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DERVISH LODGES AND CONVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Abstract

Social services can trace its origin back to the idea of human goodwill and charity. Therefore, confining our study of this phenomenon to the modern era, and consequently ignoring its roots, would be a great error. However, for centuries, charitable organizations of various sizes have been officially established. As a result of the incredible diversity of such organizations in Islamic societies, conducting research in this field is also an easier task. There are many examples of this institutional variety. For instance, the most notable examples would include the *akhilik* (fraternity) organisation, caravansary, almshouse, guilds, hospitals, charitable institutions, workhouses, Ottoman orphanages.

Historically dervish lodges were mistakenly considered to be solely involved in mystic and esoteric activities. However, this Islamic religious order was fundamentally devoted to holy living through worldly deeds. This originates from the Sufi interpretation of religion, which revolved around serving; the creator, the lordly one true God, and his creations. As a result, the Sufis established Islamic monasteries (*ribats*), dervish lodge centres (*hankah*), small dervish lodges (*zaviye*), inns and bathhouses on deserted roads and mountain bases in order to provide free accommodation, to serve food and drink for cross border travellers and passers-by and generally to meet the needs of people. During the classical Ottoman period, they served as secondary cultural institutions, left vacant by the government in city centres. They served as a meeting point between the political authorities and the people. Dervish lodges were sometimes a shelter for those seeking refuge from a state. We can also presume that they received occupational therapy in the modern sense. This included training under the watchful eyes of the dhikr and contemplation, for the purpose of serving humanity. As a result of their commitment to profession, diligence and the use of logo therapy, they succeeded in producing one of the most organised and effective historical instances of social work. This study seeks to elucidate the historical role of dervish lodges in the provision of protective social assistances, social aid and support from a social services stand point.

Key words: social services history, protective social assistances, dervish lodges and convents.

SOSYAL HİZMET TARİHİNDE TEKKE VE DERGAHLAR

Öz

Sosyal hizmet, insanlığın içinde bulunan iyilik ve yardım kavramı kadar eskiye uzanan reel ve dinamik bir kavramdır. Bu sebeple onu insan olgusundan bağımsız olarak modern döneme hasretmek sosyal hizmet bilim dalına yapılacak en büyük haksızlıklardan biridir. Diğer yandan kurumsal olarak da ilk çağlardan itibaren küçük büyük çok sayıda yapılar var olagelmıştır. Söz konusu İslam toplumları olunca bu kurumsal zenginliği izlemek ve incelemek daha kolaydır ve bunun örnekleri çok fazladır. Sözelimi ahilik teşkilatı, kervansaraylar, imaretler, loncalar, dârüşşifalar, vakıflar, ıslahhaneler, dârüleytam ve dârulacezeler bunların ilk dikkat çekenleridir.

Tekke ve dergâhlar da tarih boyunca eksik bir tarzda mistik ve ezoterik eylemlerle bağlantılı düşünülür. Halbuki İslam tarikatları özde dini hayat ve dünyevi eylemlerle ilgilidir. Çünkü sufilere göre din, yaratan tanrıya ta'zim (büyükleme ve birleme) mahlukata (yaratılanlara) hizmetten oluşmaktadır. İşte bunun için sufiler ıssız yol başlarında, dağ geçitlerinde, sınır boylarında gelip geçene ücretsiz konaklama imkânı sağlamak, yiyecek-içecek vermek, kısacası insanların ihtiyaçlarını görmek için ribatlar, hankâhlar, zaviyeler, han ve hamamlar kurmuşlardır. Klasik Osmanlı dönemine gelince şehir merkezlerinde devletin boş bıraktığı ikincil kültür kurumları vazifesi görmüşlerdir. Siyasi otorite ile halkın buluşma ve kesişme noktasını oluşturmuşlardır. Tekkeler bazen de siyasi otoriteden kaçanların sığınağı olmuşlardır. Genelde zikir ve tefekkür eşliğinde yaratılanlara hizmet eğitimi aldıkları ve bir amaca yönelik meşguliyet sahibi oldukları için onları varoluş amacını gerçekleştirdiklerini var sayabiliriz. Sonuçta amaç ve sorumluluk yüklenmeleri sebebiyle logo terapiyi edinmiş hem kendilerini imar etmiş hem de sosyal hizmetin birinci elden en düzenli, istikrarlı verimli örneğini oluşturmuşlardır. Bu çalışmada tekke ve dergâhların sosyal yardım ve destek faaliyetleri yanında koruyucu sosyal hizmet perspektifinden sosyal hizmet tarihindeki yerine işaret edilmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal hizmet tarihi, koruyucu sosyal hizmet, tekkeler, dergâhlar

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Introduction

Dervish lodges in history are known by different names such as, *savmea*, *ribat*, *zâviye*, *hankâh*, *dergâh* (dervish convent) and *âsitâne*. They have carried out important liabilities and functions along with being a part of social life in the Muslim world. Those functions were including education, culture, art, religion, social help, social rehabilitation, personal development, spiritual guidance, personal coping and preventive/protective social services.

