

## GETTING TO THE FINAL FORM: REFORMING OF THE ALEVI AND BEKTAŞI BELIEF THROUGH THEIR INTERACTION WITH ONE ANOTHER

Alevilik-Bektaşilik Entegrasyonu: Alevilik-Bektaşilik  
Birlikteliğinin Her İki İnanç Sistemi Üzerindeki Etkisi

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### Abstract

The Alevis/Kızılbaş and Bektaşis, two of the most prominent religious groups of the Ottoman dynasty, in modern times, have unusually come to be called the Alevi-Bektaşis. This way of use gives the impression that these two religious institutions as though reflect the same group of people despite differences in historical development and growth. With the influence of the popular writings of Fuad Köprülü and later İrene Mélikoff much of the current scholarship held to the belief that these two entities originated from the same root, the Bâbâî movement. While acknowledging the historical connection between the two groups, few scholars have taken an interest in clarifying how and when such an association started. This article aims to uncover the historical link of the Alevi-Bektaşis alliance. It further explores the possible benefits that the two entities obtained through their interaction with one another. It will then focus on how the two have affected each other's religious stance. In doing so the following questions will guide this research: How and why did a Sufi order, recognized and advocated by the Ottoman state, come into contact with a harshly criticized religious group which was identified as an enemy to the Ottoman unity? How did the Kızılbaş-Bektaşis interaction affect

### Öz

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu döneminde zuhur eden popüler dini gruplardan olan Alevilik diğer bir adıyla Kızılbaşlık ve Bektaşilik modern dönemde daha ziyade 'Alevilik-Bektaşilik' başlığı altında kullanılmaktadır. Bu kullanım biçimi birbirinden farklı tarihsel serüvene sahip olan bu iki dini kurumun aynı inanç biçimini ve zümreyi yansıttığı intibayı vermektedir. Araştırmacıların geneli tarihsel gelişimlerdeki farklılıklarına rağmen, Fuad Köprülü ve akabinde İrene Mélikoff'un çalışmalarının etkisi ile her iki grubun da temelde aynı kökten yani 'Babailikten' türediği düşüncesini benimsemişlerdir. Diğer yandan iki grup arasındaki tarihsel bağlantı kabul edilmekle birlikte, bu bağlantının ne zaman, nasıl ve hangi şartlar altında başladığı ve geliştiğine yönelik sorular ile tam olarak ilgilenilmemiştir. Bu makalenin temel amacı Alevilik-Bektaşilik entegrasyonunun tarihsel serüvenini ele almak ve bu bağlantının zaman içinde her iki grubun dini yapısında ortaya çıkardığı muhtemel değişikliği irdelemektir. Çalışmaya öncülük edecek sorular şu şekilde sıralanabilir: Osmanlı Devleti tarafından

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Başvuru   Submission	Kabul   Accept	Yayın   Publish
29.06.2020	11.11.2020	30.12.2020

DOI: 10.18403/emakalat.759634

the social, political, and religious experience of the Kızılbaş over the course of its transformation into the Alevi belief system? In what sense did both sides benefit or not benefit from such a link?

**Key Words:** Alevism, Bektaşism, Kızılbaş, Hacı Bektaş, Ottoman.

tanınan ve desteklenen Bektaşilik nasıl ve neden Osmanlı Devleti'nin bütünlüğüne bir tehdit olarak görülen ve itibarı zedeli olan dini bir grup ile temas etmiştir? Kızılbaşlık'dan Alevilik inancına dönüşüm sürecinde Kızılbaş-Bektaş entegrasyonunun etkisi nedir? Alevilik-Bektaşilik birlikteliği her iki grubun inanç biçimini nasıl şekillendirmiştir?

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Alevilik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık, Hacı Bektaş, Osmanlı.

## INTRODUCTION

In this research, I study two inter-related religious groups, the Alevis/Kızılbaş<sup>2</sup> and Bektaşis. From the late fifteenth century onward, both of which played a particular role in the Ottoman Empire's socio-political domain. The scholars of Alevism and Bektaşism from the early twentieth century have often been tempted to view the Alevis and Bektaşis as though they were genetically related. With the popular saying of Fuad Köprülü, 'Alevis are the village Bektaşis,' the two entities began to be viewed as the same thing, according to which they both originated from the same ground — the Bābā'ī movement.<sup>3</sup> This approach has been supported with the works of Irène Mélikoff as she further states that they were of the same origin, but were divided into two groups after the early fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Beside, much of the recent scholarship of Alevism and Bektaşism has come to use the phrase of 'Alevi-Bektaşî' in the sense of that as though the Alevis and Bektaşis represent the same group of people. Relatedly, in some of the Alevi-Bektaşî literature, the historical development of these two entities was wrongfully

<sup>2</sup> From the nineteenth century onward, the Kızılbaş has been called as the Alevis. Across this article, I will particularly use the term Alevi even when referring to the Kızılbaş community lived under the Ottoman rule.

<sup>3</sup> Baba'î movement occurred with the rebellion of Baba Ishaq in 637/1240 against the Seljuk sultanate.

<sup>4</sup> Irène Mélikoff, *Uyur İdik Uyardılar: Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları*, İstanbul: Demos Yayınları, 2006, p. 29; Irène Mélikoff, "Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and Its Consequences", ed. T. Olsson, et al. *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*, İstanbul: 1-7. Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, pp. 1-7.

interchanged; for example, the historical growth and development of the Alevi has been narrated for the Bektaşîs.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the current scholarship — while upholding the assertion that these two entities grew from the same root — does not clarify; however, how and when such an association started. Neither does it stipulate how long such an association lasted, nor when it ended, nor when it began again. At this juncture, two things seem to be in conflict. Firstly, not only did Bektaşîsm play a crucial role in the social life of the Turkmen tribes of the Ottoman subject, but also the Bektaşîs were closely connected with the Ottoman military system. This connection, which came through the Janissaries, continued until the suppression of the Janissaries in 1826. Further, while the Ottomans were favored by the moral and social support of the Bektaşî order, the Bektaşîs were always respected and protected by the Ottoman sultans and had no religio-political arguments with either of them until 1826 when the order was temporarily dissolved. Unlike the Bektaşîs, the Kızılbaş could never find a legitimate space under the rule of the Ottomans because of their support of the Safavids. Secondly, while the Bektaşîs like other dervish groups have not been tolerated by the Republic since 1923 (their religious places were closed and leaders were imprisoned), the Republic of Turkey has perceived the Alevi as allies in their quest to establish a secular and nationalist state.<sup>6</sup> This shows that these two groups have been differently perceived by both the Ottoman and Turkish states. Even if they were of one origin, they did not get along from their existence until a certain time. Neither were they perceived as the same community. Hence I argue that claiming that these two movements were of the same origin leaves substantial historical loopholes. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore and retheorize the historical and religious development of the possible attachment of the Alevi with the Bektaşîs. Ultimately, it tends to illustrate that at the time of their emergence until the early seventeenth century, with the exception of a few individual link, the two movements appear to be poles apart.

How did the Alevi-Bektaşî alliance affect the social, political, and religious experience of the 'Kızılbaş' over the course of its transformation into the Alevi belief system? In what ways did the Alevi-Bektaşî association influence each other's discourse and

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<sup>5</sup> For an example, see Baki Öz, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Alevi-Bektaşîler*, İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1990, p. 23; Besim Atalay, *Bektaşîlik ve Edebiyatı*, İstanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1930.

<sup>6</sup> Baha Sait Bey, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik-Bektaşîlik Araştırması*, ed. Nejat Birdoğan, İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 1994.

standing within the sectarian conjecture of Islam? Though interrogating those questions, this research suggests that both Alevism and Bektaşism have mutually benefitted from their association with one another. While the Alevis in the eyes of the Sunnis, have gained acceptance in their own right as members of an Islamic pattern, the Bektaşis have pursued their presence and possessions under two different, but rough circumstances; namely, after the closure of the Bektaşî lodges in 1826 and later in the early times of the Republic of Turkey.

