as joyous treatment. He goes further declaring that pain from the beloved is sweeter than any cure: "If that One of friendly countenance (*the Beloved*) should shed my blood, dancing (*in ecstasy*) I will strew my soul upon Him."⁸⁸ In other words, the lover (*as a patient*) gladly sacrifices himself and finds healing in the very wounds inflicted by the beloved. This motif – the lover's willingness to "die at every moment" for love – recurs throughout the *Masnavi*. It illustrates that true lovers accept suffering as the price of love and even view that suffering as the remedy for their separation: "For lovers, there is a dying at every moment... if the Beloved slays me, 'tis through that death that I live."⁸⁹

This paradox—where love's wound is simultaneously its remedy—recalls the doctrine of divine *jadhba* (*attraction*), where it is the Beloved, not the lover, who initiates the journey. The affliction of love is not something the *āshiq* takes upon himself; rather, it is inflicted upon him by the very nature of divine beauty, which pulls him irresistibly toward annihilation. In this sense, the *āshiq* is not a mere metaphorical figure but a necessary ontological category within Sufi cosmology. His annihilation is not an end but a beginning, for it is only in ceasing to be

86 *Masnavī*, VI: 4593–4599.

87 *Masnavī*, I: 23–24; *Masnavi* III: 3832–3833.

88 *Masnavī*, III: 3838.

89 *Masnavī*, III: 3835–3840.

that he can truly become. The path of love is thus not one of fulfillment but of dissolution—of vanishing into the reality of the Beloved, where all distinctions of self and other, being and nonbeing, love and madness, are finally erased.

7. Love as the Prime Mover and the Guide to the Origin: The Cosmic Motion of Love in Rumi's *Masnavi*

At the heart of Rūmī's *Masnavi*, love is not a passive sentiment or a mere subject of reflection; it is the primal force that animates existence, the unseen sovereign that commands the ceaseless motion of creation. Love is both the origin and the return, the cause of all longing and the final destination of that longing. It is a force that simultaneously draws all things toward their source while dismantling their illusions of selfhood. Rūmī's poetic cosmos is constructed through layered metaphorical frameworks, where love is depicted alternately as fire and water, a guiding light and an all-consuming darkness, a force that gives and a force that annihilates. Beneath these shifting images lies a fundamental dialectic between movement and stillness, a tension that defines the lover's journey. Love propels all things toward their ultimate destination, yet it also strips away the illusions of autonomy, leaving the lover bereft of independent will. It is this very tension—the simultaneous assertion and negation of agency—that underscores the deeper ontological reality Rūmī seeks to unveil. This is mirrored in Rūmī's treatment of love's visibility. Love, like the Beloved, is both manifest and concealed—it reveals itself through signs and metaphors, yet its essence remains veiled. The *Masnavi* frequently plays with this paradox, suggesting that love is both the light that illuminates the path and the darkness that blinds the seeker. "Love is a veil, concealing the Beloved

from sight. Yet within this veil, the Beloved is closer than breath."⁹⁰ This notion of love as a veil (*hijāb*) underscores the impossibility of grasping it directly. The lover may strive to comprehend love, to define it, to name it—but each attempt only reinforces its ineffability. Love is not something that can be possessed; it is something that possesses. In this sense, the lover's journey is not one of acquiring knowledge but of being undone by it, of relinquishing the illusion of comprehension in favor of immersion.

The transformative nature of love extends beyond the realm of individual experience to the fabric of the universe itself. Rumi describes love as the great kinetic energy that moves all things, from the revolution of the planets to the fluttering of leaves in the wind: "Love has thrown the heavens into ceaseless motion; it has set the sun and moon on their course. If love did not stir them, they would remain still; without love, existence itself would be motionless."⁹¹ This vision of love as the fundamental force behind all cosmic activity closely parallels the Aristotelian notion of the Prime Mover, an unmoved entity that imparts motion to the entire universe. Yet, in Rūmī's formulation, love is not an impersonal or indifferent principle but an active, dynamic energy that compels all things to seek union with their source. This relentless movement—whether in the form of celestial revolutions, the rippling of water, or the yearning of the soul—is ultimately the journey back to the Beloved. Love does not merely set things into motion; it provides them with direction and purpose. As Rūmī's metaphors unfold, the lover's path reaches its inevitable conclusion: he does not merely return to the Beloved—he ceases to exist altogether. His being is not merely transformed but eradicated, leaving behind only the reflec-

90 *Masnavi*, VI: 940–941.

91 *Masnavi*, VI: 932–934.

tion of love itself. This dissolution is not a loss but the fulfillment of love's demand: the lover does not *find* love; he *becomes* it. This idea is most powerfully conveyed through Rūmī's famous metaphor of the astrolabe: "Love is the astrolabe of divine mysteries, The instrument by which hidden truths are unveiled."⁹² Just as the astrolabe reveals the movements of the celestial spheres, so too does love to unveil the hidden architecture of existence. Yet, for the lover to become this instrument, he must first be emptied—stripped of selfhood, purged of all that is other than the Beloved. In this final state, he no longer distinguishes himself from love; he is absorbed into its essence, his identity dissolved in the radiance of divine presence.

Ultimately, Rūmī's *Masnavī* refuses to resolve the paradox of love. It does not offer closure but instead leaves the reader suspended in love's unfolding mystery. Is the lover an active seeker or a passive recipient? Is love a force that moves or a stillness that absorbs? Does the lover reach the Beloved, or does he vanish before he arrives? The *Masnavī* offers no final answers—only the recognition that love, by its very nature, defies containment. It is a journey without end, a fire that both consumes and illuminates, a wound that heals as it deepens. And so, the lover remains in motion, forever drawn toward a Beloved who is at once infinitely distant and closer than his own breath.

Conclusion

Rūmī's metaphors of love in the *Masnavī* are integral to his didactic and mystical framework. Far from literary embellishments, they operate as deliberate pedagogical devices and reflect an ontological vision grounded in divine love. Through the language of passion and longing, Rūmī conveys truths that

elude straightforward expression, communicating the ineffable via symbol and parable. In his poetry, love emerges as both a way of knowing and the very fabric of reality—an epistemological means to divine insight and the ontological foundation of existence. Thus, Rūmī's poetic symbolism simultaneously instructs the seeker's soul and articulates a cosmology in which love is the ultimate reality. Furthermore, Rūmī's metaphors illuminate love's paradoxical nature and transformative power. Only love, he suggests, can resolve the tension of opposites and "make them one"—uniting joy and sorrow, absence and presence, in the wholeness of divine unity. This unifying process requires purgation of self: love "burns away everything except the Everlasting Beloved," annihilating the ego's illusions. Yet in this annihilation lies the soul's revival, for "divine love makes the seeker capable of bearing... all the pains and afflictions" as trials that purify the heart. Rūmī's parables thus show that love's suffering is not contrary to its fulfillment but instrumental to it—a healing paradox for the soul. The *Masnavī*'s allegorical narratives do not merely describe this transformation; they facilitate it. Immersed in these tales, the reader is subtly guided through a similar spiritual experience. Rūmī's use of poetic symbols therefore serves as both a pedagogical method and an existential commentary on divine love, demonstrating how love's paradoxical fire ultimately transforms separation into union with the Divine. Each of these metaphors illustrates the paradox of divine love: it is both suffering and ecstasy, dissolution and fulfillment. Finally, the lover's return to the divine is framed through the imagery of the straw drawn by amber, the wanderer lost in the desert, and the astrolabe that unveils divine mysteries. At this final stage, the lover does not merely approach the Beloved but becomes the instrument through which the

92 *Masnavī*, I: 109–220.

divine is known. Love is not a path one walks but the very force that guides, moves, and ultimately consumes the traveler. By structuring his discourse in symbolic language, Rumi does not simply describe love—he enacts its transformative nature through the rhythm, imagery, and metaphoric density of his poetry. The *Masnavi*, then, is not a manual for love but an immersion into love’s unfolding mystery. It does not offer a definition but a path, not an explanation but an experience. In the end, the only true articulation of love is not in words but in becoming love itself.

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Özgün Derleme Makale ve Yazılar
Review Articles & Essays

Vefâtının 300. Yılında İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî ve Muhammediyye Şerhi: *Ferâhu'r-Rûh*

*Ismâil Hakki Bursevî on the 300th Anniversary of His Passing
and His Commentary on Muḥammadiyya Entitled Farah al-rûḥ*

Mustafa KARA*

Özet

Osmanlı tasavvuf düşüncesinin önde gelen isimlerinden biri olan İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî (ö. 1137/1725), bir Celvetî şeyhi olmasının yanı sıra velûd bir müellif, müfessir ve şâirdir. Bursevî, Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî'nin (ö. 672/1273) *Mesnevî*'si ve İbnü'l-Fârız'ın (ö. 632/1235) *Nazmü's-sülûk*'u, Yûnus Emre (ö. 720/1320) ve Hacı Bayrâm-ı Velî'nin (ö. 833/1430) bazı şiirlerinin de aralarında bulunduğu eserlere yazdığı şerhlerin yanı sıra, Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed'in (ö. 855/1451), kardeşi Ahmed Bîcan'ın (ö. 870/1466) teşvikiyle kaleme aldığı *Kitâbü Muhammediyye* adlı eserine yazılmış en ünlü şerhlerden biri olan ve çok sayıda yazma nüsha ve baskısı bulunan *Ferâhu'r-rûh*'u da telif etmiş ve bu şerh vazifesinin, Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed tarafından kendisine bir rüyasında tevdi edildiğini ve şerh esnasında “Mevlâ'nın feyzi miktarınca ona bakmasını” salık verdiğini belirtmiştir. Bu yazıda, hem vefâtının 300. yılı münasebetiyle İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî'yi yâd etmek hem de Osmanlı dînî-tasavvufî literatürünün oluşmasına büyük katkı sağlamış olan *Muhammediyye* ve ona yazılmış en meşhur şerhlerden biri olan *Ferâhu'r-rûh* hakkında kısaca bilgi vermek amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, Yazıcızâde Mehmed, *Muhammediyye*, *Ferâhu'r-rûh*

* **ORCID:** 0000-0003-1108-7781. Prof. Dr., Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Emekli Öğretim Üyesi,
E-mail: mkara@uludag.edu.tr

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Abstract

Ismâil Hakki Bursevî (d. 1137/1725), one of the prominent figures of Ottoman Sûfî thought, was not only a Jalwatî sheikh but also a prolific writer, commentator and poet. Alongside the partial commentaries on Rûmî's (d. 672/1273) *Mathnawî*, Ibn al-Fâriḍ's (d. 632/1235) *Naẓm al-sulûk* and some of the poems of figures like Yûnus Emre (d. 720/1320?) and Hacı Bayrâm Velî (ö. 833/1430), Bursevî wrote one of the most famous commentaries, *Faraḥ al-rûḥ*, on the *Kitâb Muḥammadiyya*, a work attributed to Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed (d. 855/1451) which was encouraged by his brother Aḥmed Bîcan (d. 870/1466), asserting that he was chosen for this undertaking through a dream, in which he was handed the book by Yazıcıoğlu himself. In this article, we aim both to commemorate Ismâil Hakki Bursawî on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his death and to give brief information about the *Muḥammadiyya*, which contributed greatly to the formation of Ottoman religious-Sûfî literature, and one of the most famous commentaries written on it, *Faraḥ al-rûḥ*.

