

THE ALEVISM-BEKTASISM ORDER AND THE AKHIS ORGANISATION IN ANATOLIA: IDEAS AND PRACTICES

Anadolu'da Alevilik-Bektaşilik Tarikati ve Ahî Teşkilatı: Fikirler ve Uygulamalar

Der alevitisch-bektaschitische Orden und die Achi-Organisation in Anatolien: Ideen und Praktiken

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ABSTRACT

The Seljuk Turks' victory at the Battle of Manzikert (1071 AD) and their entry into Anatolia marked a new chapter for this ancient land. The emergence of the Sultanate of Rum led to extensive political, social, and cultural transformations in the region. Gradually, with the consolidation of Seljuk rule, nomadic and urban Turks, drawn by the promise of prosperity and security in Anatolia, crossed the deserts of Central Asia and flocked to Anatolia in droves. To strengthen the foundations of their weakening caliphate in the 6th-7th/12th-13th centuries, the Abbasid caliphs supported the *futuwwa* movement. They joined them and encouraged their vassal rulers to do the same, spreading *futuwwa* throughout the Islamic lands. The Mongol invasion prompted a migration of scholars and Sufis to Anatolia, where they found refuge under the Seljuk kings. The kings' support for *futuwwa* and Sufism and socio-political changes in the region led to various Sufi orders in Anatolia. Despite its combative stance against the Seljuks, the Alevi-Bektasi order became one of the most influential Sufi movements in the region and was significantly impacted by the Akhis tradition. Alevi Bektasi order was influenced by *futuwwa* ideas and practices. Some of their rituals in Jam ceremony are similar to *futuwwa*. With the

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rise of the Alevi-Bektasi order during the Ottoman period, many Akhi members joined this order. The simplicity of teachings, emphasis on action, and the presence of Shia rituals in both groups brought them closer together and eventually united them. This paper examines the influence of them on the Bektasism, highlighting the similarities between the two movements that eventually led to their integration.

Keywords: Anatolia, Seljuks of Rum, Akhis of Rum, Alevism- Bektasism.