### 1. Historical, Political and Religious Development of the Bektaşî Order

#### 1.1 From Hacı Bektaş to Balım Sultan

Yet to date, the historical process of the Bektaşî tradition — from the lifetime of Hacı Bektaş, the *murşid* (someone who gives right guidance) and patron saint of the Bektaşis, until the official presence in the early sixteenth century of Balım Sultan, the second patron saint — has not been fairly covered. This is primarily because of lack of sources concerning the early history of Hacı Bektaş. Besides that, the information provided by the earliest historiography on Hacı Bektaş and the Bektaşî tradition is heroic and legendary. As with a number of other mystic groups, Bektaşî resources attribute miracles to Hacı Bektaş and define him as a charismatic powerful leader who can perform miracles. Several historical materials, written almost one or two centuries after the death of Hacı Bektaş, address his historical and legendary personality. The work *Garibnâme* written by Aşık Paşa around the thirteenth century<sup>7</sup>, *Menâkıbu'l-Arifin* of Aflâkî composed by the fourteenth century<sup>8</sup>, and *Menâkıbu'l Kudsiyye* by Elvan Çelebi written around the fourteenth century<sup>9</sup> are all of crucial importance in terms of delivering information on the religious personality of Hacı Bektaş. The most detailed information on the life, beliefs and methods of Hacı Bektaş can be found in the *Velayetnâme* of Hacı Bektaş.<sup>10</sup>

Hacı Bektaş is believed to have been born in Nishapur, a city of Khorasan in the thirteenth century. The date of 668/1270 is accepted

<sup>7</sup> Aşık Paşa, *Garibname*, ed. Kemal Yavuz. vol. 4, Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2000, According to Köprülü, as a Sunni scholar, Aşık Paşa wrote *Garibnâme* to distinguish the Sunni ideology from the non-Sunnis.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkabeleri*, trans. and ed. Tahsin Yazıcı, İstanbul: Kabaalcı Yayınevi, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Elvan Çelebi et al. *Menakibu'l Kudsiyye fi Menasibi'l Unisyeye: Baba İlyas-ı Horasânî ve Sülâlesinin Menkabevi Tarihi*, İstanbul: 1984.

<sup>10</sup> Hacı Bektaş Veli, *Velayetname*, ed. Hamiyi Duran, Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2007.

as the date of Hacı Bektaş's death at the age of sixty-three, but this is not definitive. According to the *Menâkıb* of Aflâkî, Hacı Bektaş was contemporary with Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rumî (603/1207 – 671/1273).<sup>11</sup> He fled from the Mongol invasion and came to Anatolia with his brother called Menteş and visited several cities including Sivas, Amasya, Kırşehir, Kayseri and settled in Suluca Karahöyük, a village of Kırşehir.<sup>12</sup> In Suluca Karahöyük, he was welcomed in the house of a woman named Kadıncık Ana.<sup>13</sup> It has come to be believed that the house of Kadıncık Ana had become the first *tekke* (dervish lodge) where Hacı Bektaş preached and raised followers.<sup>14</sup> According to Aşık Paşazâde's account, Hacı Bektaş was joined to the group of '*bacıyân-ı rûm*' (women's union in Anatolia), which was one of the four separate Sufi groups active in Anatolia.<sup>15</sup> He further states that Hacı Bektaş adopted Kadıncık Ana as a daughter, and revealed his secrets and prophecy (*kerâmet*) to her.<sup>16</sup> He died there and was buried in the city of Hacı Bektaş, the city named after him. Hence, by the fourteenth century, the earliest structure of the Bektaşî teaching was already in place, having begun to be developed right after the death of Hacı Bektaş by a certain Abdal Musa with the help of Kadıncık Ana.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Bektaşî order was named after Hacı Bektaş, he is not regarded to be the founder of the order, but it was rather molded in the early sixteenth century by Balım Sultan (d. 922/1516). With the institutionalization of the Bektaşî doctrine, Hacı Bektaş has become the most celebrated of all dervishes.<sup>18</sup> Due to the fact that his

<sup>11</sup> Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, pp. 370-372.

<sup>12</sup> Aşık Paşazâde, *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman*, ed. Nihal Atsız, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949, p. 195. *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman* was first published by Ali Bey in İstanbul, 1332 (1914), then by Friedrich Giese in Leipzig in 1929, and finally edited by Nihal Atsız in İstanbul in 1949.

<sup>13</sup> Necdet Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi: Osmanlı Tarihi. 1285-1502*, İstanbul: Bilgi Kültür Sanat, 2013, p. 307.

<sup>14</sup> Mikail Bayram, *Fatma Bacı ve Bacıyân-i Rûm: Anadolu Bacılar Teşkilâtı*, İstanbul: Nüve Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2008, pp. 35-36.

<sup>15</sup> The other three are: *Gaziyân-ı Rûm*, *Ahiyân-ı Rûm* and *Abdalân-ı Rûm*.

<sup>16</sup> 'İmdi Hacı Bektaş bunların içinden Bacıyân-i Rûm'a ihtiyar etti. Kim o Hatun anadır. Onu kız edindi, keşf ve kerametini ona gösterdi, ona teslim etti. Kendi Allah'ın rahmetine vardı.' Aşık Paşazâde, *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman*, p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> Mélikoff, "Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and Its Consequences", p. 2; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türkiye'de Tarihin Saptırılması Sürecinde Türk Sûfliğine Bakışlar: Ahmed-i Yesevî, Mevlânâ Celâleddin-i Rûmî, Yunus Emre, Hacı Bektaş-ı Velî, Ahîlik, Alevîlik-Bektaşîlik: Yaklaşım, Yöntem ve Yorum Denemeleri*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1996, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> Irène Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektaş: Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitap Kulübü, 1998, p. 87.

philosophy and teaching has been recognized and appreciated even before his death, the time from the thirteenth century onward can be introduced as the starting point for the development of this particular Sufi order.

Ařık Pařazâde, in his well-known historical account of *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman*, talks about the presence of a Sufi group in the late fifteenth century with the name of 'Bektařı'. He uses the term 'Bektařı' for a particular group that attribute themselves to Hacı Bektař. <sup>19</sup> Relying on the information provided by Ařık Pařazâde, Köprülü came to believe that the Bektařı order was officially founded with its religious ceremonies and rules by the fifteenth century. <sup>20</sup> The *Dîvân* of Sadık Abdal also mentions of a Sufi group with the name of 'Bektařı' by the fifteenth century. According to him, this Sufi group was formed in the dervish lodge of Kızıldeli. <sup>21</sup> Balım Sultan was also trained in the Kızıldeli lodge. <sup>22</sup> Vâhidî in his *Menâkıb* (written in 929/1522), beside, provides information on the Bektařı dervishes of the early sixteenth century. According to his writing, the Bektařı dervishes like a number of other mystic dervish groups including Qalandars, Haydaris, Abdals of Rûm, Jamis, and Shams-i Tabrîzîs were active social dervish groups in the Ottoman lands. <sup>23</sup> Unlike the other dervishes, the Bektařıs became even more influential after the sixteenth century.

In 1502, Balım Sultan (d. 922/1516) was asked to institutionalize the Bektařı order by the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Bayazid II (885/1481 – 917/1512). According to the tradition, Balım Sultan came into the Kızıldeli lodge in which he systematized the Bektařı rituals and decrees. That is why he is regarded as the real founder and second patron saint of the order. <sup>24</sup> While a number of mystic dervishes mentioned in Vâhidî's work slowly went out of existence, the Bektařı dervishes of the fifteenth century retained their entity. They progressed even further to become the primary dervish group existing in the Ottoman realm. The Ottoman support has been listed

<sup>19</sup> Ařık Pařazâde, *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>20</sup> Ařık Pařazâde, *Tevârîh-i âl-i Osman*, pp. 204-206.

<sup>21</sup> For detailed information on the role of the Kızıldeli lodge in the formation of the Bektařı Order, see Rıza Yıldırım, "Muhabbetten Tarikata: Bektařı Tarikatı'nın Oluřum Sürecinde Kızıldeli'nin Rolü", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektař Arařtırma Dergisi* 53 (2010): 153-190.

<sup>22</sup> John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London: Luzac & Co. [1937] 1965, pp. 56-57.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994, p. 83.

<sup>24</sup> Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, p. 57.

as the leading reason behind the success of the *tarîqah*. The order was granted territories from the newly conquered areas and was advocated to establish their own dervish lodges (*zāwīya*) in Anatolia and the Balkans.<sup>25</sup> Those *zāwīyas* served as a central place for Islamic teaching.