Keywords: Ismâil Hakki Bursawî, Yazıcızâde Mehmed, *Muḥammadiyya*, *Faraḥ al-rûḥ*

Meğer günlerde bir gün emr-i takdir
Oturmuştum Gelibolu'da sırra
Elimi çekmiş idüm cümle halktan
Dilimde zikr idi kalbimde zikra
Gelibolu'nun ol âşklarından
Dirildiler gelüp katıma turra
Dediler ki niçin kılmazsın ey dost
Resûlün vasfını âlemde Büşra

Giriş

Süleyman Çelebî'nin *Mevlîd*'i gibi Resûlullâh aşkıyla yazılan ve asırlar boyu şevkle okunan, ezberlenen halk klasiklerimizden biri de Muhammediyye'dir. Yazıcızâde Mehmed Efendi (ö. 855/1451) tarafından 1449 yılında Gelibolu'da kaleme alınmış olan yaklaşık 9000 beyitlik eseri, İsmâil Hakki Bursevî (ö. 1137/1725)¹ iki asır sonra 1669'da nesir olarak şerhedecektir. Mustafa İsmet Uzun'un *İslam Ansiklopedisi*'nde kaleme aldığı *Muhammediyye* maddesinde² belirtildiği

üzere eserin tam adı *Kitâbü Muhammediyye fî na'ti seyyidi'l-âlemîn habîbillâhi'l-a'zam Ebi'l-Kâsım Muhammedini'l-Mustafâ* şeklindedir.

Müellifini üne kavuşturan eser, üç ana bölümden meydana gelmektedir. Yazıcıoğlu, rüyasında Resûlullâh'ı görüp ondan aldığını söylediği emirle 850 (1446) yılında yazmaya başladığı kitabını 853 Cemâziyelâhîr'inde (Ağustos 1449) Gelibolu'da tamamlamıştır. Çok sayıda yazma nüshası bulunan eserin müellif nüshası Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşiv ve Neşriyat Müdürlüğü Kütüphanesi'nde korunmaktadır (nr. 431/A). Kazan'da basılan eserin (1845) İstanbul'da rûmî 1262-1326 (1846-1910) yılları arasında, dokuzu resimli olmak üzere yirmi iki baskısı yapılmıştır. Eserdeki çeşitli mersiyele arasında “Vefâtü'l-Hasan ve'l-Hüseyin” başlıklı elli dört beyitlik *Kerbelâ Mersiyesi*, Sünnî çevrelerdeki muharrem törenlerinde asırlarca okunmuş, mersiyele'nin Zâkirî Hasan Efendi (ö. 1032/1623) tarafından nühüft makamında yapılan bestesi Türk dinî mûsikisinde çok rağbet görmüştür.³ İşte o mısralar:

1 2025 yılının, 1725'de vefat eden Bursevî'nin vefatının 300. yılı olmasını vesile bilerek Bursa'daki dostlarımızla bu senenin BURSEVÎ YILI olmasını Sayın Valimiz Erol Ayyıldız Beyefendi'ye teklif ettik. Memnuniyetle kabul buyurdular. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığına yazı yazdılar. Yılboyu yapılacak faaliyetlerin, bu toprakların din ve kültür dünyasının daha iyi anlaşılmasına vesile olması gönülden temennimizdir.

2 Mustafa İsmet Uzun, “Muhammediyye”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 2020, XXX: 583-584.

3 Geniş bilgi için bkz. Gülçin Yahya Kaçar, “Hatip Zâkirî Hasan Efendi'nin Nühüft Makamındaki İmam Hüseyin Mersiyesi”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 66 (2013): 239-254.

Rivâyetle gelir bir gün Resûlullâh oluptu
şâd

Ki dizinde oturmuştu Hüseyin ile Hasan
şeh-zâd

Hüseyin'i öptü boynunda Hasan ağzın du-
dağında

İkisin bâb-ı şefkatte bu resme eyledi îrâd

Erişti Cebrayıl derhâl elinde var idi üç şal
Biri kara biri sarı biri kıvıltı idi vekkâd

Dedi Allâh selâm eder buyurur kim revâ
mıdır

Beni nice sever çünkü bana karşı öper
evlâd

Divanında eli bağlı kulundur Yâ Resûlallâh
Yazıcıoğlu'na eyle şefaât olasıñ dilşâd

Muhammediyye'nin önemli özelliklerinden biri, matbu nüshalarından bir kısmının devrin önemli hattatları tarafından yazılmış ve içinde bazı dinî resim ve çizimlere yer verilmiş olmasıdır. *Muhammediyye* sonraki dönemlerde şerhedilmiş ve esere nazîreler yazılmıştır. İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî'nin *Ferâhu'r-rûh* adıyla kaleme aldığı şerhi en meşhur şerhlerden biridir. Kitabın nazîreleri arasında en önemlisi ise, XVI. asır mutasavvıf şairlerinden, kendisinden "Yûsuf-i Bîçâre" diye bahseden Ankaralı bir müellifin 913'te (1507) tamamladığı *Muhammediyye* adlı eseridir.

Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed (Muhammed), kardeşi Ahmed Bîcan'ın teşvikiyle Arapça kaleme aldığı *Meğâribü'z-zamân li-ğurûbi'l-eşyâ' fi'l-'ayn ve'l-'ıyân* adlı eserini Türkçeye çevirmesini ondan istemiş, Ahmed Bîcan'ın bu eserden hareketle *Envârü'l-âşıkîn*'i ortaya koymasından bir müddet sonra bu defa kendisi, *Meğâribü'z-zamân*'ın özellikle Hz. Peygamber ve ashabıyla ilgili kısımlarını Türkçe olarak yeniden yazmış ve eserine *Kitâbü Muhammediyye fî na'ti seyyidi'l-âlemîn habîbillâhi'l-a'zam Ebi'l-Kâsım Muhammedini'l-Mustafâ* adını vermiştir. Müellif Resûl-i Ekrem'in diliyle aktardığı,

Yenile mevlidim çıksın cihâna
Eğerçi söylenir dehren-fe-dehrâ

beytiyle, na't diye nitelendirdiği eserinin aynı zamanda mevlid özelliği taşıdığına işaret etmektedir. Mevlidlerde yer alan bütün bölümleri içeren ve dinî törenlerde mevlid gibi okunduğu bilinen eser siyer-mevlidler arasına girecek dinî-destânî bir muhteva taşımaktadır. Yazıcıoğlu, çilehânesinde zikir ve ibadetle meşgul olduğu sırada bazı yakınlarının kendisinden Hz. Peygamber (s.a.v.) hakkında bir kitap kaleme almasını istediklerini, daha önce birçok siyer ve mevlidin yazılmış olduğunu söyleyerek bu teklifi kabul etmediğini, ancak rüyasında Resûlullah'ı görüp ondan,

İçir hikmet şarâbın ümmetime
Sözümü söyle halka âşikârâ

emrini alınca eseri yazmaya başladığını belirtir. *Muhammediyye* 853 Cemâziyelâhîr'inde (Ağustos 1449) Gelibolu'da tamamlanmıştır.⁴

Evliyâ Çelebî Gelibolu, Ankara ve Amasya halkının *Muhammediyye*'yi ezbere okumakla tanındığını kaydeder. Eser, Anadolu ve Rumeli'nin yanı sıra Kırım, Kazan ve Başkurt Türkleri arasında da tanınmıştır.⁵

Muhammediyye sade ve samimi ifadesi, akıcı üslûbu ve halk dilinden tabirleriyle asırlardan beri geniş halk kitleleri üzerinde etkili olmuştur. Medrese, tekke ve camiler yanında, köy odalarında da muhafaza edilmiş, okunup dinlenmiş, bu suretle yaygın din eğitiminin dayandığı en mühim eserlerden biri kabul edilmiştir. Elde bestesi bulunmamasına rağmen mûsikî araştırmacıları, eserin XV. yüzyılda bestelenmiş olduğu kanaatine sahiptirler. XVII. yüzyıldan itibaren bazı sanatkârların "muhammediye-han" diye kayıtlara geçmesi eserin mevlid gibi irticâlen ve beste ile okunduğunu göstermektedir. Bu hususta meşhur isimlerden

4 Uzun, "Muhammediyye", XXX: 583-584.

5 agm.

biri Halvetî şeyhi Müstakim Efendi'dir. XVIII. yüzyılda muhammediyehan olarak tanınmış en önemli isimler arasında Akbaba imamı bestekâr Mehmed Zaîfî (ö. 1115/1703) ve İstanbullu Hâfız Şühûdî Mehmed Efendi gibi üstatlar da bulunmaktadır. İsmâil Hakkî Bursevî, Akbaba imamının Sultan Selim Camii'ne muhammediyehan tayin edilmesinin şehirde büyük bir sevinçle karşılandığını, onun başarılı icrasıyla hatim meclislerinin sonunda eserin bazı bölümlerinin okunmasının bir âdet haline geldiğini yazmaktadır.⁶

XV.yüzyıl Anadolu Türkçesi için zengin bir dil malzemesine sahip olan *Muhammediyye*'nin müellif hattı harekeli nüshası Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşiv ve Neşriyat Müdürlüğü Kütüphanesi'ndedir (nr. 431/A).⁷ İstanbul'da otuz ikisi Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi'nde olmak üzere elli sekiz tam, yedi eksik nüshası tesbit edilmiştir. Bunların dışında Anadolu kütüphanelerinde otuzdan fazla, Kahire, Londra ve Vatikan kütüphanelerinde onu aşkın yazması bulunmaktadır. Eski harflerle yirminin üzerinde baskısının yapılmış olması, eserin gördüğü rağbeti göstermektedir. Âmil Çelebioğlu, *Muhammediyye* üzerine hazırladığı doktora çalışmasının (Erzurum 1971) metin kısmını daha sonra yayınlamıştır.⁸

İsmâil Hakkî Bursevî *Muhammediyye*'yi *Ferâhu'r-rûh* adıyla şerhetmiş, İstanbul ve Kahire'de birçok defa basılan eseri Mustafa Utku dostlarıyla birlikte sadeleştirerek yayımlamıştır.⁹ *Muhammediyye*, XVII. yüzyılda Esîrî Mehmed Yûsuf Efendi tarafından nesre çevrilmiştir.¹⁰

6 agm.

