

## **The Mevlevi Order (Mevlevilik) in Political and Social Life**

### **Mevlevilik in political life — Mevlevi myths related to politics and the sword-bearing ceremony —**

### **The status of women in Mevlevilik — Mevlevilik, other religions and especially Christianity — Traces of ancient faiths (faith traditions) in Mevlevilik**

#### **Mevlevilik in Political Life**

Mevlana had an entirely populist character, he was in tune with common people while having visionary foresight. He never bowed down to any sultan, bey (tribal ruler) or person of status. He witnessed the brutality of the Mongols and foresaw that in the end, their uncivilized nature would inevitably lead to their demise. At the same time, he hoped that the unbridled quality of the destruction had the potential to pave the way for the establishment of a better and more robust, advanced civilization in the ruins of the disintegrating Seljuk civilization. Therefore, as I indicated in the book “Mevlana Celaleddin,” he sympathized with the Mongols. His sympathy was influenced by the fact that the Mongols had overthrown the reign of Khwarazmshah, who had forced his father to migrate from Belh.

Perhaps Mevlana was sensing that the *rûsûm ulemâsı* (91), the representatives of orthodox Islamic knowledge, whose oppressive authority descended on thought like a heavy weight, would be eliminated by the Mongols. The Mongols were not all Muslims yet, and even if some became Muslim during the advance, it wasn't possible with this kind of immediacy for them to gain sufficient knowledge to zealously defend any school of thought. Mevlana, whose worldview sanctified *insan* (human) and *insanlık* (humanity/humanness), transformed mystical viewpoints that had become rigid and

dogmatic into more realistic and fully humanistic forms. He was a guide on a path beyond religions. As he witnessed the imminent collapse of the rule of establishment, perhaps he was feeling a little hopeful that the free and humanistic thinking that he wished for would eventually gain dominance.

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Would it be possible that the wish for humanism he had – visible with shining clarity in his life, his lifestyle, his work and as perceived by those gathered around him – was based on a blueprint he already had in mind? Or was he, like many others, simply hoping, striving and waiting for humanity to attain a higher level of morality on its own?

Mevlana can't be presumed to have such inertia as his character was not passive. Rather, he believed in *irade* (human will) and had an activist character. He sought for, “a lover who, upon rising, causes fiery apocalypses to erupt everywhere; who rescues the seas and simultaneously creates a sea from a single wave; who makes one forget all hells; who grasps the skies in his hand like a handkerchief; who hangs up the sun like a *kandil* (lamp); a crocodile-hearted lover, who fights like lions, and if no one is around to fight, wages a battle with him/herself like hell does. (92) Even if it was not a well defined plan in his mind, it could be counted in his favor that he did not attempt to pursue this plan. The traces of the Babalılar Uprising and its consequences had not yet disappeared. The Cimri Riots afterwards were also buried in the pages of history following much bloodshed. The collapse of the Seljuks was a major event, yet the Mongols had not been weakened. They remained a destructive power. The Seljuks in order to retain their puppet-like reign, enabled the Mongols to sustain their power through the concessions they would give to them in response to each rebellion.

Mevlana announced himself as the Ahmed of his time, when he said: “Mustafa returned, declare your faith.”(93) He was aware of this reality, and did not get engaged

in an adventure with a dubious end. Instead, he strived to elevate those who gathered around him in morals and thought, he became a role model for people, and guided them with his words.

Mevlana's son Sultan Veled, who did not see eye to eye with the authorities of his time, embraced the *halk*, or commoners. He took Mevlana's humanistic ideology, which held a universalistic quality that had the potential to spread across humanity, and formed a foundation around this ideology, associating it with a single community and mysticizing it. While he was not an institution-builder like Sultan Veled, Ulu Ârif Çelebi through his passion and travels, also spread this mystical-idealistic ideology with a tolerant and humanistic character. This ideology would eventually evolve into a centralized ritualistic form, spreading from its main center to satellite centers, manifesting in association with a group of people, and becoming visible in certain rituals and ceremonies.

As we also discussed in his biography earlier, Emîr Âbid Çelebi, who represented Mevlevilik after Ulu Ârif Çelebi, was not favored due to his *mustağni* (unwavering) and stern character. However, while Mevlevis remained unscathed, the reaction to his character affected him individually, resulting in his distancing from the center of Mevlevilik. Çelebis who came after him immersed themselves in a mystical aura and maintained a connection to the foundation.

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Despite Sakıp Dede's words, sultans during the early Ottoman era, such as Murad II and Fatih, did not consider Mevlevis as a power, and did not bestow importance to their path. Due to the Bedreddin Uprising, Ottomans who adopted a policy of severe punishment and even abolishment of tariqas that harbored opposition to orthodox beliefs, did not touch Mevlevis. Yet at the same time, they did not consider them as allies either. The sons of Othman noticed the Mevlevis during the time of the Shia-Bâtînî tensions, when Mevlevis such as Dîvâne Mehmed Çelebi, Yûsuf Sîne-çak, and

Şâhidî, a group that was later classified by Vâhidî as *Şemsîler* (the people of Shams), began to embrace the *halk*. At the same time, Alevî-Bektashis in Anatolia and Rumeli (Thrace) were spreading propaganda on behalf of the Safavids, pledging allegiance to the Shah of Iran as the legitimate ruler, sending him gifts, providing him with support, whenever possible performing the *salaat* (ritual prayer) in his name, and fleeing to Iran when they faced a defeat. Therefore, since the time of Yavuz, a policy of strict surveillance and expulsion towards *Alevîs* (Alawites), had begun, while those Bektashis who lived in towns and cities remained untouched. Hurûfis and Kalenderîs who comprised a considerably wide community, also drew attention due to actions in defiance of orthodox sharia, and were included in the expulsion. (94) During the 16th century, Hamzavîs (Bâyramî Melâmîleri or Bayrami Malamatis) established an organization that targeted the ruler and enacted regulations to promote the lifestyle of the *Fütüvvet* brotherhood (the Futuwwa brotherhood), which resulted in them enduring endless political efforts of expulsion. (95)

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During the same century, the *Şems* (Shams) branch of the Mevlevis, as they were later referred to, were getting along with commoners, giving rise to the formation of Mevlevi villages. The *Madrasa* (state-sanctioned Islamic schools) had an unfavorable perception of this group of deeply passionate Mevlevis. They had *Bâtînî* beliefs and *Alevî* tendencies. They were almost united with the Bektashis and adopted the opinions of Hurûfis. However, unlike Alevîs, they never considered Iran as their kaaba, and never engaged in any activities targeting the ruler. Reasons for this included the following: Mevlevis were more mystical than Alevîs, even those who had *Bâtînî* beliefs were known outwardly as Sunnis, and finally, there was indeed a pious Sunni group that existed amongst the Mevlevis. This latter group in particular had already pledged its allegiance to the ruler and became more intermingled with the state. The group's activities in *waqf* (charitable endowments), repairs, construction and donations [toward state-sanctioned projects], and the fact that state rulers were involved in internal feuds

within the *tariqa*, were among the reasons that the *tariqa* was slowly pulled away from the broader public. Also contributing to this was the emergence of *Mevlevilik* as a tangible representation of a mystical ideal, one that found expression through the humanistic and tolerant mannerisms of the higher class.

*Mevlevilik*, which always took a passive stance in political life, seems to have sided with the Abaza Uprising in Konya in the 17th century. However, this was an isolated incident, with no involvement observed from *Mevlevi*s elsewhere. In actuality, the Abaza Mehmed Pasha uprising did not have a populist character. Abaza Mehmed Pasha, the governor (*Beylerbeyi*) of Erzurum, was not complaining about the public's suffering, the oppression of the ruling elite, the deteriorating state of the nation, or heavy taxation, nor was he seeking power as a representative of a religious ideology.

When the word got out about Abaza's punishment of the *Yeniçeris* (the Ottoman infantry troops known as Janissaries) who murdered Osman II [in a revolt], cavalry troops known as *Sipahis*, along with those *Yeniçeris* who sided with Abaza, killed the murderers of Osman II in Istanbul. *Hodjas* (Islamic religious teachers) and zealots rose up in support of Abaza, along with some *Yeniçeris* with various motivations, and sometimes the public. The shaikh of Abkhazians, whose name was mentioned previously, incited Abaza Mehmed Pasha, saying: "It is your God-given duty to massacre the *Yeniçeris*". During this period of uprising, some *Mevlevi*s in Konya and the *Çelebi* sided with Abaza. However, this singular incident was settled after Abaza was defeated, pardoned, and returned to Erzurum as governor. (96)

From the time of Murad IV to Selim III, *Çelebis* who were in charge, as well as *Mevlevi*s and *Mevlevi* sheikhs, did not play a considerable role, positive or negative, in any incidents in political life. The one exception was that during the time of Selim III, as we have mentioned previously, Mehmed Emin *Çelebi* sided with the *müftü* (judge) of Konya, who resisted progress by publicly opposing *Nizam-ı Cedîde* (the New Order put forward by Sultan Selim III). This tension lasted for several years, yet didn't lead to

expulsion mostly due to Selim III's mild-mannered nature, and also because of his love for Mevlevilik and Galib Dede, who was a beacon of progress in Turkish divan literature. The incident subsided before it caused a negative reaction against Mevlevis and Mevlevilik.