ÖZ

Selçuklu Türkleri'nin Malazgirt Meydan Muharebesi'ndeki (1071) zaferi ve Anadolu'ya girişleri, bu eski topraklar için yeni bir dönüm noktasını işaret etmiştir. Rum Sultanlığı'nın ortaya çıkışı, bölgede geniş kapsamlı siyasi, sosyal ve kültürel dönüşümlere yol açmıştır. Selçuklu yönetiminin pekişmesiyle birlikte, refah ve güvenlik vaatleriyle Anadolu'ya çekilen göçebe ve yerleşik Türkler, Orta Asya çöllerini geçerek Anadolu'ya büyük bir akınla gelmişlerdir. 6-7. yüzyıllarda/12-13. yüzyıllarda Abbâsî halifeleri, zayıflayan halifeliklerini güçlendirmek için futuvvet hareketini desteklemişlerdir. Onlar bu hareketin içinde yer almış ve vasal yöneticilerini de aynı şekilde davranmaya teşvik ederek futuvveti İslam topraklarına yaymışlardır. Moğol istilası, alimlerin ve sûfilerin Anadolu'ya göç etmesine yol açmış ve burada Selçuklu hükümdarları altında sığınacak yer bulmuşlardır. Selçuklu hükümdarlarının futuvvet ve tasavvufa verdikleri destek ve bölgedeki sosyo-politik değişimler, Anadolu'da çeşitli tasavvufî tarikatların ortaya çıkmasına sebep olmuştur. Selçuklulara karşı mücadeleci bir tavır sergileyen Alevi-Bektaşî tarikatı, bölgede en etkili tasavvuf hareketlerinden biri haline gelmiş ve Ahi geleneğinden büyük ölçüde etkilenmiştir. Alevi-Bektaşî tarikatı, futuvvet anlayışlarından ve uygulamalarından etkilenmiştir. Cem ritüelindeki bazı uygulamalar futuvvetle benzerlik göstermektedir. Osmanlı döneminde Alevi-Bektaşî tarikatının yükselmesiyle, birçok Ahi üyesi bu tarikatla birleşmiştir. Öğretilerin sadeliği, eyleme vurgu yapılması ve her iki gruptaki Şii ritüellerinin varlığı, onları birbirine yakınlaştırmış ve nihayetinde birleştirmiştir. Bu makale, Alevi-Bektaşîliğin üzerindeki etkilerini inceleyerek, iki hareket arasındaki benzerlikleri vurgulamakta ve sonunda entegrasyonlarına yol açan bu benzerlikleri ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anadolu, Rum Selçukluları, Rum Ahileri, Alevilik-Bektaşîlik.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Sieg der Seldschuken in der Schlacht bei Manzikert (1071 n. Chr.) und ihr Einzug nach Anatolien markierten ein neues Kapitel für dieses alte Land. Mit der Entstehung des Sultanats der Rum-Seldschuken gingen weitreichende politische, soziale und kulturelle Transformationen in der Region einher. Mit der Festigung der seldschukischen Herrschaft wanderten Scharen nomadischer und städtischer Türken angezogen von der Aussicht auf Wohlstand und Sicherheit nach und nach durch die Wüsten Zentralasiens nach Anatolien. Im 6.-7./12.-13. Jahrhundert unterstützten die Abbasiden-Kalifen die *Futuwwa*-Bünde, um die Grundlagen ihres geschwächten Kalifats zu stärken. Sie schlossen sich der Bewegung an und ermutigten ihre Vasallenherrscher, dasselbe zu tun, wodurch sich die *Futuwwa* in den islamischen Regionen verbreitete. Die mongolische Invasion führte dazu, dass Gelehrte und Sufis nach Anatolien migrierten, wo sie unter den seldschukischen Herrschern Zuflucht fanden. Die Unterstützung der Seldschuken für die *Futuwwa* und den Sufismus sowie die soziopolitischen Veränderungen in der Region führten zur Entstehung verschiedener sufistischer Orden in Anatolien. Trotz ihrer gegnerischen Haltung gegenüber den Seldschuken wurde der alevitisch-bektaschitische Orden zu einer der einflussreichsten sufistischen Bewegungen der Region und war stark von der Achi-Tradition geprägt. Der alevitisch-bektaschitische Orden wurde von den Ideen und Praktiken der *Futuwwa* beeinflusst, wobei einige ihrer Rituale in der *Cem*-Zeremonie Ähnlichkeiten zur *Futuwwa* aufweisen. Mit dem Aufstieg des alevitisch-bektaschitischen Ordens in der Zeit des Osmanischen Reichs traten viele Mitglieder der Achi-Organisation dem Orden bei. Die Einfachheit der Lehren, die Betonung von Handlung und das Vorhandensein schiitischer Rituale in beiden Gruppen führten dazu, dass sie sich einander annäherten und schließlich vereinigten. Diese Arbeit untersucht den Einfluss der Achi-Tradition auf den bektaschitischen Orden und beleuchtet die Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den beiden Bewegungen, die letztendlich zu ihrer Integration führten.

Schlüsselwörter: Anatolien, Rum-Seldschuken, Rum-Achi, Aleviten und Bektaschiten.

Introduction

The Seljuk Turks' victory at the Battle of Manzikert (1071 AD) and their entry into Anatolia marked a new chapter for this ancient land. The emergence of the Sultanate of Rum led to extensive political, social, and cultural transformations in the region. With the consolidation of Seljuk rule, nomadic and urban Turks, drawn by the promise of prosperity and security in Anatolia, crossed the deserts of Central Asia and flocked to Anatolia in droves. This trend intensified, especially with the Mongol invasion of Islamic lands and the insecurity across vast regions of the Islamic world. The Mongols, through widespread slaughter and the destruction of cities, caused the migration of intellectuals, scholars, and Sufis who sought refuge in the realm of the Seljuk sultans of Rum.

The presence of Sufis and scholars among the newly settled Turks provided a fertile ground for political, social, and religious transformations, resulting in the spread of kind of innovative Islam (*bid'a*) among the rural classes. In his valuable work, "The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh to the Fifteenth Century," Speros Vryonis (1971) highlights the Seljuk kings' benevolent treatment of the Anatolian inhabitants and the tolerance and gentleness of Sufi Islam in attracting followers as factors contributing to the Islamization of Anatolia.¹ Thus, Anatolia rapidly became a hub of the formation of various groups and schools, often founded by immigrant and displaced sheikh (See: Mokhber Dezfouli, 2010).

