

AHMET RIFAT EFENDİ'S *MİRÂTÜ'L-MEKÂSİD*:
THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUNNI BEKTAŞİYYE IN THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY

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BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid*:

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid*: The Possibility of a Sunni Bektaşîyye in the Nineteenth Century

This thesis focuses on the work *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid*, which was written by a Bektaşî intellectual, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi in 1875. Although the Bektaşî order left its mark on the Ottoman Empire and had a long-standing association with the Janissary corps, it was also known for its heterodox and non-Sunni orientation. Yet, in *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid*, the author describes a Sunni Bektaşîyye. In this work, the Bektaşî order is represented as a Sufi order that was no different from the other Sunni Sufi orders. In particular, the author's efforts to bring together the Halidi branch of the Nakşibendi order and the Bektaşî order stand out.

Why did Ahmet Rıfat Efendi represent Bektaşîs in this way? This thesis argues that the answer to this question lies in the new challenges faced by Bektaşîs in the nineteenth century. In 1826, the Bektaşî order was abolished along with the Janissary corps and many Bektaşî lodges were destroyed or given over to Nakşibendi sheikhs. Despite these setbacks, however, the Bektaşî order could survive and gradually recuperated. Yet, the attacks on the Bektaşîs did not cease. In 1875, Harputlu Ishak Hoca penned a polemical work against the order. This thesis argues that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi penned his work in response to this and similar attacks and aimed to create. The necessary conditions and concessions for the Bektaşî order continue to exist in the late 19th-century Ottoman world.

ÖZET

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi'nin *Mirâtü'l Mekâsid*'i:

On Dokuzuncu Yüzyılda Sünni Bir Bektaşilik İhtimali

Bu tez, bir Bektaşî aydını olan Ahmet Rifat Efendi tarafından 1875 yılında kaleme alınan *Mirâtü'l Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid* adlı esere odaklanmaktadır. Bektaşî tarikatı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na damgası vurmuş olan, Yeniçeri ocağı ile yakın bağlara sahip olan, heterodoks ve Sünni olmayan yönelimi ile biliniyordu. Ancak *Mirâtü'l Mekâsid*'de müellif Sünni bir Bektaşîliği anlatmaktadır. Bu eserde Bektaşî tarikatı, diğer Sünnî tarikatlardan farkı olmayan bir tarikat olarak tasvir edilmektedir. Özellikle yazarın Nakşibendi tarikatının Halidi kolu ile Bektaşî tarikatını bir araya getirme çabaları göze çarpmaktadır.

Neden Ahmet Rıfat Efendi Bektaşîleri bu şekilde tasvir etmiştir? Bu tez, bu sorunun cevabının 19. yüzyılda Bektaşîlerin karşı karşıya kaldığı yeni zorluklarda yattığını iddia etmektedir. 1826 yılı itibariyle Yeniçeri Ocağı ile beraber Bektaşî tarikatı da kaldırılmış ve birçok Bektaşî tekkesi yıkılmış veya Nakşibendi şeyhlerine devredilmiştir. Ancak yaşanan tüm bu aksiliklere rağmen Bektaşî tarikatı ayakta kalabilmiş ve yavaş yavaş toparanabilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, Bektaşîlere yönelik saldırılar durmamıştır. 1875 yılında Harputlu İshak Hoca, Bektaşî tarikatına karşı bir çalışma kaleme almıştır. Bu tez, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi'nin bu ve benzeri saldırılara karşı eserini kaleme aldığını ve Bektaşîlerin lehine bir polemik yaratmayı amaçladığını savunmaktadır. Bektaşîlik'in yaşaması için gerekli olan birtakım şartlar ve tavizler 19. yüzyıl sonu Osmanlı dünyasında varlığını sürdürmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Case

The Ottoman Empire had a very colorful religious scene, as the Ottomans ruled over multiple religious communities throughout the six centuries of their existence. While Sunni Islam was the religion of the dynasty as well as of most of its ruling elites, a wide variety of Islamic communities and groups also existed under Ottoman rule. The Sufi orders, which developed relations with both the civilian population and the Ottoman administration, were especially prevalent. Among the Sufi orders, Bektaşîyye had a particularly interesting place. On the one hand, Bektaşî teachings contradicted certain aspects of the official Ottoman understanding of Islam and bore a distinct similarity to the beliefs and practices of the persecuted Kızılbaş-Alevî communities. On the other hand, despite its confessional divergence, from at least the fifteenth century onwards the order developed a close relationship with the Janissary corps and was able to flourish relatively unhindered until the destruction of the Janissary corps in 1826. Moreover, even after this event and after the Ottoman ban on their order, Bektaşîs managed to survive this debacle and were able to make an impact in various regions until the Ottoman Empire collapsed.

