



Effects of Business Ethics in Ahi Community on Management Mentality

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Sosyal Bilimler Metinleri
Papers on Social Science

SOSYAL BİLİMLER METİNLERİ

Papers on Social Science

Sürelî Hakemli Dergi

ISSN 1308–4453 (Print)
ISSN 1308–4895 (Internet)

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Effects Of Business Ethics In Ahi Community On Management Mentality

ABSTRACT

Ahi community cannot be defined solely as a commercial organization. The most fundamental purpose of Ahi community is to bring up people who are beneficial to the society, within the principals of lifelong learning, from cradle to grave. It is a school of discipline which strains to create an ideal society, teaching social solidarity, cooperation, rights, law and justice, humanitarian values and good morals. The principals in fütüvvetname's (rules and regulations of Ahi community) which are accepted as by-laws of Ahi community, are important in terms of providing individual and social stability to the whole society and being the sources of business ethics. The belief in God as "the Sole Proprietor" resulted in the acceptance of "generosity, sharing one's properties with others, protecting poor people and honesty in commerce" as fundamental principles in Ahi community. The principle of "working for the world as if one will never die, and working for hereafter as if one will die tomorrow", provided a balance between form and meaning. The life is not limited to the world in Ahi philosophy. The belief in hereafter required a continuous self-control. They protected not only the rights of themselves but also those of the society with a sense of social responsibility, departing from the understanding of "Serving people is serving God".

Key Words: Ahi, Ahi community, Ethics, Management Ethics

Ahilik Toplumunda İş Etiğinin Yönetim Zihniyeti Üzerindeki Etkileri

ÖZET

Ahilik teşkilatı sadece ticari bir organizasyon olarak tanımlanamaz. Ahiliğin en temel amacı, beşikten mezara kadar hayat boyu öğrenme prensipleri çerçevesinde topluma faydalı insan yetiştirmektir. Sosyal dayanışmanın, yardımlaşmanın, hak, hukuk ve adaletin, insani değerlerin ve iyi ahlakın öğretildiği dolayısıyla ideal bir toplum oluşturma gayretinde olan bir öğretme mektebidir. Ahilerin Ahlaki tüzük olarak kabul ettikleri fütüvvetnamelerdeki ilkeler, toplumun bütününe şahsi ve toplumsal istikrara kavuşturma ve iş etiğinin kaynakları olma açısından önemlidir. Mülkün gerçek sahibi Allah'tır inancı, ahilik teşkilatına "cömertliği, sahip olduklarını başkalarıyla paylaşmayı, yoksul olanı gözetmeyi, alışverişte dürüstlüğü" temel ilkeler olarak benimsetmiştir. Hiç ölmeyecekmiş gibi dünyaya, yarın ölecekmiş gibi ahrete çalışma ilkesi ise madde ve mana arasında bir denge sağlamıştır. Ahilik felsefesinde hayat sadece dünya hayatıyla sınırlı değildir. Ahiret inancının varlığı sürekli bir otokontrolü gerektirmiştir. Halka hizmet, hakka hizmettir anlayışla sadece kendi çıkarlarını koruyup gözetmemişler, aynı zamanda sosyal sorumluluk bilinciyle toplumsal çıkarları da korumuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahi, Ahilik, Etik, Yönetim Ahlakı

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1. DEVELOPMENT AND MISSION OF AHI COMMUNITY

The word Ahi is an Arabic-origin word and means “my brother” in Arabic language. According to the most common belief, the word ahi underwent a transformation from the Turkish word akı which has the same meaning in Turkish, since the words akı and ahi have similar meanings in *Divan-I Lügat-it-Türk* (Dictionary of Turkish Languages). As a result, it is believed that the word ahi might have undergone a transformation, although it has its origin in another word root. The first researcher, who argued that the word akı, which means “bountiful, generous, brave” in the old Turkish language, was transformed to the word ahi, which has a similarity in terms of pronunciation and meaning, was J. Deny, who was a French Turkologist (Çağatay, 1989, s.43-44).