7 İkinci Dünya Savaşı'na kadar Gelibolu'da idi.

8 Âmil Çelebioğlu, *Muhammediyye I-II*, (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1996).

9 İsmail Hakkî Bursevî, *Ferâhu'r-rûh: Muhammediyye Şerhi I-IX*, haz. Mustafa Utku, (Bursa: Uludağ Yayınları, 2000-2010).

10 Uzun, "Muhammediyye", XXX: 583-584.

Muhammediyye'nin bazı nüshaları hattatlar tarafından özellikle nesih hattıyla yazılmış ve tezhip edilerek ciltlenmiştir. Ayrıca matbu nüshaların bir kısmı Mustafa Râkım (1758-1826) gibi tanınmış matbaa hattatlarınca yazılarak bastırılmıştır. İstanbul'daki İranlı yayıncılar eliyle yapılan kaçak baskılara okuyucuların dikkatini çekmek üzere bazı baskıların ilk sayfasına kayıtlar konması Türk yayıncılık tarihi bakımından eserin önemini arttırmaktadır. Bunun yanında cennet, cehennem, arş, kürsü, livâü'l-hamd, Mekke, Medine, Kâbe ve Mescid-i Nebevî ile ilgili şekil ve çizimlerin eklenmesi eseri dinî halk resimciliği açısından değerli kılmaktadır.¹¹

1. Bir Eser Niçin ve Nasıl Yazılır?

Şimdi Bursevî'nin, *Muhammediyye* şerhi *Ferâhu'r-Rûh*'a yazdığı *Mukaddime*'yi okuyalım:

Evliyânın kalplerine tecellî ederek onları şirk ve riyâ şâibelerinden arındıran, gayriyyet sıfatlarından onları temizleyerek içlerinden evhâmı ve hayâlâtı çıkartan ve böylece onları Zât ve sıfât âleminin nakışlarını taşıyacak parlatılmış aynalar haline getiren Allah'a hamdolsun!

Âlemlerin kendisiyle ayakta durduğu, yol izleri ve işaretlerinin onunla devam ettiği, İsm-i A'zâmın sırrı, zâtının cevheri kevn bulanıklığından ve gayr tozundan arınmış ve yüce himmetinin her çeşit mirâca, seyr ve tayra kâdir olduğu efendimiz Hz. Muhammed Mustafâ'ya (s.a.v), Allah'ta fâni olan ve ahadiyyet sırrına eren Âline ve etvâr-ı Ahmediye ile menâzil-i Muhammediyye'yi bilen Ashâbına ezelden ebede kadar salât ve selâm olsun!

Hakk'ın tecellî mertebelerinin en üstüne yükselmeye muhtaç, kurbanlık İsmâil'in ismini taşıyan, Celvetî tarikatına mensup, Bursa'da -Allah bu şehri ve sâkinlerini ko-

11 agm.

vulmuş şeytanın iğvâsından korusun- yerleşmiş olan İsmâil Hakkı der ki *Muhammediye* kitabı, âşıkların sultânı ve âfâkta meşhûr olan Şeyh Yazıcızâde Mehmed Efendi'ye (ks) aittir.

Bu kitap, ibâresi ve cümle yapısı itibariyle her ne kadar Türkçe olsa da şaşılacak bir tertîb üzere yazılmıştır. Kāmûsuna ancak mâhir dalgıçların dalabileceği zor ve karışık sözler ve ancak havâstan olan bir madencinin çıkarabileceği karmaşık kelimelerle doludur. Çünkü bu kitapta zevki küllînin anlayamayacağı sırlar ve tecelli-î ulâ ile çözülmeye muhtaç düğümler vardır! Sûra üfürüleceği güne kadar bu konuda ısrâr edip yorulsa da kusurlu insanların elleri bunlara ulaşamaz! Bunun sebebi ise yakın olmak ile uzak olmak arasındaki fark gibi, haber vermek ile gözle görmek arasında fark olmasıdır. Ashâb-ı işârâtın, Kur'ân-ı Kerim'deki müteşâbihler gibi müteşâbihleri, rumûz ve ıstılahları vardır ki bunları da ancak kendileri ve onlara yakın olan irfân ehli bilir.

Bu yüzden de her asırda ve ülkede yaşayan birtakım inkâr ehli, uyanıklık halinin uyku gibi olduğunu zannederek sûfîlerin kullanmış olduğu bazı kelimelere itiraz edip onlarda kusur aramakla meşgûl olmuştur. Heyhât ki esir olan kimse hür kimselere benzemediği gibi kör olan da gören gibi değildir!

Allah'ın, eski elbiseler içinde öyle kulları vardır ki onları ancak Settâr'ın kendisine tanıtmış olduğu kimse tanıyabilir. Onlar sultân ve vaktin Süleymân'ıdırlar. Mühür ellerindedir. Onlar dünyanın direğidirler. Doğru yolu gösteren işâretler ve ilim başarılarının üzerindedir. Onların mühürlerini ancak güçlü parmaklar çözebilir. Kelimelerini ise ancak harf-i müseccel-i mânevî silebilir. Ben, Ankâ-yı muğribin yanında bir yönde kuşu veya bülbülün yanında, gülleri ve çiçekleri tanımayan bir serçe gibiyim ki onların makâmlarını beyân ve ifâde etmekten âcizim!

Lâkin, yukarıda işâret edilen kitabın sâhibini iki kez rüyâmda gördüm. Birincisinde beni müjdeleyerek kucakladı ve bana sadece ihvân arasında cârî olan bir dostluk gösterdi. İkincisinde ise bana kendi yüce kaleminden çıkmış olan kitabını verdi ve şerhini yazarken Mevlâ'nın feyzi miktarınca ona bakmamı işâret buyurdu.

Makâm sâhibi, ediplerin üstâdı İmâm Ak Baba olarak anılan Şeyh Muhammed Hazretleri, mezkûr kitabı [*Muhammediye*'yi] saltanat şehri İstanbul'daki Sultân Selim Câmii'nde okumak üzere tayîn olduğunda, dînen ve tîneten şehir bir hoş oldu! Âşıkların sinelerinin derinliklerinde bulunan kalpleri harekete geçti, huzûr ehlinin gönülleri onun hayret verici devirleri ve yumuşak nâğmeleriyle coşmaya başladı. Meclisin sonu, yemeğin sonunda yenilen meyve ve tatlı mesabesinde olsun ve kalbi hasta olanlar şifâ bulsun diye hatim esnasında bu manzûm eserin bazı bölümlerini okumak alışkanlık haline geldi.

Sonra [Yazıcızâde Hazretleri (ks)] bana işâret ederek bu kitapta bulunan bazı Arapça ve Farsça kelimeleri, yeryüzünün bu Rûm diyarında cârî olan lisân üzere tercüme etmemi; işâret elinin, ibârenin ağırlığında düğümlenmiş olduğu mânâyı himmet parmaklarıyla çözmemi ve hürirlerin boyunlarında asılı duran incilere benzemesi için her bahire münâsip manzûmeler yazmamı yemin alarak benden istedi.

Yüce Allah'tan birinci rüyâmı gerçekleştirmesini, ikinci rüyâm konusunda beni başarılı kılmasını diledim ve satırların karanlığında hayat pınarına ve tertemiz şarâba yol bulabilmek, susuzluktan ciğerleri yananların boğazlarının ona [*Muhammediye*'ye] bakmakla susuzluktan kurtulması, şüphede olanların beyân dâiresinden istenen noktaya gelmeleri, gayb perdesinin göz üzerinden kalkması ve insanlardaki inat ve ihtilâfın izâle edilmesi için bu isteğini kabul ettim.

Bu şerhin her türlü [mânevî] yara bereye devâ olacağını zannediyorum. Çünkü bu eser, her çeşit ilim ve letâifi içinde topladığı ve Allah'ın kapısını bekleyen sadır ehli olan akıl sahipleri tarafından bilindiği gibi onda, başka kitaplarda bulunmayan birçok şey vardır.

Hidâyete erdiren ancak Allah'tır ve itimâdım O'nadır. Bütün murâdım O'nun yardımıyla ulaşabilirim.¹²

2. Bu Şerhe *Ferâhu'r-Rûh* Adı Verilmesine Dâir

Yazıcızâde Mehmed Efendi, eserinin son mısralarında Ahad olan Allah'ın Resûl'ü Ahmed'e (s.a.v.) tahsis ettiği eserine *Muhammediyye* ismini verdiğini Arapça-Türkçe mısralarla şöyle ifade etmişti:

Çün esbâb oldu ettim söze bünyâd
Çun oğlan doğdu verdim bir güzel ad
Hade'l Ahadu min delâleti'l-Ahmediyye
Bade'l-Ahmedü min celâleti'l-Ahmediyye
Lemma hademtü bi'r-risâleti hatme'r-risâlet
Semmeytüha bi'r-Risâleti'l-Muhammediyye

Bursevî de son mısralarında aynı yolu izlemiş ve eserine *Ferâhu'r-Ruh* isminin verilmesi konusuna açıklık getirmiştir:

Hakkîyâ Hak uyardı çün cânın
Dîde-i mahz oldu her yânın
Sana gösterdi nâzımı der-hâb
İznin aldın o dem o sultânın
Başladın şerh-i kitâba bî-bâk
Cûş edip mevce geldi ummânın
Şerh ederken dediler gûş-ı dile
Ferahu'r-Rûh ko nâmın ânın
Hamdülillâh bu sûret ü mânâ
Lütf u ihsânı oldu Mevlâ'nın
Gül gibi doğdu anadan rengin
Komadı rağbetin gülistânın
Ferah-ı rûhu oldu uşşâkın
Yeniden cânı geldi devrânın

12 Bursevî, *Ferahu'r-rûh: Muhammediye Şerhi*, I: 15-16.

Muhammediyye gibi üç asırdan beri Osmanlı'nın gönül coğrafyasında okunan bu halk klasiği dua ile son bulmaktadır:

Îlâhî dembedem Senden ricâmız
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir
Budur dergâha rûz ü şeb duâmız
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir

Bahâr-ı ömrün erdikte hazânı
Uçur bağ-ı cinâna mûrg-i cânı
Koma vahşette Sen rûh-ı revânı
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir

Okunmuştur bu hat levh-i ezelden
Kamu zî-rûh içre câm-ı ecelden
Siline çün kalem ketb-i amelden
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir

Tamam olur egerçi sâlike râh
Tamam olmaz velî dünyada derd âh
Deyip âhir nefeste Allah Allah
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir

Cenâbından diler Hakkî atıyyât
Kılar her dem Habîbine tahiyyât
Bi-hakki'l-âl hem hayri'l-berıyyât
Bizi îmân ile hatm eyle âhir¹³

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13 Bursevî, *Ferahu'r-rûh: Muhammediye Şerhi*, IX: 393-396.