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Actually, Selim's love for Mevlevilik and his Mevlevi identity was a reaction to the Yeniçeris, who considered Hacı Bektaş as their pir. Mahmud II adopted a similar path. Even the State Kethüda (State Chamberlain) Hâlet Efendi, despite his support among the Yeniçeris, also adopted Mevlevilik. All the grand statesmen have become Mevlevi *muhıbs* (sympathizers). Hâlet Efendi's strategic position did not result in any adverse measures against this tariqa.

During a snowstorm, Mahmud II arrived at the Yenikapı tekke when Osman Salâhaddin Dede was the shaikh (death 1887/1304 H). Along with him were Şehzade Abdulmecid (Prince Abdulmajid) and Şehzade Abdulaziz. As Osman Dede greeted Mahmud II at the door, Mahmud II pointed toward the şehzades and said: "In this weather, your heart drew us here. If it were up to these two, they could not have come." Abdulmecid never forgot his father's words. After much time had passed, Abdulmecid, during his reign as a sultan, arrived at Yenikapı in a similar snowstorm and said to the shaikh who greeted him at the door: "How about it, Shaikh Efendi? Remember my father, who had said, if it were up to these two, they could not have come. Could we?" (Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi, p. 181-182).

Mahmud II's policy against Bektashis was in alignment with his heart, since the Yeniçeris had a Bektashi baba in each of their military units. They called themselves *Tâife-i Bektaşiyân* (Bektashi Troops), their leader was *Ağa-yı Bektaşiyân* (The Head of the Bektashis), their military units were *Ocağ-ı Bektashiyan* (Bektashi Garrisons), and their scribes were referred to as *Koca Bektaşî* (The Grand Bektashi). He was active against Bektashis before *Vak'a-i Hayriyye*, the abolishment of the Yeniçeris. Mahmud II

expelled Hayder Baba, after the sacking of Yeniçeri Ağası İsmail Ağa in 1882. Hayder Baba came from Iran, had involvement in the Alemdar Incidents with Selim III, went to Iran and then returned, and was stationed at the garrison of troop 99. When he was expelled, Baba died as he arrived in Bolu. (97)

Mevlevilik, which wasn't opposed to the *Islahat* and *Tanzimat* reform edicts of the Ottomans, and was favored by the government against Bektaşilik, played a positive role during the dismissal of Murad V and the enthronement of Abdülhamid II. Midhat Pasha, who is believed to be a follower of Osman Salahaddin Dede, the Yenikapı shaikh, convened the first meeting at his mansion that resulted in the decision to name Abdülhamid as sultan. Midhat Pasha's mansion was in the vicinity of the mansion of the shaikh, which was near the tekke. Earlier, Midhat Pasha and Damad Mahmud Pasha had taken the decision to dismiss Murad V during a discussion that took place at the Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi. Osman Efendi later visited the şehzade for a meeting at the *Veliaht Dairesi* (The Office of the Crown Prince) in *Beşiktaş Sarayı* (The Besiktas Palace) at the invitation of Abdülhamid. It was during this meeting that the decision was taken for Abdülhamid to meet with Midhat Pasha at the mansion in Büyükdere, located between Hacıosman Bayırı and Maslak Road. Osman Efendi was also present in this meeting, where Abdülhamid pledged to Midhat Pasha that he would declare *Kanunu Esasî* (the Ottoman constitution). Furthermore, it is said that Midhat Pasha received a written commitment from Abdülhamid on this matter.

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Osman Efendi received the gratitude of Abdülhamid while attending the new sultan's enthronement ceremony: By this point, the *fatwa* (Islamic decree) calling for the dismissal of Murad V had not yet reached the palace, causing the *Şeyhulislâm* (or Sheikh ul-Islam, referring to the chief religious official in the Ottoman Empire) to get anxious. At this, Osman Dede declared: "Isn't the agreement of *icmâ-ı ümmet* (the elderly decision-makers representing Muslims) considered a fatwa?" Upon which,

allegiances to Abdülhamid were declared without waiting for the arrival of the fatwa. It is said that these words caused Abdülhamid to bend down and kiss the forehead of Osman Salahaddin Dede.

The opinion of the palace towards the Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi, as well as all Mevlevis, shifted following the demise of Midhat Pasha. Osman Dede, who had been appointed to hold readings of the Mathnawi at the palace, was then distanced from the palace on the pretense of accommodating his advanced age by giving him more time to spend with his *evrad* (wird or prayer book) and in *ezkar* (remembrance).

During the time of Osman Dede's son Celaledin Dede (died 1908), the Yenikapı dergah was a source of concern for the oppressive monarchy, which always kept it under strict surveillance, but could never shut it down. Abdülhamid's administration played an undeniable role in this, interfering in even the content of the mevlûd (mawlid) prayers that were regularly recited. During the wedding of Abdülbaki Efendi, Celaledin Dede's son, a search warrant was issued for each car carrying female guests arriving at his wedding. Consider that the shaikh of this dergah mediated Abdülhamid's rise to power. Veliaht (Crown Prince) Reşad Efendi was also a follower of Osman Salahaddin Dede. There was truth to the hearsay about Celaledin Efendi's relationship with Jön Turks (The Young Turks) in Paris. Eventually, when Abdülvahid Çelebi took the Çelebilik position, it was perceived that he could become the heart of a mighty power due to his Melami tendencies, and his affinity to Bektaşılık and Shi'i beliefs. (98)

Among the Mevlevis who joined the struggle for independence were: Abdülhalim Memduh (died 1905), Doctor İbrahim Edhem, the owner of Hizmet Newspaper that was published in İzmir, and Tevfik Nevzat (died 1905), the chief columnist of this paper, as well as the Shaikh of the İzmir Mevlevis Nuri Dede and Tokadîzade Sekib (died 1932).(99)



The declaration of independence and the enthronement of Mevlevi Mehmed Reşad (Mehmed V, death 1918), was an auspicious event for Mevlevi. During the reign of this sultan, the Yenikapı Mevlevihane and Bahariye Mevlevihane, which had burned down, were rebuilt, while other dergahs were repaired. Eventually, during World War I, due to the declaration of “Cihâd-ı Mukaddes” (Jihadi Mukaddes, or The Sacred War), and under the commandership of Veled Çelebi and the late Abdülbaki, a battalion Mevlevi troops was formed as an experiment. During Birinci Büyük Millet Meclisi (The First Assembly of the Congress of the Turkish Republic), Abdülhalim Çelebi became the representative of Konya, and Veled Çelebi held the representative position for Yozgat and Kastamonu for many years.

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However, these were contextual and transitory events, a reflection of their times. They were far from granting a new life to an institution that had become dormant. Once the old has been removed from its original knowledge and educational system (madrasas), mere aesthetics or philosophy aren't enough to sustain it. In fact, it did not survive. It also became a part of history along with its populist, community-oriented, faithful disposition with its tolerant spirit and disregard for worldly affairs, its garments, its music, its dergah (lodges), and its traditions. However, Mevlana, with his populist and humanist philosophy; with his worldview that transcended religions; with his poems that are soulful and always fresh; with his life as a role model, finds new life in each moment: A pleasure, a joy, a poem, and a source of energy. It boils and pours, over and over again, belonging to all people and humanity. Thus, Mevlevilik became a part of history, however, *Mevlânâîlik* (*Mevlana*-ism) belongs to all times, and each person, as it cannot be constrained by time and space.

**Political Myths Attributed to Mevlevi and Kılıç Alayı** (The Procession of the Swordsmen)

As Mevlevilik gained importance in political life from the time of Selim III, several myths have emerged without any basis or historical records. We can list them as follows:

- Once, Mevlana left the palace as he was offended that Rükneddin Kılıçarslan gave his allegiance to Bâbâ-yî Merendî as his baba. At the same time, Osman I was approaching the palace and, when he saw Mevlana, stopped and stood in *niyaz* (bowing in respect). In appreciation of this gesture, Mevlana untied the sword on Osman's belt, and tied it back on (as would take place in a sword-bearing ceremony), as he said: "We took the sultanate from the Seljuks and bestowed it upon you and your descendants".
- After the collapse of the Seljuk sultanate, Mevlana became the sultan for 18 days in Konya, then passed the sultanate to Osman.
- It was Mevlana's son, Sultan Veled, who conducted Osman's sword-bearing ceremony.