The "*Ashab-i Futumwa*", known in Anatolia as Akhis of Rum, who had long been active in the Islamic world, increased their activities with the Mongol invasion and the insecurity in Islamic regions, and Anatolia became one of the arenas for their activities. During this period, primary Sufi schools such as the Awhadiyya (followers of Sheikh Awhad al-Din Kirmani), the Akbariyya (followers of Sheikh Akbar Ibn al-Arabi, led by his adopted son Sadr al-Din Qunawi), the Mawlawiyya (led by Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi), and the Bektasiyya (led by Haji Bektash Wali) emerged and flourished in this region. It should be noted that all those Sufi orders founded and preached later by the aforementioned sheikhs followers.

1 For more information see: Speros, Vryonis, The decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the 15th century, University of California Press, 1971.

The support of Seljuk kings for Sufi sheikhs, as long as they posed no political threat, played a role in this growth and prosperity. However, the Bektasis, unlike the schools mentioned above and due to their origins as remnants of the Baba'i movement (See: Ocak, Ahmet, 1980) were against the Seljuks and gradually played a significant role in the Seljuks' downfall and the rise of the Ottoman state. This article, by reviewing the cultural landscape of Anatolia in the 7th/13th century, which was a center of activity for various Sufi schools, will examine the pervasive influence of the Akhis organisation on the Alevi Bektasi Order and the similarities between these two groups, which led to the Akhis joining the Alevi Bektasi Order during the Ottoman period.

Extensive research has been conducted on the Akhis organisation in Anatolia; those investigations are based on numerous *futuwwa* treatises that have survived from different periods. In his valuable work, "Futuwwa in Islamic Countries and Its Sources," Abdülbaki Golpınarlı, in addition to presenting the "Futuwwa-nama-yi Nasiri," refers to many *futuwwa* treatises found in Turkish libraries. In Iran, Mohsen Afshari, in "Futuwwa Treatises and Khaksariyya Letters," as well as another work co-authored with Mehdi Madayeni titled "*Futuwwa wa asnaʿ*," has compiled several important Futuwwa treatises.

However, limited research regarding the Alevi Bektasi Order is available in Persian. The books "The Emergence of the Alevi-Bektasi Order in Anatolia" by Fahimeh Mokhber Dezfuli and "Turks, Islam, and Alevi-Bektasi Beliefs in Anatolia" by Mohammad Taghi Emami Khoi and also many articles by the abovementioned authors are the important researches conducted on the Alevi-Bektasi Order in Iran; however, Turkish authors such as Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Fuad Köprülü, Ali Yaman and Abdülbaki Golpınarlı have written numerous works on Bektasism, which have been utilized in this article.

Anatolia in the 7th/13th Century

At the dawn of the 7th/13th century, the Islamic lands were ablaze with discord and fragmentation. Instead of striving for unity and harmony among Islamic rulers, the Abbasid caliph instigated them against each other, fueling conflict among local leaders.

In the Islamic East, Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah battled the Qara Khitai and Ghurid kings² while harboring aspirations of overthrowing the Abbasid caliphate. Egypt and Syria were under the control of the Ayyubids, who, while at odds with each other, also fought against the Crusaders. The Seljuk kings of Rum were not far behind their counterparts in other regions, engaging in rivalry and enmity over power, resulting in the killing of nobles and innocent people.

The fear of Mongol invasion and the weakness of the Seljuk government, which had plagued them since the death of the most capable Seljuk ruler of Rum, Ala al-Din Kiyqbad (1219-1237), led to social unrest. The people witnessed conflict and strife between Seljuk princes on the one hand and clashes with their viziers on the other. Due to insecurity, the viziers opposed the kings, governors rebelled, and Seljuk sultans killed viziers under various pretexts.³The lack of security led to increased activity among the Ashab-i Futuwwa, who based their school's foundation on safeguarding the well-being and security of ordinary people.