The Ottoman-Bektaşî alliance was mutually beneficial for both sides. As stated earlier, with the backing of the Ottoman state, the order expanded its teaching and rituals all around the Ottoman territories. Through the service of the Bektaşî *tekkes* — a type of Islam indigenized by the Ottoman government — they reached out to the people of different religious tendencies in the newly conquered places. At this point, Mélikoff suggested that the Ottomans blessed the order with the objective of keeping the *rāfîdî* thoughts within the bubble of the Ottoman central belief.<sup>26</sup> Thus and so, those Sufi religious groups of different vibes would have been in the sights of the Ottoman. Likewise Rıza Yıldırım states that it was aimed to control the various social-religious groups and to prevent them from affiliating themselves with the Kızılbaş movement.<sup>27</sup> Besides, it has been claimed that the Ottoman co-opted the Bektaşî lodges to Islamize the Christian children of the conquered Byzantine territories.<sup>28</sup>

As far as it is known, the Bektaşîs were one of several dervish groups that actively engaged in the social and religious spheres of the Ottoman dynasty during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Aside from those dervish groups which had not yet turned into a Sufi order, by the late fifteenth century there were; however, the Sunni colored Sufi brotherhood, such as the Mevlevîs. While the Mevlevîs were recognized by the Ottoman administration, they had

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<sup>25</sup> Irène Mélikoff, *Tarihî ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Türkiyede Alevîler, Bektaşîler, Nusayrîler*, İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 1999, pp. 20-21. It is also suggested that Abdal Musa, claimed to perform and teach the Hacı Bektaş discipline, played a particular role in the conquest of the Balkans and Trace. In return, he and his followers were rewarded from the conquered territories for their effort and commemorated as *ghāzîs* (Muslim fighters against infidels). They were allowed to build their own religious lodges. See, Ömer Lütfî Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler I: İstilâ Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Zaviyeleri”, *Vakıflar Dergisi* 5 (1942): 279-386.

<sup>26</sup> Irène Mélikoff, “Le probleme Kızılbaş”, *Turcica* 6 (1975): p. 65.

<sup>27</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, “Bektaşî kime derler?: Bektaşî Kavramının Kapsamı ve Sınırları Üzerine Tarihsel Bir Analiz Denemesi”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Araştırma Dergisi* 55 (2010): 30-33.

<sup>28</sup> The view has been initially suggested by Louis Massinon and then adopted by a number of other scholars. Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 10-11.

likewise always supported the state's political and social stand. There appeared no sign of their anti-state stance. At this point, I ask how and why did the Ottoman choose the Bektāşis over the other dervish groups? Instead of turning its full attention to the Mevlevīs, which was an already institutionalized Sufi order why did the Ottoman spend its energy and money to fund a socially esoteric dervish group which had not yet systematized its teaching and rites? At this point, the aforementioned discussion makes sense, according to which the Ottoman state supported the Bektāşis to keep different views of several dervish groups in line with the Ottoman's central belief. While the Bektāşis interacted with the Turkmen *babas*, even claiming to be the continuum of the Bābā'ī order, the Mevlevīs never thought of the Turkmen *babas* as an ally, but rather as rivals.<sup>29</sup> At this point, Bektāşis appears to have been a better option than the Mevlevīs to attract the attention of and even control the distinctive dervish groups.

### 1.2 Janissary-Bektāşi Association

The Bektāşi's distinctive authority over the Janissary army could be listed as the primary reason of the expeditious progress of the order within the Ottoman regions. According to general view, the Janissary corps, paid soldiers of which constituted the principal branch of the army in the Ottoman state,<sup>30</sup> were educated spiritually by the Bektāşi *dedes*.<sup>31</sup> They paid allegiance to Hacı Bektaş and recognized him as their patron saint. The era of Murat I has been officially recognized for the establishment of the Janissary army<sup>32</sup>, but when and how Janissaries-Bektāşism interaction began is still a controversial and undefined subject.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, "Bektāşiliğin Menşeleri", *Türk Yurdu* 7 (1925).

<sup>30</sup> Godfrey Goodwin, *Yeniçeriler*, trans. Derin Türkömer, İstanbul: Doğan Yayıncılık, 2008, p. 157.

<sup>31</sup> Fahri Maden, "Yeniçerilik-Bektāşilik İlişkileri ve Yeniçeri İsyânlarında Bektāşiler", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 73 (2015): 174.

<sup>32</sup> İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları, I. Acemi Ocağı ve Yeniçeri Ocağı*, vol. I, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1984, p. 145.

<sup>33</sup> What kind of relationship had they had? Was any money transferred to Bektāşi lodges from the incomes of foundations established by Janissaries? If so what was its potential? This discussion is beyond the scope of our study. For a detailed information on this subject, see, Metin Ziya Köşe, "Yeniçeri Ocağının Bektāşileşme Süreci ve Yeniçeri-Bektāşi İlişkileri", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 49 (2009): 195-207.



It is claimed that Hacı Bektaş met with Osman I (655/1258 – 726/1326), and he prayed for the Janissaries' success.<sup>34</sup> He was also claimed to be a close friend and a consular of Sultan Orhan Gazi;<sup>35</sup> however, it is a fact that he died long before the birth of Orhan Gazi (679/1281 – 761/1360). According to the account of Aşık Paşazâde, Hacı Bektaş was never engaged in a conversation with any of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>36</sup> As stated by Aşık Paşazâde, the Hacı Bektaş cult gained recognition through the mediation of Abdal Musa, as he was in interaction with the Janissary army during the conquest of Bursa.<sup>37</sup>

Even though the interaction of the Bektaşî order with the Janissary corps was officially recognized from 1591 onwards<sup>38</sup>, historical records show that even before then there had appeared a constant relationship between the two. The fact that some Janissary *ocaks* (the Janissary organizations named as *ocak*) were called by phrases like '*ocak-ı Bektaşîyyan,*' '*taife-i Bektaşîyyan,*' '*güruh-u Bektaşîyyan,*' and etc.,<sup>39</sup> offers sufficient proof to illustrate a possible connection between the Janissary army and Bektaşî order. The Janissary army was abolished by Mahmut II in 1826. The army was not in favor of the sultan's reforms and resisted training by saying that it is an infidel invention.<sup>40</sup> The firm attitude of the army was judged as a threat to the central government. Thus the Janissary army was disbanded in 1826 and numerous soldiers were executed. The abolishment of the Janissary army was also declared as '*vaka-i hayriyye*' (propitious event).<sup>41</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih 1*. vol. 1 ed. Abdurrahman Şeref, İstanbul: Matbaa-ı Âmire: 1290/1874, p. 149.

<sup>35</sup> According to the records, when Orhan decided to establish a new army in 1339 he called Hacı Bektaş to Bursa to join the ceremony of the establishment of the new army and Hacı Bektaş did pray for the army. Lucy M. J Garne, *The Dervishes of Turkey*, London: The Octagon Press, 1990, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> "Ve illa bu Hacı Bektaş, Âl-i Osman neslinde kimseyle musahabet etmedi; ol sebebden anmadum." Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi*, p. 307. Aşık Paşazâde further refutes the saying of the headgear of the Janissaries was modeled based on that of Hacı Bektaş. The Question: "*Ya bu Bektaşiler esdurler kim: Bu yeniçerinin başındaki tac Bektaşilerdedir derler.*" The respond: *Vallahi yalandır.* Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi*, p. 308.

<sup>37</sup> Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi*, 2013, p. 307.

<sup>38</sup> Goodwin, *Yeniçeriler*, p. 157.

<sup>39</sup> Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları*, p. 150.

<sup>40</sup> Talim gavur icadıdır, Müslümana yakışmaz...' Ali Resad. *Asr-ı Hazır Tarihi*, İstanbul: 1926, p. 620.

<sup>41</sup> Mehmet Şeker, "Bektaşî Tekkeleri hakkında Sultan II Mahmut'un Fermanı", *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* 12/3-4 (1999): 273.

Shortly after disbanding the Janissary army, Mahmut II issued a *ferman* (decree) that banned the Bektaşî order. This was because of the order's traditional and religious link with the Janissaries. Many Bektaşî lodges were destroyed and the control of the un-ruined ones left to the Nakşibendî *shaykhs*. Moreover, a huge number of Bektaşîs were deported and numerous Bektaşî dervishes were executed. A report given in the Muhimme registers, written by a *sadrâzam* (grand vizier) to the Divan-ı Humayun (supreme court), states that the trains and possessions of the Bektaşî lodges in Üsküdar/Istanbul with all of its properties including foundational centrals, lands, infield and garden, were given to the state.<sup>42</sup> It was not merely the Bektaşî tie with the Janissaries that was reported for the abolishment of the order,<sup>43</sup> but rather the distortion of their beliefs that were presented as cause for chastening. In the historical records, the Bektaşîs were broadly criticized on account of their disobedience and non-performance of Islamic duties and were even being defined as infidel.<sup>44</sup> Depending upon the Ottoman official record's representation of the early nineteenth century Bektaşî belief, I argue that the final form of the doctrine, teaching, and even rites of the Bektaşî order was not shaped entirely by the sixteenth century. Rather, the religious elements of the order evolved from the presence of Hacı Bektaş onwards until the late nineteenth century and displayed different characters due to the sultan's approach to the order and its discovery of other religious tendencies.