The first of these myths was an add-on to a real incident that was recorded by Eflaki.

(100) The second myth was a misinterpretation of a record in "Şakayık" that mentioned Muhlîs Pasha, who became sultan for six months after taking revenge on those who ended the Babalis revolt, and later passed on the sultanate to Karaman, the son of Nureddin Sufi (Nur Sufi), who was one of the Baba İlyas sufis. (101) The third myth was the result of the deconstruction of the first myth. This "kılıç kuşatma" (the sword-bearing ceremony) myth was later attributed to Hacı Bektaş by Bektashis, for reasons that we will explain.

Perhaps, this myth was the result of a strange claim that emerged around the same time period: The descendants of Mevlana Celaleddin were the true heirs and owners of the sultanate, as Mevlana was genealogically related to Prophet Muhammad from his mother's side, and the first caliph Abu Bakr from his father's side, while he was also related to the descendants of the Khwarizmshahs. The sons of Osman (Osmanoğulları) were sultans, only as regents to Çelebis. Thus, it was mandatory that when they

traveled to Istanbul, Çelebiis stayed in Üsküdar (*the part of Istanbul that lies on the Anatolian side*). Otherwise, if a Çelebi crossed the Bosphorus Strait from Üsküdar to the European side of Istanbul, the sultan would be required to hand over his sultanate to Çelebi, and pledge allegiance to him. (102)

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Since the time of Selim III and Mahmud II, it was widely believed that Çelebi, who was the heir to, and held the *makam* (station) of Mevlana, and who would become the sultan if he crossed to the European side, performed the sword-bearing ceremony for sultans at Ebû-Eyyub-al-Ansârî's tomb in Istanbul.

It is quite possible that the sword-bearing ceremony was a direct result of the influence of the *Fütüvvet* brotherhood. The Sultan was considered a soldier of the Yeniçeri Ocağı (The guild of the Janissary Infantry). As a representative of a state that was established with the sword and was being protected by the sword, the Sultan was considered as belonging to the *seyfi* (sword) arm of the *Fütüvvet*. When he was enthroned, through this sword-bearing ceremony, he officially took over the role of representative.(103) Since sword-bearing was inherent to the enthronement ceremony, sources prior to the 17th century did not specifically mention it. In one instance, Murad II, who learned that he had become sultan while in Amasya, was arriving in Bursa with his entourage. Emir Buhari, Yıldırım's son-in-law, greeted him outside the city along with the public, and personally conducted the sultan's sword-bearing ceremony there.(104) Even though some claim that the sword-bearing ceremony only became an official part of enthronement after this period, it is possible to say that this ceremony always took place, albeit unofficially. For example, Murad I was a qualified member of the *Fütüvvet*, and he was the leader of Ahis (Guild-members), and Osman and Orhan also had positive engagements with the *Fütüvvet brotherhood*, therefore this ceremony can be dated back to the early Ottoman period.(105)

It is believed that Fatih's sword-bearing ceremony was performed by Akşemseddin at Ebû-Eyyub-al-Ansârî's tomb. Since the 17th century, this ceremony is historically referred to as "Taklid-i Seyf - Kılıç Kuşatma" (Sword-Bearing), or "Takallüd-i Seyf - Kılıç Kuşanma" (Donning of the sword), and especially, the state chroniclers mention each sultan's sword-bearing in a separate section.

Süleyman II (died 1102H/1691) had his sword-bearing ceremony at Ebû-Eyyub-al-Ansârî's tomb (Rasit, Ist. Mat. Amire, 1282, vol. II, p. 21), and according to F. V. Hasluch, the sword-bearer was *Nakıyb Al-Aşrâf*, the director in charge of officials who were responsible of the care of the *sayyids*, descendants of the Prophet (Bektaşilik Tedkikleri, translated by: Ragib Hulusi, Turkiyat Enstitüsü Publications, Ist. Devlet Mat. 1928, p.124). Ahmed II (died 1106H/1694) had his sword-bearing ceremony at the same tomb: "Âdet-i hasene-i devlet üzere Nakıyb Efendi mübâşeretle miyân-i himmetlerine seyf-i âlem-gîr-i mulûkâne taklîd edilmiştir" (same resource as above, p. 160). Although it is not known who conducted the sword-bearing ceremony for Mustafa II (reign 1106-1115H/1694-1703), there is no doubt that it was done at the same place as it was the custom.

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In alignment with Kânun-i Kadîm-i Osmani (the ancient Ottoman law), Ahmed III had his sword-bearing ceremony with *Silahdarağa* (the Ottoman sultan's personal assistant and bodyguard), Nakıyb al-Aşrâf, and the Yeniceri Ağası, as stated: "Kanun-i kadim-i Osmani üzere Silahdaraga ve Nakıyb-al-aşrâf Efendi ve Yeniçeri Ağası mübaşeretleriyle". (Same resource as above, v. III, p. 82). Mahmud I took his sword-bearing with "Ber-mûceb-i resm-i mukarrer Nakıyb-al-aşrâf İmadzade Seyyid Muhammed Efendi" (Sami, Its. 1198, p. 11); Osman III with Nakıyb Al-Aşrâf Rıza Efendi (Vasif, Ist. Mat. Amire, 1219, p.43); and Mustafa III with the *Şeyhülislam* (same resource as above, v. I, p. 95).

Selim III, who belonged to the Mevlevi *tariqa* (path), had his sword-bearing ceremony with the Şeyhülislam (Cevdet, v. IV, ikinci basım, 1st. Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309, p. 265); Mahmud II with Nakıyb-al-Aşrâf Durrizade Abdullah (same resource as above, v. VIII, p. 329). Hasluch indicates that there was also a Mevlevi shaikh during this ceremony (p. 129). Abdülmecid's ceremony took place with Nakıyb-al-Aşrâf Abdurrahim (Lutfi, 1st. Mahmud Bey Mat. 1302, v. VI, p. 51); Abdülaziz with Şeyhülislam (Takvim-i Vekayi, Muharrem 17, 1278, no. 216). Although it was announced that Murad V would have his sword-bearing ceremony on a Thursday in the month of Cemaziyelevvel (Jumada al-Awwal, the fifth month in Hijri calendar) in 1293, it was later canceled due to his illness (Basiret, 20. Cumadelula, Pazartesi, No. 1837). Abdülhamid II had his sword-bearing ceremony on Thursday the 18th in the month of Şaban (Shaaban, the eighth month in Hijri calendar) in 1293. (Basiret, 19 saban 1293. Cuma, No.1902).

Eventually, when the sword-bearing ceremony for Mehmed was performed after Abdülhamid's removal from the throne, it was done by Abdülhalim Çelebi. This can be regarded as the first and final success for the promotion of Mevlevilik in the context of sword-bearing ceremonies (Serveti-fünun, yevmi nüsha, 27 Nisan. Mali yıl 1325. Pazartesi, No. 287, p. 2, Musavver Muhit, 30 Nisan 1325. Perşembe. Volume 2, No. 4-26, p. 101. L'illustration, 22 Mayıs 1909, No. 3456, p. 353).

The main factors leading up to this event included politics that were aligned with *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (The Society of Unity and Progress), as well as Abdülhalim Çelebi's telegrams to the provincial authorities, heads and representatives of the Majlis-i Ayan and Majlis-i Mebusan (the Senators and the Representatives of the General Assembly), including the commander of the Hareket Ordusu (the army), who removed Abdülhamid from the throne. These elements collectively played a more important role than Sultan Reşad being a Mevlevi. We had already presented a copy of the private letter that was written by Abdülhalim Çelebi after World War I, addressed to the Office of the Commander of Occupying Forces in Istanbul. In his letter, Çelebi mentions that he is

sending the so-called telegram, in urgency. Yevmi Servetifünun newspaper, based on a story in the Istanbul Newspaper, mentions this telegram (16 Nisan 1325, No. 277, p. 3). In another issue, the paper mentions Çelebi's arrival in Istanbul for the sword-bearing ceremony. It states that during the greetings period after Friday prayers (Cuma selamlığı), Çelebi was received by the Sultan. During his stay in Istanbul, Çelebi was provided with a room in the Enderun, and was assigned two staff members in his service. Within this context, the newspaper published the text of this telegram, as below:

“To the commander of the Hürriyet Ordusu (The Army of Independence) and the heads of of the Majlis-i A'yan and Meb'usan, all representatives, the victors of independence, and my *Nuzzar* (ministers) brothers:

Your might and justice surprised all the world's civilizations with awe. The entire nation is pleased with you and is grateful to you. Abdülhamid, with the help of his traitor bandits, manipulated religion for his purposes. To re-establish the tyranny of autocracy, he broke the trust, and was in contravention of the sharia. Therefore, he is not worthy of carrying our honorable Prophet's sword that was entrusted to him. Essentially, our recommendation is to remove this sword of justice from his hands, and entrust it with those hands that are worthy. We are all with you.” (20 Nisan 1325. Pazartesi. No. 281).