Each religion has an area of spirituality. Islamic spirituality has brought about dervish lodges. This spirituality has shown itself as existence, knowledge and the combination of the two which has reached the present day in different inclinations, shades and colours depending on the country and region.

The debates that take place regarding the formation and emergence of dervish lodges generally initiate with discussions on the definition of religion. Philosophers and religious scholars have come together in Bayezid-I Bistami's definition of "Respect for the Creator, service to the creation" as a result of discussions about the meaning of religion in social terms. According to this description it is understood that religion is firstly, to

respect and worship God and secondly, in terms of existence, to serve and support each and every living thing. The term “every living thing” refers to all three categories of plants, animals and humans and the lower one serves the next one and ultimately, they all serve human beings. This categorisation is not an exploitation from top-down but rather the fulfilment of duties and responsibilities from bottom-top based on its nature according to the competence, sufficiency and opportunities given to it.

Religion is not solely about normative (written) rules. It has been shaped by the imagination of the people in history, along with written rules such as the Quran and the sunnah (actions of the Prophet Muhammed pbuh). In history, Muslims have also established many institutions from mosques to fountains, inns to baths, caravanserais to birdhouses, in line with their own acceptance. Dervish lodges are among the institutions that are produced by this piety and religious people.¹

Islamic mysticism aspires to the actions and morals of the Prophet Muhammad. It prioritises to live and follow his example and way of life. If the psychological aspect of this way of life is to improve morally, then its social aspect is formulated around caring, supporting and reaching out for the helpless, poor, elderly, sick, disabled and those in need. As a matter of fact, in a holy hadith, the Prophet Muhammad reminded that Allah the Almighty has warned those who neglect their social responsibilities towards other people:

Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, would say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He would say: O my Lord; how could I visit Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him and were you not aware of this that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him?

O son of Adam, I asked food from you but you did not feed Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I feed Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? He said: Didn't you know that such and such servant of Mine asked food from you but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side?

(The Lord would again say:) O son of Adam, I asked drink from you but you did not provide Me. He would say: My Lord, how could I provide Thee whereas Thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He would say: Such and such of servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him, and had you provided him drink you would have found him near Me. (Muslim 2569/43).

As it can be understood in this holy hadith, Allah equates meeting the needs of other people with meeting their own needs, and in turn, worshiping Himself (Allah). Thus, the life of worship as an individual actually results in improvements regarding their sociological areas and guides them to serve other people. An individual becoming more

¹ Ünver Günay, *Din Sosyolojisi*, İnsan Yay., İstanbul: 2011 s. 231.

religious is initially perceived as a bond between himself and God. However, religion does not remain in a personal dimension, but reaches an interpersonal dimension by going beyond the individual. As a matter of fact, Ünver Günay likens religion to a stillborn foetus, if it does not go beyond the individual it does not reach a group or a society.² In regards to these outputs and results, the socialisation of religion is nothing more than the development and revival of the society.

For this reason, it has been stated that the best of the people in the eye of Allah are “the most beneficial ones to people” (Abu Ya’la, Musnad, nr. 3370), and serving those in need has been deemed superior to the supererogatory worship, in religion. Anas (Allah be pleased with him) tells the following incident:

Anas (Allah be pleased with him) reported: “We were with the Apostle of Allah (may peace be upon him) on a journey. Some of us had been observing the fast and some of us had not been fasting. We got down at a place on a hot day. Most of us had the cloth for shelter. There were also those amongst us who sheltered (themselves against the rays of the) sun with the help of their hands. The observers of the fast fell down (on account of weakness). Those who had not observed it got up and pitched tents and watered the mounts. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: The breakers of the fast have taken away the reward today.” This hadith is accepted as proof that serving human beings is superior to supererogatory prayers.