### 1.3 The Bektaşî Struggle to Survive from 1826 Onwards

As highlighted earlier, the Bektaşî belief has never died out or passed away from the stage of history neither after the ban in 1826 nor with the shutting down of the dervish lodges in 1925. The Bektaşî *tariqah* managed to survive in hiding and in defiance of the stance of the central authority of the Ottoman dynasty and Republic of Turkey. I argue here that this period of secret existence must be counted as an important era that enabled the order to establish its final form.

<sup>42</sup> Cemal Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşîler*, İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2002, p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> Esad Efendi in his famous work of *Üss-i Zafer* mentions of the Bektaşî link to the Janissaries and its importance on the restraint of the Bektaşî Order. 'Bektaşî guruhi Yeniçeri taifesine istinad ile o misillu tekyeler ve zevayanın isimlerini tahrif ve kendilerine nisbet ile zabt ve hasilatı vakfı nefislerine hasr ve fisk-u fucur ile ekl-u bel ve bazı mahallerde dahi halkı idlal için muceddeden tekyeler ihdas ve birer fasid vakfiye tertibiyle ihtira'î evkaf iderek sirran ve alenen enva-i senate cesaret etmekte oldukları...' Mehmed Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, İstanbul: Matbaa-i Suleyman Efendi, 1876, p. 215.

<sup>44</sup> Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 1830, pp. 214-215.

The era of Mahmut II has to be distinguished from the era of the following sultans: Abdülmecid I (1254/1839 – 1277/1861), Abdülaziz (1277/1861 – 1292/1876) and Abdülhamid II (1292/1876 – 1326/1909). That is mainly because each of these sultans illustrated a different approach to the Bektaşis; however, the ban over the order had not been constitutionally removed under their rule. Hence the Bektaşis kept their presence either with the help of some high state officials or with the tolerance of the reigning sultan.

In contrast to the era of Murat II, the era of Abdülmecid is known as tolerant to different types of the dervish lodges and religious tendencies. Within this time period, like a number of other Sufi groups and religious sects, such as the Druze and Yazidis, the Bektaşis did not re-establish their closed lodges, but to some extent gained strength.<sup>45</sup> By the time of Abdülaziz, tolerance to the Bektaşis has become transparently visible. During this time, the Bektaşî order was sufficiently tolerated to operate their public service. The tolerant attitude has been tied to the sultan who claimed to be sympathetic to the order.<sup>46</sup>

And finally, by the early twentieth century, under the rule of the *İttihat and Terakki* (1909 – 1918), the Turkish government became interested in researching the Anatolian Sufi orders, particularly the Bektaşis and Alevis. This was the beginning of the process of new political and administrative attempts. Talat Paşa, the leader of the party, said in the parliament; ‘however, we rule the government, we lack in our knowledge of Anatolians. We must know the people.’ That is why the different beliefs, *tarîqahs* and tribes must be investigated. And Baha Said Bey was assigned to research the Alevi and Bektaşî groups.<sup>47</sup>

## 2. The Religious Resemblance: the Alevis and Bektaşis

The Alevi community resembles the Bektaşî community with its non-traditional practice of Islam. Neither of these groups pay any attention to the external forms of religion nor do they strive to be recognized as a branch of either Sunni or Shi`ite. Most of recent

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<sup>45</sup> İlber Ortaylı, “Tarikatlar ve Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Yönetimi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* (1990): 285: The herald of the rescript of Gülhane (*Tanzimat fermanı*) has been represented as a primary reason of the tolerant attitude of the Sultan. Salih Çift, “1826 Sonrasında Bektaşilik ve Bu Alanla İlgili Yayın Faaliyetleri”, *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 12/1 (2003): 251.

<sup>46</sup> Çift, “1826 Sonrasında Bektaşilik,” pp. 249-268.

<sup>47</sup> Baha Sait Bey, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırması*: Bursalı Mehmet Tahir and Hasan Fehmi Hoca were in charge to research *ahis*, and Esat Uras Bey was assigned to seek the beliefs of Armenian.

scholarship attempted to associate them with Shi'ite Islam due to the alleged Shi'ite elements like the veneration of 'Alı and Twelve Imams. On the contrary, some scholars perceived the Bektařı order as a Sufi group of mainstream Sunni Islam. Besides, to some scholars, Alevism and Bektařism symbolize a Turkish form of Islam that is close to Sunnism, but is definitely not Shi'ite.<sup>48</sup>

With the writings of K opr l , Alevism and Bektařism are believed to have been originated from the B b 'i movement.<sup>49</sup> With the exception of a few scholars who criticize this view, this approach dominated the current Alevi-Bektařı literature. The identical character of their religious rites could be one of the primary reasons, if not the only one, that enable this view to be recognized by the majority of the following scholarship. In modern times, instead of the term 'Alevi' and 'Bektařı' as they represent separate two groups, the phrase of 'Alevi-Bektařı' has become quite popular as though it represents a single group of people. Although today there appears a group of people who identify themselves as Alevi-Bektařı, it does not mean that each Alevi is also Bektařı and vice versa. And more importantly, despite popular usage of the notion Alevi-Bektařı, the historical evolvment of both groups differs from one another. However, some scholars neglect to distinguish the historical and theological development of the two.<sup>50</sup> It is of interest to this article to note the fact that the Alevi and Bektařı history has developed through the influence of different political, social and religious paradigms. Nevertheless, both groups exhibit similar religious doings with some exceptional differences. While acknowledging the community that define itself as 'Alevi-Bektařı', in the general sense, this study intends to separate the Alevi community from the Bektařıs by recognizing the presence of separate Bektařı groups, such as the Babagan Bektařıs, elebi Alevi-Bektařıs,<sup>51</sup> and Nakřı Bektařıs.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> For detailed discussion on the subject, see Reyhan Erdođdu Bařaran, "Comparing Scholarship: The Assessment of the Contemporary Works that Links Alevis with either Shi'ism or Sunnism", *Kilis 7 Aralık  niversitesi İlahiyat Fak ltesi Dergisi* 5/9 (Aralık 2018): 315-338.

<sup>49</sup> Mehmed Fuad K opr l , *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, trans. and ed. Gary Leiser and Ropert Dankoff, London: Routledge 2006, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>  z, *Kurtuluř Savařında Alevi-Bektařiler*, pp. 25-26; H seyin Bal, "Cumhuriyet, Mustafa Kemal ve Alevi-Bektařiler", *Alevilik-Bektařilik Arařtırmaları Dergisi* 3: 55-83.

<sup>51</sup> It has been suggested that the Kızılbař community begun to interact with the Bektařıs through the mediation of the elebi Bektařıs. H lya K  k, *Kurtuluř Savařında Bektařiler*, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınları 2003, p. 152.

<sup>52</sup> Refik Engin, "Nakřı Bektařiler", *S leyman Demirel  niversitesi İlahiyat Fak ltesi Yayınları* 20 (2005): 364.