The Akhis organization in Anatolia

The origins of *Futuwwa*, or the “chivalrous youth” movement, can likely be traced back to Sassanid-era Persia,⁴ although the concept was not unfamiliar to Arabs. *Futuwwa* members embodied bravery, masculinity, generosity, and justice and were often drawn from the ranks of artisans and craftsmen. During the second Abbasid period, as the caliphate weakened and its ability to maintain public safety declined, these groups became increasingly active, particularly in turbulent regions.

2 The Abbasid Caliph incited local emirs against each other. In 612 AH, he sent a message to Uzbek bin Pahlavan, encouraging him to fight against Mangali, the vassal of Khwarazmshah (Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil*, Vol. 12, p. 306). He also incited the Ghurids to rebel against Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah (Juvayni, *Tarikh-i Jahan-gusha*, Vol. 2, p.86)

3 . For example, Sa'd al-Din Köpek, who had long held the position of vizier and gained extraordinary influence by executing many Seljuk statesmen, was handed over to the executioner. Similarly, Mu'in al-Din Pervane, who had rendered many services to the Seljuk state of Rum, met the same fate (*Aqsarayi, Musamarat al-Akhhbar wa Musayarat al-Akhhbar*, p. 252).

4 For more information about the Sassanid origin of Akhis See: Zakeri, Mohsen,(1995), *Sasanid soldiers in early Muslim society; The origin of Ayyaran and Futuwwa*, Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.

The establishment of the Saffarid dynasty (252-298 AH) by Ya'qub ibn al-Liyth al-Saffari in Sistan resulted from this group's activities. In the final years of the Abbasid Caliphate, al-Nasir li-Din Allah (575-622 AH) himself assumed leadership of the *futuwwa* and sought to leverage their social standing to stabilize the shaky foundations of his family's caliphate. This support led to the widespread dissemination of Futuwwa throughout the Islamic world.⁵

One of the regions where *futuwwa* emerged was Anatolia. The friendly relationship between the Seljuk rulers of Rum and the Abbasid caliphate, particularly during the reign of al-Nasir li-Din Allah, contributed to the influence of *futuwwa* within the ruling elite, to the extent that Seljuk sultans themselves joined the movement.

The *futuwwa* organization in Anatolia was known as "Akhiyan" and their leaders were called "Akhi". Throughout the Seljuk period and into the early Ottoman era, individuals known as "Alp Erenler" and "Ghazis of Rum" belonged to the military branch of the Akhis organisation.⁶ The extensive network of Akhiyan in Anatolia⁷ can be inferred from the numerous individuals who bore this title. Sheikh Nasir al-Din Mahmud, known as Akhi Evren, son-in-law of Sheikh Awhaduddin Kirmani, the leader of the *futuwwa*, was one of the founders of the Akhiyan in Anatolia. Additionally, Husam al-Din Chalabi, the caliph of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, was a descendant of the Akhiyan in Anatolia (Zarrinkoub, Abdolhossein, 1379)

The Akhis organization remained active throughout the Seljuk period in Rum. Ibn Battuta, who traveled through Anatolia in the 8th century AH, mentions Akhiyan, who were scattered throughout the region, and their lodges served as refuges for

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- 5 Izz al-Din Kaykaus, the Seljuk king, sent Sheikh Majd al-Din Ishaq with many gifts to the Caliph. The Caliph, while honoring him, sent back to Konya the Caliph's *futuwwa* permit, *futuwwa* trousers, and many gifts (Ibn Bibi, Mukhtasar Saljuqnama, pp. 94-96). Additionally, Al-Nasir Li-Din Allah, the Abbasid Caliph, sent Sheikh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi with the decree of governance over Rome, Armenia, and Diyarbakir, along with gifts, to Alaeddin Kayqubad. Suhrawardi personally clothed the Seljuk king with the khirqa (Ibn Bibi, Al-Awamir Al-Alaiyya fi Umur Al-Alaiyya, pp. 230-232).
 - 6 In the *Futuwwat Nameh* of Najm Zarkub, the *futuwwa* followers are divided into three branches: Qawli, who are not soldiers and are lovers of *futuwwa*; Sayfi, those who apparently fight the infidels but in reality fight their own selves, similar to how the Prophet (PBUH) gave a sword to Ali (AS), and the Akhiyan give them a sword; and Sharbi, those who drink sherbet (Golpinarli, *Futuwwa in Islamic Countries*, p. 56)
 - 7 Golpinarli, in the book *Futuwwa in Islamic Countries*, mentions the names of many Akhiyan inscribed on tombstones from the Seljuk period (pp. 104-105).