Although the Bektaşî order could not be completely erased from history, its adherents were affected by the new challenges of the era. Bektaşîs not only had to cope with the pressures placed on them by the authorities and some of the civilian population, but they also had to prevent possible new dangers early. Therefore, Bektaşîs had to hide themselves from time to time. However, this state of self-concealment was not exactly an introversion, it entailed adapting to the conditions

according to the degree of pressure on the order. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that as it other orders, there was no uniformity among the members of the Bektaşî order, and that Bektaşîs with different views could find a place in the same order. Moreover, while examining the Bektaşî order in the nineteenth century, the specific time and place could make a big difference. In the aftermath of the massacre of Janissaries and the ban on the Bektaşî order during the reign of Mahmud II, Bektaşîs had to be particularly mindful of the authoritarian atmosphere. In comparison, the relatively liberal atmosphere of the Tanzimat era eased the tension of the Bektaşîs to a significant degree. Yet in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Muslim backlash against the Tanzimat's liberal religious policies began to make itself felt also against the Bektaşîs.

This thesis focuses on a text written about the Bektaşî order by a self-described Bektaşî towards the end of the Tanzimaterâ. The text in question is *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid* (*Mirror of Intentions and Removal of Iniquities*), written in 1875. Its author, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi was an Ottoman bureaucrat and a Bektaşî, who openly described himself as such. What is interesting about this work is that it made the case for a rather Sunni Bektaşîyye. Specifically, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi tried to reconcile the Bektaşî rituals and the general rules of the order with Sunni Islam and with the beliefs and rituals of the Sunni Sufi orders, especially the Nakşibendis. In fact, the confessional status of the Bektaşî order cannot be easily categorized inside Ottoman Sunnism, and there was a strong opinion among the general public that Bektaşîs were indifferent to the principles of Sunni Islam.

So, why did Ahmet Rıfat Efendi try to convince his readers to reconsider the general opinion about Bektaşîyye? Did he represent the Bektaşîyye in the way he did because the order had indeed gone through a radical religious, and specifically

creedal transformation after it was closed? Or did Ahmet Rifat represent a more Sunni wing of the Bektaşîyye that had always been in existence? Or was his aim simply to protect his order from experiencing a repeat of the disaster that had befallen it in 1826? These are the principal questions that this thesis tries to answer. Before discussing how I will try to answer these questions in this thesis, however, it is necessary to see how the modern scholarship has dealt with the question of Bektaşî religious beliefs and practices.

2.1 Review of Secondary Sources

Although Bektaşî studies made a big leap about 40 years ago, its history goes back to the end of the 19th century. An order, that found countless supporters from both the subjects and the ruling class of an empire that ruled the Near East for six centuries, attracted the attention of many researchers. In terms of his influence on later historians, the most important of these researchers was Mehmet Fuat Köprülü. Even though Köprülü did not write a monograph on the Bektaşî order, his discussion of the early Sufis of Anatolia set the framework for decades of scholarship on the Bektaşîs. In his analysis, Köprülü relied heavily on the concepts of orthodoxy and heterodoxy and paired them with high, urban Islam and low, folk Islam respectively. In particular, he saw in the folk Islam of Anatolia the continuation of the shamanic culture of Turks in Central Asia. According to Köprülü, Bektaşîyye represented an interpretation of Islam that the Turks could understand, unlike the orthodox Islam of the urban elites.¹ Furthermore, Köprülü traced the Nakşibendis and Bektaşîs to a common origin through the Yesevi order, but treats Bektaşîyye as an interpretation of Islam that the uneducated Turks could understand, unlike the orthodox Islam of the

¹For more information, see, Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 243.

urban Muslims.² Notwithstanding, Köprülü's approach changed over time on some matters such as the confessional inclination of Ahmed Yesevi and the Shiite and Alid tendencies of Bektaşis.

His student Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı also contributed to Bektaşî studies. Especially his contribution to Bektaşî and Alevi literature is still appreciated.³ Although AbdülbakiGölpınarlı had studied with Köprülü, as a practicing Sufi and a Shiite, he was much more aware of the Alid orientation of many of the Sufi orders and of course also the Bektaşîs.⁴

Köprülü's followers Irene Melikoff and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak took forward Köprülü's views but they continued to defend his dichotomical approach such as a concept of "heterodox" Islam against orthodox and institutionalized Islam with a range of syncretism and the influence of old Turkic pre-Islamic beliefs.⁵

Suraiya Faroqhi's *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolia* is another important study about Bektaşîs. In her work, she focused more on the socio-economic conditions of Bektaşî lodges than on the religious. As far as Bektaşî religious orientations go, she gave credence to the argument of Beldiceanu-Steinherr that the Ottoman authorities had initially encouraged Bektaşîs to propagate Sunnism among the Turcoman tribes of east-central Anatolia but that in the process the Bektaşî dervishes themselves came under the influence of Shii-inflected popular Islam of the region. Nevertheless, in her own distinctive contribution, Faroqhi underlined the economic capability of the Bektaşî order as a reason for the abolition of the order in

² For more information, see, Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 243.