## 2.1 The Shared Religious Characters

Attribution to Hacı Bektaş as a spiritual guide is one of the most proposed indicators of commonalities between the Alevi and Bektaşîs. The earliest Bektaşî resources refer to Hacı Bektaş; however, the name does not appear in the early writings of the Alevi literature. There neither appears the name of Hacı Bektaş in the earliest written texts of Shaykh Safî *Buyruks*, dated 1608<sup>53</sup> and 1612,<sup>54</sup> nor there is a sign of Bektaşî influence. The name of Hacı Bektaş, however, does appear in a few places in the later made Imam Jafar *Buyruk*, dated 1292/1875.<sup>55</sup> In a particular passage, Hacı Bektaş appears along with Jesus, Salmân al-Fârsî, and Uwais al-Qarani.<sup>56</sup> In a different part, Hacı Bektaş was listed right after the Alevi trinity concept (Allâh, Muhammad, and ‘Alî), ‘Allâh, Muhammad, ‘Alî, Hacı Bektaş say *hû* (*hû* is used to refer to God in Sufism) to the truth!<sup>57</sup> The name of Hacı Bektaş does not appear in the *ijazetnâmes* and *hilafetnâmes* of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and also in the well-respected books of the Alevi community like the *Dîvân* of Hatâî.<sup>58</sup>

Particularly with the Alevi-Bektaşî association, Hacı Bektaş, the patron saint of the Bektaşî order, became a leading charismatic figure for the Alevi community. Hacı Bektaş has been acknowledged as important as ‘Alî. Recognition of him helped the Alevi community to establish their independence from the Safavid influence. Due to the integration of Alevism with Bektaşîism, Alevism came to be perceived as a Sufi order, which according to Sunni-inclined Turkish scholars is closer to Sunni than the Shi’ite faith.<sup>59</sup> Further, the adoption of Hacı Bektaş as a spiritual guide along with ‘Alî fostered a nationalist

<sup>53</sup> Bisâtî, *Şeyh Sâfî Buyruğu, Menâkıbu’l-Esrâr Behcetü’l-Ahrâr*, ed. Ahmet Taşğın, Ankara: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Mehmet Yaman, *Erdebilli Şeyh Safî Buyruğu*, İstanbul: Ufuk Matbaası, 1994;

<sup>55</sup> Fuat Bozkurt, *Buyruk: Imam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu*, İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2004; Sefer Aytekin, *Buyruk*, Emek Basım Yayınevi, 1958.

<sup>56</sup> Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, p. 68; Aytekin, *Buyruk*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>57</sup> Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, p. 85; Aytekin, *Buyruk*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>58</sup> In the later-made copies of the *Divan*, the name of Hacı Bektaş appears; however, in the earliest transcript, it lacks. Tourkhan Gandjei, *Il Canzoniere Di Sâh İsmâ’îl Hatâ’î*, Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1959; Mirza Resul İsmailzade, *Hatâ’î Şâh İsmâ’îl Safevî Hetai Külliyyatı: Dîvân, Nasîhatnâme, Dehnâme, Koşmalar, Farsça Şiirler*, Tehran: 2001.

<sup>59</sup> Even some schoolbooks in Turkey have viewed Alevism as a denomination of Sunnism in their teaching of Alevi-Bektaşî doctrines. Halise Kader Zengin, “Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Öğretim Programlarında Devletin Alevilik Algısı (Karşılaştırmalı Bir Analiz)”, *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 12/47 (2013): 63-87.

approach. However 'Alī is an Islamic figure, he is, for the Turkish nationalist, still an Arab. But on the other side, Hacı Bektaş had been represented as a Turkish figure.<sup>60</sup>

Pro-Alid sayings and Shi'ite patterns like the concept of the Alevi triad of (Allāh, Muhammad, and 'Alī), the glorification of 'Alī, *ahl al-bayt*, the doctrine of Imamate, and matter of the fourteen infallibles are all indicative of the doctrinal affinities that exist between the Bektaşis and Alevis. However, while the Alevi community has acknowledged those Shi'ite currents from the beginning of their origin, they are not observable within the Bektaşî collections until the late seventeenth century. The Bektaşis due to their reverence for 'Alī, *ahl al-bayt*, and the lament for the martyrs of the Karbalā cult, Bektaşis are claimed to be secretly Shi'ite.<sup>61</sup> Reverence for 'Alī, however, was also quite common in most of the religious groups that define themselves as Sunni. It further needs to be pointed out that in what circumstance did the Ottoman state support and favour the Bektaşî order when it claimed to be Shi'ite.

The use of the Turkish language, rather than Arabic and Persian in practicing their rituals and in the composed texture of their traditions can be listed as one of the fundamental resemblance. There is also a resemblance in the practice of using symbolic liquor (wine), the *sema* (spiritual dance), fast in *Muharram*, and similar service at *Nawruz* (old Turkish-Persian New Year celebration).<sup>62</sup> The well-know *cem* ritual is also performed by both the Alevis and Bektaşis.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, the doctrine of '*dört kapı*' (four gates) — *sharī'ah*, *tarīqah*, *ma'rīfah* and *haqīqa* — and '*kırk makam*' (forty positions)<sup>64</sup> are expressed in the *Makalat* attributed to Hacı Bektaş, and are almost identical with the ones explained in the *Buyruks* of the Alevi literature.<sup>65</sup> It is also essential to know that the tradition of *cem*, belief

<sup>60</sup> Baha Sait Bey, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırması*, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> Due to seemingly Shi'ite elements appear in the Bektaşî order, Birge suggests that it is a Shi'ite inclined Sufi order. For detailed information, see Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*.

<sup>62</sup> Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, pp. 166-170.

<sup>63</sup> It is run by a *murşit*, or *baba* or a *dede*. There are twelve duties. Hacı Bektaş, *Maḳālāt*, ed. Esad Coşan, Ankara: Seha Neşriyat, 1983, p. 263.

<sup>64</sup> For the names of the *kırk makam* and their qualifications see, Hacı Bektaş, *Makalat*, pp. 11-21.

<sup>65</sup> İlyas Üzüm, "Hacı Bektaş Velinin Kızılbaş Kültürüne Etkileri", *İslam Araştırmalar Merkezi, I. Uluslararası Hacı Bektaş Veli Sempozyumu*, I, (Çorum: 2010): 241-251.

of 'dört kapı' and 'kırk makam' are also the shared future of a number of Sunni-colored Sufi orders.<sup>66</sup>

## 2.2 The Elements that Distance the Alevis from the Bektaşis

One of the fundamental differences between the Alevis and Bektaşis is that while for the Alevis, only those whose' genealogy can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad can lead the community as a *dede*. The head of the 'dedelik institution' can merely be the son of a *dede*. When a *dede* dies, naturally his son becomes *dede*. The Bektaşis instead the term *dede* prefer to use the word *baba* to refer to their spiritual guide of the dervish lodge. *Baba* was not required to be a *sayyid* to lead the community. Any qualified *shaykh* can be the *baba*. Each position and rank within the order is being done through election.<sup>67</sup>

Secondly while the bloodline is essential to be recognized as an Alevi according to which only a person being born from an Alevi family can be Alevi, the Bektaşis have no such norm. Unlike the Alevi structure of belief, anyone who wills to be Bektaşî and embraces the Bektaşî belief can become a Bektaşî. Accordingly, anyone can become a Bektaşî but not an Alevi. The doctrine of 'musahib' [that Muhammad and 'Alî are companions] can be listed as another rite that separates the Alevi community from the Bektaşis. It appears to be an important ritual in the Alevi belief as a particular section entitled 'musahib' narrated in detail in the primary Alevi texts.<sup>68</sup> Contrary to this, there is no sign of the 'musahib' dogma in the Bektaşî tradition. Additionally, although the *cem* ceremony was the shared rite of both groups, there appear some differences in its performance. For example, only married couples can participate in the Alevi *cem* ceremonies. On the other hand, the Bektaşî have a tradition of 'mücerred' (single/unmarried dervish)<sup>69</sup> in which only the single dervishes can participate in the ritual. Last but not least, for the practice of religious rites, the Alevis use the phrase 'meydan evi' for their gathering place, while the Bektaşis use the term 'dergah'.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Hasan Onat, "Kızılbaşlık Farklılaşması Üzerine", *İslâmiyât* 6/3 (2003): 10.

<sup>67</sup> Bedri Noyan, "Doçent Dr. Bedri Noyan (Dedebaba) ile Söyleşi", röp. Ayhan Aydın. *Cem* 4/48 (Mayıs 1995): 16.

<sup>68</sup> Yaman, *Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*, p. 78; Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, pp. 70-91; Aytekin, *Buyruk*, p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektaş*, p. 255.

<sup>70</sup> Birol Azar, "Benzerlikler ve Farklılıklar Ekseninde Alevi-Bektaşî İnançları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10/2 (2005): 83.