Following Talas War between Turks and Muslim Arabs in 751, merchants and voluntary ecclesiastics contributed to the recognition of Islam religion among Turks. Since Islam was appropriate for their social and cultural structure, Turks did not have difficulty in adopting it, and they wanted to establish a Turko-Islamic civilization in the following years, choosing Anatolia as their homeland. The cultures of akı and fütüvvet which complement each other began to merge in Anatolian territories. In parallel with the expansion of Islam, fütüvvet members, who are known as being widespread among craftsmen and related trades workers, were called as *civanmert*, *ayyâr* (*ayyârân*), *fetâ* (*fityan*) in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkistan, Samankand, Andalusia, North Africa and Egypt (Bayram, 1991, s. 130-132). Fütüvvet, which is an Arabic word, means kindness, generosity, youngness, adolescence, juvenescence, the most brilliant times of youngness, promiscuity arising from youngness and courageousness. It is used as *feta* in singular form and as *fityan* in plural form. *Feta* means young man, brave, generous, courageous and good-natured person. In the jargon of masters of truth; it means to prefer servants of God to one’s own self, when considering issues relating to the world and hereafter (Çağatay, 1989, s. 2-4). According to Sülemi, fütüvvet means generosity, abiding by the orders of God, good worship, abandoning all kinds of evil, implicitly and explicitly embracing the finest ethics, bantering with friends, meeting their needs, returning good for evil, not punishing guilt, turning a blind eye to mistakes of friends, protecting friends and neighbors, loving guests and to give feats, being contended and generous, being straightforward, refraining misappropriation and being aware that one owns only the amount that he/she donates (Sülemi, 1977, s. 24-35).

Fütüvvet, establishment of which as an organization dates back to the Caliphate of Abbasids, is a professional organization which means bravery. Beginning from their acceptance of Islam and settlement in Anatolia, Turks embraced fütüvvet and garnished it with the Turkish-style attributes of bravery, generosity and heroism (Kazıcı, 1988, s. 540). Quite similar to knighthood that is considered as an honorable position peculiar to the Middle Age Western culture, fütüvvet is also perceived as an honorable position peculiar to the Middle Age Islamic culture. Using Islamic values, Arabs developed and maintained the understanding of fütüvvet which they already had in their culture even before accepting Islam. Persians developed and adopted the understanding of *cevanmerdi* using Islam. Turks also developed their own understanding of akı and transformed it to Ahi culture benefitting from

Islamic ethics and values (Bayram, 1991, s. 130-132). Characteristics like prowess, bravery, courage, solidarity, hospitality, chivalry, benevolence, solidity, righteousness, generosity and honesty stand out, when the lifestyle of Turks before Islam examined. Even the old Turkish epic stories like Dede Korkut or Orhon Tablets frequently speak of these characteristics. Courage, chivalry and bravery are the most important themes in Dede Korkut stories. In these stories, those people who do not have any records of bravery and heroic acts are accepted as not worthy of being named. Another important matter is that hospitality has an important place in Turkish societies. According to Mahmud of Kasgar, "Luck accompanies the guest". Dede Korkut says "it is better to demolish those houses which do not have any guests" in the beginning of his stories and describes the good housewife as that person who does not fail in respect and kindness for the guest. According to Dede Korkut, the worst woman is that person who does not like guests, describing her as "resembling to the donkey of the Prophet Noah" (Ergin, 1998, s. 3-5).

The person who played an active role in expansion of Ahi community in Anatolia is Ahi Evran. The father of Ahi Evran, whose principal name was Nasıru'd-Din Mahmud, was Ahmed. Ahi Evran became famous with the nickname "legend teller". He was born in Hoy town in Azerbaijan in 1171 and had education in Khorasan and Ma wara'un-nahr as the student of Fahu'd-Din-iRazi(1209) who was a famous Eş'ari logos thinker. He stayed in Baghdad for a while, and sent to Anatolian territories by Abbasid Caliph Nasr in order to spread fütüvvet movement in Anatolia, together with Turko men sufi Şeyh Evhadu'd-Din-I Kirmani who was his teacher and father-in-law. They were welcomed by the Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev the 1st, the Seljuk Sultan of the period (Bayram, 1986, s. 175-176).By way of the political and cultural relations between Caliph Nasr and Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev the 1st, fütüvvet movement was taken by Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev the 1st under the protection of the state, when Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev the 1st accepted and wore the fütüvvet cardigan, sent by Caliph Nasr to him. In this way, Abbasid Caliph aimed to Islamize the nomad people who adopted a sedentary life; educate and persuade them to abandon the customs and traditions of their former religion; and provide a total peace through fütüvvet movement. In this way, various groups became able to synthesize old Turkish customs with Islamic beliefs and stayed on the side of the state. In this environment, while fütüvvet principles, with their sufistic image, continued its existence within the spiritual atmosphere of Anatolia on the one hand, they established craftsmen organizations under the name of Ahi organization with the existing cadres (Akça, 2003, s. 32-34).