³ For more information, see, Gölpınarlı, *Alevi Bektaşî Nefesleri*.

⁴ For more information, see, Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Tasavvuf*.

⁵ For more information see, Melikoff, *Uyur İdik Uyardılar*; Ocak, *Türk Sufiliğine Bakışlar*; *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sûfilik: Kalenderîler : XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar*.

the early nineteenth century and states that Shiite beliefs did not play an important role in taking this decision.⁶

Since the 1980s, the Köprülü paradigm has been questioned from different perspectives. An especially early critic was Ahmet Karamustafa. In his monograph *God's Unruly Friends*, Karamustafa criticized Köprülü for regarding nonconformist dervishes as lightly Islamized shamans. Instead Karamustafa argued that nonconformist dervish piety took shape in the late middle period of Islam as a movement of protest at institutionalized Sufism. Far from being ignorant rural or tribal folk, the leaders of nonconformist dervish groups were often from urban and educated backgrounds. In both this book and a separate article Karamustafa identified the Bektāşis as a group that was part of this wave of nonconformist piety but which was itself transformed and became an institutionalized (but still nonconformist) *tariqa* starting in the sixteenth century.⁷ Other scholars who questioned aspects of Köprülü's argument include Cemal Kafadar, Devin Deweese, Markus Dressler, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump and Zeynep Oktay. These scholars have critiqued him for making to a sharp distinction between high Islam and folk Islam, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and on his insistence on the so-called Shamanic origins of various currents of Islamic piety in late medieval Anatolia. In particular, Markus Dressler has argued that Köprülü put forth his principal arguments to help the building of a nationalist discourse at the dawn of a Turkish nation state. It was thanks to his efforts that Alevism came to be associated with Turkishness in the young Republic of Turkey. The religious origins of Alevism and Bektāşīyye were attached

⁶ Faroqi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolia*, 186-187; Popovic and Veinstein, *Bektachiyya: Etudes sur l'ordre mystique des Bektascis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*, 171-184.

⁷ Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends : Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550*

Karamustafa, "Kalenders, Abdals, Hayderis: The Formation of the Bektāşīye in the Sixteenth Century" in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, ed. İnalçık and Kafadar, 121-129.

to the Central Asia Turkish mythology and contemporary Alevi were regarded as superficial Muslims that had not any conditions to understand the details of Islam. Put differently, Alevism and Bektaşîyye were the surviving Shamanism under a superficial Islamic cover. This attitude disregards the very existence of Kurdish/Zaza Alevi and the cultural diversity of Alevi population and history. By being stuck inside of a Central Asia originated discourse is also an underestimation for the cultural sources of the Near Eastern geography.⁸

Ayfer Karakaya Stump's publications have offered new perspectives on the history of both the Bektaşî and the Kızılbaş. The geographical and genealogical foundations of antinomian Islam are being gotten closer to the Middle East as it has to be. For instance, traces of Wafai order on the religious structure of Anatolia and *ocak* networks in Anatolia should be regarded as revolutionary leaps on thinking of Islam in Anatolia. Another significant assertion of Karakaya-Stump is about the formation of Kızılbaş Movement. She argues that ongoing and diverse religious groups in Anatolia and North Syria formed a coalition at the end of the 15th century. Anatolian Kızılbaşism was a consequence of this coalition. This was a response to Ottoman persecution and Sunnitization policies.⁹ Karakaya-Stump claims that Bektaşî tekke in Karbala had a function of mediation between Anatolian Kızılbaş community and Iran Safavid religious and political authority.¹⁰ In other words, Anatolian Kızılbaşes could establish connections via Bektaşî institution with Safavid authority.

Rıza Yıldırım's recent studies have contributed important point of views to the Bektaşî literature. In his recent work, he considers the birth of Bektaşîyye and its

⁸ For more information, see, Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam*.

⁹ Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşîlik, Kızılbaşlık: Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek, 2015; The Kızılbaş-Alevi in Ottoman Anatolia : Sufism, Politics and Community* .