### 3. When and How did the Alevi-Bektaşî Association Begin?

Relying on the historical records of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, it is unlikely to be certain whether the Alevis and Bektaşîs rooted from the same religious origin. The historical material rather suggests that the two groups exist as separate movements and developed for a certain time in their own circle, despite the fact that the religious tenets of both factions are stunningly alike. Therefore, the scholars of Alevism and Bektaşîsm are hesitant to estimate the exact date of how and when the two groups initially encountered one another. The available popular sources of the sixteenth century on the Bektaşî and Alevi belief do not relate them. On one side, the Alevis/Kızılbaş was officially recognized as a religious and militant group by the Ottoman state during its fight with the Safavid dynasty. Due to their support of the Safavid dynasty, they were subjected to persecution. The central government not only accused them of being a threat to the integrity of the state, but also defamed them as an enemy to Islam. The official records of the Muhimme Registers and religious documents provided similar information to justify the persecution of the Kızılbaş.<sup>71</sup> On the other side, the official administrative records of the sixteenth century have no accusation on the political, social or religious stance of the Bektaşîs, but the *fermans* of the nineteenth century mention of the Bektaşî belief as marred.<sup>72</sup> Rather, it has come to be believed by the historians that the support of the Ottoman government enabled Balım Sultan to institutionalize the Bektaşî order and that their religious doctrine, teaching, philosophy and method were not systematized until then.

The work of Suraiya Faroqhi in which she studied the geographical distribution of the Kızılbaş groups — particularly the ones mentioned in the Muhimme registers and existing Bektaşîs of the sixteenth century — illustrates that the geographical expansion of the both sides are not interrelated.<sup>73</sup> Due to that, however, it seems difficult to claim an institutionalized link between the two groups by the fifteenth and sixteenth century, with the discovery of newly Alevi

<sup>71</sup> M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı*, İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983, For detailed information, see Reyhan Erdoğan Başaran, "Does being Rafidi mean Shi'ite?: The Representation of the Kızılbaş Belief in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Records", *Trabzon İlahiyat Dergisi* 6/1 (Haziran 2019): 12-35.

<sup>72</sup> Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşîler*, pp. 155-157-163.

<sup>73</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, *Anadoluda Bektaşîlik*, trans. Nasuz Barin, İstanbul: Simurg, 2003, p. 79.



documents, some scholars have come to declare a possible individual interaction between the two groups by the sixteenth century.<sup>74</sup>

### 3.1 The Undocumented Sixteenth Century Alleged Link of the Bektaşis to the Alevis

Ayfer Karakaya-Stump mentions of an institutionalized relationship between the Anatolian Kızılbaş of the sixteenth century and Bektaşî lodges located in Iraq.<sup>75</sup> She states that “from the second half of the sixteenth century onward, the Alevi/Kızılbaş communities of Anatolia maintained a close and by all appearance rather institutionalized relationship with a distinct network of Bektaşî convents in Iraq centered around the convent in Karbalâ.”<sup>76</sup> This view has been supported with similar expression in a different article, “Alevi documents originating from Iraq expose the presence of fairly institutionalized relations between the Alevi *dedes* and a group of Bektaşî convents in Iraq.”<sup>77</sup> She mentions of recently discovered Alevi documents like *ziyaretnâmes*, *hilafetnâmes* and the ones indicating their pedigree that connect them with the Prophet Muhammad originated in the sixteenth century showing an institutionalized relationship between the two communities. Nevertheless, she only cites a single document — an *ijazetnâme*, dated 996/1588, formed in Karbalâ convent, claimed to be the leading Bektaşî convent in Iraq — on behalf of a certain Dede Yusuf from the Dede Kargın *ocak*.<sup>78</sup>

The *ijazetnâme* states that a person named Dede Yusuf living in a village of Malatya (Bimare köyü) visited a number of sacred cites and

<sup>74</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families: An Overview”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37/3 (December 2010): 277-278; Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “The Forgotten Dervishes: The Bektashi Convents in Iraq and their Kizilbash Clients”, *Journal of Turkish Studies*. Vol. 16, no. 1/2, (2010): p. 20. At this point, the study of Karakaya-Stump becomes more of an issue as she claims an established institutionalized relationship between the Kızılbaş of Anatolia and the Bektaşis of Iraq by the sixteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> Karakaya-Stump, “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families: An Overview”, 277-278; Karakaya-Stump, “The Forgotten Dervishes: The Bektashi Convents in Iraq and their Kizilbash Clients”, p. 20.

<sup>76</sup> Karakaya-Stump, “The Forgotten Dervishes”, p. 20.

<sup>77</sup> Karakaya-Stump, “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families,” pp. 277-278.

<sup>78</sup> The transliterated version of the original form of the *ijazetnâme* was given in the work titled *Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile İlgili Yeni Belgeler*. Alemdar Yalçın- Hacı Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu İle İlgili Yeni Belgeler”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* C.8 (2002): 71. The article in total, mentions of 30 original documents composed for the Dede Kargın Ocak, the oldest one was composed in 1496 and the latest was formed in 1914.

tombs of Imam ‘Alī, Imam Husayn, Imam Każım, Sahib-i Zaman and a number of other saints in Iraq. He was trained in the lodge of Imam Husayn. With reference to this particular *ijazetnāme* formed in 996/1588, Karakaya-Stump argues that the association of the Dede Kargın Ocak (naturally the Kızılbaş community) and the Bektaşis of Iraq commenced by that time. The *ijazetnāme*, was formed in the name of Dede Kargın Ocak in the Karbalā convent, which to Karakaya-Stump is the Bektaşī lodge of Karbalā.<sup>79</sup> However, as far as I am concerned that there appears no sign of a Bektaşī link with regard to the scope of the *ijazetnāme*. Neither does it refer to Hacı Bektaş nor to any particular Bektaşī dervishes. It also does not make any mention of the Karbalā lodge’s link to the Bektaşis.<sup>80</sup> The name of Hacı Bektaş, however, rigorously shows up in a *ferman* composed in 1227/1813 and in an *ijazetnāme* written in 1232/1817. This would lead us to believe in an institutionalized relationship between the Dede Kargın Ocak and Bektaşī community by the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>81</sup> And yet it would be difficult to talk about an institutionalized link between the two groups by the sixteenth century relying merely on this particular *ijazetnāme* composed in 996/1588.

In a different research, she provides another document written by the early seventeenth century<sup>82</sup> in the form of a letter composed by a certain Seyit Baki, who is said to have come from the lineage of Hacı Bektaş. The letter was to be sent to Seyyid Yusuf, who was introduced as ‘the son of Hakk Dede Kargın’ (Hakk Dede Kargın ođlu).<sup>83</sup> In the letter, Sayyid Baki informs Sayyid Yusuf about the conquest of Baghdad by Shah Abbas in 1033/1624. Karakaya-Stump indicates that the letter was written in a Bektaşī lodge located in Baghdad. The most striking part of the letter is that here Seyit Baki appears to be a firm supporter of the Shah of Iran as he praises the Shah on his

<sup>79</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, “Kızılbaş, Bektaşī, Safevi İlişkilerine Dair 17. Yüzyıldan Yeni Bir Belge”, *Journal of Turkish Studies*. Vol. 30/II (2006): 12.

<sup>80</sup> Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” pp. 42-43, (record: 25).

<sup>81</sup> Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” pp. 45-49-58.

<sup>82</sup> Karakaya-Stump, “Kızılbaş, Bektaşī, Safevi ilişkilerine dair 17. Yüzyıldan yeni bir belge,” pp. 117- 130.

<sup>83</sup> This letter was preserved by Galip Dedekargınođlu, a member of Dede Kargın Ocak. Today Dede Kargın Ocak is regarded to be one of the Alevi *ocaks*. The earliest information on behalf of Dede Kargın was presented in the *Menākib* of Elvan Çelebi. According to this, Dede Kargın was likely fled from the Mongol attack and settled in Anatolia. Across time, he had become quite popular and the number of his disciples had dramatically increased. Çelebi et al. *Menākibu’l Kudsiyye fi Menasibi’l Unsiyye*.

conquest of Baghdad. He also states his wish for the Shah to move to Anatolia, according to which, the letter illustrates a certain loyalty to the Safavid Shah. The letter leaves a huge loophole in terms of the political and religious stance of the Bektaşis operating in Iraq. Even though, in this letter, Seyit Baki relates himself to the genealogy of Hacı Bektaş, it is not yet definitive if the dervish lodge, possibly located in Baghdad where the letter was written, had acquired a Bektaşî identity by the early seventeenth century. As far as we know, the Bektaşî lodges in Iraq only began to be identified as Bektaşî after the annihilation of the Safavids, which did not happen before the eighteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Unlike the previous *ijazetnâme*, the reference to Hacı Bektaş shows that by the seventeenth century there had appeared an individual link between some certain people of Dede Kargın Ocak with the Bektaşî order.