On the other hand, in another hadith, “*Walking to meet the needs of a believing my brother is more cute to me than sitting in that mosque and performing Itikaf for a month.*” (Taberani, Evsat, nr.7583) It is stated. To reinforce the same meaning. “*If a person works for the benefit of his Muslim brother without committing any sin, even for a blink of an eye, in order to gain Allah's approval, the reward is written as if he had worshiped Allahu ta'ala for a thousand years.*”³ the hadith draws attention once again to the ‘you’ structure of Islam and its altruism.

Sufism desires a selfless civilisation, not to being selfish.

It is recommended in Islam to remove stones or rocks from the road that can be of potential harm to others, to offer water to those next to them despite not being asked to, to greet the other regardless of knowing them or not, to give charity and zakat and to smile even if there is not anything to offer. These concepts all-in-all portray a selfless character in contrast to a selfish one. The planting of a sapling by a Muslim (even if they are on their last breath) not only for humans but for animals to benefit from (its fruits and its shadow) and having a fountain built on road sides for passersby, wolves, birds and any animal that will drink from it, are other examples of this altruism. These examples demonstrate that attaining eternal happiness and peace is linked to meeting the needs of others and achieving happiness through the other. Since the initial years of Islam, many

² Ünver Günay, *Din Sosyolojisi*, s. 231.

³ Muhammed. Ebubekr, *Şir’atü'l-İslâm*, (Cev. L Uyan-F. Meyan) İst. 1980 s. 254.

examples of this have continued to spread in Islamic societies through centuries. For instance, when asked about the ways to reach Allah, the famous Sufi Ebu Said (978-1061) answered: *“There are many ways to reach Allah. However, the shortest and easiest way is by helping others. It is trying to help new others instead of putting them in a difficult situation.”*⁴

Unlike the Jewish and Christian clergy, Islamic Sufis did not think or prefer the seclusion life in a way that consumed their entire lives. They thought of seclusion like a preparatory stage in a limited period whereby they turn to society and provide solid services. As a matter of fact, when someone said *“I want to retreat to seclusion”*, Sheikh Ata responded with *“who are you going to be with after separating from society”*, the person asked *“Then in that case, what shall I do?”*. Sheikh Ata explains how true seclusion should be like *“Be with the people externally and with the Haqq (God) internally.”*⁵

The following description of Dede Ömer Ruşeni (D.1487) on how a Sufi should be with the people is remarkable: *“Sufism is to be a friend, but not a burden. To be a rose field but not a thorn/taking the burden of everyone but not being a burden on anyone, not being hurt by anyone and not hurting anyone.”* Ibrahim Efendi (d. 1591-92), the Sheikh of the Dervish Lodge in Aksaray, said in his poem where he made numerous descriptions of Sufism, *“Sufism, is said to be the protector of all people”* By saying this, he has said that it is essentially a service to all humanity.

Ebu'l-Hasan Harakani, the head of saints, evaluates service to God as a service to the people and has classified individual and social worship according to time and ground. *“Do things that the public likes and is satisfied with, every day until the evening. Every night, until the morning, be with deeds that God likes.”*⁶

In an explanation of the same understanding, Sheikh Ebu Bekir Vasiti has said *“The sign of a faithful Sufi in his case is to be constantly with corporally brothers and only with Allah in the heart.”*⁷

Naqshbandi, who has mentioned that any individual who does not approve of avoiding service to people and performs social services, will obtain a means to divine mercy. Naqshbandi preaches the following principles that will later become the rule of conduct of Naqshbandism. *“Our method is to be with God whilst amongst the public. Our journey is a journey of communication and service for the public. There exists a disease of fame in escaping from the public. In fame, there is disaster. Goodness, is to be among the people and to serve everyone for God.”*⁸

⁴ Bayat-Jamnia, 2003: s. 53. Seyyar, 2015: s.37.

⁵ Attar, Feridüddin, *Tezkiretü'l-Evliyâ*, (Trc. Süleyman Uludağ) Kabcacı Yay. İstanbul 2007: 452.

⁶ Seyyar, a.g.e, s.41.

⁷ Attar, 2007: 666.

⁸ İbn Allan, 2001: s. 107.

Bayezid-i Bistami is perhaps the most open speaker on this issue. He preaches social work as a condition of both the tariqa and the sharia. His words are: “*Whoever reads the Qur’an but is not ready to attend the funerals of Muslims, does not visit the sick people, does not learn about orphans and still talks about Sufism, we know that he is an imposter.*”⁹

Sufism and Dervish lodges aim to establish and maintain a social order based on morality and spirituality, justice and sharing, virtue and respect. Sufism, that views differences as a wealth and mercy, has made social and cultural diversity an element of living in peace and tranquillity.