Yûnus Emre's Poetry and Philosophy

Yûnus Emre Şiiri ve Felsefesi

Mahmud Erol KILIÇ*

Abstract

Yûnus Emre was a Turkish Sufi master of the 13th century whose poetry continues to reverberate to this day. The simplicity of the language used to convey the inherently complicated concepts of divine love, love of humanity, the illuminated heart, all from the perspective of unity transcends the boundaries of language and religion and speaks to all. His multi-layered interpretation of religion in one of his poems, where he writes, “Şeriat, tarikat, yoldur varana / Hakikat mârifet andan içeru” – “Laws and paths are roads for those who arrive / The fruit of truth is what is within,” takes the listener beyond religion as a set of rules and into the deeper and vast realm of belief, where it is the truth and reality of these rules that are brought to the forefront in order to support the believer in reaching the Ultimate Truth. Recent events have demonstrated, at times violently, the danger of denying or neglecting the profound side of religion and only concerning oneself with the dogmatic aspects. Yûnus Emre's focus on humanity within the context of the divine and the universe allows the reader or listener to step back, acknowledge that all of humanity is one, and as part of Creation, all of us are subjects of the same message: “Sen sana ne sanırsan, ayruğa da onu san / Dört kitabın manası, budur eğer var ise” – “You have a self-image in your own eyes, Be sure to see others in the same guise / Each of the four holy books clarifies; this truth as it applies to man's affairs.”

Keywords: Yûnus Emre, divine love, humanity, illuminated heart, Sufi poetry

* **ORCID:** 0000-0003-4144-1518. Professor, Director General of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA),
E-mail: mahmuderol@gmail.com

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Özet

Şiirlerinin zamanı aşan etkileriyle günümüzde de yaşamaya devam eden Yûnus Emre, bir 13. yüzyıl Türk mutasavvıfıdır. İlâhî aşk, insan sevgisi, bilen kalp gibi özünde son derece karmaşık olan tasavvufî kavramları, tevhid perspektifinden aktarmak için kullandığı dilin sadeliği, dilin ve dinin sınırlarını aşarak herkese hitap eder. “Şeriat, tarikat, yoldur varana / Hakikat mârifet andan içeru” beyitleri aracılığıyla dine getirdiği çok katmanlı yorum, dinleyiciyi bir kurallar bütünü olarak dinin ötesine, inancın daha derin ve engin âlemine götürür ki burada aslolan, inananları Mutlak Hakikat’e ulaşmada destekleyen kuralların bâtinî yönüdür. Son zamanlarda yaşanan olaylar, dinin derûnî yönünü inkâr veya ihmal ederek sadece dogmatik tarafıyla meşgul olmanın tehlikesini zaman zaman şiddetli bir şekilde göstermektedir. Yûnus Emre’nin Allah ve âlem bağlamında insanlığa odaklanması, okurun bir adım geriye çekilerek tüm insanlığın bir olduğu ve yaratılışın bir parçası olarak hepimizin aynı mesajın muhatapları olduğumuzu kabul etmesine olanak tanır: “Sen sana ne sanırsan, ayruğa da onu san / Dört kitabın manası, budur eğer var ise.”

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yûnus Emre, ilâhî aşk, insanlık, bilen kalp, tasavvuf edebiyatı

Introduction

One of the few things we know for certain about Yûnus Emre is that he was a Turkish Sufî poet who lived in Anatolia in the 13th century. While much research has been done about the more specific details of his life, in terms of who he was, where he came from, and what he did, what concerns us is the power of his poetry reverberating in listeners’ hearts 700 years later. As one author states, “what is it to us where he is from, or who his family is? Even if we don’t know any of this, there is a Yûnus whom we do know, and what we know is more than enough for all of us. This Yûnus has the capacity to not only develop this world, but to build for us the hereafter world as well. This is the Lover Yûnus, the Pained Yûnus, the Silent Yûnus, the Dervish Yûnus, and above all, he is Our Yûnus!”¹

Our Yûnus has been referred to as the “*hâtem-i lisân-ı Türk*”, the seal of the Turkish language, for his mastery over the words he uses to express divine wisdom, divine love, love of humanity, all from the perspective of *tevhid*, of unity. He continued the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabî and Mevlânâ in explaining and

expressing Sufî concepts, with the difference of doing this plainly, and in Turkish. He writes, “Bu bizden öndin gelenler mâ’nîyi pinhân didiler / Ben anadan toğmış gibi geldüm ki ‘uryân eyleyem”² – “In those who came before us, hidden was the meaning / I came as if just born from my mother, fully revealing.” Once again following in the path of these two great figures, Yûnus Emre states that poetry is simply the means by which he tries to convey what is truly important, which is the meaning, the spirit behind the words.³ He writes, “Yûnus’un sözi şi’irden ammâ aslı(dur) kitâbdan / Hadîsile dinene key (bilgil) sâdık olmak gerek”⁴ – “Yûnus’ words are poetry, but their origin is the Book / remain loyal to it and the Hadith constantly, no further one need look.” While preparing for this paper and thinking and reading through Yûnus’ poetry, what continually resonated with me was the immense love within Yûnus Emre, expressed through the powerful and encompassing perspective of *tevhid*, unity.

2 Mustafa Tatçı, *Yûnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, (İstanbul: H Yayınları, 2014), 367, 173/7.

3 Mahmud Erol Kılıç, *Sûfî ve Şiir*, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2014), 79-80.

4 Tatçı, *Yûnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 342, 137/9.

1 Nezihe Araz, *Anadolu Evliyalari*, (İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1975), 62.

Yūnus Emre's love shines from his poetry because it is not just the Divine whom he loves, it is every single existing thing that has been graced with one of the names of God. His cascading love flows to every single one of the seventy-two nations under the sky; this love is a fundamental part of his faith.⁵ The concept of humanism might come to mind when speaking of the love of humanity, wherein the focus is on the value of the human in different manners and interpretations throughout the world, but it has remained only at a theoretical level, not reaching what Yūnus Emre and others like him demonstrate where this love is an active part of life. We can see this call to action where he writes, "Bir hastaya vardunısa bir içim su virdünise / Yarın anda karşı gele Hak şarâbın içmiş gibi"⁶ – "If you visited the infirm, if you gave a sip of water / Tomorrow that will return, as if that sip was from the elixir of the Truth." It should be noted that while one interpretation of this verse is the more worldly one of acting for the care of the individual and society, there are multiple layers of meaning here. For someone at Yūnus Emre's spiritual level, the real sick person would be the one who is unaware of their Lord, who persistently refuses to mature in their level of humanity, who continually denies the entrustment God bequeathed them.⁷ Yūnus Emre offers the remedy for such a sick person in the second part of the couplet – what is it that can awaken the sick person from their heedlessness? That sip of water you give – it might not have an effect on them immediately, but it might awaken within them tomorrow, or later on, and it will be as if they have drunk from the elixir of the Divine.⁸

5 Sâmiha Ayverdi, *Âbide Şahsiyetler*, (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyatı, 2022), 61.

6 Tatçı, *Yūnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 525, 388/5.

7 Personal conversation with Rıza Tekin Uğurel, 13/11/2022.

8 Personal conversation with Kenan Gürsoy, 14/11/2022.

Another couplet that demonstrates the multiple layers of interpretation is as follows: "Bu dünyada bir nesneye yanar içim göyner özüm / Yigid iken ölenlere gök ekini biçmiş gibi"⁹ – "One thing in this world wrenches my heart and brings tears to my eyes / When, like a too-early harvest, a young one dies." This couplet can be read as Yūnus Emre being fully a part of the human community, sharing in both their triumphs and their losses, in this case, the death of the young. While this deep feeling might appear as going against the will of the Divine, there is no protest or rebellion against what occurs – this is the compassionate sharing of an immense pain.¹⁰ The additional meanings here, however, ask one to consider what it is Yūnus Emre means when he writes "yigit/youth". Is this a situation where it is really an early harvest, or is it the harvesting of the spiritual bounty provided by God? Thus the "early death" referred to here might instead be to the concept of *mûtu kable en temûtu* – to die before dying, meaning to advance beyond the constraints of the ego (*nafs*), to strive for the level of *insân al-kâmil*, the Perfected Human Being.¹¹

Yūnus Emre truly believes that every human is equal, that true maturity can only occur by regarding every single person out in the world with the same eyes.¹² He writes, "Sen seni ne sanursan ayrığa da anı san / Dört kitâbun ma'nîsi, budur eger varısa"¹³ – "You have a self-image in your own eyes, Be sure to see others in the same guise / Each of the four holy books clarifies, This truth as it applies

9 Tatçı, *Yūnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 525, 388/4.

10 Mehmet Demirci, *Yūnus Emre'de İlâhî Aşk ve İnsan Sevgisi*, (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyatı, 1997), 103-4.

11 Personal conversation with Rıza Tekin Uğurel, 13/11/2022.

12 Demirci, *Yūnus Emre'de İlâhî Aşk ve İnsan Sevgisi*, 91-2.

13 Tatçı, *Yūnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 459, 299/6.

to man's affairs."¹⁴ He does not ever consider the human as a lone entity, separated from what surrounds her; instead, the human is always regarded in correlation with God and the universe, as the deposit for the divine entrustment, as the potentiality of reaching the Divine Essence (*zât*).¹⁵ This Divine presence can be witnessed within the heart of the believer, hence Yûnus Emre's following verses: "Bir kez gönül yıkdunısa bu kıldugun namâz degül / Yitmiş iki millet dahı elin yüzün yumaz degül"¹⁶ – "If you even once broke a heart, it is no prayer to God, your obeisance / all the seventy-two nations may gather, but you, no effort is enough to cleanse." The same feeling comes through in another verse, where he writes, "Gönül Çalab'un tahtı gönüle Çalap bahdı / iki cihân bedbahtı kim gönül yıkarısa"¹⁷ – "The heart is the Creator's throne, wherein God's gaze lies / whosoever breaks a heart, misery in both worlds is where their destiny lies," thus once again emphasizing how important it is to treat everyone equally, justly, with respect and love, because we are all created by the same hand.