strangers and the destitute. Aşık paşazade also identifies the groups present in Anatolia as Ghazis, *Akhiyan*, *Abdalan*, and *Bajiyân* (Pashazadeh, 1332H)

In accounts of the early Ottoman period, the names of *Akhiyan* are frequently mentioned. Sheikh Edebalı, the father-in-law of Osman Gazi, was one of the leaders of the *Akhiyan*. Osman Gazi married his daughter, Malhun Hatun, and benefited from the influence of the *Akhiyan* in achieving his goals.⁸

Hacı Bektas Veli in Anatolia

By the time Hacı Bektas Veli, the founder of the Alevi-Bektasi order, arrived in Anatolia and joined the Baba'î movement (637 AH), the *Futuwwa* movement had been active in the region for many years, and their influence had spread to various Sufi schools in Anatolia. After the suppression of the Baba'î movement, which involved the massacre of Baba'îs by the Seljuk rulers of Rum and the flight of the survivors to different parts of Anatolia (Ibn Bibi,,n.d.) Hacı Bektas Veli found it unsuitable to reside in the major cities of Anatolia, where prominent Sufi leaders such as Mawlavi Jalal al-Din Rumi, Sadr al-Din al-Qawnawi, and Awhaduddin Kirmani were present. Instead, he migrated to the small village of Suluca Karahöyük(ıbid).

Hacı Bektas Veli settled among the simple-hearted villagers and dedicated himself to propagating his Sufi teachings, gradually gaining widespread influence. In fact, Hacı Bektas Veli was not a theologian like Rumi or Sadr al-Din al-Qawnawi; he was a folk mystic who connected with the villagers through simple mystical ideas and remained by their side. According to his hagiography, Hacı Bektas gained many followers during his stay in Suluca Karahöyük, and people from all directions came to visit him. He sent delegations to various regions and attracted numerous disciples.⁹

At a time when Anatolia was witnessing violent Mongol incursions and conflicts among the Seljuk rulers, Hacı Bektas Veli in Suluca Karahöyük was the messenger of a path that preached love and compassion for all beings and welcomed all individuals with diverse beliefs and religions. The book "*Maqalat*" by Hacı Bektas

8 Ozun Charshili, Ismail, Ottoman history, translated by Wahab Vali, Tehran, 1380, 107/1)

9 Figlali has mentioned the names of the successors of Hacı Bektash. He names individuals such as Seyyed Jamal Sultan, Sari Ismail Sultan, Rasul Baba Sultan, Pir Abi Sultan, Tapduk Emre, and others. Sari Saltuq was the founder of the Bektashi order in the Balkans, and Barak Baba was one of the successors of Hacı Bektash at the court of Ghazan Khan. Figlali,188-9

Veli explains religious matters in simple and understandable language for ordinary people. According to his hagiography, Haci Bektas Veli was related to the *Akbiyan* of Anatolia and had a close friendship with Akhi Evren, although he did not participate in his uprising in Kayseri (Golpinarli, 1955)

The Akhis Organisation and Alevi-Bektasis: Beliefs and Practices

The numerous survived *futuwwa* treatises provide insights into their communities' prevailing thoughts. Golpinarli, in his book "*Futuwwa in Islamic Countries*," refers to numerous *futuwwa* treatises that he has seen in libraries in Istanbul and other cities in Turkey. The sanctification of various professions from the *futuwwa* perspective is such that the origin of each profession is linked to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Ali. Also, there are hadiths and narrations which are cited regarding the formation and even the creation of the necessary tools for each profession by God.

Overall, common themes can be found in *futuwwa* treatises, the most important of which are: *futuwwa* is a collection of good qualities, doing good to everyone regardless of their religion or sect, seeing everyone as equal and considering oneself lower than others, the continuation of the futuwwa tradition from prophets like Abraham and Joseph, and that *futuwwa* has passed from the prophets to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and then to Imam Ali (1379). In the beliefs of *futuwwa* adherents, the connection of the chain to Imam Ali and following him is of great importance, and in all *futuwwa* treatises, whether they have Shia or Sunni characteristics, the love of Imam Ali and following him is considered the greatest virtue (ibid).