Sufi’s have played a rather crucial role in solving the social and moral diseases within Muslim societies. Sufism, through the mission of compiling, bringing together, reconciling, and uniting, strengthens the base of peace and serenity, respect and tolerance at every corner of the Islamic world from West to East, from Turkey to Egypt, from Morocco to Indonesia and contributes greatly to our lives within society.

On the other hand, social and cultural institutions that have emerged from the religion and religiousness cannot be thought apart from them (religion and religiousness). Simple social structures grounded on agriculture and animal husbandry for production and consumption have met their needs in accordance with their beliefs by mutual solidarity. The order of “cleanliness and ablution” appointed by the religion allowed for fountains and baths to be made next to the mosque, “distributing water is considered a charity” resulted in the construction of fountains on the roadsides, “what the wolf and bird eats is considered a charity”, brought together the planting of fruit trees. The command of collective worship has brought about “masjids and mosques”, whilst “lodges, dervish convents and monasteries” have eventuated from voluntary prayers. On the other hand, compulsory religious education was required by mosques in addition to prayer and madrasahs were established, where dervish lodges became the centre of education in the fields of virtue, morality, deep and high philosophical thought, aesthetics and literary.

It was stated above that the philosophical, spiritual and metaphysical foundations of religion produced the dervish lodges, and the dervish lodges invoked a unique civilisation. Some thinkers call this unique civilisation “*a civilisation of loyalty*”, some call it “*a civilisation of sincerity*” while others say it is “*a civilisation of compassion*”. With the “fidelity civilisation” it is meant that a Muslims’ first devotion and respect is to the mothers and ancestors and the second is to their spiritual ancestors, their teachers and prophets. With the phrase “the civilisation of mercy”, they aimed not to expect a return of a favour they did for the people from the people but from Allah only. With the “civilisation of compassion” they aimed to treat wolves, birds, flowers and trees like they treat rain, and consecutively to treat people with compassion.

⁹ Attar, 2007: 187

The Dervish Lodge and Financial Life

The most famous of the visible organisations effectuated by the dervish lodge civilisation is the *futuvvet* (Turkish-Islamic guild) organisation. Futuvvet is not to think about himself, but think about the ummah like the Prophet pbuh, to worry about people's troubles, to want for others what he wants for himself, to cover up mistakes and anything causing disgrace, to be hostile to the *nafs* (self), not to have hatred for the poor, not to go after the rich, to see what comes in and out of his pocket as the same, not to hold a grudge towards anyone and not to be an enemy, not to expect benefits or mercy from anyone, to have goodness and mercy towards everyone and not to be concerned about passing the world and the hereafter.

Futuvvet is being insufficient in his own personality, seeing his brothers competent, mature and equipped, having good moral and being generous; being loyal and reliable, compassionate, hospitable, down to earth and merciful. It is a necessity of the morality of futuvvet to favour his brother over his own *nafs* and to want all the good deeds he does for himself, for his brother too, and not to want any bit of bad for his brother, like he would not want for himself. Futuvvet is the accumulation of good morals of a whole humanity with these described features. Futuvvet has manifested itself in virtues such as; making a living with craftsmanship and the labour of his hand from prophet Idris, hospitality and generosity ethics from prophet Ibrahim, patience to trouble and illnesses from prophet Eyyub, tolerating betrayal and complaints from prophet Musa (Moses), speaking without breaking one another from prophet Harun (Aaron) and not responding to bullies from prophet Isa (Jesus).

The form of futuvvet that emerged as *Akhism* (fraternity) in Anatolia is considered as an institutionalised example of the Islamic economic life. In the verses about Isar (altruism) of the Quran, the concepts of treating and giving, becoming a refugee or someone who needs help because of migration, are explained as follows: "and (fai' is also) for those who established themselves in the homeland (of Madinah) and in faith before the former ones (arrived in Madinah), who have love for those who emigrated to them, and do not feel in their hearts any ambition for what is given to the former ones (from fai'), and give preference (to them) over themselves, even though they are in poverty. – And those who are saved from the greed of their hearts are the successful." [Hashr, 59/9].