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In order to maintain the favor of several groups in the nation, the *İttihatçılar*, followers of İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, tried to infiltrate these groups. They aligned themselves with Bektashis by: Having their naval officers decorate the handles of their rapier swords with katibi-style-wrapped, 12-foiled turban ornaments; Visiting the tomb of Hacı Bektaş; and Spreading propaganda through Bektashis in their group, stating that Bektashism was a Turkish religion. At the same time, they utilized Melamis (Malamatis) within their

group, such as Bursalı Tahir Bey in the Majlis (death 1925), in an attempt to align themselves with the Melamis. Hence, it was the result of their policy to maintain the support of Mevlevis which prompted them to invite a Mevlevi Çelebi to Istanbul, and to have him conduct the sword-bearing ceremony for the sultan. Çelebi, who already showed his support to them by sending that telegram, was publicly known as Mollahünkaroğlu (*Molla-son-of-the-sultan*), and it was widely believed that he had the right to conduct the sword-bearing ceremony for the Sultan.

However, not only did Çelebi not possess any authority to conduct the sword-bearing ceremony, until Sultan Reşad, there was no precedent for a Çelebi to have ever conducted the sword-bearing ceremony of a sultan. This *adet-i hasene-i devlet* (beautiful tradition of the state) was typically conducted by Nakıyb-al-Aşrâf. This had been *resm-i mukarrer* (a continuous state ritual) as per Kânun-i Kadîm-i Osmani. The reason the Şeyhulislam was called on to conduct the ceremony for several sultans was most likely due to an excuse, or due to the wish of the sultan. Evidently, as we understand from the ceremony of Ahmed III, Silahdarağa and Yeniçeri Ağası also took part. Since the Sultan, as well as his weapons, were considered as belonging to the Yeniçeri Ocağı, there was nothing more natural than for the Yeniçeri Ağası to be present in this ceremony.

The last sultan who took the sword-bearing ceremony was Vahideddin. Vahideddin was offended by the telegram of Abdülvahib Çelebi, and instead, wished for his ceremony to be conducted by Şeyh Sunusi, who arrived in Istanbul during that time (İkdam, 25 zilkade 1336, 1 Eylül 1334-1918. Bazar).(106)

Evidently, since the 18th century, Mevlevis considered a Çelebi as a “Sultan of Bâtın” (*Sultan of the Invisible Realm*). In the early Ottoman period, the crown prince who would be enthroned after a sultan passed away, would be made a governor of the city of Manisa. During the era of the last Çelebis, a Çelebi next in line to hold the makam of Çelebi, would be appointed as a shaikh at the Manisa Mevlevihanesi.

According to official protocol, a Çelebi would be equal to a Kazasker (Chief Judge). *Mujahidin-i Mevleviyye* was a regiment of troops formed during World War I, where Veled Çelebi was appointed as the commander, and Abdülbaki, the shaikh of Yenikapı, with his ranking as the major, served as the deputy commander.

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In official correspondence, Çelebis were traditionally addressed as *reşadetlû* (the rightly guided). But during the reign of Abdulhamid II, the term became evocative of the Crown Prince Reşad Efendi, who was a Mevlevi *muhîb* (friend), and as a result, this caused suspicion by the administration. Therefore, another term *faziletlû* (the virtuous ones), which was used for those who are from the *ilmiyye* (the intellectuals), was favored for the Çelebis. Similarly, because the public referred to the Sultan as *post-nişin*, or the one who sits on the makam (post) of the Prophet, Çelebis and shaikhs switched from using *post-nişin* (the people of the post) on their stamps to *seccade-nişin* (the people of the prayer mat). They also followed the practice of the *ilmiyye* by adding the suffix *ed-dai* to the end of this title.

### **The Status of Women in Mevlevilik**

As mentioned previously, Mevlana considered women as integral to society. He opposed for them to be covered or hidden, he had many female followers, women attended Sema gatherings and spread rose petals on the dervishes performing the Sema, he always advised affection towards women, and in the end, he spent his life with the same woman (Mevlana Celaleddin, 3rd Edition, p. 211-213).

Eflaki includes stories about many women, including Kerra (Kira) Hatun, the wife of Mevlana; Mutahhara and Şeref Hatun, the daughters of Sultan Veled; Fatima Hatun, the mother of Ulu Arif Çelebi and daughter of Salahaddin Zerkub; the two Melke Hatuns,



the daughters of Mevlana and Ulu Arif Çelebi; Kerime Hatun, the daughter of Shaikh Muhammed Hadim; and many women who were *mürids* (students) of Mevlana. Some of these stories were passed on to Eflaki by others, and some were told by Eflaki himself, without any intermediaries. It is evident that women from the Mevlevi family, and those who loved Mevlana, have always socialized and held conversations with Mevlevi elders.

The genealogy provided by Eflaki at the end of his book records that Sultan Veled's daughter Şeref Hatun had many followers. Ârife-i Hoş-likaa from Konya was the Mevlevi *khalifa* (representative) in Tokat. Many elders were her followers. Similar to Mevlana, Ulu Arif Çelebi socialized and held conversations with women and participated in their Sema gatherings.

It is evident that in the early years of Mevlevilik, there was no difference between man and woman. Furthermore, women were appointed as khalifas, and held seniority to many men who became their followers. This vision of equality between men and women lasted until the 17th century. Destînâ, the daughter of Şah Mehmed Çelebi, who was the grandson of Divane Mehmed Çelebi and the son of Hızırşah Çelebi, became the administrator of the Karahisar *tekke* (lodge), donning the *hırka* (cloak) and *kûlah* (tall hat) like a man (Sefine, cuz, I, p. 252-253). After Destînâ, Küçük Mehmed Çelebi, who was from the lineage of Divane Mehmed Çelebi, occupied the post. When he passed away, his eldest daughter Güneş Han continued the admission and the training of *saliks* (dervishes), and actively performed the duties of a shaikh and a khalifa (same resource as above, p. 253-255). According to stories told by the locals, Güneş Han used to go to the market to do the shopping for the dergah and received much respect from everyone she encountered. At the same time, wearing a *destarlı sikke* (a tall hat with a sash wrapped around it worn by shaikhs) on her head, and a *hırka* (cloak) on her back, she conducted the Mevlevi *mukabele* (the Sema ceremony that includes whirling and zhikr).

We feel obliged to share the following eulogy written for Güneş Han by Derviş Yakıyn, a Mevlevi poet. In Divani literature, a eulogy written for a woman, such as this one, is virtually nonexistent:

>Add poem here (p. 258); heavily in Persian and Arabic<

The fifth and the sixth lines of this eulogy clearly confirm the truth behind local stories about Güneş Han conducting the Mevlevi mukabele. The daughter of Küçük Arif Çelebi, Güneş Hân-ı Sugrâ, was also among the women who were shaikhs of the Karahisar tekke (p. 258).

Another influential senior among Mevlevi women was Hacce Fatima Hanım, who adopted Sakıb Dede as her son, appointed him as a shaikh of Kütahya, and wedded him to Havva Hanım, her sister's daughter (p. 261). Hacce Fatima Hanım was also an accomplished poet who could compose such an eloquent ghazal as this (p. 260):

>Add poem here (p. 258-59); heavily in Persian and Arabic<

This ghazal that she recited during her visit to Mevlana is even more beautiful than the previous one:

>Add poem here (p. 259); heavily in Persian and Arabic<

Thus, it is evident that in the early periods of Mevlevilik, women were never excluded from the community. This path, which spread to rural areas and even led to the formation of Mevlevi villages, never considered women as inferior to men. Based on all

these clues, it is our belief that women also participated in the Sema, especially in villages.

However, there were several elements that collectively led to the restriction of freedoms given to women. These included Mevlevilik's foundational affiliation with the government and its alignment with the affairs of the Şeyhülislam. In addition, as Mevlevilik further migrated from villages and small towns into cities, it was adopted by the [more orthodox] intellectual class in society. After the 17th century, we no longer encountered a female Mevlevi shaikh, which happened in conjunction with the disappearance of Mevlevi villages and Mevlevihanes (Mevlevi lodges) within villages. Mevlevi women like Ârife-i Hoş-likaa and Güneş Han are found on the pages of *menakib* (story books about important personalities in mysticism/sufism). Yet in everyday life, Mevlevi women watched the mukabele from *kafes dairesi* (a section enclosed behind a trellis). In other times, women remained in the harem section of the dergah, and were not allowed to participate in *Ayn-i Cem* (an outdoor Sema ceremony).