The universality of Yûnus Emre's message and love has an underlying emphasis on unity. What he says can be applied to every religion and faith, and all one needs is an open heart to understand; it is not linguistic knowledge that forges connections. Yûnus Emre writes, "Benem Hakk'un kudret eli benem beli 'ışk bülbülü / Söyleyüp her dürlü dili halka haber viren benem"¹⁸ – "I am the Truth's hand of power, yes, I am the nightingale of love / I

am the one who speaks all the different languages and informs the people." Using the Turkish language, he expresses his purpose, his belief, his love, feelings, and thoughts all with the aim of achieving *tevhid*, unity.¹⁹ As an internal act, *tevhid* is rather hard to define, although it might be referred to as a maturation, working on the submission of the ego rather than to the ego, and ultimately to see Truth, Haqq, in every single existing thing. Yûnus Emre does not have this difficulty of expression,²⁰ as he writes, "Eğer âyîne bin olsa bakan bir / Gören bir, görinen bin bin görindi"²¹ – "Even if there are thousands of mirrors, there is only one who looks / the one who looks is one, the seen appear in the thousands."

In the matter of unity, there is an external unity that Yûnus Emre speaks to as well. The matter of loneliness, of disconnect, is one we face as humans all over the world. There has been a distancing from each other despite – or perhaps because of – the hyperconnectivity brought about by the internet age and social media. Not only is there distance among humans, but we have also become isolated from nature. There is a line of thought in Islam where the Qur'ân is a divine book that should be studied and read, exemplified through the living Qur'ân that was the Prophet Muḥammad (saw), but there is also the book of nature, a book that continually renews itself and rejuvenates, that overcomes all its travails while fully submitting to that which occurs to it and within it. We have become ignorant of this

14 Talat Halman (ed.), *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*, (Indiana: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1989), 155.

15 Kenan Gürsoy, "Yunus Emre: l'homme, le monde et l'univers chez Yunus Emre," speech at Gregorian University, 6-9 November 1991.

16 Tatçı, *Yûnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 362, 166/1.

17 Ibid. 459, 299/5.

18 Ibid. 384, 193/11.

19 Müjgan Cunbur, "Yunus ve Türkçemiz," *Yunus Emre Sempozyumu Bildiriler*, (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Yayınları No 514, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları No 25, 1992), 27.

20 Mehmet Demirci, "Türkiye'de Yunus Emre Çalışmalarına Genel Bakış," *Uluslararası Yunus Emre Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, (Manisa: Yunus Emre Belediyesi, 2016), 18.

21 Tatçı, *Yûnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 541, 411/9.

book as well, living in concrete jungles with very few forays into nature. Yūnus Emre bears witness, however, to the fact that even the trees, the flowers, every single grass blade, every insect, every bird, is also in the process of remembering God. One of the stories related about him is that while in the service of his *mürşid*, his teacher, he would go out to gather wood from the surrounding areas. One day, however, he is on his way back with not even a single piece of wood on him, instead holding a single violet in his hand. When asked why he did not gather any wood to be used in the lodge, he replies, “How could I? Every time I went to cut a piece, they were all clearly saying – ‘Do not cut me, you are keeping me from my *dhikr*, my prayer!’ All I am bringing back is this small flower, and the flower requested that I take it – ‘I forgot my *dhikr* for a moment and fell into heedlessness, please, take me away!’”²² And in one of his poems, he writes, “Dağlar ile taşlar ile çağırayın Mevlâm seni / Seherlerde kuşlar ile çağırayın Mevlâm seni / Su dibinde mâhî ile sahralarda âhû ile / Abdâl olup yâ Hû ile çağırayın Mevlâm seni”²³ – “I call for you My Lord, with the mountains and the rocks / I call for you My Lord, with the birds at dawn / With the fish in the depths of the ocean and the gazelles in the deserts / I call for you My Lord, as an Abdal shouting ‘O You!’” There is clearly a shared call here, where it is not just Yūnus Emre who is engaged in the remembrance of God, it is every single rock, tree, fish, bird, and everything else in existence.

The atomization that has happened under the guise of specialization has caused rifts within the feeling and perception of being in unity. It is almost as if humans no longer have the time and energy to simply stop for

a while and think and observe that truly, in the end, we are all one. This is the point that Yūnus Emre addresses throughout his many poems where he writes in different verses, “gelin tanış olalım” – “come, let us become acquainted,” “gelin birlik olalım” – “come, let us become one,” or “bir iken ayrılmayalım” – “let us not separate when we are already one”.²⁴ This appeal to remain one is a reflection of his understanding of the human as a social being – a human is not meant to be alone, only engaging in the bare minimum of whatever is necessary to continue to live. The human has been created with an enormous potential for love and mercy; every human is a manifestation of an illuminated heart that loves, that is loved, and that connects with compassionate and passionate love. Another of his verses points to the active nature of unity as well – “Gel hey kardeş gel sen birliğe özen / Birliktir her nefsin kal’asın bozan” – “Come, brother, and aspire to unity / It is unity that breaks down the castle of the ego.”²⁵

I have mentioned already the capacity Yūnus Emre has for stating simply what is complicated, and one of the examples of this is in how he characterizes himself in his poems. He refers to himself in different ways, but one of the more common ones is “Miskin Yūnus”. Although *miskin* is usually taken to mean sluggish, lazy, poor, spiritless, and even helpless, the entire character changes when considered from the perspective of *tasavvuf*. When considered from this perspective, *miskin* means “the fighter of the heart who comprehends their lack of power and presence in the face of God, who knows that God is the ultimate wealth and that they are the dervish servant, the poor one, who is

22 Ahmet Kabaklı, *Sohbetler-I*, (İstanbul: Türk Edebiyatı Vakfı Yayınları, 1991), 131-3.

23 Tatçı, *Yūnus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 781-2, 176/1-2.

24 Levent Bayraktar, “Yūnus’un Güncelliği”, *Uluslararası Yūnus Emre Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, (Manisa: Yūnus Emre Belediyesi, 2016), 19-20.

25 Fulya Bayraktar, “Yūnus’ta Bağlanma”, *Uluslararası Yūnus Emre Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, (Manisa: Yūnus Emre Belediyesi, 2016), 32.

forever utterly dependent upon God.”²⁶ Yunus Emre demonstrates this meaning in one of his poems where he writes, “Miskînlikden buldılar kimde erlik varısa / Nerdübândan yitdiler yüksekden bakarısa”²⁷ – “It’s the true man who leads the mystic life – whoever is human, whoever dares / Those who stand high and look below with scorn, are bound to fall from the top of the stairs.”²⁸ His powerful, almost magical voice is an appeal to both the physical and the spiritual side of the human in urging them to think, listen and to bring themselves to account, thus fully activating the energy within them.²⁹

Loving the created because of the Creator, respecting all of creation because the very atoms of every single existing thing are continually remembering God, and looking at everyone through this ultimate perspective of *tevhid*, unity, Yunus Emre himself is the one who actually answers the question of why he remains relevant and influential 700 years later: “Âşık öldi diyü salâ virürler / Ölen hayvân durur ‘âşıklar ölmez”³⁰ – “The death knell rings, claiming the lover’s death / It is the animal part that is gone, for lovers do not die”.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude my words with what reads to me as a prayer from Yunus Emre upon those who walk with him. He writes,

Her kime ki dervişlik bağışlana
Kalpı gide pâk ola gümüşlene
Nefesinden müşk ile amber tüte
Budağından il ve şehri yemişlene
Toprağı dertli için derman ola
Ayağında saz bitip kamlışlana

- 26 İlhan Ayverdi, “Miskin,” Kubbealtı Lugatı, <http://lugatim.com/s/miskin>, accessed November 2, 2022.
27 Tatçı, *Yunus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 459, 299/1.
28 Halman, *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*, 155.
29 Ayverdi, *Âbide Şahsiyetler*, 60.
30 Tatçı, *Yunus Emre Dîvân-ı İlâhiyât*, 324, 113/8.

Cümle şâir dost bahçesi bülbülü
Yunus Emre orada dürraçlana³¹

Whoever receives the gift of the dervish state

Is cleansed, rid of counterfeit, gets his silver-plate

He’s that tree whose breath oozes musk and amber

From whose branches, city and country receive fruit

Those who are suffering find their cure in its leaves;

Reeds and bushes sprout and blossom at that tree’s feet.

Poets are the nightingales in the Friend’s garden;

Yunus Emre is the singing partridge in it.³²

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- 31 Kabaklı, *Sohbetler-I*, 150.
32 Halman, *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*, 168.

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Ibn ‘Arabī and the Metaphysical Meanings of the Shadow Play in Java*

İbn Arabî Metafizîğinin Java Geleneksel Gölge Oyunundaki İzdüşümleri

Lee Shan TSE**

Abstract

This article is about shadow play as a pedagogy in Indonesia and beyond, connecting it Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings. Ibn ‘Arabī is known as one of the most important Islamic thinkers from the 13th century, and his teachings have expanded across the entire Islamic world. However, his two main works, *al-Futūḥāt* and *al-Fuṣūṣ*, have remained largely inaccessible over the last 800 years, transmitted not through translations or writings but through teachers to select students. A Mursyid from Bandung has been teaching ‘Ibn ‘Arabī since 2019 publically. I am interested in the teachings, elucidations and use of the pedagogy of the shadow play in communities which strive to make meaning and value in people’s lives. The teacher of this community offers insights into the shadow play as a mystical tool for pedagogy. This article touches upon the often lost meaning of the shadow play central in Islamic teaching over the centuries. I will offer an ethnographic study of the role of shadow play in the seeker’s search for their self as it was told to me by the Mursyid. By doing so, we understand the interplay between the Divine and the Human within the shadow play, the search for the soul, and its metaphysical order of veil, light, and shadows.

Keywords: Ibn ‘Arabī, sufism, shadow play, *wayang kulit*, Java, Indonesia, veil, light, shadow

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** **ORCID:** 0009-0007-6168-3086. Dr., Evans Fellow, University of Cambridge,
E-mail: lst35@cantab.ac.uk

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Özet

Bu makale, Endonezya ve ötesinde pedagojik bir eğitim metodu olarak görülen geleneksel gölge oyununu, İbn Arabî'nin öğretileriyle ilişkilendirerek ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. İbn Arabî, 13. yüzyılın en önemli İslâm düşünürlerinden biri olarak bilinir ve öğretileri tüm İslâm dünyasına yayılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, iki baş yapıtı olan *Fütûhât* ve *Fusûs*, son 800 yıl boyunca büyük ölçüde erişilemez kalmıştır. İbn Arabî metinlerinin çağdaş bir öğreticisi olan Mursyid'in İslâmî eğitimi, 2019'dan bu yana artık yaygın bir şekilde halka açık hale geldi. Bu anlamda ben de, insanların hayatlarına anlam ve değer katmak için çalışmalar yürüten topluluklarda, pedagojik bir metot olarak gölge oyunu öğretileri, açıklamaları ve kullanımı ile ilgili araştırmalar yürütüyorum. Araştırmalarımı sürdürdüğüm topluluğun rehberi olan Mursyid, mânevî bir eğitim aracı olarak gölge oyununa dair farklı perspektifler sunuyor. Dolayısıyla bu makale, yüzyıllar boyunca İslâmî öğretinin merkezinde yer alan gölge oyununun çoğu zaman kaybolan anlamına değinmektedir. Mursyid tarafından bana anlatıldığı şekliyle, gölge oyununun, tâlibin mânevî yolculuğundaki rolüne dair etnografik bir çalışma sunacağım. Böylelikle, gölge oyunundaki Allah ve İnsan arasındaki etkileşimi, nefis yolculuğunu ve onun metafiziksel perde, ışık ve gölgeler düzenini anlayacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İbn 'Arabî, tasavvuf, gölge oyunu, *wayang kulit*, Java, Endonezya, perde, nûr, gölge

Introduction

The importance and value of the shadow play as a quintessential artistic inheritance of Indonesia with its cultural values and identities has been studied in colonialist studies.¹ Historical anthropologist Ward Keeler and many other scholars along the way documented extensively the religious and philosophical interpretations of the ritual uses of shadows in Javanese shadow plays, drawing links between shadow plays and Javanese selves. I am interested in delving beyond the material culture of the shadow play to understand the practice and the use of the shadow play in religion and traditional arts, in contemporary contexts.