Abu Huraira explains the reason why this ayah was revealed: "A man came to the Prophet and said "I am hungry". The Prophet sent a message to his wives (to bring something for that man to eat) but they said that they had nothing except water. Then Allah's Messenger said, "Who will take this (person) or entertain him as a guest?" An Ansar man said, "I." So he took him to his wife and said to her, "Entertain generously the guest of Allah's Messenger " She said, "We have got nothing except the meals of my children." He said, "Prepare your meal, turn off the light and let your children sleep if they ask for supper." So she prepared her meal, lighted her lamp and made her children sleep, and then stood up pretending to mend her lamp, but she put it off. Then both of

them pretended to be eating, but they really went to bed hungry. In the morning the Ansari went to Allah's Messenger who said, " Allah is pleased with what you did to your guest tonight." " [Buhârî, Menâkıbu'l-Ensâr, 10, Tefsîr, 59/6; Müslim, Eşribe, 172-173]

The organisation of futuvvet and akhilik induced; a system of moral structure with tradesmen and guild organisations They prevented unfair competition, the incompetent from being employed. They allowed skilled craftsmen and qualified workers to be trained, strengthened the solidarity between tradesmen and organised the economic life. Akhilik has made rather solid contributions and gains towards the economic life. It is possible to list the first three leading items as follows:

1. Akhis (brothers) have arranged the relationship between the apprentice, errand boy and expert (master), in a son-brother like warm and spiritual environment.
2. They have organised the relations between producers and consumers on the basis of need and efficiency, and have prevented waste.
3. They have given vitality to art, culture, accommodation and tourism with the lodges they have established from the villages to the cities.

Futuvvet and akhilik have become the most defining characteristics of Anatolian Sufism. This feature has made Anatolia a homeland and brought the Turks to the forefront amongst other settled nations, tribes and communities, and fabricated it as the dominant culture. It has elevated to a position that is not hated, but envied.

Dervish Lodges and Establishing the Homeland

During the initial years of the Seljukian and Ottoman empire, some dervish lodges were established in areas that were suitable with the governments' settlement politics and were supported by the government. Thus, dervish lodges have served social services in matters such as security and trade, as well as Sufism education. Sometimes, under the leadership of a sheikh, disciples and tribes who came to Anatolia directly established a village by firstly constructing a lodge, on the lands close to the water which they found to be desolate and empty, acquiring their homeland by cultivating the untouched land. They lived on agriculture and animal husbandry and performed religious, cultural and public improvements simultaneously. It is also true that these dervish lodges, coming before the Islamic armies, softened and eased the ground, facilitating the conquests and the operations of the army.

Archive documents reveal that villages in Anatolia and the Balkans including Erenköy, Veliköy, Tekkeköy, Dedeköy, Tekkekızılar, Tekkeyenicesi, Tekkekaya, Cimitteke, Hacışeyh and Balışeyh were created by dervishes. As seen in Konya, Seydişehir, there are also mentors such as Sayyid Harun who came from very distant lands and were assigned to constitute a city. Sufism experts built dervish lodges in the conquered places and

revived the lands in the region together with the hearts of the people. The obtained products were offered to the guests and the state supported the dervish lodges by granting a tax exemption. These services are one of the most momentous reasons for the Islamisation of the settled people of Anatolia. In the early years of the Ottoman Empire, dervish lodges were constructed usually on calm mountain sides, difficult and dangerous road routes, providing, with a style of submission, free food and accommodation to each passerby with nothing expected in return. This situation inevitably gained the respect and love of people from all religions.

Dervish lodges, where spiritual life and spiritual jihad are prioritised, have been involved in keeping people who are rebelling in peace with each other and with the state, without resorting to arms. Consequently, many state officials have followed the policy of supporting and allowing the spread of dervish lodges. All in all, many researchers have emphasised the unifying and integrating role of dervish lodges in social life in Anatolia. Alternately, the dervishes in these dervish lodges have participated in the army during war, despite the fact that military service was not their main duty. Nonetheless, they took part in both returning services and providing moral and spiritual support.

Dervish Lodges and Socio-Cultural Life

Dervish lodges were secondary cultural institutions as providing social integration and being a maintaining element of culture. As an autonomous, original and voluntary secondary cultural institution, they differed from the primary structures established by the state and the upper social strata. Dervish lodges, especially from the regions where their centre is located, have carried the Ottoman-Turkish cultural and spiritual accumulation to the highest possible point. Thus, on the one hand, while they were politically engaged in Ottomanisation activities, on the other hand, they processed the understanding of Hanafi-Maturidi-Sufi religion in social-cultural terms. This comprehension of religion has been based on love and tolerance without excluding the reality of the human and geography. The *Mevlevihane* (dervish lodges), belonging to dervishes, born in Konya were widespread from Budapest which was the Westernmost border of the Ottoman geography, to Egypt, Cairo in the South, or from Baghdad in the East, to Erzurum, Tokat and Samsun in the North. Around a hundred dervish lodges and small *mevlevi* monasteries were located at almost all transportation points and crossroads across the Ottoman land. In addition, the Bektashi lodges spreading from Kırşehir-Hacıbektaş were instituted within all Ottoman countries, from the Balkans to Karbala and from Egypt to Cairo.