### **3.2 From the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century: From an Individual Link to an Institutionalized One**

How and why did a Sufi order, recognized and advocated by the Ottoman state, come into contact with a harshly criticized religious group which was identified as an enemy to Ottoman unity? How did such a relationship affect their political position up against the Ottomans? In what sense did both sides benefit or not benefit from such a link? Overall, historians studying the Bektaşis and Alevis are in agreement with the view proposed by Mélikoff that the Ottoman state supported the systematization of the Bektaşî order; it did so with a particular intention of assimilating the *râfîdî* thought and preventing the existing unruly dervish groups being a threat to the Ottoman unity.<sup>85</sup> Namely it is likely to say that the central motive of the Ottoman dynasty to support the Bektaşî philosophy is to co-opt the different mystic groups including the Alevis/Kızılbaş. According to this, establishing of personal or formal relationships with the other mystic groups was entirely consistent with the nature of the Bektaşî order.

What was the motive of the Kızılbaş in interacting with the Bektaşis? One possible reason would be that they were tired of

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<sup>84</sup> Bektaşî order, according to Hamid Algar, was also influential on some marginal sects and groups in Iran. The group of Ahl-i Haqq views Hacı Bektaş as incarnated version of Sultan Sahak. Some rituals like the *cem* service parallels in two groups. The notions of *sharī'ah*, *tariqah*, *ma'rifah* and *haqīqa* in the Ahl-i Haqq are as essential as they are for the Bektaşî order. Hamid Algar, "Bektaşî ve İran: Temaslar ve Bağlantılar", *Tarihi ve Kültürel boyutlarıyla Türkiyede Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler*, İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 1999, pp. 136-139; Evliya Çelebi et al. *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 4, İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Mélikoff, "Le probleme Kızılbaş," p. 65.

exclusion and persecution. And thus being close to a Sufi order that was the ally of the Ottoman would free them from the enmity of the Ottoman dynasty. Secondly, and more importantly, it would be because of the Safavid's unstable stance to the Kızılbaş after the recognition of Twelver Shi'ism as the official religion of Iran. The Safavid *'ulamā* tended to control the religious philosophy of the Kızılbaş after the recognition of Twelver Shi'ism. The attempt of the Safavid *'ulamā* on religious understanding of the Kızılbaş, said Kathryn Babayan, weakened both the political and religious bond that existed between the two.<sup>86</sup> Hence the Kızılbaş would have been in search of a different harborage where they could find more freedom for their own belief system. Due to the common religious elements shared between the Kızılbaş and Bektaşis, the Bektaşis would have met the expectation of the Kızılbaş. It needs to be clarified that the Bektaşis link to the Kızılbaş, however, has begun as early as the seventeenth century and it does not seem to be institutionalized earlier than the late eighteenth century. The evanescence of the Safavid dynasty seems to fasten the relationship between the two factions.

Since then, the Kızılbaş community has turned its face from the Safavid Shahs to Hacı Bektaş. The majority of the Alevi *ijazetnâmes* written after that included a genealogy connecting the Alevi *dedes* to Hacı Bektaş.<sup>87</sup> Hence from the eighteenth century onwards, the Kızılbaş began to appeal to the Hacı Bektaş convent in Kırşehir to ratify their *sayyid*-hood and thus to acquire an accreditation for their *dede* status. The Hacı Bektaş convent in Kırşehir has become the focal point for the Bektaşis and Alevis, and the rest of the Bektaşis lodges originating in the Ottoman reigns, were subjected to this one. When a new *shaykh* was about to be assigned to a *tekke* or a *zāwiya*, he would only be assigned with the permission of the *shaykh* of the Hacı Bektaş convent and Ottoman sultans.<sup>88</sup> The eighteenth century Alevi documents indicate that Alevi *dedes* applied to the Hacı Bektaş convent for an accreditation to confirm their *ocak* status and their *sayyid*-hood genealogy. The Alevi association with the Bektaşis seems to be beneficial for the Kızılbaş community. The advantage of the link for the Bektaşis side showed up especially in 1826 with the

<sup>86</sup> Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: from Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism", *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): pp. 140-143.

<sup>87</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "Alevi Dede Ailelerine Ait Buyruk Mecmuaları", ed. Hatice Aynur et al. *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VII: Mecmua: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*: 361-379, İstanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2012, p. 379.

<sup>88</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Nüfuz Mücadeleleri, Yapı Sorunları, ve Yeniçerilerin Sorunlu Rollerini: Bektaşilerin 1826 Öncesi Tarihine Bir Katkı", *Toplumsal Tarih Dergisi* 97 (Ocak 2002): 18.

abolishment of the Bektaşî convents. While the majority of the Bektaşî lodges were closed down, the Nakşî *shaykhs*, who were known for their loyalty to the Ottoman state, were assigned to the available ones. With that the government aimed to control the functioning of the ongoing Bektaşî lodges. By that time it is likely to claim that the Bektaşî link to the Kızılbaş enabled them to keep their presence in secret.

The distinguishing feature of the Alevi documents composed in the Hacı Bektaş convent when compared with the ones formed in the Sufi convents in Iraq is that the genealogy of the Alevi *dedes* have begun to be traced back to Hacı Bektaş. The oldest available *ijazetnâme* in which the chain of initiation was taken back to Hacı Bektaş was dated 1763.<sup>89</sup> There is also a number of other *ijazetnâmes* from the nineteenth century that frankly express a Bektaşî identity. Similar expression with regard to connecting the genealogy to Hacı Bektaş also becomes quite definitive in the documents of the Dede Kargın Ocak. For example, an *ijazetnâme* composed in 1817 begins with similar expression with the rest of the *ijazetnâmes* as they all praise Muhammad, ‘Alî, Fâtîma, and the Twelve Imams, but then it distinctly gives a special place to Hacı Bektaş. In this particular *ijazetnâme*, Hacı Bektaş was respected and glorified. Hacı Bektaş was presented as the most almighty person of his era and the sultan of *tariqah*’s almighties.<sup>90</sup> This *ijazetnâme* explicitly illustrates the presence of notably institutionalized relationship between the Dede Kargın Ocak and Bektaşî order.

By the eighteenth century, the Bektaşîs were known by two separate branches: the Çelebis, which mainly expanded in Anatolia, and the Babagans, which were popularized in the Balkans. The political and religious stance of these two branches had begun to break up slowly by the time when the Kızılbaş belief has become to blend in with the Çelebi Bektaşîs. By early twentieth century, there appeared a fairly obvious power struggle between the Çelebi and Babagan branches of the Bektaşî order. In 1327/1911, Feyzullah Baba, who represented the Babagan branch, wrote a letter to the sultan in which he offered his loyalty to the Ottoman sovereignty while he accused Çelebi Cemaleddin Efendi, the leading figure of the Çelebis, of meddling with their business. By contrast with this, the Çelebis accused of the Babagans for favoring the Albanians.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Yıldırım refers to the *ijazetnâmes* dated 1763-1803, 1816, 1819, 1855, and 1870, but he neither includes the facsimile nor the transliterated version of the documents. Yıldırım. “Bektaşî kime derler?,” 39.

<sup>90</sup> Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” pp. 45-49.

<sup>91</sup> A. Yılmaz Soyger, “Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında II Meşrutiyet Döneminde Bektaşîlik,”

Besides that, the Ottoman government of the late nineteenth century was involved in a fight for power between the *İttihat and Terakki* party — the party that ruled the government (1909 – 1918) — and the sultan. The Babagan and Çelebi Bektaşis even favoured different sides. The Çelebi Bektaşis by the early twentieth century established a good relationship with the sultan. Thereafter the Babagans were in good terms with the *İttihat and Terakki* party.<sup>92</sup>

This power struggle united the Kızılbaş with the Çelebis; the Babagans, however, kept their distance from the Kızılbaş community. The Çelebi Bektaşi beliefs were combined into a mixture of Kızılbaş and Bektaşi tenets. The Alevi-Bektaşi literature composed under the authority of the *İttihat and Terakki* party at this time, demonstrates that there was a sense in which the Alevis and Bektaşis were regarded as the same group of people.<sup>93</sup> The phrase 'Alevi-Bektaşi' also began to be used to define the Alevi and Bektaşi groups. The history of Alevis has been given in a number of books as though it was that of the Bektaşis. This is still a common mistake in numerous recently written books. Further, numerous Bektaşi convents like the main lodge in Hacı Bektaş, the lodges of Şahkulu located in Üsküdar/Istanbul, and Abdal Musa lodge in Elmalı/Antalya were all begun to be run by Alevi *dedes*.<sup>94</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In modern times, the usage of the Alevi-Bektaşi has become popular to refer to the community in which people identify themselves as both an Alevi and Bektaşi. In such circumstance, we

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*Tasavvuf* 12 (2004): 299.