Regulations of Ahi movement, which take their basic principles from Islamic sources, are called "fütüvvetname" and they include the guidelines and commercial and moral rules of Ahi community. Those who want to become a member of the organization were obliged to abide by the religious and moral orders stated in these sources. According to fütüvvetnames, members of the organization should have the characteristics of fidelity, righteousness, reliability, generosity, modesty, counseling to friends, steering them to the true path, forgiveness and repentance. Reasons for dismissing from profession were immoral attitudes like drinking wine, adultery, lying, slandering and cheating (Kazıcı, 1988, s.541).Those who do not have any arts or crafts to live off; do not help others and batten on

somebody else were not eligible to become Ahi. Even if being accepted to become a member and have mastership belt; those who commit an act of immorality, alcoholism, slandering or infidelity were removed from membership. For this reason, their mastership was taken back. This situation was announced to the Ahi organization within a week (Çalışkan, 1993, s. 73).

Art, commerce and profession was nested with maturity, morality and righteousness in Ahi culture. An “Ahi” had absolutely an art, commerce or profession. In addition, he was mature, well-behaved, merciful, benevolent and a symbol of righteousness and reliability in all his acts and attitudes (Maverdi, 2008, s. 9-10). Ahi community was a civil society organization which provided unity, wealth and order in the society in Anatolia and was organized as to meet all material and spiritual needs of the people as a guild (Demir, 2000, s. 323). Ahi culture encouraged people to work, aiming at educating people in a craft and enabling that they are not in need of others. This was expressed as: "always engage in occupation, become acceptable near a master of art or craft. Lazy people cannot obtain anything." Member craftsmen were expected to be right, this became a moral rule. Righteousness had an economic substance in Ahi culture and meant production of goods in the way that is known and selling of it for a determined price (Ülgener, 1981, s. 45).

As a traveler in 14th century, İbn Battuta (1308-1368) came to Anatolia through Alanya during his travel lasting for 28 years, and told about Ahi members in his Book of Travels: "Ahi people are settled in Anatolia and live in all villages, towns and cities where Turkmens live. These people are unprecedented in terms of issues like hosting foreigners visiting their cities, dealing with them, providing food and accommodation for them, protecting them from bandits and swindlers, etc." (Batuta, 2005, s. 277).

Ahis were organized in large groups in big cities and each one had their own hermitage. In small cities, various occupational groups could constitute a single guild. These guilds were dealing with problems relating to professions and organizing relations with the state, during the Anatolian Seljuk Empire. The most essential duties of these guilds were to control the goods and their qualities, and to determine prices. In this period, intakes in the organization were called as “yiğit” (brave) or apprentice; the post of Ahi attained thereafter. While sheikhs, caliphs or prophet’s descendants were at the top of these guilds, “sheikh of all sheikhs” held the highest position of all craftsmen. In addition, training of the apprentices was critical for the future of the profession. Ahi culture, which spread even to villages in Anatolia, gathered a large number of statesmen, members of military cliques, Muslim judges and mudarrises, and sheikhs of religious orders, which lasted until the 14th century. Afterwards, they took the shape of organized craftsmen unions and economic activities started to come to the forefront (Kazıcı, 1988, s.541).

On the other hand, departing from the famous Turkish poet “Gülşehri” who lived during the first half of the 14th century, a quarter century before İbni Battuta, some researchers stated that these were not craftsmen organizations and included a large number of Muslim judges and mudarrises. They argued

that these were esoteric religious orders like Bektashi, Hurufis and Babais and aimed at spreading their beliefs using the organization. They also stated that these people were ignorant of and inattentive to the fütüvvet morality, and that the intellectuals and Sufis following the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed did not bear good opinions regarding these organizations (Köprülü, 1981, s. 207, 215).