A dervish who set out to go on pilgrimage from Istanbul reached the level of being able to do this only by staying in the *mevlevi* dervish lodges in Kütahya, Afyon and Konya. There was undoubtedly a sameness of meaning and goal formed on those who were addressed through the *Mesnevi*, which was regularly read and annotated in small dervish lodges constituted in regions belonging to different nations. In this form, they were providing

and maintaining the political and cultural unity of the state centre. The same was true for other dervish lodges belonging to other sufi orders (tariqah).

In addition, dervish lodges were also taking part in social services in another way by providing voluntary embassy and hospitality services. It is evident that in times when transportation and communication were difficult, guests from other areas and other nations would naturally need some services such as accommodation and food. For this purpose, many lodges were established with the names reminiscent of the region people came from, such as Uzbeks, Afghans, Indians, Kalenderis, who came to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, from Central Asia. For example, it is known that the Uzbek dervish lodge in Üsküdar, Sultantepe, hosted pilgrims from areas such as, Taşkent, Hokand, Semerkand, Buhara, Kaşgar, Andican, Namangan, Karakul, to fulfil the Hajj pilgrimage to Hejaz. It is known that the lodge accommodated and kept its doors open for pilgrims from all professions. The same pilgrims group were hosted in this lodge again, as they made their way back through Istanbul. This Uzbek dervish lodge had close relations with other Uzbek lodges in İstanbul and the Afghanis dervish lodges in Üsküdar. In accordance with its purpose of establishment, particularly in the XIXth century, it has performed important services. The guests who came to these lodges brought handicrafts, art, culture, aesthetics, knowledge and manners of the region they came from and undoubtedly assisted the development of the skills of Anatolia including problem solving and communication.

Above, it was mentioned that some villages and settlements were generally built around lodges. With this, the culture of the lodges has penetrated the social life of the village and contributed to its shaping. Some works produced by the followers of the lodges such as, *Ahmediye*, *Muhammediye*, *Mevlid*, *Müzekkin-i nüfus*, *Marifetname* were read in village rooms. These were studied and constructed the metaphysical memory of the people and contributed towards a life based on morality and virtue. These works have created a perception of life and the hereafter within society. As for cities, amidst the people of it *Mesnevi*, *Divan of Yunus* and *Niyazi Mısri*, were among the works that were mostly read and lectured.

Dervish lodges such as Hacı Bayram and Hacı Bektaş located in central Anatolia are known for distributing agricultural products, food and clothing aids that they received through donations, to both followers and people who passed by. These lodges have even become famous and known for their aid to the needy village people during years of famine. Moreover, politicians who were deposed and escaped from their country due to political disagreements and conflict were protected by taking shelter in these lodges and were pardoned through the head of the dervish lodge, or by accepting and making agreements with their opponents, where socio-political transition was ensured.

The most important goal of the dervish lodges was to raise the “*kamil insan*” (the perfect human being in God’s eyes). The *kamil* person, is one who tries to morally mature in

order to get closer to Allah, and to see every living as a manifestation of Allah and tries to solve the wisdom in it and act accordingly. Actually, everything was created in the best way. Everything and everyone would do what is required of their nature. The wrong is to break this order of creation (nature) by acting in accordance with personal egos and ambitions. What falls upon humankind is not to spoil, but to seek and discover nature. Through understanding the secret, perfection would initialise. The Sufi's main responsibility is understanding the *why* and *how* in events (seeking wisdom).

One's nature shows itself in beautiful voices, beautiful fragrances and in beautiful ways. For these reasons, fine arts such as dervish lodge music, calligraphy and illumination became common through lodges. Among the followers of the lodges, those manufacturing and selling fragrances have emerged. A person who is aware and conceives his nature would begin to apprehend other people and act accordingly. He would be able to express the true aesthetic feelings in his inner world and address other people with common feelings which would be liked by them. It is for these reasons that the literature of the lodges, the music of the lodges, or the visual arts belonging to the lodges have received deep attention from the masses. The thing that made art was the products' properness the measurements of the Greatest artist (God).