As mentioned earlier, during the formation of various Sufi schools in Anatolia, the *futuwwa* was a distinguished class supported by the Seljuks of Rum, and many prominent figures of this period considered themselves part of this group. Therefore, the *futuwwa* tradition significantly impacted Bektasism and other Sufi orders. However, there were similar characteristics in the *futuwwa* tradition and the Bektasi order that brought them closer together to the extent that in the early Ottoman period, when Bektasism, as a respected order, took spiritual control of the Janissary corps, many Futuwwa adherents joined the Bektasi order.¹⁰

10 Most researchers have pointed to the affiliation of the Fityan with the Alevi Bektasi order during the Ottoman period. Imam Khui, 128-7; Golpinarli, 91; see also: Birge, 182; Figlali, 121

Common Ideological Grounds Between the *Akhis* and Alevi-Bektasism

The presence of Shia beliefs and rituals brings the Alevi-Bektasi groups and the *Akhis* closer together¹¹, but they cannot be considered followers of one of the official Shia schools of thought, like the *Akhis*. The Alevi-Bektasism never delved into Shia concepts such as the infallibility of the Imams and the event of Ghadir, and sometimes they adopted self-constructed concepts unrelated to Shia Islam (Mokhber Dezfouli, *ibid*,80) However, the Shia affiliation of both groups can be considered as one of their commonalities. The love for Imam Ali, like the *Akhis*, is a prominent feature of the Alevi-Bektasi order. Some of the Bektasi beliefs about Imam Ali, such as his courage, generosity, and companionship with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in battles, are like the beliefs of both Sunni and Shia Muslims. However, their excessive love for him has a Sufi flavour and sometimes goes beyond that. The Alevi- Bektasism, like the Akhis, generally traced their lineage of sheikhs back to Imam Ali. According to the hagiography, the lineage of Hacı Bektas Veli's order is as follows: Sayyid Bektas Khorasani, Sheikh Luqman Perende, Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi, Khwaja Yusuf Hamadani, Sheikh Abu Ali Farmadi, Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Kharaqani, Sheikh Abu al-Qasim Garakani, Sheikh Abu Uthman Maghribi, Sheikh Abu Ali Katib al-Misri, Abu Ali Rudbari, Junaid Baghdadi, Sheikh al-Sari al-Saqati, Ma'ruf Karkhi, Dawud Ta'i, Habib A'jami, Hasan Basri, Imam Ali.¹²

Respect for the Twelve shi'a Imams, fourteen *ma'sum* (infallible) and recognizing them is essential for the followers of the Alevi-Bektasi order. However, their understanding of the word "infallible" is fundamental, they consider infallibility to be specific to children, and therefore, according to Bektasi beliefs, the *chahardah ma'sums* (fourteen pure infallible) are fourteen children of the infallible Imams who were martyred in childhood: Muhammad Akbar, son of Imam Ali, forty days old; Abdullah ibn Hasan, seven years old; Abdullah ibn Akbar, son of Imam Hussain ; Qasim ibn Hussain , four years old; Hussain ibn Ali ibn Hussain , six years old; Qasim ibn Muhammad al-Baqir , four years old; Ali ibn Muhammad al-Baqir, four years old;

11 For more information see: Mokhber Dezfouli, Fahimeh, (2013) "The Shiite Doctrine and the emergence of Alevi-Bektasism in Anatolia", Gezmisten Gunumuze Alevilik Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Bingol University, Turkey.3-5 Oct.

12 Another lineage is also reported for Hacı Bektas, which is similar to the previous lineage up to Junaid Baghdadi. However, after him, it extends to Imam Reza, Imam Musa Kazim, Imam Sadiq, Imam Baqir, Imam Sajjad, Imam Hussein, and Imam Ali. For more information, see: Ali Aktas, "Hunkar Hacı Bektas Veli.

Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq, three years old; Yahya al-Hadi ibn Ja'far, ten years old; Salih ibn Musa al-Kadhim; Tayyib ibn Musa al-Kadhim; Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Taqi; Qasim ibn Ali al-Naqi; and Ja'far ibn Hasan al-Askari (Birge, 80). The names of those infallible are completely similar to the fourteen Infallible from the perspective of the *futuwwa*¹³.