Despite this situation, Mevlevi women managed to persevere in meaningful ways as much as possible. Women were presented *arakiyye* (a simple dervish hat made of felt) with the recitation of *tekbir* (proclamations of Allahu Akbar). Sometimes they were also presented with a *sikke* (a Mevlevi felt hat). Women were allowed to perform Sema amongst themselves and sometimes they could perform Sema in the presence of a few elderly dedes, who would accompany them with *ney* (reed flute) and *kudum* (small frame-drum). However, these were certainly only consolations to remedy their longing.

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Because an [exclusionary] form of the ritual had been established and calcified within a frame of reference where women could not take the oath of dervishhood, could not go into *çile* (or chille, a traditional period of training and dedicated service), and could not

enter the *meydân-ı şerif* (the sacred space in the lodge where the Mevlevi Sema takes place). It is relayed amongst the Mevlevi that, one day, poet Leyla (death 1848), who is buried at the *hamuşan* (the cemetery, or place of the quiet ones) of the Kulekapı Mevlevihanesi, stood at the door of the *matbah* (the kitchen) while crying, and said: “My God, why did You withhold such a little piece of flesh from this one?”.

### **Mevlevilik — Other Religions, Especially Christianity**

Any group that uses religion to sow division and enmity amongst people by emphasizing the differences between religions is often also the group whose livelihood depends on its version of religious knowledge and ritual. For commoners, however, any differences between religions become minimal due to the existence of humanistic tolerance, and especially, a love and respect towards the Truth.

Whether they are Muslim or Christian, people who do not dwell on and intellectualize the differences for profit, instead believing in what they perceive as the essence of religion, naturally show acceptance toward others on the premise that “they are also referring to Allah”. However, conflict arises as we rise to the level of religious scholars, who split hairs to focus on differences even within the same religion, let alone between different religions. For instance, during ablution, whether to wash the arms from top to bottom or from the bottom to top, becomes a cause for serious conflict. Whereas the way commoners engage with such rituals is almost habitual. We cannot disregard the fact that commoners often rely on and expect a metaphysical power to offer a remedy to attain their wishes or ward off difficulties in their daily lives. Those with a certain level of comfort in worldly affairs tend to participate in traditional community rituals whenever they can, with the purpose of securing comfort in the afterlife.

When looking for help from a metaphysical power to attain a wish, achieve a hope, prevent an anticipated difficulty, or if the difficulty has already been encountered, to get

rid of it, commoners aren't interested in whether the saint that they are visiting is from a different religion. They might justify their reasoning by saying: "God knows what is in my heart" or simply brush it off, by saying: "All is the way of God". In its essence, as we have just mentioned earlier, the conscience of the masses always looks for ways to reconcile differences. This is true even when considering, as F. V. Hasluch notes, the conversion of churches and monasteries into mosques and tekkes; these spiritual spaces are visited by people from the two religions. Every year, the Balıklı Church in Istanbul used to send olive oil to Yenikapı Mevlevihane. According to the stories, and I am not sure if they have official merit, this tradition began when a priest's daughter or relative was cured from her illness after a shaikh prayed for her. The Balıklı Church and Holy Spring, situated on the way from Sirkeci to Sultan Ahmet, located on the left before Alayköşkü, still continue to be visited both by Christians and Muslims, who make an offering for their wish to be granted. Despite serious efforts by religious scholars to openly declare the Şia-i İmamiye's (Shia Imams') bloody commemoration rituals as against the sharia, groups called "deste" continued to perform them during the month of Muharrem. Until very recently, Christians participated in these rituals by presenting offerings such as dresses, flags, shrouds, etc.

It is not only Shia Muslims who leave offerings such as candles, sugar, tea, goblets, spoons, etc, at the Seyyid Ahmed Deresi Mescidi near the Şia-i İmamiye Cemetery in Üsküdar. Among them, there are Sunnis who make offerings, and Christians also leave gifts. In hopes of finding a cure for some ailment, Christians visit Muslim hodjas, and Muslims visit Christian priests. Those who loathe the unifying, reconciliatory demeanor of commoners, or consider it to be a hindrance to their profit, ended up claiming these dual visitation sites for their own religion. Hence, Muslims and Christians were inclined to claim ownership of each others' saints. Muslims could justify their affinity with a Christian saint by saying: "Perhaps, he became a Muslim in his last breath," or "There are many hidden Muslims". At the same time, a Christian would claim a Muslim *eren* (wise man) as one of their own with justifications such as: "Because he had a dialogue

with a certain priest, because of a certain incident, or because he was liberated due to the beneficence of a certain saint.”

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However, it is essential to not forget the following:

Needs, necessities, hopes and fears, regardless, make one to feel the need to seek refuge in a supernatural power.

Beyond those who exploit, people who see the other as human and as needy as themselves, do not see a benefit in furthering religious division and opposition. When commoners encounter an authority with humanistic thinking and who embraces humanity with his actions, providing this reconciliation, they gather around him. Mevlana, who considered the differences in religions as a means of arrival, said that arriving at this Truth liberates one from all such restrictions. His reconciliatory thoughts that transcend religion are amongst the powers that strive to unify humanity. This is why not only Muslims, but also members of other religions, gather around him.

Undoubtedly, those *Rum* (Anatolian Greeks) who became members of Mevlana's circle, such as Kaloyan, Aynüddevle and Alaeddin Süryanos, did not feel that they were stepping into a religion entirely opposite to their previous one. They gathered around him because they were in awe of this power that envisioned unity, and in time, they were liberated from all restrictions, and matured with this love of humanity. Again, undoubtedly, as Mevlana spoke with a priest at the *Eflatun Monastery* (Monastery of Plato), he did not think that Christianity was superior, and did not make the priest feel that way. Human Mevlana, with that human priest, reached agreement on the basis of humanity.

When Mevlana prostrated before a priest on the road, and before an Armenian butcher, Armenian youths leaving a bar, and even women who make their living as prostitutes and their panderess, in all of these encounters, as they bowed towards each other, none of them thought of anything but that they were bowing to the humanness within each other. Both sides, by disregarding human weaknesses, or by tolerating them, prostrated to the perfect human, the humanness; and that is why Mevlana's funeral was carried like a crown above their heads by *hahams* (hakhams), priests, villagers and city-dwellers, people of different religions and sects. As Alemeddin Kayser says, each prophet is loved by his people, and each *velî* (saint) is loved by his followers, however, Mevlana is loved by people from all religions, all sects, everyone, all human beings and humanity. Those poor ones who remain entrapped by restrictions, who cannot step outside a narrow circle, those who turned their knowledge into conservatism, and their feelings into enmity towards those who do not think like them, cannot comprehend this preeminence, this borderless-ness.(107)

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When one begins by disregarding the context of a situation, they immediately step onto the wrong path and inevitably arrive at the wrong conclusion. Take the example of Hasluch, who recorded hearsay that even naïve folks laugh at, such as his claim that Şems-i Tebrizi had turned into Christ at his death-bed after swallowing an apple that contained the *Ruh-al-Kudüs* (the Holy Spirit), and became a Christian. Or imagine considering an utter lie without any evidence to claim that a priest is buried right next to Mevlana in his tomb and that Mevlana was half-Christian. Or, as some others have done, assume that because Mevlana's second wife Kerra (Kira) Hatun's name resembles a word in Greek, she spoke Anatolian Greek and showed tolerance towards Christians, that she herself must be Greek, completely disregarding that she was the daughter of İzzeddin Ali from Konya and was the wife of someone named Muhammed

Şah before she became Mevlana's wife. (108) Statements such as the above offer no value to knowledge, and can only be expressions of religious conservatism. (109)

The reason Mevlevis cultivated wise men and women with an immense tolerance that attracted non-Muslims, is because they had the immense capacity to accept a human as a human, notice and forgive their weaknesses, and consider all beliefs to be true to the believers' level of knowledge.

Here, we feel obliged to state the following:

Anyone with basic literacy knows that the region that was once called "the land of Rum" (as in the land of Rome named after the Roman Empire which later became the predominantly Christian Eastern Roman Empire) is Anatolia, and "Rumi" means "Anatolian". Due to the migration of Mevlana with his father from Belh to Konya, and his settling and passing away in Konya, the word "Rumi" was added to his name later on. Mevlana has not used this word either as a moniker, or a pen name. However, what if he did? Eşrefoğlu (death 1469), who established the Eşrefiyye branch of Kadirilik and was buried in İznik, is known by Eşref-zade, Eşref-i Rumi, and by his real name, Abdullah-i Rumi. There is a Sufi called Bayezid-i Rumi. Tosyalı İsmail (death 1631 CE, 1040H), who spread Kadirilik in Istanbul by establishing a branch from this tariqa, is known as İsmail-i Rumi. While this is the situation, one day, a priest from a Jesuit church in Anatolia found me at the cafe in front of the Bayazıt Library. He had gone to the Bayazıt Library and told them that he had some questions related to religion. The studious director of the library, Muzaffer Gökman, had recommended me. We started talking. The honorable priest believed that Mevlana was a Christian, and he asked me why otherwise would he be called Rumi (referring to the Christian legacy of the land). I was flabbergasted, and this is the reason why I had to elaborate on this matter at length.