The Miskinler Lodge as a Health Institution

The first Ottoman leprosarium served in Edirne's Kirişhane neighbourhood in the 15th century, and was followed by those in Üsküdar, Bursa, Lefkoşe (Nicosia), Kandiye (Heraklion) and Sakız (Chios). Like the Seljuks, the Ottomans thought that leprosy was contagious, and they used to protect the patients in the leprosy houses they built outside the city. In Europe, on the other hand, these patients were considered to be cursed and were cremated.

Sultan Akbıyık (1456), who was the caliph of Hacı Bayram Veli, was a man (like) who had been carried away by mystical experience. He provided medical, social and spiritual rehabilitation services especially to mentally ill children in his social complex in Bursa. It is known that after the death of Akbıyık, irritable and angry children were brought to this lodge before sunrise and bagel pieces were served through a hole in attempts for them to be treated.¹⁰

In their words, foreigners recorded the Üsküdar Miskinler lodge as a Miskinler hospital (for the deprived). This was because this place operated like a health institution and a nursing home. This place was known by names such as Üsküdar Cüzamhanne and Miskinhane (house for the deprived). The term "miskin" was used to mean; helpless, poor, unresponsive, immobile.¹¹ Usually, names such as dervish lodges, Islamic

¹⁰ Mehmet Şemseddin, *Yâdigâr*, s. 221.

¹¹ Sarı, Nil - Ü. Emre Kurt, "Üsküdar Miskinler Tekkesi", *Üsküdar Sempozyumu IV: 3-5 Kasım 2006 Bildiriler*, 2007, cilt: II, s. 365-390.

monasteries, dervish convents, were used for leprosy houses located next to the tomb of members of the tariqah and were likened to the dervish lodges where people lived in independent groups. The lepers did not join in society and lead a hermit life like the habitants of the dervish lodges.¹²

A person who had a complaint filed of leprosy had the right to request a medical examination and was released if he/she was found to be healthy. For this reason, it is known that there were cases of those who wanted to be examined again and again.

Those who had leprosy and were married stayed in these lodges with their families. These dervish lodges were not open to everyone and the approval of the Ministry of Evkaf-ı Hümayun was required for the patient, whose diagnosis of leprosy was confirmed, to stay in the Miskinler lodge. An Imam appointed by the foundations was assigned to take care of the internal and external affairs of those with leprosy, and the head of the Leprosy house was named “Sheikh”. The charity given by the public was an important source of income for those with leprosy.

In front of the lodge, there was a charity stone for passers-by to leave money. When money was placed in the cavities of the charity stone, a patient waiting at the door, called “the watcher grandfather”, would inform those inside and the lepers would pray (make dua) together. In addition, there were also foundations allocated to lepers. Since lepers did not have the means to earn money, they were exempt from tax.

Üsküdar Miskinker dervish lodge had been the foundation of Mustafa Reşit Efendi and Emin Paşa who were among the grand viziers of Sultan Abdülmecit and later joined Mecca and Medina foundations. It is known that the building constructed by Yavuz Sultan Selim was demolished, its foundations were transferred somewhere else. These two people rebuilt the Miskinler lodge. At the start of the 20th century, as a result of political turmoil and wars, the old rulings of lepers became obsolete and these places became neglected. Most of the lepers who were not able to go outdoors before left the lodge due to neglect. At the request of the public, it was decided that the remaining patients should be fed and drunk in a mental institution. However, some of the lepers who did not want this ran away, those who did not want to escape were initially housed in Toptaşı Hospital and then in a special leprosy section in Bakırköy Mental and Neurological diseases hospital.¹³

¹² <https://www.fikriyat.com/kultur-sanat/2018/05/08/gecmisten-gelecege-atilan-ok-okular-tekkesi>

¹³ The Miskinler Lodge, which was left empty, burned down after a while and disappeared. Only the fountain, more than half of which is buried in the ground, has survived from the lodge. <https://www.dunyabulteni.net/kultur-sanat/miskinler-tekkesi-cuzzamhane-h144283.html>

Dervish Lodges in terms of athlete health and athlete training

In addition to the development of the religious and social areas, dervish lodges also provided training in order to develop the sportive structure too. These institutions were considered sacred by athletes, they were not entered without ablution or if drunk, and relationships were undergone in a certain order. Instructors were not disrespected and people were not boastful about their achievements. An individuals' personality and moral development would come first.