This article is about the shadow play as a pedagogy in Indonesia and beyond, connecting it

Ibn 'Arabî's teachings. Ibn 'Arabî is known as one of the most important Islamic thinkers, from the 13th century, and his teachings have expanded across the entire Islamic world. However, his two main works, *al-Futûhât* and *al-Fuṣūṣ* have remained largely inaccessible over the last 800 years. The Mursyid, a contemporary teacher of Ibn 'Arabî's texts, has offered his teachings to the public since 2019. These teachings are having a global impact. As an anthropologist, I am interested in the teachings, elucidations and use of the pedagogy of the shadow play in communities which strive to make meaning and value in people's lives.

I have been following Mursyid's teachings on the metaphysical meanings of a popular traditional arts performance, the art of *wayang kulit* (shadow play),² from the 15th century for three years. Mursyid leads a Sufi order of 800 members across Java and Sumatra and across the globe, helping them to define

1 Schechner studies how the Dutch colonial intervened into the practices of the wayang kulit (shadow play), especially during the Java War (1825-1830) onwards. Many changes took place during the Dutch East Indies during the long colonial epoch, where the Dutch 'stripped wayang of its politics and historicity, its ability to relate contemporary events'. Instead, they emphasized on ancient myths, aesthetics, and mystical functions. See Richard Schechner, "Wayang Kulit in the Colonial Margin," *TDR* 34, 2 (1990): 25-61.

2 Readers are invited to enjoy the webpage and the illustrations on wayang kulit created by Momina Khattak, an artist from Pakistan. www.n-sphere.space/shadow-play

and negotiate their past, present, and future. This community's lineage traces back to the first saints of Indonesia, called the Council of Nine Saints – the *Wali Songo* (also transcribed as *Wali Sanga*), who introduced Islam to the Hindu islands (Indo-nesia) through the shadow play. This community follows the Islamic teachings of Ibn 'Arabī closely and focuses specifically on the teachings of Ibn 'Arabī's second major work, called *al-Fuṣūṣ*. The teacher of this community offers insights into the shadow play as a mystical tool for pedagogy, which we explore in this article.

According to Ibn 'Arabī in his work *al-Fuṭūḥāt*, the shadow play begins with the puppeteer, who uses a three-dimensional puppet, making it come alive as it is removed from the first box called 'womb' to be placed at the end in the box called 'grave' – what the audience sees is the life on stage, the in-between, narrating a universal story of humanity. The audience behind the veil sees only a two-dimensional shadow play, having lost the dimension of the intricate, colourful puppets which had been crafted in great detail.

This article will touch upon the often lost meaning of the shadow play central in Islamic teaching over the centuries. I will offer an ethnographic study of the role of shadow play in the seeker's search for their self as it was told to me by the Mursyid. By doing so, we understand the interplay between the Divine and the Human within the shadow play, the search for the soul, and its metaphysical order of veil, light, and shadows. These findings come from a series of semi-structured interviews with the community teachers and puppeteers, and local shadow play audiences. I used participant observations in my fieldwork during two summers between 2022-2024 and received permission to publish the research findings by all research participants. All research participants have been given anonymous names for privacy protections.

As part of a decolonial way of engaging with ethnographic material in the field, this article uses direct, first-hand teachings, without the academic, colonial, performative rituals of citation. This encourages the research participants of the community (*ṭarīqat*) I spent 2 years' time with, to speak in their own voices, without the constant mediation of an anthropologist.³

1. The Process of *Wayang Kulit*

I met one of the contemporary puppeteers (*dalang*), whose name is Nani, in a radio station in Java, who was about to give a performance later that evening. He was a man in his forties with more than 30 years of experience in the shadow play. Inspired by his grandfather who was a well-known village *dalang*, close to Jogjakarta, he became a *dalang* at a young age and later studied at a *dalang* performative arts school in Jogjakarta – and with a chuckle, he goes on: "Against my parents' permission – I only told them to come to my graduation, when they became aware of my professional path as a *dalang*." He explained the process of the shadow play to me as follows: some of them can go on over many hours, sometimes even 9 hours, from early evening to the dawn. The *dalang* is the puppeteer who is also the narrator of the selected plays he performs during the evening. He often sits cross-legged facing the rectangular screen, with the light shining on to the puppet on to the screen. Traditionally, the audience sits behind the screen so that the *dalang* would not be seen, but nowadays, many of the audiences sit on the side of the *dalang*. (The Mursyid sees this as evidence that the lesson of the shadow play has been lost.) Then behind the *dalang* sit the gamelan players, who are the musicians

3 I would like to thank all research participants who contributed to the findings and made this research possible in the first place. I am grateful for the Evans Fellowship for funding this independent research.

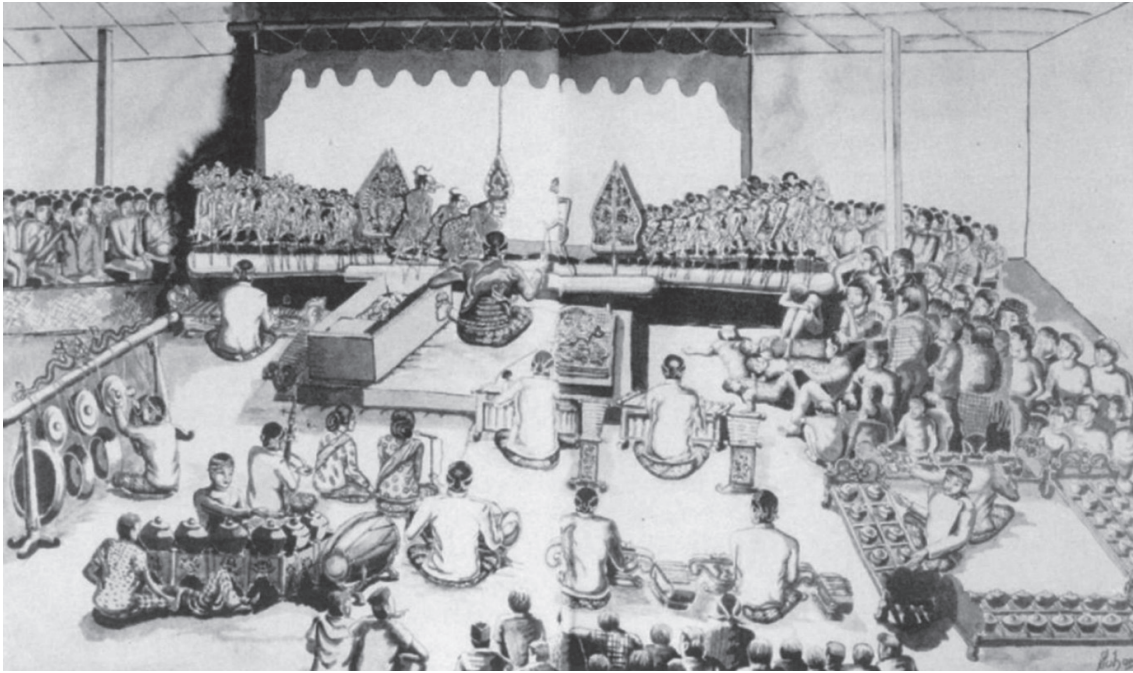


Image 1: A Drawing of the Shadow Play. In Ward Keeler, *Javanese Selves*, 1987.

improvising the musical accompaniment of the shadow play. Spectators are on both sides of the screen. In most contemporary performances, invited guests are seated on chairs watching the shadows, while uninvited guests and passersby observe from the *dalang*'s side. Other scholars noted that in the past, there was a gender-segregated seating plan, where women and children were on the shadow side, while men on the *dalang*'s.⁴ The stories that are narrated include familiar puppets known to the community, containing stories of legendary Javanese figures, some based on the *Ramayana*, some on the *Mahabharata*. As the play begins, I find Nani in the middle of the stage, concentrating on the shadow play. He is focused and multi-tasking, using a wooden mallet in his left hand and a small mallet held between his toes. While all the puppets are arranged in order of size at the sides of the screen, with the smallest placed nearest the screen, he starts the dialogue, interchanging

the voices of the different characters on stage, as he is the only narrator of the play. He does so without any script. He explained to me at another meeting how he is always making sure that he is in ritual purity (ablution, *wuḍū'*), that he is prepared with a few shadow plays and has practiced them. But for most part they are inspired or improvised on the day of the shadow play: "We (*dalang*) are in the veil between the light and the audience, and we feel out what is in the atmosphere. It is a special role as a *dalang*, as I feel I am the intermediary between both sides of the screen."

Most *dalangs* do not learn their plays (*lakons*) by reading them but rather through oral and spiritual transmission. It used to be that there was great importance in knowing and more profound understanding the puppet arrangement, language, sacred music and plots, following the character's journeys, relationships and hierarchies.⁵ However, when I asked about the meanings of the shadow play and

4 Willem Huibert Rassers, "On the Origin of the Javanese Theatre", in Pañji, *The Culture Hero: A Structural Study of Religion in Java*, (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1931), 93-215.

5 Schechner, "Wayang Kulit in the Colonial Margin," *TDR* 34, 2 (1990): 25-61.

interviewed participants in the audience, they seemed not to know them nor were concerned about them. Instead, they were interested in the play itself as an evening entertainment for themselves and for the meaning. How these meanings are lost has not been a concern for the professional puppeteer Nani, who feels that the shadow play invites anyone interested in the arts, whether they are called to understand the meaning or not; to him, this is not important. However, it has been a concern for the local community teacher Mursyid, who maintains the importance of shadow play and the need for its accuracy and faithful tradition.