Giese (1925, s. 159) opposes Fuad Köprülü who states that Anatolian Ahi should be regarded among Ismailiesoterics. To support his argument, he alleges the importance given to Abu-Bek'r, Omar and Osman in Turkish fütüvvetnames, while this is not the case in Arabic fütüvvetnames. Stating that "It is clear that this kind of an institution would gain power and importance, especially during times of anarchy. During those times when the type of government had not developed yet, even if they did not they represent the power of the state, they represented the most important thing, the will of the local people, in small towns", Fuad Köprülü underlines that Ahi played important roles in times of crisis and during the reorganization of the state (Köprülü, 1988, s. 91).

From socio-economic perspective, the objectives of Ahi community can be summarized as follows:

- Training people in order to make them productive and beneficial, thus enabling them to come into the place they deserve in the society.
- Providing a moral and productive working environment and protect the sustainability of this environment.
- Establishing socio-economic equilibrium in the society, with an understanding of cooperation and collaboration, based on mutual understanding and trust (Soykurt, 1971, s. 51).

2. MANAGEMENT AND TRADE ETHICS IN AHI PHILOSOPHY

It should be stated that Ahi culture is an institution of Islamic culture, and consequently takes Islam and its system of ethics as a reference; and that the Ahi organization applied these principles of business ethics in the best way throughout the centuries. The reality that the rules of public decency and business ethics were accepted as the by-law of Ahi culture under the name of fütüvvetname and that all craftsmen were trained with the moral imperatives in these fütüvvetnames alone proves the extent of regard which was paid by Ahi culture to live and maintain Islamic culture. Fütüvvetnames, which were ethical by-laws of Ahi community, stated a large number of business ethics principles like self denial, being good natured, abiding by the orders of God, beware of his prohibitions, being good hearted, benevolent and generous, hospitality and welcoming guests, avoiding cheating and lying, etc. (Yakıcı, 1999, s. 290). As can be seen, the principles in fütüvvetnames, which were regarded as ethical by-laws of Ahi community, aimed at providing personal and social stability for the society, and landing their business and professional life with moral responsibilities. As stated by Farabi, all of these moral principles were results of the objective of Ahi community to "build up an excellent and wealthy society", which is called as Medinet'ül- Fazıla. To put it differently, the constant purpose of Ahi community was "to provide an order for the Universe" (Erken, 1999, s. 127-129).

The Madrasa of Nizamiye had an important contribution in creation of Ahi community and establishment of Ahi morality. Gazali, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Shirazi and Omar Hayyam, who were the leading thinkers of the The Madrasa of Nizamiyemade an intellectual leap possible in this period. It is not possible to alienate the creation of Ahi morality from above mentioned ideational climate. “The values within the intersection set of the works of the thinkers at the Madrasa of Nizamiye = Ahi morality”.

It will be explanatory to take a look at some of the principles in fütüvvetnames in order to understand Ahi morality. According to HacıBektasVeli, who lived in the same period with Ahi Evran, facial beauty of a human being is the beauty of his words. His maturity arises from the righteousness of his works. In his work Makalat, Hacı Bektas Veli states that it is necessary to learn science in parallel with fütüvvet morality and to behave mercifully in halal earnings and attitudes (Veli, 2002, s. 36-41). In his work Fevaid, he underlines that it is banal to desire being praised and the right attitude should be to behave perform everything in the correct way (Veli, 1996, s. 45). In line with fütüvvet understanding, Hacı Bektas Veli advises on these issues (Veli, 1996, s. 53):

- Not the sovereign succeeds, but the justice does...
- Not the enemy conquers, but through advice...
- Hearts cannot be obtained, without humbleness...
- Wants cannot be achieved, without patience...