<sup>92</sup> Hülya Küçük, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Bektaşilik", *Uluslararası Bektaşilik ve Alevilik Sempozyumu I*, SDÜ İlahiyat Fakültesi Isparta (2005): 79.

<sup>93</sup> The *İttihat and Terakki* party assigned some scholars to investigate the Anatolian Sufi orders particularly the Bektaşis and Alevis. This was the beginning of the process of new political and administrative attempts. Talat Paşa, the leader of the party, said in the parliament, 'however, we rule the government, we lack in our knowledge of Anatolians. We must know the people.' That is why the different beliefs, *tarīqahs* and tribes must be investigated. And Baha Sait Bey was assigned to research the Kızılbaş and Bektaşi groups. (Baha Sait Bey researched from 1914 to 1915, however, his researches were published in 1926-7 in *Türk Yurdu*. Bursalı Mehmet Tahir and Hasan Fehmi Hoca were in charge to research *ahis*, and Esat Uras Bey was assigned to seek the beliefs of Armenian.) Baha Sait Bey, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırması*; Ahmet Cahit Haksever, "Osmanlı'nın Son Döneminde İslahat ve Tarikatlar: Bektaşilik ve Nakşibendilik Örneği", *Ekev Akademi Dergisi* 13/38 (2009): 49.

<sup>94</sup> Küçük. "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Bektaşilik," 79.

cannot talk about two separate religious identities but a united religious group of people. And yet it does not mean that each Alevi is also Bektaşî since there appear to have been those who identify themselves as Bektaşî but not an Alevi and vice versa. When using the phrase of the Alevi-Bektaşî, it is essential to differentiate two groups in terms of their historical, theological and political development. Despite the differences in the historical and theological development of both groups, some scholars engaged in studying Alevism and Bektaşism struggle to separate the two entities from one another. At this point, the view of Köprülü appears to be influential as he traces the origins of both back to the Bâbâî movement. Similarly Mélikoff highlights link between the two from their origin, mentioning; however, certain distinctions emerging only by the early fifteenth century. This view dominates the current Alevi-Bektaşî literature. Instead of focusing on whether the two entities originated from the same root or not, since there does not exist enough evidence to prove it, I find it important to discuss how and when the Alevis came into contact with the Bektaşîs.

Until recently, it was believed that by the seventeenth century Alevism and Bektaşism have become intertwined with one another. However, Karakaya-Stump mentions an institutionalized link between the Alevis and Bektaşîs by the sixteenth century. Yet the document discussed in her work does not seem to be enough to suggest an institutionalized link, but rather shows the presence of an individual connection between the two. The *ijazetnâmes* and *hilafetnâmes* of the seventeenth century, however, show a precise link between the two group and the records of the eighteenth century likely display an institutionalized link between the two.

The historical records show that the Alevi link to the Bektaşî order has been consolidated during rough times. Both groups in terms of their religious and political stance seem to have been influenced from such link. Relatedly, the central motive of this article is to demonstrate that with the influence of the Bektaşî order, the Alevi belief has freed itself from the Imami hegemony of Iran and found a latitudinarian space for its own self-directed belief structure. Given this fact, this article purports that the Alevi belief found its final form after the penetration of the Bektaşî philosophy — not before that, as claimed.

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### SUMMARY

This research focuses on the link of the two essential religious groups of the Ottoman realm\_ the Alevis/Kızılbaş and Bektaşîs. From the late fifteenth century onward, both of which played a particular role in the Ottoman Empire’s socio-political domain. However the order is attributed to Hacı Bektaş (d. 668/1270), it was rather institutionalized in the early sixteenth century by Balım Sultan (d. 922/1516). As a Sufî order, the Bektaşî movement attracted the attention of the rural Oghuz population. From the early sixteenth until the late nineteenth century they played a crucial role in the social and political life of the Turkmen tribes in the Ottoman regions of Anatolia and Rumelia. To the much of historians, the support of the Ottoman dynasty played crucial role in the institutionalization and expansion of the order all around the Ottoman realm. On the other hand, the Alevism<sup>95</sup> appeared as a religious and political group by the late fifteenth century under the influence of Shaykh Junaid (d. 864/1460), the leading figure of the Safavid order by that time. Due to the Alevi-Safavid alliance, there had been a certain struggle between the Alevis and Ottoman Empire. Unlike the Bektaşîs, there had never appeared a peaceful link between the Alevis and Ottoman dynasty. The Alevis were never recognized nor respected as a legitimate religious group. They were rather subjected to the harsh critics as they were called to be *râfiđî* (rejectionists), *mulhid* (apostate), *khawârij* (seceders), *zindîq* (heretic), *kâfir* (unbeliever), non-Sunnis, bandit, burglar, etc.

From their birth to a certain time, the political stance of the both groups is completely different from one another. While the Bektaşîs were in a close link with the Ottoman Empire, the Alevis were

<sup>95</sup> It has come to be known with the name of Kızılbaş until the nineteenth century.

supporting the Safavid order in their struggle with the Ottoman. This, however, shows that they were initially un-related religious groups, with the influence of writings of Fuad Köprülü and later Irène Mélikoff, a number of works on Alevism held to the belief that these two entities originated from the same root, the Bâbâî movement. Both Köprülü and Mélikoff have come to believe that these two entities were originally related. Mélikoff even states that both originated from the same ground and divided into two separated groups through time. However, neither the records of the late fifteenth nor the sixteenth century provide enough evidences to prove such assertion. And yet scholars who claim that Alevism and Bektaşim were grew from the same root, does not clarify, however, how and when such an integration ended.

Alevism and Bektaşim in the modern times have come to be called the 'Alevi-Bektaşis'. Some scholars have even used the phrase of 'Alevi-Bektaşis' as though the two always reflect the same group of people. Due to that despite differences in their historical, political and theological development, some scholars have struggled to distinguish the two groups' historical growth from one another. To give an example, in a few works, the historical growth and development of the Alevis was given when talking about the Bektaşî historical process. The important matter that this research aims to pay attention is the fact that however, the phrase of 'Alevi-Bektaşis' represents a certain group of people, it does not mean that each Bektaşî is an Alevi and vice versa. Across time Bektaşism has been divided into several groups and only the Çelebi Bektaşî have integrated with the Alevis. Neither the Babagan Bektaşî nor the Nakşî Bektaşî related themselves with the Alevis.

It is of interest to this article to note the fact that the Alevi and Bektaşî history has developed through the influence of different political, social and religious paradigms. But in the course of its doctrinal and theological development, Alevism has in modern times become closely associated with Bektaşî order. To date, however, there are only a few recently published Alevi documents that make mention of the historical interaction of a number of Alevi *dedes* with some certain Bektaşî dervishes. At this point, the following questions will guide this research: How and why had a Sufi order, recognized and advocated by the Ottoman state, have come into contact with a harshly criticized religious group which was identified as an enemy to the Ottoman unity? How did the Kızılbaş-Bektaşî interaction affect the social, political and religious experience of the Kızılbaş over the course of its transformation to the Alevi belief structure?

Recently Ayfer Karakaya-Stump talks about an institutionalized relationship between the Anatolian Kızılbaş *dedes* of the sixteenth

century with the Bektaři lodges located in Iraq. However, the available sources of the sixteenth century on the Alevi and Bektaři belief do not relate them. Besides, the work of Suraiya Faroqi in which she studied the geographical distribution of the Kızılbař groups-particularly the ones mentioned in the Muhimme registers and existing Bektařis of the sixteenth century-illustrates that the geographical expansion of the both communities are not interrelated. Unlike the sixteenth century record, the seventeenth century documents on Alevism and Bektařism present strong link between the two. That is why to this research, it is unlikely to claim for an institutionalized relationship between the Alevi communities and Bektaři lodges, those documents presented by Karakaya-Stump only show an individual link between some certain Alevi dedes with the order.

To this research, Alevi belief system underwent a type of religious transformation over the course of its interaction with Bektaři order. It can also be said that the evanescence of the Safavid dynasty fastens the relationship between the two factions. Since then, the Kızılbař community has turned its face from the Safavid Shahs to Hacı Bektař. The majority of the Alevi *ijazetnāmes* written after that included a genealogy connecting the Alevi *dedes* to Hacı Bektař.