Without being left to chance, serious and professional physical, mental and spiritual trainings would be carried out here. Because, within the archers lodge, archers trained every day and went through a heavy and hard work period called the "firm training" before important competitions. Those who wanted to do archery started to work with the permission of the sheikh and by praying (namaz), and they were called *şakirt* (rookies or disciples). Thus, the organised, healthy, well-behaved and moral upbringing of the youth would have been ensured. What we can call guiding and protective social work was preventive of wrong tendencies and orientations. As a matter of fact, one of the most important practices in the context of protective/preventive social work today is to direct individuals to sports activities. It is known that this allows an individual to be mentally, physically and socially healthy.

It is reported that when Fatih Sultan Mehmet donated Okmeydanı for archery, boundary stones were placed around it and an area was allocated to make prayer (dua). Later, during the Bayezid II. Period, a separate place was given to Okmeydanı. Iskender Paşa, one of the important statesmen of the Fatih period, during the time of Bayezid II., built a lodge here and assigned this lodge to a group of archers. The Sultan strictly prohibited "making a building, grave, waterway, vineyard or garden in the square even if they were in the span of it."

The Okmeydanı lodge, would open every year on the 6th of May, which is the day of the Hıdırellez. Archery training would take place every Monday and Thursday for six months. In addition to archery training, games such as pole vaulting, sword competitions, javelin, tomak (wooden ball), and matrak also took place in this area. The Okmeydanı lodge was in a sense responsible for the function of a sports club in which the akhis tradition was continued. It was only possible; to take an archer to Okmeydanı, to allow for the shooting of an arrow or to expel from the field, only with the permission of the lodge's sheikh.¹⁴

The basis of the Ottoman and Turkish sports organisation structure were formed as a result of these lodges. All the reflections of the Ottoman culture and Islamic life in terms of protection, sports education, personality and character development are all clearly distinguished in these sports organisations. The Ottoman Empire left its mark in the area

¹⁴ <https://www.fikriyat.com/kultur-sanat/2018/05/08/gecmisten-gelecege-atilan-ok-okcular-tekkesi>

of sports with its organisational understanding that was able to see far beyond its age and made great contributions to archery which is one of the most noble Turkish sports, and the level it has reached today.¹⁵

Conclusion

Dervish lodges have undergone various functions within the scope of social work within society in Islamic history. Most of these services are within the realm of protective and preventive social service. The first of these are suggestions given to the applicants who came to the sheikh of the lodge, within the domain of spiritual guidance counselling such as, *zhikr* (a form of devotion in which the worshipper is absorbed in the rhythmic repetition of the name of God or His attributes), supererogatory fasting based on the time, supererogatory prayers and group rituals, which are reviewed as services within the scope of occupational therapy.

Secondly, in attempts to be a perfect human, it is to serve plants, animals and people as a sublime duty and goal, to take responsibility for the social environment and work to beautify it. Having this aim and taking responsibility brings meaning to life (logo therapy). In this sense, the journey of being a dervish adds optimism and a positive approach to life. It enhances self-confidence and improves interpersonal relationships. It teaches you how to deal with challenges and even allows resistance and confidence to overcome and clear them out. The most important indicator of this is the culture of wisdom and courtesy produced by the dervishes, aesthetic language, Sufi music, and fine arts such as calligraphy and illumination.

The third is that almost every dervish lodge would; provide food and drinks for everyone who passes-by, feed the poor and hungry, provide accommodation for the homeless and those who have arrived from far destinations.

Fourth is the establishment of special lodges for the ill, old and deprived individuals, or experiencing the lodge culture in buildings that were installed for this purpose.

Fifth is the dervish lodges that were established especially for guests coming from Central Asia, such as Afghan, Hindi, Uzbek, which provided voluntary embassy service, regional profession and cultural transfers and food services for their people.

Sixth is the provision of public and widespread education through the *Mesnevi* houses established by the followers of the lodge and books such as *Mesnevi*, *Mevlid*, *Ahmediye* and *Muhammediye* read in almost every sects dervish lodge, ensuring the unity of knowledge and culture within society. This ensures that the separation and division conflict does not take place but instead, a spirit of unity and a sharing culture is enforced.

¹⁵ <https://www.fikriyat.com/kultur-sanat/2018/05/08/gecmisten-gelecege-atilan-ok-okcular-tekkesi>

Lastly, lodges such as those for archers and wrestlers are performed as community services through providing sports activities. As I mentioned before, these kind of activities can be always considered as the lodge's act of social service. In this situation, we can say that in Islamic societies, lodges are not only the result of the life of ascetism or worship (zuhd life), but also have functions for providing social health as a center of social communication and cooperation. However, it should be noted that dervish lodges (takkah/zaviyah or hankah) are still available for research in these aspects.

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