It is possible to argue that fütüvvet understanding in Ahi community was considerably influenced by the thoughts of Gazali. Gazali explains and interprets this concept in his work “Hak Yolun Esasları (The Principles of the Right Way)”, under the section called “Fütüvvet Morality”. Fetâ (person who is brave and generous on the way to God), is that person who waives his self, goods and descents in order to grant to sacrifice for almighty God, who is the sole owner of everything. In fact, none of the things he granted belongs to him, but to God. Fetâ does not have any problems inside, while not behaving deceitfully or showing-off outside. Giving consent to everyone’s situation is a part of the morality of fetâ. He knows and protects everyone’s rights, even if they are above or below him, or on equal footing with him. According to Gazali, fetâ always deals with meeting other people’s needs. He never twits when he does a favor; he never makes anyone feel indebted to himself. He speaks truly, keeps his promises, he is generous and has a feeling of shame. He has honor and a good morality, gets on well with religious fellows, refrains from hearing bad things from his fellows, fulfills his promises and agreements, refrains from bad behavior like grudge, jealousy and cheating(Gazali, 2010, s. 241).

Gazali’s views on trade ethics have also influenced Ahi community. Gazali thinks that trade or arts should be considered among Fard al-Kifaya. Fards which are obligatory for every individual obligant Muslim are called Fard al-Ayn; while fards which are not obligatory for every individual obligant Muslim

are called Fard al-Kifaya. When some Muslims fulfill these kinds of fards, others become exempt from it. If nobody fulfills it, then the whole community becomes responsible for it (Demir ve Acar, 1997, s.86). He emphasizes the concepts of cooperation and collaboration, through stating that the world order would be possible through mutual help and division of labor, on the ground that if everybody deals with the same occupation, the life would become paralyzed since other works are not performed (Gazali, 1998, s. 218). He states that an ideal merchant should review all his commercial relations with everybody he does business with, because of the fact that everybody will be brought to book on judgment day for each and every person he did business with (Gazali, 1989, s. 227).

The content of the good that is sold should not be harmful for people. The good should be the own property of the seller and the seller should be authorized to sell that good. In addition, the seller should know the features of the good he sells, and should be able to deliver the good on time. In order for the seller to refrain from cruelty and respect justice, he should not make black-marketeering and should destroy counterfeit money if he gets one, rather than launching it to the market. He should not praise his goods using features that are not present in his goods and should explain all possible defects of his goods, without hiding anyone. He should not manipulate measurement and weighing devices. He should not underestimate the value of goods and hide the market prices, while buying goods from suppliers; and should not make price negotiations with suppliers if he does not plan to purchase (Gazali, 1989, s. 195-206).

Gazali gives these advices under the heading of “benevolence in commercial transaction”, in line with fütüvvvet understanding: Ruinous profits should be refrained, and a modest ratio of profits should be determined. When buying from a weak and poor supplier, prices should be determined higher in order to contribute to his progress and achievement. It is necessary to refrain from being urgent with debtors, being particular about money, and waive remainders while getting money. If the person is debtor, he should pay his debt properly and totally. If the other party of a commercial agreement becomes regretful or he thinks that he has been cheated, he should not be refused when he applies for break that agreement. The seller should sell his goods to poor people on account, with the intention of granting it (Gazali, 1989, s. 206-216).

Again, according to Gazali, fütüvvvet, which is a feature that rulers should have as well, is dealing with people, without drifting away from God (Gazali, 1989, s. 242). He recommends rulers to have fütüvvvet, stating that: Sultan! Do not look down upon needers who apply you to present their problems. Refrain from this dangerous act. Leave your supererogatory prayers aside while engaging with the needs of Muslims, and try to overcome their problems as soon as possible (Gazali, 2010, s. 73).

Maverdi (975-1058), who worked as a government officer in Abbasid state and served as advisor in the palace states in his work called “The Principles of Governance (Yönetimin Esasları) that “Nobody endeavors and gets tired like as much as those who undertake the duty of administration of people. Similarly, there is no other job that necessitates being extremely careful and behaving mercifully to

people. It is better to have a government that follows right and true path, than living in a prosperous and wealthy situation” (Maverdi, 2008, s. 9-10). His views coinciding with Ahi culture are discussed under the headings of “Not to impinge on properties of the people” and “Students and Learned Men” in his work.