Bektasism is the order of four doors and forty stages. These four doors are Sharia, Tariqa, Marifa, and Haqiqa. Ten stages are also mentioned for each of these doors, similar to many stages in other Sufi schools, and they do not have any particular complexity. Thus, the simplicity of the *futuwwa* teachings is also reflected in the Alevi-Bektasi teachings.

Kindness to people and the open entry door into the Akhis organization, with any belief and religious inclination, also existed among the Alevi-Bektasis. In fact, Haci Bektas Veli was the founder of a Sufi school whose motto was love and kindness towards all beings. This order recommends observing etiquette and showing love to all living beings and inanimate objects.¹⁴ Love, acceptance of others, and helping them were common principles between Alevi-Bektasis and Akhis, which led people of all beliefs and religions to join their circle of followers.

Abu Muslim Khorasani is another figure who was respected and celebrated among the *Akhis* and later the Alevis. According to their beliefs, he achieved victory with the general public's support and, therefore, gained fame as a brave hero among the artisans and guilds, mostly Akhis members. The story of Abu Muslim became popular among the *Akhiyan* of Anatolia and then found its way into Alevi-Bektasi gatherings. For example, the axe on the Bektasi lodges wall is called Abu Muslim axe. Some dervishes also carried this axe in their belts and called it the axe of Abu Muslim (Yusufi, 1356: 184-5)

13 Mirabedini, Hassan and Mehran Afshari, *The Qalandari Order*, 209; cf. *Futuwwat Nameh* of Seyyed Hossein, Abdulbaki Golpinarli, *Turkish Encyclopedia*.

14 For instance, it is recommended not to stamp your feet firmly on the ground while walking or to kiss the corner of the quilt and pillow when entering the bed (Figlali, 165).

Numerous *Abu Muslim-Namib* in Turkish indicate the prevalence of Abu Muslim recitations in various Akhis and Alevi gatherings in Anatolia¹⁵. The Abu Muslimnameh is an epic about Abu Muslim Khorasani and an engaging novel about his heroic adventures, written by Abu Tahir Tarsusi. Later, a person named Hafiz Ferdi verified it. This poem is still recited in coffeehouses in Turkey today and has given rise to folk literature in which Abu Muslim is a Turkish hero seeking revenge for the martyrs of Karbala (Tarsusi,1976). In the Abu Muslimnameh, Abu Muslim's companions are a group of truthful and righteous wanderers who work during the day and rush to his aid at night when needed. Also, in this book, Abu Muslim is favoured by the Prophet (PBUH) and deeply devoted to Imam Ali.

Women held exceptional value¹⁶ and respect in the Akhis tradition. The women's organization within the Akhiyan was separate, and they were called Bajiyān. Aşıkpaşazade refers to the Bajiyān of Rum as one of the four Sufi groups of his time. Bajiyān, like Fatima Baji, played a role in Anatolia's political and social transformations¹⁷. In the Bektasi order, women also hold a special place, and there is no difference between men and women in entering the order and progressing through its various stages. Women in the Bektasi order worship alongside men, and a woman can become a *sāqi* (wine server) with the permission of the *pir* (spiritual leader). Women have equal inheritance rights with men and full testimony rights. Additionally, Bektasi men do not have the right to polygamy and shaking hands with women is not prohibited.

It seems that the most significant influence of the Akhis on the Bektasi order was in the realm of customs and rituals practised in their gatherings. According to the *Akhiyan*, Ali tied the belts of seventeen individuals, called *kamarbastigan* (the belted ones), and Salman, the Persian, was at the forefront of them. *Futūmwa* treatises contain detailed information about the rituals of belt-tying, sharbat (sweet drink)

15 Nine copies of Abu Muslim Nameh in Turkish and four copies in Persian are available in the National Library of Paris. Additionally, nineteen manuscript copies of Abu Muslim Nameh in Turkish are available in the libraries of Istanbul (Yousufi, in the same place).