Apparently, these are the consequences of the hearsay recorded by Hasluch!



Those who hold mystical beliefs first and foremost need to strengthen their faith, and at the very least, they must convince another to believe in what they believe. Therefore, religious people surmise that a religious poet representing a previously widespread religion must have foretold the one that will come after him, even without considering whether that poet had actually said that or not, or whether the words that represent the thought being presented belong to him or not. We find many examples of this in the holy books. However, it goes beyond that. The follower of a religion, in order to prove that his path is the true path, claims that the owner of the religion also foretells the one who will propagate it. Eventually, the words of the prophets become like a news magazine that gives news from the Invisible. (110) This occurrence that happens in almost every religion and every sect and undoubtedly serves interests, also occurs in Mevlevilik, which operates not like a religion but more like a sect with its Sema ceremony, joys, music, traditions, beliefs, manners and protocols.

When Vahdeti, a Bosnian scholar and poet, said the following,

**Arşın altında sema' eyler iken gordu anı**

**Şeb-i esrada kamu kavm-i rusul başları**

he was pointing to a story that appears in the latter books of stories about the lives of important people of faith, as follows: (111)

During the time of Sultan Veled, a Sayyid from Medina arrived in Konya. The tip of his turban reached down to his belly, in Mevlevi style. Sultan Veled remarked that this style was the tradition of Mevlana, and that they have not seen it in other shaikhs and sayyids. The Sayyid responded by saying that they had heard it from their elders, and that it was written in *Miraj-names* (accounts of the Prophet's ascension). During the night of the miraj, the Prophet saw at the top most level of the sky, a beautiful person

donning this style of turban. He inquired with Archangel Gabriel whether this person was one of the prophets, or one of the *erens* (wise men or saints). Gabriel said: “This is the soul and the image of Muhammed Jelaledin from the lineage of Abu-Bakr. He will tell the truth about your words. He will open the secrets of the Quran, and for his time, he will be your example.” (112)

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However, it doesn't end here. During the grandeur of Mevlevilik, Esrar Dede took it a step further to claim that Mevlana was foretold in the Bible:

**Mubesser oldu Incil icre ayin-i semaindan  
Mesih'in remz-u imasi Celaledin-i Rumi'dir (Divan, p. 7)**

Which verse of the Bible was Esrar Dede referring to? It is not possible to say for sure. However, in Yohanna (John's) Bible's verses XIV and XVI, İsa (Prophet Jesus) mentions that a *teselli edici* (one who consoles those who are suffering) will arrive (7-14, 26), and even calls him *hakikat ruhu* (the spirit of truth). Most likely, Esrar is referring to these verses. Esrar has another very strange poem:

**İy mugbece-i ziba iy can-u dil-i İsa  
Subholdu Güneş dogdu geldi dem-i eklisa  
Zir-i bagal Engilyon destinde celipasi  
Ta kunbed-i gerdundan geldi bu gece Yuna**

<... poem continues on next page>

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>Insert poem here from pages 264-65; heavily in Persian and Arabic<

In this poem, Yuna, who is mentioned in the second couplet, must be Yunus (Jonas), a prophet of İsrailoğulları (the sons of Israel). The third couplet refers to a sermon of Prophet Yahya (John) delivered in the desert, advising people that *göklerin melekutu* (the dominion of the angels of the skies) is near, as well as Yahya's baptism of the Prophet İsa (Matthew's Bible, section III, Mark I, Luke III, John I). The second line of the fifth couplet is in Greek. Yohanna, who is mentioned in the sixth couplet, is one apostle of Jesus, who has a gospel.

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Fara, that is mentioned in the eighth couplet, is the land of Faran, which is Mecca where, according to the Torah, Prophet İbrahim (Abraham) received the good news that the lineage of İsmail will also become an ummah (a community of believers) (Tekvin, XXI, 13-21). The ninth couplet refers to the *teslis* (Trinity), and Matitya, who is

mentioned in the same line, is Matta (Matthew), who has a gospel. Luka (Luke), who is mentioned in the following line, also has a gospel. “Divançe-i Salmûsi”, mentioned in the 14th couplet, should be referring to Talmud, which is a commentary on the Tevrat (Torah). Işa (Isha), who is mentioned in the same couplet, is most likely Abşalom (Abshalom), the third son of Davud (David). Uzza, mentioned in the following couplet, is one of the idols that the tribe of Quraysh worshipped before the prophethood of the Muhammad.

Apparently, Esrar Dede took his time studying the Torah and Bible, and as he read them, attributed certain sections to Mevlana. Perhaps he knew Greek like Mevlana did, and perhaps, his residency in the Galata neighborhood might have resulted in him learning Greek.(113)

### Traces of Ancient Beliefs in Mevlevilik

Mevlevilik was established during the time of Sultan Veled, and its formation and expansion took place from the 13th through to the end of the 15th centuries. Mevlevilik expressed the realistic philosophy of Mevlana solely through his expansive worldview and tolerance, as well as through Sema, *vecid* (ecstasy), poetry and music. The belief became mystical over the centuries under the influence of the *nazari tasavvuf* (theoretical sufism), and the *madrasah* (religious school).(114) Mevlevilik *adab* (manners), *erkan* (protocols) and *merasim* (ceremonies) took their final form after the 16th century, and in all this, we can find traces of many traditions which are centuries old, passed from one generation to another.

- The sacredness of the *ocak* (stove) and the *matbah* (kitchen) in Mevlevilik, without a doubt, is the expression of a very old tradition. Varuna, in the ancient Hindu-Iranian belief, which in Greek appears as Ouranos meaning the sky, was the most exalted of all creation. The Sun was his eye, and the fire, which manifested as a lightning bolt, was his son. Mitra, which later became Mihr in Persian, was the Apollo of the

Greeks. Apollo, which was called Febus (Phoebus) in Rome and represented fine arts and literature, manifested itself in the universe as the Sun. There is an obvious connection between Vesta (Hestia in Greek), which has the sign of sacred fire symbolizing the stove and the virtues of a family, and the words âtar and âtarsh in the Avesta (the religious text of Zoroastrianism). In the Pahlavi language, the words become âtur, atar and âtash, and in Persian, âzer and âder, âteş, âdiş, and later become ateş. The temple of Vesta in Rome was specifically rooted in the sacredness of the fire and the stove (For this subject, please refer to Dr. Muhammed Muin's *Mazdayasna*: "Mazdayasna and Te'sir-i on der Edebiyyat-i Parisi", Tehran University Publications, 1326 şemsi hijri - Universite Basimevi, page: 27-31, 174-180).

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The overwhelming similarities between the Greek and the Persian mythologies leave no room for doubt. In Iran, *tir-utarid* – referred to as "*debir-i felek*" or the scribe of the sky – is Hermes in Greek, and Mercurius in Roman mythologies. Nahid (Zuhre, or Venus) is Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Mirrih, or Behram, is Ares (Mars in Latin). Keyvan, meaning Zuhel, is Saturn; and such similarities go on and on. Similar to how faith became rooted in reason during the medieval ages, in Iran, faith combined elements of mythology with the science of Ptolemy and the reason of Aristoteles, resulting in a strange astronomy.

Is it Greek or Iranian mythology that is at the root of this sameness? Did this mythological understanding receive its principles from ancient India, or was it transferred to Iran via Alexander (the Great)? While we can say that the latter understanding is weak, we will not explore it further because it is beyond our focus.

It is apparent from this brief explanation that *ateş* (fire) has been sacred since ancient times; it belongs to the sky, and its home is the stove and the kitchen, which are sacred places. Zoroastrianism, which accepted the religion of the one God, has

promoted the sacredness of fire and the Sun. Balkh (Belh) was one of the most important cultural centers. “Nev-bahar” was amongst the few fire temples in Balkh, which despite originally being a Buddhist temple, was later considered a Zoroastrian temple by an important group of historians and poets, due to its fame (Please look up Mazdayasna, pages: 232, 323-327).

The belief in the sacredness of the fire and the stove had enriched language with numerous metaphors, as well as literal meanings in literature. An example of this is how *aşk* is almost always likened to fire. Many words that originated in Zoroastrianism appeared in classical Islamic and Persian literature. Examples of these words include *mubid* (a follower of Zoroastrianism), *ateşkede* (fire temple, fire altar), *muğbeçe* (an apprentice at a Zoroastrian temple), *pir-i muğan* (the senior wine-server), *muğ* (a follower of the Zoroastrian religion, also meaning wine-seller), *mey* (wine, or divine love). Even the word *gebr* (a Zoroastrian or fire-worshipper) was used to refer to non-Muslims, especially Christians. These words that originated in Zoroastrianism were augmented by the influence of mythology, which eventually overpowered the Islamic elements in the language, resulting in the formation of a national and popular folk literature.