Although Keykavus bin İskender, who was the ruler of the Ziyaroğulları State that reigned between 1049 and 1069, named his work with a general title as “Nasihatname”, the work acquired reputation with the name *Kabusname* from the beginning (Çetindağ, 2003, s. 111). These are the advices of Keykavus on Ahi morality: “If someone needs your help and if you know that helping him will not be harmful for your religion and this world, do not turn him down with a broken heart” (Keykavus, 2008, s. 122). It is good for a ruler to be forgiver because if an individual do not commit an offence, amnesty of his ruler would not be present. When he is punished according to his offence, the supremacy of the ruler would disappear. It is certainly necessary to punish the individual when he commits an offence but when the ruler punishes according to that offence, he would forget the way of supremacy, mercy and compassion and docility. The ruler does not get away from the honor of supremacy, just because of forgiving. It is not proper for the master of supremacy to follow the way of merciless people (Keykavus, 2008, s. 118-119). These are the advices of Keykavus for rulers: beware of illicit, get your hands and eyes away from the property and harem of the people, get advice from the learned men before every trade, behave cheerfully in every trade (Keykavus, 2008, s. 195-196).

Ahlak-I Nasiri, the work of Nasiruddin Tusi who was contemporary thinker with Ahi Evran, is quite comprehensive and systematic with regards to contents dealing with the issues, compared to its contemporaries and peers. It is necessary to quote below analogy in order to understand Tusi’s approach to manager-worker relationship, which is an example of his ideas that coincide with Ahi morality (Tusi, 2007, s. 257). According to Tusi, in order for the protection of the order between the ruler and the subjects, the ruler should love his subjects as a father; the subjects should love their ruler as his children, and the subjects should love each other as siblings. The target of this formula can be stated as following: The ruler should take softhearted fathers as an example in compassion, kindness, love and benignity against subjects, protecting them and their interests, resolving their concerns, and preventing any harm against them. The subjects should take clever sons as an example in obedience, respect and homage to the ruler. They should take siblings as example in kindness and benevolence to each other.

Sadi Şirazi from the Nizamiye Madrasah school, who contributed to creation of ideational foundations of Ahi morality, generally preferred to convey the thoughts he want to transmit in his works through types of expressions like narratives, wits, aphorisms, advices or maxims. In his work called *Gülistan*, Şirazi discusses these issues which are in parallel with Ahi morality: The rulers should be compassionate, against oppression, brave and generous, respectful to learned men, protective and reconciliatory. In his work titled *Bostan*, he discusses other issues like: compassionate for weak and

helpless, internal peace through modesty and consent, doing favor for people, benefaction and humbleness (Şirazi, 2004).

Within this framework, Ahi community is an organization that was established for and based on the purpose of realizing ethical cooperation principles like mutual love, mutual respect, mutual help, protecting poor and deprived people, with a perspective of recognizing that working is worship and business is divine. In addition, since it is an institution of Turkish-Islamic society, it adhered strictly to the moral orders of Islam and based its business ethics principles on Islam's moral orders (Bodur, 1999, s. 59-60).

Ahi respects human being because of seeing him as the most honorable of all creatures (eşref-i mahlûkat). With this understanding, Ahi culture treats everybody fairly, without differentiating between religion, language, ethnic identity, skin color or gender. Violating these principles is punished with sanctions: it is known that the sellers who cheat Christians and Greek people and overprice fraudulent goods were punished without any hesitation (Ekinci, 1993, s. 169).

Dualism in Ahi community is explained using the metaphor of tying & untying. Tying and untying the belt seven times during belt tying ceremony in Ahi community has a symbolic meaning. Every tying act represents closing the door of a bad behavior; while every untying act represents opening the door of a good behavior. These are (Ceylan, 2012, s. 69):

- Closing the door of miserliness and graspingness; opening the door of generosity
- Closing the door of oppression; opening the door of goodness
- Closing the door of ambition and fanciness, opening the door of contentment
- Closing the door of taste, opening the door of ascetism
- Closing the door of expecting from people, opening the door of expecting from God
- Closing the door of senselessness, opening the door of good conversation, mentioning God
- Closing the door of devilish acts, opening the door of submissiveness to God