16 For detailed information on the importance of Hacı Bektaş Veli's aphorisms in terms of value education, especially equality between men and women, see: Baharlı, Ilgar et al, Serçeşme'den Katreler; Temel Değerler Bağlamında Hacı Bektaş Veli ve Özlü Sözleri., 2024.

17 For more information about the Bajis of Rome, see: The Anatolian Women's Movement, Fatima Baji and the Bajis of Rome, Mikail Bayram, translated by Vafaei Vujudki, Tehran, 2001.

drinking, and wearing *izars*(trousers), which were shared among various guilds, as well as more specific rituals like eating halwa, setting the table, lighting candles, etc., which are described with slight variations for each guild. These rituals are symbolic, and according to the *futuwwa* treatises, wearing an *izar* signifies the virtue of chastity, tying a belt signifies courage and dedication to serving people, and drinking sharbat signifies knowledge and wisdom. Comparing *Manakib-i Haci Bektas Veli Vilayetname* with *futuwwa* treatises, one can find many similarities between the customs and rituals of the Akhis and the Alevi-Bektasis. In the initiation ritual of Bektasis, kissing the threshold, tying a sash around the waist, drinking sharbat from a bowl, and the prayers recited in the ceremony are adaptations of the rituals of the Akhiyan of Anatolia. Confession among the Bektasis (Cosan,1986) calling out in the lodge square, interpretations of the threshold and acceptance,¹⁸ surrendering the seeker to the mentor with Salawat (prayers upon the Prophet), the way the mentor holds the seeker's hand with thumbs outside, reciting the verse of allegiance,¹⁹repentance, sending Salawat to the Twelve Imams , kneeling on the left knee ²⁰ when in need, and giving sharbat after the portion is entirely similar to the Akhiyan practices. Also, the rituals of tying the sash, the hand of allegiance, and the preparation of halwa among the Bektasis are like those of the Akhis. Examining the works and lives of the sheikhs of the Alevi-Bektasi and Akhis reveals that the Akhiyan influenced the Alevi-Bektasis in their simplicity of beliefs and religious rituals. The presence of Shia rituals, the absence of philosophical thoughts, and the focus on performing specific actions and rituals are likely common points between those two groups.

Conclusion

Beginning from 11th century, *futuwwa* were widespread in Anatolia. However, they were a social movement, later they were influenced by Sufism and these guilds of tradesmen established in Anatolia as Akhis. In these guilds, the members were all equal and as brothers together. Although most of the members were men, there

18 Among the *futuwwa* (chivalry) people, what the disciples needed to know about their beliefs and customs was generally taught to them in the form of poetry or prose in Persian or Arabic. These sayings are called Tarjuman (translation). (Golpinarli, Futuwwa in Islamic Countries, 72.).

19 Surah Al-Fath, 10.

20 Among the Bektashis, "Niyaz" is a form of worship practiced instead of the standard Muslim prayer. It involves kneeling on the ground, placing both hands forward, and kissing the ground. Gölpinarlı, *ibid.*, 88 [1].

are women Akhis like Akhi Ana. The specific conditions that have to be fulfilled for accepting to the organisation and special ceremonies of “entering into the path” have many similarities observed in both Akhis and Alevi Bektasi. And also, both tekkes of Alevi Bektasism and Zaviyes of Akhis were located in rural areas and they were giving service to the people during their travels.

In addition to their role in the establishment of the ottoman empire, these guild organisations were significant for the administration due to their assistance on housing and building rural areas and religious propaganda. It should be noted that the first three Ottoman Sultans, Osman Gazi, Orhan Gazi and Morad I were known as Akhis.

The Akhis stayed as an influential movement in Anatolia during the 7th and 8th centuries, significantly impacting the prevailing Sufi schools in the region. The Alevi-Bektasi order was one of those schools, indebted to them regarding beliefs and practices. The great interest to Ali and attributing their lineage of sheikhs to him, sharing customs and traditions such as tying a shad (a belt), drinking syrup, reading Abu Muslim Nameh and respecting fourteen *ma'sums* and twelve Shi'a Imams are among the similarities between *futuwwa* and the *Bektaşhis*. The simplicity of teachings, emphasis on action, and the presence of Shia rituals in both groups brought them closer together and eventually united them. With the rise of the Alevi-Bektasi during the Ottoman period, many Akhi members joined this order.

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