*Tasavvuf* (Sufism), with its acceptance of the oneness of being, considered love, joy, music, dance and poetry as means of cleansing the soul, and attributed a mystical meaning to each of these words: *Pir-i muğan* (senior wine-server); *pir-i harabat* (owner of the bar where wine is sold; or, mystically, head of the dervish lodge); *insan-i kamil* (the perfected human being); *mürşit* (murshid, or the shaikh), meaning a *kutup* (a person of the highest spiritual attainment of his era); *muğ* (a believer of the oneness of being) and *muğbeçe* (the one who manifests); *salik*, a spiritual traveler who is on a journey to reach the Truth; *ateşkede*: the place where the *mürşit* is; *meyhane*: *gönül* (conscience); and *mey*, the wine, has come to symbolize the joy or pleasure of Truth and love.

The ancient roots of the sacredness of the fire and stove also exist in Mevlevilik. Within this context, the *matbah* (kitchen) is a sacred place of worship where the *salik* is cooked and matured through service. The stove in the kitchen, which is also referred to as *Ateş-baz* (fire starter), is the station of Ateş-baz-ı Veli and is akin to a *mihrab* (prayer niche) in this sacred place of worship. Ser-tabbah, or Aşçı Dede (the master cook) as he is called in Turkish, is the teacher of the saliks. He is not a man who cooks food, he cooks travelers into maturity, and therefore he is the *murşit* who is also known as *Aşçıbaşı* (the head of all the cooks), or Aşçı Dede. The *kazancı* (cauldron-master) is his *umumi vekil* (deputy).

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Similarly in Bektâşilik, the master cook is not only responsible for the *aşevi* (the dining hall), but also belonging to him is the special additional role of providing the service of *rehberlik* (guidance). At the *Pirevi*, meaning the Hacı Bektaş Tekke (The Lodge of Hacı Bektaş), which Mevlevis refer to as the “Huzur” and Bektashis as “Hazret”, Aşçı Baba (The father cook) is not only the Baba of the Aşevi, but is also the most senior of all other Babas, second after *Dedebaba* (The master) and is a prospective Dedebaba. The Bektashi *meydan* (the sacred gathering space) always contains a stove and a *post* (a sheep-skin) that belongs to the Aşçı Seyyid Ali Sultan. (115)

- In Mevlevilik, abstinence from speaking during meals is reminiscent of being silent during meals in Zoroastrianism. In Mevlevilik and Bektashilik, the *terceman* and *gûlbank* prayers, and specifically the *sofra gûlbank* (the mealtime prayer), are reminiscent of the prayers that are recited by *muğ* in a low tone of voice, murmuring quietly without opening their lips, when sanctifying the fire, when taking a shower, and when eating (Zoroastrianism/Mazdayasna: Baj and Zemzem, pages: 253-257). Actually from our perspective, the *hırka* (dervish cloak) of the Sufis and the *şedd* (waist belt), which members of the Fütüvvet brotherhood wrap around their waists,



are adaptations of *kutsi*, a sheep-wool belt that is handwoven with 72 strings, and *sedre* shirts worn by the followers of Zoroastrian. In Zoroastrianism, for a youth to receive his *sedre* and to get his *kutsi* wrapped on his waist by his *muhi*d (teacher) would mean that he entered amongst the society of “*bih-dinler - iyi dinliler*” (those of good religion), and he was born for the second time, a spiritual birthing into the world. For the Fütüvvet brotherhood, *kutsi* first appeared in the style of a *şedd*, and was called *tiyg-bend* by Bektashis, and *elifi nemed* by Mevlevis. The *hirka* is common amongst all Sufis, however, it does not exist in the Fütüvvet (please refer to the same book, page: 243-252). (116)

- The *Ayn-i Cem* outdoor Sema ceremony, which is often considered in mystical thought as having derived from the term *Ayn-al-Cem* (the eye of the gathering) was most realistically derived from the term *Ayin-i Cem* (the ceremony of gathering together), which only exists for Mevlevis and Bektashis. Both of these tariqas emphasize elements of fire and music as part of the ceremony, and drinking is incorporated by Bektashis into the conversations that take place after the ceremony.
- The reason that fish is not consumed in the Mevlevi kitchen was due to the influence of ancient philosophies. The origins of this belief might include influences from ancient Indian religions, or might have emerged from a respect towards life. Furthermore, consuming fish from lakes and rivers in continental climates was not habitual as they were rare to obtain in the early periods, and were full of fishbones and smelled like moss. However, in later periods, as mystical considerations took root, not consuming fish became a dogma. Let us also share this: Fish has no place in the Bektashi kitchen as well. Furthermore, Bektashi zealots never eat fish. As they believe in reincarnation, fish is considered *esfel suret*, meaning, the lowest form of existence.

Those who drowned in Noah's deluge, still appear as fish [117] and if fish and seafood are consumed, one's spiritual progress stops. Strangely, this belief is also shared by those who spend their time trying to do things that can't be done, such as so-called fortune-tellers, numerologists, breath-healers and sorcerers who utilize various methodologies and claim to know and to have the ability to control the unknown/unseen. [118] If seafood is consumed, the power of the breath is diminished, and their efforts attain no results. Therefore, among those who made a living from such methods, those who had enjoyed eating fish would stop when they needed to use their breath to heal another.

### **Endnotes:**

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(91) Although members of other tariqas also use “ulema-yı rûsûm” and “rûsûm ulemâsı” to refer to the representatives of orthodox knowledge, this term mostly belongs to Mevlevis.

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(92) Please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Edition II, p. 291, poem. VIII.

(93) Please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 201.

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(94) “Otman Baba Vilâyetnâmesi” contains very important information about the positive relations of Fatih with Hurûfîs. Şakayık writes that Hurûfîs deceived Fatih, and Mahmud Pasha informed Fahreddin Acemî of this situation. One day, Fahreddin Acemî hid inside the home of Mahmud Pasha; when Hurûfî dede came and began talking about matters against the sharia, he got out of his hiding place and started cursing at dede; and, when dede started running away to the palace, he ran after him and yelled at him while in the presence of the Sultan. Consequently, the poor man was burned along with other Hurûfîs at the Edirne Musallası (musalla: the space outside a mosque, where burial prayers take place), when Fahreddin Acemî’s beard caught fire as he breathed into the fire. (İst. Mat. Âmire, 1269, p.82-83). Hâmidî mentions in a qasida he wrote for Mahmud Pasha, in his Divan in Persian, that Hurufis were burned (Külliyât-ı Divân-ı Mevlânâ Hâmidî, Prof. İ. H. Ertaylan edition, İst. Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1949, p. 284). Nişancı Tarihi also contains important information about the banishment of the Kalenderis during the reign of Kanunî (İst. Mat. Âmire, 1279, p.234-235).

(95) According to a precious manuscript dated 990 (1582), which was discovered by Professor Tayyib Okiç from Ankara İlahiyat Fakültesi (Faculty of Religious Studies), who presented his findings at the Müsteşrikler Kongresi (Conference of Orientalists) in 1951, Hamza Bâli and his followers, the Hamzavîs, attempted to establish a state by appointing amongst themselves a sultan, vezir (vizier, minister), kadi (qadi, religious judge), defterdar (treasurer) and cavus (sergeant). I thank him for his kindness in sharing this document with me. Bosna Kadısı (Qadi of Bosnia) Bâli, whose name is mentioned in this document, and this event is explained in its entirety as part of Şakayık's translation addendum (p. 283). Münîrî of Belgrade, in his book titled "Silsilât-al-Mukarrabîn va Manâkıb-al-Muttakiym" writes that Hamza Bey was martyred in Hicri year 990, while pointing out to a reference to "Mabeynlerinde tertib-i erkan iddia olunduğuyçün" (due to a rebellion attempt that took place in their place of worship) (Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Pasha, mecmua (magazine), No. 2819. Risâle, takes place on the pages 21-145 of the magazine. Hamza Bey is mentioned on pages 139-141).

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(96) Abaza, who became quite tiresome for the state as he caused for the army to nearly perish twice during winter in Erzurum, and got into relations with Iran, was the governor (Vali) to Bosnia and later to Silistra during the reign to Murad IV, and was eventually killed in 1634. As Kâtib Çelebi was a part of the army that was in charge of dispersing this rebellion, his "Fezlike" contains the most accurate information about this uprising. Other histories always use him as their reference. (Please refer to, vol. II. İst. Ceride-i Havadis Mat. 1287, p. 21-56, 108-111, and 169).

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(97) Cevdet, vol. XII, p. 54.