2. Towards a New Meaning of the Javanese Shadow Play – Shadows, Puppets, and the Light

I was introduced to Mursyid through one of his disciples, T, who works as a translator and writer in the Netherlands. After I had known her for 3 months in 2021, she soon invited me to visit Mursyid and the community, in Autumn 2022. All my interviews with Mursyid were accompanied by T., who translated the conversations from Indonesian to English. She was enthusiastic about the shadow play because Sunan Kalijaga of the *Wali Songo* was one of her ancestors. Sunan Kalijaga is known as the one who brought the shadow play.

Mursyid is her teacher and is a spiritual leader of a Sufi order with 800 followers in Bandung. During the day, he is a professor at the local university, and he offers spiritual teachings outside office hours, almost daily. During the visit, there were three wayfarers (*sālikīn*), who generously offered their help with communication between Mursyid and I, and simultaneously translated our conversations, which were often held in a living room set up. Sometimes, the interviews took place

on Zoom, while T. was in Bandung to help with the interview. All conversations were recorded and then translated into English, with full transcripts into Indonesian, provided by a team of *sālikīn* who offered their skills and assistance to me.

During the first visit, a community member, one of his *sālikīn*, brought me to a Batik store, and they selected a unique dress for me with the wayang's feature. I was gifted a shadow play dress by the community! In our first meetings, I saw Mursyid's passion for shadow play. He explained the etymology to me: "*Wayang* comes from the root word '*bayang*,' which means shadow." For the traditional Sufi order Q., the shadow play has an extraordinary metaphysical meaning beyond the cultural tradition of storytelling. From our meeting, I knew that the shadow play existed in a deep meaning dimension for his community. Mursyid reminisces about the beginning of his spiritual journey when he met his teacher, whom he calls 'father' or Bapak. From however long he has been on the path, he recalls his fascination with the *wayang kulit*.

"The shadow is related to the imagination," says Mursyid with his head nodding and a gentle smile. He continues: "Humans who are guided by the light, need to imagine the meanings of the teachings, that are often in the unseen dimensions." He picks up his Qur'ān and looks through it, explaining that the shadow is mentioned 33 times, which is the key to the deeper meanings of the shadow play. During this interview, I saw how his face lit up when he was talking about his own guide, his teacher: "My teacher Bapak used to say, 'Our true self is not the body; this is only a copy, a shadow of our true self.'" He opens the Qur'ān and reads out loud to me: *Have you not seen your Lord (Rabb) how He lengthens the shadows and if Allah*

wills will be made permanent (not moving and not changing). And We made the sun a guide over the shadow (al-Furqān 25/45-46) For Mursyid, there is an interaction between the shadow and its puppet and the puppet and its source of light, with the shadows either aligned or misaligned. When the shadow is aligned, it is possible that they even become 'lengthened' – that is extended shadow. It immediately occurred to me that a shadow is not just a shadow, rather different kinds of shadows exist. He shared that the *wayang kulit* may seem like a performance, but it is not. Mursyid, now unpacked two large puppets from his bag, demonstrates what he meant by 'image'.

Now, look at these beautiful puppets. Look at the shape, the carvings. They are made of leather. Do you see all the colours and details? All of this, [he points to the puppets,] speaks for a very detailed and serious craft. But when one is sitting in the audience, all one can see is the shadow. If the puppet was not that important, and all it needed to do was cast the shadow, why would the craftsman put hours and hours perfecting the puppet in its volume, depths, colours and detailed carvings? This, in fact, already shows the two levels of realms. The first one is the shadow, which is but the image on the screen that can only speak of the physical realm ('*alam al-mulk*'). And the puppet, being the second realm.

This comment indicates multiple levels of understanding of shadow play as a pedagogy. On the one hand, he details the materiality of the puppet, which is three-dimensional, hand-carved with intricate details, and colourful; on the other hand, he speaks of the shadow as an image of the puppet, and when the puppet's shadow is cast on the screen. What happens is that the three-dimensional puppet becomes, because of the casting, a

two-dimensional shadow. Traditionally, the screen is supposed to be illuminated by a single source, a flickering oil lamp, and the puppets are supposed to be made from parchment formed out of water buffalo hide, horn and bone, but these days such practices disappeared.⁶ From the audience's perspective, sitting on the other side of the curtain, all they see are the two-dimensional shadows, and they know that their origin is the true puppet behind the veil. These are the first two immediate realms of shadow play, which form part of the metaphysical cosmic order of the shadow play: the first higher dimensional realm is that of the light shone onto the puppet, which represents the unseen world, while the second realm represents the seen world, with one lesser dimension.

Then he continued: "Now, let's look at the shadow. The shadow indicates where the sun is." I thought that this comment was very interesting because he starts with what is seen and backtracks to the backstage; he extrapolates the shadow, to the puppet, all the way to the light, which is behind the veil. I would have thought that he would start with the light, puppet, and shadow, but he very much turned the sequence around, beginning with the shadow.

In the eyes of Mursyid, the shadow represents all that we can perceive, akin to the physical realm we inhabit. It is not just the puppet that casts a shadow; everything we see is merely an image of something that truly exists, such as the puppet in this case. Initially, it seemed perplexing to me that we could perceive shadows, as I had always thought that what we see with our eyes is light. However, to Mursyid, the visual imagery and the physical stage of

6 See Roger Long, *Javanese Shadow Theatre: Movement and Characterization in Ngayogyakarta Wayang Kulit*, (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1982). See also Schechner, "Wayang Kulit in the Colonial Margin," *TDR* 34, 2 (1990): 25-61.

the shadow play explain it all: what we see is what the audience observes watching the shadow play, representing the shadow world (*'alam al-mulk*). However, the True realm in the *jabarūt* and the *malakūt* is the world of Light, with souls and spirits and the source of life. That world is concealed behind the screen. What we perceive are shadows, while what is illuminated by the light, like the puppet, remains unseen. Every image we perceive is merely the shadow of the actual entity behind the veil. I came to realize that the two opposites, light, which remains unseen, and the shadow, the only 'thing' we see, are two necessary antipodes in the shadow play.

3. The Search for the Self

He lifts the puppet this time and explains that everything begins with a story of a story. "The Wali Sunan Kudus of the *Wali Songo* was one of my ancestors," Mursyid explained that Sunan Kalijaga's mother was one of the Chinese emperor's daughter and travelled across the sea from ancient China to Indonesia in the 15th century. His father was King Brawijaya the 5th. Indonesia was a Hindu nation at the time, hence the origin of the name Indonesia, my interlocutors told me.^{7*} Sunan Kalijaga brought with him the shadow play. The art of the shadow play made its way to Indonesia during the pre-Islamic era when the majority of the population was Hindu-Buddhist; however, *wayang kulit* emerged and played a central role in the

spread of Islam, marking the beginning of an Islamic period. The shadow play was suited as a tool for the spread of Islam because it used ancient tales that were already familiar to the Hindu population, and enhanced the universal truth, while effective in introducing new dimensions and aspects of Islam.

See, there was not any Javanese-style shadow puppet like the ones we know today, before his coming. Neither did the shadow play, the way they existed in Java, exists in India itself, though the stories originate from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. It was created only at the time of Sunan Kalijaga. We have to understand that was not Sunan Kalijaga's subjective or personal artistic expression, but the existence of *wayang kulit* is by the command of Allah, divine sacred art, so to speak, and includes its very details how the puppets should look like and which stories they convey. So, he did not create them because he was an excellent craftsman or artist, but there was more to the art of *wayang*.

What he meant by 'bringing with him the shadow play' is that it is now an enhanced version. The art of *wayang* was not destroyed but rather transformed and enriched with Islamic teachings, ultimately evolving into the shadow play we know today. The captivating stories of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* revolve around the pursuit of truth. According to Mursyid, the Javanese tale of Dewa Ruci -based on the epic *Mahabharata*- was composed not by Sunan Kalijaga, but by his teacher Sunan Bonang, who was the son of Sunan Ampel, a *wali* of the *Wali Songo*. The main characters featured in the epic tales of *Mahabharata*, present the characters of Pandawa Lima (the five warriors) who are representing human beings and the journey of each of them to find and embody their specific *dharma* (the mission of one's life), also referred to as '*amal ṣāliḥ*'. It is a lesson that we each have such a *dharma*.

7 The community I worked with often referred to Indonesia as a nation-state even when they talk about the 15th century, though from a historiographical point of view the name Indonesia was a modern development from the 19th century. Before the places would be named after individual kingdoms, and islands and the archipelagoes (Java, Sumatra etc), or colonial terms such as East Indies company. Officially the name Indonesia came into being with the gaining of independence in 1945. I have an impression that the community was mainly referring to the geographical region of Java, rather than Indonesia.

Mursyid begins to tell the story. The story of Bima is about one of the Pandawa brothers—of his quest for sacred knowledge:

It all began on the day Bima heard about a superior knowledge, Sastra Jendra Hayuningrat Pangruwating Diyu, which Drona said could turn giants into humans. Bima asked Drona to teach him Sastra Jendra, to which Drona replied that Bima would not understand unless he drank from the *Tirta Pawitra* (the Water of Life) first. However, Drona accidentally revealed a secret, which mesmerized Bima and made him thirsty to understand. Bima learned that he could not comprehend this sacred knowledge unless he found the water of life. His mystical journey led him to the isolated region of the South Sea, where he faced terrifying waves and fought a dragon as he crossed the ocean world. Finally, reaching the South Ocean, Bima ventured deeper inside and found himself stranded in a sea of despair and fear. He does not know what to do. He begins to drown and slowly sink into the deep ocean. Amid this deep ocean, in which he was about to die, he suddenly wakes up. He could not believe what he saw. Bima meets Dewa Ruci, the thumb-sized Lord, who is an incarnation of his spirit. Bima was told to enter Dewa Ruci's left ear. The story does not tell the end, but the universal story only begins.

Mursyid's eyes lit up when he explained and interpreted what the story of Bima meant.

Each element is purposefully guided. This work of art is truly exceptional. Behind this meticulousness in composition, details and form, a message must be conveyed. The public enjoys the lively performance of wayang kulit, but the central message in the story of Bima is to see him as a seeker who is searching for true knowledge, here the Water of Life (*Tirta Pawitra*), the water which is 'at the bottom of the sea'. He sees a dragon in his jour-

ney while seeking the Water of Life. He must swim on the surface of the sea and first defeat the dragon. The dragon signifies his ego, also known as 'the lower self' (*hawan*). In this struggle, there are two things he needs to learn: how not to drown but to endure, and how to defeat the dragon. In the inner struggle against his ego, Bima asks for forgiveness (*istighfār*) and repentance (*tawba*) from the Divine. Repentance is the key to the gate. And the peak of repentance is knowing one's nature - something that is not possible without 'the turning to the Divine', to discover what he is called to do in life.