In addition, pactasundersvanda and being against pretense are among the important characteristics of Ahi members. For this reason, they did not enroll fortune tellers and astrologers to their organization, stating that “the affair of fortune tellers is lying, they lie to people, liars do not deserve being Ahi, they cannot put on belt. Those who lie to their customers and do not keep one's promises were also excluded from membership. They advocated covering up one's fraud, rather than nitpicking. They expressed this trait in the following words: “you should cover up all you see with your eyes. Fütüvvet should be veiler, should not rub one's nose in it, for as much as “Veiler” is adjective of God. For this reason, eyes and ears of fütüvvet should be contended.” They internalized forgiving, tolerating and compassionating against grudge and anger. They stated their rules as: “Nobody should be hurt by Ahi; Ahi should behave as if without eyes, ears and voice”. They considered walking fast while looking up

as a sign of arrogance, with the understanding of “a person should know his place”. They did not affiliate these people to membership, saying that “these people do not deserve fütüvvet, even if their head reach to sky”. They encouraged people to be generous, against the sickness of miserliness. Prophet Abraham, who is mentioned as “Feta”, welcomed everybody to his dinner table; therefore, “hand, table and door” of Ahi is also open. “Ahi should be master of his tongue, eyes and loins”. It is emphasized in fütüvvetnames that Ahi should refrain from big sins like adultery, drinking and gambling. Ahi members warned their fellows against thieving and wangling and manifested their principles with the following statements: “Master of fütüvvet should not be thief. This is the biggest shame; fütüvvet has nothing to do with thieves. In so much that, hunters were not admitted to Ahi membership if they lay a trap or play a trick to hunt animals (Gölpınarlı, 1950, ss. 216-323). Believing that butchery and surgery eradicate mercy and humane sentiment through causing emotional rigidity, Ahi community did not admit these profession experts to membership. Black-marketers and speculators were also not admitted to membership since there was a possibility that cheating and fraud takes root in their hearts because of continuous cheating (Çağatay, 1989, s. 180).

One of the most striking characteristics of Ahi communities, who protected their commitment to nomadic customs and traditions although they were settled, was their moral sentiment that synthesizes Turkish and Islamic values. Principles of this morality comprised of twelve precepts, six of which were extraverted relating to social life, while the remaining six were introverted relating to the inner world of the human being (Gülerman ve Taştekil, 1993, s. 56; Güllülü, 1992, s. 95).

1. Precept related to salwar: Requires refraining from illicit intercourse.
2. Precept related to stomach: Requires refraining from illicit food and drink.
3. Precept related to tongue: Requires refraining from gossip, useless conversation and slandering
4. Precept related to ear and eye: Requires refraining from hearing and seeing evil words and acts.
5. Precept related to hands and feet: Requires refraining from robbery and undeserved earnings.
6. Precept related to ambition: Requires refraining from addiction to wealth and possessions.
7. Being generous
8. Being humble
9. Being propitious and honorable
10. Being merciful and forgiver
11. Being faraway from selfish
12. Being though-minded

There was a kind of unwritten gentlemen's agreement between members of the Ahi community. Efforts by a craftsman to tempt an apprentice to leave his master, efforts by a father to tempt his son to change his master, or efforts by an apprentice to leave his workplace to go to another one, were seen as unprofessional and immoral acts. Because, the failure to decide on a workplace and frequently

changing jobs were seen as the manner of those who have inconstant and unstable mental structure. Such people were considered as lacking a mental discipline suitable for becoming Ahi. Ahi understanding believed that if a person sets his eyes on other people's jobs, this would not yield a benefit for the person or his workplace and decrease his efficiency at work. For this reason, they believed that it is not moral for this person to have an idea like this. They called for loyalty of the workers to their workplaces and protection of the workers by employers, without any exploitation. This protection is a charge, not a favor. Closing the door of ambition, Ahi culture prevented abuse and change of workplace, thereby workplaces turned to become family houses (Ekinci, 1993, s. 169).