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(98) To obtain more information about these subjects, please refer to “Yenikapı Mevlevî-hânesi”, p. 177-190 and 220-231.

(99) There was a correspondence signed by Mehmed Kemal, one of the scribes of the Mabeyn (the palace of the sultan), dated 22 August 1319, which was sent to Bitlis, and from where it received a written response, referred to these individuals as “Erbab-ı mefsedetten,” who have been exiled to Bitlis, where they were required to live separately in the same city, were kept under constant surveillance, and would be the subject of intelligence reports twice a month, along with others who were on exile. Please refer to: Başb. Arş. Yıldız Evrakı, Tasnif Komisyonu def. K. 36, No. 2581.

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(100) Please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 243.

(101) Şakayık-ı Nu'maniyye translation, İst. Mat. Âmire, 1269, p. 23.

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(102) For the lineage of Mevlânâ, please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 34-40.

(103) For those traditions that passed on from the members of Fütüvvet (Ahilik; Islamic Guild) to the people of Anatolia, please refer to: “ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, İslam ve Türk İllerinde Fütüvvet Teşkilatı ve Kaynakları (İst. Üniv. İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası, vol. XI, no. 1-4, 1952, p. 3-354. Especially, p. 100-102).

(104) Tâc-al-Tavârih, vol. I, p. 309.

(105) Please refer to our article in İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası, p. 80-83.

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(106) The ideas that were presented in the article titled “Sultanların Kılıç kuşanması” (The Sword-bearing Ceremony of the Sultans) in F.V. Hasluck’s “Bektaşilik Tetkikleri” (Studies in Bektashilik) are entirely false attributions and are arbitrary. At the same time, the following pieces of information are wholly erroneous: A Mevlevi sheikh conducting Mahmud II and Abdülmecid’s sword-bearing ceremony; during a sword-bearing ceremony, because Çelebis were not in Istanbul, a Mevlevi shaikh in Istanbul, or the Nakıyb-al-aşrâf, to act as representatives of Çelebis; a Mevlevi shaikh to conduct the sword-bearing ceremony for Abdülhamid (p. 121-135).

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(107) To better understand these subjects, please read again the following pages: “Mevlânâ Celâleddin”’s second section, subject III. (Third Edition, p. 167-186); third section, subject I. (p. 191-246); and, especially the pages 191-211 of this section.

(108) Please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 136.

(109) Please refer to: F.V. Hasluck’s “Bektaşilik Tetkikleri” (Studies in Bektashilik): translated by Ragıb Hulûsi, p. 136-141.

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(110) Let alone how each prophet foretold the prophet that will come after him, in Islam, Mehdî, with his anticipated arrival, resulted in so many mehdî zealots (Please

refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 18-19). In recent times, Muhammed Şirazi (death 1850) who established Bâbîlik (Bâbîism), had also emerged with this claim. Bahâullah (death 1891), who was the preacher of Bahâî religion, played the role of Mehdî for Sunnis, Mesîh (Christ) for Christians, and Huseyn for Muslim Shias, who believed that he would arrive after Mehdî. To see the false hadith attributed to Prophet Muhammed foretelling the founders of the Shafi and the Hanafi schools, please refer to: Süyûtî: al-Lâ-alî'l Masnûa Fi'l-Âhadîs-al-Mavzûa, Mısır-al-Adabiyya Mat. 13, vol. I, p. 237-238.

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(111) Vahdetî is not found in Esrâr Dede. Ahdî records a Vahdetî from Yenipazar of Bosnia. This person, with his deep knowledge, and efficiency in Persian, “Râh-ı Fazl-ı Yezdâniye sâlik and fazl-ı dil-gûşâ-yı Câvidâniye mâlik”, namely, was of the Hurufi sect. In 986 (1578-1579), he went to Baghdad, upon visiting the Imams there, he left for Basra on his way to Hicaz. He became the scribe for Vali Mehmed Pasha’s Divan, and later he went to Rum, namely Anatolia, with the Pasha. The following last couplet of the ghazal, which Ahdi took as an example:

**Ehl-i Fazl’in ayağı toprağıyuz Vahdetiyâ**

**Tarz-i şî’rim nola Bâkî’den olursa muhkem**

indicate that he was also in Istanbul and had met with Bâkî (İst. Üniv. K. türk. yaz. 2604, 125. b. on the margin). The ghazal included in this text is also in a magazine registered under No. 135 in Bursa Orhan Kütüphanesi (Orhan Library in Bursa). The second couplet of this ghazal:

**Çerh-i ahdarda görün Hazret-i Mevlânâ’yı**

**Durmadın dâhı döner üstüne yoldâşları**

is inscribed in a divan-like taliq script on the foot-stone of Mevlevi khalifa Ali Dede, where the head-stone is a **istivalı seyfi külah** without a destar, behind the tomb of Rûsûhî in Kulekapısı Mevlevi-hanesi in Galata, reads:

**Arsa-i ıřkta görün Hazret-i Mevlânâ'yı**  
**Durmadın dâhı döner üstüne yoldâşları**

The couplet inscribed on the stone is the second couplet of Baki's ghazal with the following matla (the rhyming couplet of a ghazal):

**Müstedâm ola fenâ kuyunun evbâşları**  
**Kim olur birbiri yolunda fedâ bâşları.**

When considering the similarities between these two ghazals, and that there could not be such level of coincidence, or plagiarism, one should conclude that the second couplet of Baki's ghazal was probably Vahdeti's and got intermixed with this ghazal.

Vahdeti's Dîvân is registered under No. 85 amongst Haşim Pasha's books in Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi (Selim Ağa Library) in Üsküdar. It is evident from his poetry that he was a Câ'feri with sincere beliefs towards Hurûfilik (Hurufiism). Both couplets recorded by Ahdî are included in this Dîvân (p. 3, 35). The ghazal above is also included in the same Dîvân. However, the first line of the couplet we referred to is in the following style, and is the first line of the second couplet:

**Çerh-i ahdarda görün Hazret-i Mevlânâ'yı.**

The following line, is the first line of the fifth couplet:

**Durmadın dâhı döner üstüne yoldâşları.**

In conclusion, Vahdeti, is Vahdeti that is mentioned by Ahdî. Ali Dede who passed away in 991, the third of Cemaziyelevvel (1583), and similar to Divâne Mehmed Çelebi



and Yusuf Sine-çak, Şemsi (Shamsi) Mevlevi's of the time had a strong Alevi tendencies and therefore Hurufi beliefs. Considering the "seyfi külah" on Ali Dede's head-stone, there is a possibility that he was one of the khalifas of Divâne Mehmed Çelebi.

(112) This story which is in the beginning parts of "Sevâkıb-al-Menâkıb" and is the third story about Mevlânâ's birth and childhood, is not in "Menâkıb-al-Ârifin".

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(113) Let's mention this here: Esrâr is not a Christian convert. As part of the appendant to Halet Effendi's books in Süleymaniye, on the folio 1.a of Sultan Veled Dîvânı, which is registered under No. 139, the acquisition script in his own handwriting states that his father was Ahmed Bi-zeban (mute). His father was Hasan, and the name of his father was Osman.

(114) Please refer to: Mevlânâ Celâleddin, Third Edition, p. 11-21, 140-167.

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(115) All of these points have been explained extensively in our forthcoming book about Bektaşilik (Bektashism) and the history of Bektaşilik.

(116) We shared this idea for the first time in İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası (ç. XI, no. 1-4, 1952). We presented it in our article "İslam ve Türk İllerinde Fütüvvet Teşkilatı ve Kaynakları", p. 3-354. Kustî ve sedre were mentioned on pages 83-85.

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(117) >insert here long poem from page 269, heavily in Persian and Arabic<

(Üsküdar'lı Haşim Baba (Haşim Baba of Üsküdar), Dîvân, İst. 1252, p. 122.)

(118)

Havas is the knowledge of the verses of the Qur'an, and the qualities of the names (attributes) of God. This knowledge is attained through an exhaustive style of *zhikr* (remembrance) practices and abstinence, and it was believed that through this

knowledge the djinn, and even the souls of the stars could be spellbound. Vafk is the knowledge of scribing the names of God, the verses of the Quran (ayahs) and numbers in squares. It was believed that whoever carries these symbols would attain their wish. Cefr is the knowledge of the invisible realm. It was believed that through the sentences deducted from letters and numbers, one could obtain information about the future. Remil is the knowledge of the future through words and sentences conceived from letters perceived in randomly spread out dots. (To learn more about “Ülûm-ı hafiyye, ulûm-ı garibe,” which meant secret and unique knowledges, please refer to Taşköprüzade’s “Mavzuât-al-Ulûm”, translated by his son Kemaleddin Muhammed, İst. - İkdam Mat. 1313, vol. I, p. 363-366. 377-402 and 427-430).