Here, the vignette shows multiple teachings. For Mursyid it is clear that Bima's story is a universal story of seeking truth, for all of humanity. Mursyid continues:

Only when he overcomes the struggle, and only when Bima dives deep into the ocean, to his death, does he find his self. The goal of the path is to find one's true authentic self. Dewa Ruci is Bima's *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (Ruci comes from *Ruh Suci*, which means the Guide Suci). Bima and Dewa Ruci's faces are identical, but there is one difference. Look at their different sizes; one is Bima, and the other is "little Bima". That is because one is the shadow, while the other is the puppet, significantly smaller than the shadow of Bima.

The ultimate meeting of Bima and Dewa Ruci is akin to the meetings of the selves – Bima finds his self, and he does so by meeting his guide who shows him who his true self is. They become united when Bima enters Dewa Ruci's left ear. Bima and Dewa Ruci are merged and enter a different dimension, when Bima 'makes himself small' to enter Dewa Ruci, and together they enter a new realm. This means that now Bima is transformed and becomes lit up and guided from the divine light within and becomes a perfect human. Mursyid refers to Ibn 'Arabī and says that

only a person with an awakened self, through the guidance of Divine Light (*miṣbāḥ*) and then becomes the perfect human (*insān al-kāmil*). And when he becomes the perfect human, his shadow and his true self become aligned, and the three elements, the light, the true self (here the puppet behind the veil), and the shadow on the curtain all become an extension of the divine. The shadow is no longer just wandering around not knowing its true purpose, but instead the ego is vacated with Bima's near-death experience at the bottom of the sea. Bima and his soul's meeting marks the beginning of a new chapter. The metaphysical mechanism can be described as the shadow space becoming vacated, and in its space, the light fills in – that is when the shadow is illuminated with divine light, which the Mursyid explains as 'becoming an extension of the shadow'. "See, the *wayang kulit* has existed for centuries and lived for a long time in his country. Many people also interpret various things, for example, that the master puppet is God. Until now, there have been many interpretations of *wayang kulit*, and not all of them are true," says Mursyid.

He is saying the meaning is lost: when I asked what the shadow play meant for Mursyid, he immediately referred to a Qur'ānic verse and recited, *Whoever saves one soul, it will be as if they saved all of humanity* (al-Mā'idah 5/32). Every human being carried a divine mandate, something of inestimable value. Every soul (*nafs*) is called by Allah before being sent down to the face of the Earth and put into the womb (al-A'rāf 7/172). This is the true interpretation of the shadow play. Mursyid ends our conversation with a final teaching from his own life:

My teacher, Bapak, always says that you must know your life mission. The true you is not this body, which is motivated by your lower self, but to meet the true self that resides inside you. This is the uni-

versal human story that is so magnificent. The story is a story of you and me, of every human being. The role of a Mursyid is only to guide his students to find their true selves. For as long as the self is unknown, the shadow will not be at peace. Without meeting Bapak, I would not understand this story of Bima meeting his Dewa Ruci. I would not understand the metaphysical meaning of the self in its reference to the Qur'ān. I would be completely lost. I see myself as Bima, and my meeting with my guide Bapak as my Dewa Ruci, my *rūḥ al-quḍus*.

From the Mursyid's reflections, I understand that his teaching is about humans finding their selves, not merely a teaching of a regional, cultural identity, referred to as Javanese selves. The essence of the shadow play is to be found in the Qur'ān, without its connection, the teachings are lost and become merely entertainment. I could see how Bima was not only a universal story but also had a personal dimension in the life of Mursyid, as well as a historical and a spiritual trajectory, all interwoven in the shadow play. What I found most striking over the many months of collaboration with the community teacher is the profoundness of his personal story that lends itself as a pedagogy to his community of *sālikīn*. Each personal story is also tied to the *wayang kulit*, as stories within stories, and these stories are to be unfolded. They became richer as I spent more hours with this local community teacher and as he taught about *wayang kulit*. The stories of *wayang kulit* are hence not just of a performative nature but are teachings, deeply rooted in the tradition of Islamic studies, passed on from one generation to the next.

4. Three Realms – Islamic Cosmology in *Wayang Kulit* and Islamic Studies

According to Ibn 'Arabī, our existence is multi-dimensional, and this understanding

is crucial to contemporary Islamic studies and scholarship. In the manuscript *al-Futūḥāt*, in chapter 317, Ibn 'Arabī makes a direct commentary on the teachings of the shadow play:

If you want to recognize the truth of what I am hinting at for this issue, conder the shadow play and its images, and the one who is the narrator for these images shown before the little children, who are sitting away from the covering curtain drawn down between them and the players moving these images, and the narrator speaking about them... The little ones, in that sitting, are delighted and enjoying the play, while the heedless adults are taking it as mere play and amusement – while the ones who know are crossing over it as a lesson to be learned and are aware that God raised this only as a parable. This is why there comes out, in the first act, a person called the 'describer', and he gives a sermon glorifying God and declaring Him majestic.⁸

This depiction of Ibn 'Arabī as quoted above from *al-Futūḥāt* tells us that in the audience of the shadow play there are children seated who are delighting in the shadow play and understand that a lesson is being taught. They are contrasted with the adults and the scholars who see in the shadow play and in the existence of this life on this earth as mere play, and thus unimportant. Instead, Ibn 'Arabī encourages and warns us to see this as a Divine parable, in which the Divine is teaching the audience, the people, that the shadow play is the *deen* (way of life, commonly known as religion) itself, meaning the path of worship, and should be considered a precious teaching and treated with the utmost attention, care and importance. The children, and the knowledgeable ('*arifūn*') understand these Divine teachings. I began to see that the Arabic concept of *deen*, which is finding

your way of life and your purpose in life, to correspond to the word dharma that Mursyid uses. Already in the 13th century, before the Javanese shadow play, Ibn 'Arabī used the shadow play as a pedagogy to convey the *deen*.

Further, consistent with 'Ibn Arabī's teachings in *al-Futūḥāt*, Mursyid explains the three dimensions through verse 35 in Sūrah an-Nūr (the Light). According to Mursyid, Islamic teachings should incorporate the three levels of the shadow play, '*alam al-mulk*', '*alam al-malakūt*', and '*alam al-jabarūt*'. First, '*alam al-mulk*' can be translated as the kingdom, the seen world. Second, '*alam al-malakūt*' can be understood and translated as the angelic world, and largely unseen to humans (in the same way the audience do not sit with and see from the perspective of the *dalang* – but now they do, and this leads Mursyid to say a lesson has been lost). The third realm is the realm of the heart of Islam. The puppet behind the screen is the true self in a higher fourth dimension who remains in the unseen world called '*alam al-jabarūt*'. These three realms form the metaphysical realms of the shadow play.

The in-between curtain is also referred to the *barzakh*; though Mursyid did not explicitly mention it as the realm of the shadow play, he does teach about *barzakh* to his students. It is here described as the 'curtain of the heart' and referred to as the screen in the shadow play, which is a non-orientable, non-dimensional surface, which on the one side faces the light, and on the other the shadow. This in-between space is the place in which all the shadows play, and scenes happening in the life of a human being's life takes place there. This *barzakh* is lit up and guided by the *miṣbāḥ*, the Divine lamp.

What is relevant for contemporary Islamic studies, as inspired here by the teachings of

8 Eric Winkel, *An Illustrated Guide to Ibn Arabi*, (New York: Pir Press Inc., 2021), 169-171.

Ibn ‘Arabī and Mursyid, is to consider the shadow as ‘everything we see’, meaning ‘existence’. The shadow play stands for everything that is happening in our lives ‘from womb to the grave’, as we first see it with our eyes in the seen world. Then, when human beings become more aware of their own spiritual and religious seeking, especially in Islam, accordingly they become more aware of the different dimensions beyond the seen world. And hence, they are seeking their true authentic self, asking existential questions about where they are from, where they are now, and where they are going. This is when they become aware of what is beyond the bounds of the physical world and bodies. This is the beginning of the search for meaning and the true self. This is the true self which lies ‘deep within one’s self’. With the beginning of the search for their soul, humans transform from humans (*bashar*) to human beings (*insān*), to eventually become perfect humans (*insān al-kāmil*), and they begin to function in the multi-dimensionality of the shadow play.

Mursyid explains that Bima is looking for the water of life, which here in this verse is the olive oil - because without the latter, the lamp cannot be lit. The veil (shade, *chadar*, *hijāb*) connects the body and the self. The human has all these three realms because it is the veil, the *barzakh*, and Allah breathed into the body of His spirit (*rūh*), which remains an unseen secret to the body, residing in the heart. The heart is central in Islamic studies, as it often is referred to the *hadīth qudsī*: *The heavens and the Earth do not contain Me, but the heart (qalb) of my faithful servant (mu’min) does contain Me*. It means that the human heart (*qalb*) has a tremendous capacity to contain the Divine. The universe is contained within the human in his heart, such as the human is part of the universe. Bima finds his self then, when he meets his guide, Dewa Ruci; only then his Divine guidance is opened, and

he transforms from being human to human being, to the final stage of the perfect human, who is the sum of all extraordinary worlds.

For Mursyid, the truth revealed in the Qur’ān takes on multiple forms. First, he sees a historical truth in the *Wali Songo*’s role in Indonesia, bridging the Hindu and Islamic worlds, as one of his ancestors brought the Divine gift of shadow play to Indonesia. Second, he sees the story of Bima as the search for the self. Third, the shadow play teaches directly the secrets revealed in the manuscript of Ibn ‘Arabī, and the scripture of the Qur’ān itself. Mursyid encourages his students and the public to study the importance of shadow play and see the critical value of shadow play beyond mere entertainment, but link it to daily worship, practices and Qur’ān studies.

Conclusion

This ethnographic study of the shadow play contributes to the tradition of Islamic study and Sufi studies, as it offers a pedagogy directly inspired by the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī. The ethnographic materials presented in this article come directly from the lived experiences and teachings on the ground, which foregrounds the participants’, performers’ and community teachers’ theological and metaphysical aspects of the shadow play. Rather than reducing the shadow play to either a performance or merely a form of entertainment, this article encourages others interested in the topic to delve into the ethnographic study of the shadow play itself and appreciate the value of incorporating sacred text, such as the Qur’ān, and unique works, such as Ibn ‘Arabī’s *al-Futūḥāt*, as well as live and living teachings, such as the ones provided by Mursyid. Just as with Ibn ‘Arabī, Mursyid uses many modes and languages to convey his teachings – shadow play, Bima and

Dewa Ruci, Qur'ān, grammar and metaphysical dimensions and realms, all to demonstrate a multi-dimensional reality and existence.

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