Fundamental principles of Ahi community were; honest work, quality goods, reasonable profits, and a fair control mechanism that never compromises. Ahi members have not been in a position of cheating or deceived. They have protected the rights of both the producers and consumers (Güzel, 2005, s. 521). The idiom "put someone's nose out of joint" reflects the sensitivity of Ahi community in producing quality goods. The story of this idiom, which is being used for eight hundred years by Turkish people, is as follows: Ahi Evran, who was the founder of Ahi community and father of all artisans and craftsmen, used to inspect the shoes and throw false and cheapjack ones to roof while walking through shoemakers' marketplace. When such an event took place, the news was rapidly spreading among craftsmen and people used to say "someone's shoe has been thrown to the roof". The shoemaker whose shoe has been thrown was not able to show his face for weeks, because of his shame. As can be seen in this example, Ahi community managed to infuse quality into artisans and craftsmen through business ethics, and transformed it to a sanction through a system of auto control (Ekinci 1993, s. 158). There are similar cases that are told in historical documents. For example, an artisan has been dismissed of his art in Istanbul because of painting a hilt and misinforming buyers stating that it is made of ebony-tree. Penalties of forgery in Ahi community are also interesting. A milkman selling milk mixed with water has been hanged down in a well; a lumberjack using a bad scale has been walked in the marketplace with his scale on his shoulders; a pekmez seller has been put a jar of pekmez over his heads, because of selling tartedpekmez (Güzel, 2005, s. 522).

3. IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

Ahi culture is a system that builds its moral codes predicating on the Sunnah of the Prophet. Concepts like human being, cosmos, world, working, production, peace and brotherhood are at heart of Ahi system. Human being is the most honorable creature among all created. They built a lifestyle, departing from the Prophet Muhammad's sayings. The advice "working for this world as if you will never die, for hereafter as if you will die tomorrow" (Câmiu's-Sagîr, 2/12, Saying No:1201) is one of the fundamental philosophies of Ahi culture. The world is a place for working and examination. Every human being should have an occupation. According to Ahi understanding, the most honorable human being should work, produce and refrain from becoming destitute as a result of being in need of others. Ahi aims to increase the value of both his and the society.

Working and being beneficial to the society is encouraged in Islam. Mendicancy and encumbering on others are not seen welcomed. The understanding of “the sole owner of all properties in God” promoted generosity, sharing properties with others, guarding poor people and behaving honestly in trade as fundamental principles in Ahi culture. The principle of “working for this world as if you will never die, for hereafter as if you will die tomorrow” provided a balance between materiality and spirituality. In Ahi philosophy, the life is not limited to life in this world. The belief in hereafter required a continuous auto control. Rather than protecting and pursuing their own interests, Ahi people protected social interests with the awareness of social responsibility, with the understanding of “Serving people is serving God”.

It is incomplete to define Ahi organization as an organization of craftsmen. The most fundamental purpose of Ahi culture is to raise perfect human being. For this reason, lifelong learning from cradle to grave is in place. It is a school of discipline which strains to create an ideal society, teaching social solidarity, cooperation, rights, law and justice, humanitarian values and good morals.

Ahi culture has created a philosophy of economy peculiar to our own culture. Tabakoğlu states in this respect that “the most fundamental characteristics of our civilization stems from Ahi culture. While the most important factor in western culture and capitalism was bourgeoisie mentality, Ahi understanding shaped our socio-economic life to a large extent”. As a result, imperialist mentality and class struggle which created capitalism has not been observed in Turkish economic life (Tabakoğlu, 2007, s. 412).

Halil İnalçık states that Ahi organization shaped the national character of Turkish people, and underlines that characteristics like extraordinary hospitality, benevolence for people in hard situation, self sacrifice and fraternity, respect for elderly people, refraining from sexual abuse, bravery, courage and collective (co-op) farming which can be seen in Turkish people are stem from this philosophy. Ahi culture shaped behavior of craftsmen who constitute the majority in towns and cities. Fütüvvet morality has been conserved through training of apprentices by masters since arts and crafts in Ottoman society were organized according to the education system including apprentices, foremen and masters. In this way, Ahi culture functioned as the fundamental morality of the socio-economic structure (İnalçık, 2009, s. 40).

During the period when Ahi organization was active, tradesmen contributed to the performance of the functions of ruling and control by the government, through the concepts of customer satisfaction, continuous development and evaluation, and organization of production processes and working life. Ahi understanding is a culture that has characteristics which can find implementation opportunity even in contemporary organizations, which is ahead of the economic and managerial understanding of its time, and which can guide contemporary practices (Keskin, 2010, s. 40).

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