¹⁰ Karakaya-Stump, "Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah"

transformation in the historical context. The relationship between the Bektaşî order and Kızılbaş population of Anatolia is considered in his studies. According to him, after the demise of the Safavid state in the eighteenth century, the spiritual leadership for Kızılbaş population turned from Ardabil to Hacıbektaş.¹¹

Zeynep Yürekli contextualizes the early modern Ottoman religious landscape and she focuses on the relationship and contradiction between the Bektaşî shrine culture and the centralization policies of the Ottoman Empire. According to her, gazis, abdals and various non-Sunni groups gathered under the Bektaşî umbrella, redefined themselves against the exclusionary Ottoman center and Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş lodges became significant locations for these groups.¹²

Derin Terzioğlu and Tijana Krstić's studies on the processes of Sunnitization and confesionalization in the early modern Ottoman Empire have also been important for our understanding of the broader context of the Bektaşîyye. Especially Terzioğlu's "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization" and "Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building" articles are very helpful to understand the complexities of Ottoman Sunnism and the Sunnitization process. In the latter article Terzioğlu explains the close connection between Alid-loyalty (also called Ahl-al Baytism) and Sufi piety in the early Ottoman Empire and discusses how Alid loyalist Sufis, including Bektashis, were impacted by Ottoman Sunnitization during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³

Other scholars have shed light on the 19th-century history of the Bektaşîs. Before discussing these scholars, however, it is necessary to mention the

¹¹ Yıldırım, *Bektaşîliğin Doğuşu*.

¹² Yürekli, "Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektaşî Shrines in the Classical Age", 20.

¹³ Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 301-338; Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building", 563-609; Krstić T. & Terzioğlu, D. *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750*.

contributions of Butrus Abu Manneh. In his exploration of the religious roots of the Tanzimat, Abu Manneh has questioned the dichotomy between reformism and Islamization and shown how the Nakşibendi-Halidi efforts at Sunnitization and Ottoman efforts at centralization and administrative and military reform went hand in hand in the first part of the 19th century. According to this view, the Bektaşî order was positioned as a reactionist place but Nakşibendis were more progressive. Actually, this approach may regenerate another problematic dichotomy because both Bektaşîs and Mujaddidis composed some places in state mechanism and yet we do not know properly their real role behind the reforms.¹⁴

Yılmaz Soyger's book *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik* (Bektaşism in the 19th Century) is another elaborative source on Alevi Bektaşî studies. The Bektaşî rituals and the order's inner structure are detailed in this work. This work also reveals relationships that Bektaşîs developed after the abolition and how Bektaşîs could breast the pressures and persecutions during the abolition process.¹⁵

Fahri Maden's studies were also remarkable. His book "*Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşiliğin Yasaklı Yılları*" (*The Abolition of Bektaşî Lodges and the Prohibited Years of Bektaşism*) indicates how Bektaşîs could survive after the abolition. His work also illuminates us the relationship between Bektaşîs and other orders. It is an interesting point that Bektaşîs could shelter themselves by the help of other Sunni and sharia normed orders. According to him, we can see solidarity between some of these orders.¹⁶

Salih Çift's works related post-abolition process of the Bektaşî order were other important studies. Even though his main point of view is inclined to justify the

¹⁴ Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript", 173-203; Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century".

¹⁵ Soyger, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik*, 76-79.

¹⁶ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşiliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 205.

assigned Sunnism on Bektaşis, he sheds light on the publication activities and some of the remarkable intellectuals' productions of the Bektaşî order.¹⁷

This thesis makes use of other M.A and PhD thesis in that respect shed light on the 19th century Bektaşism portrait. Özkan Karabulut's *The Rehabilitation of the Bektaşî Order in the 19th Century* is a comprehensive work which detailed the Bektaşî order between 1826-1876. Additionally, İbrahim Altuntaş's M.A thesis *Yeniçeri Ocağının Kaldırılmasından Sonra Bektaşî Tekkeleri ve Osmanlı Yönetimi* also focuses on the post-abolition period. These theses problematized the conditions that Bektaşî order had confronted. Muharrem Varol's extensive PhD thesis *Bektaşiliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)* emphasizes the state's control effort of the Sufi orders in the modernization process.

1.3 Primary sources and approach of this study

The main primary source of this thesis is Ahmet Rıfat's *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'i Mefâsid*. In this work, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi depicts Bektaşîyye as a Sunni Sufi order. Bektaşî rituals, traditions, creed and basic concepts of Bektaşîyye are represented in a Sunni framework and as being compatible with other Sunni Sufi orders. Moreover, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi expresses a favorable opinion of all the Sufi orders. However, he deliberately avoids touching upon some controversial points such as the abolition of the Bektaşî order, the Janissary-Bektaşî alliance or the participation of women in *cem* rituals.

Among the Sunni critics of Bektaşîyye, Es'ad Efendi, Ubeydullah Kuşmani, Harputlu İshak Hoca, Cevdet Paşa and Ahmed Lütü Efendi were important figures who provided us with significant primary sources. Ubeydullah Kuşmani's work

¹⁷ Çift, "1826 Sonrasında Bektaşilik Ve Bu Alanla İlgili Yayın Faaliyetleri", 250-266.

Zebîre-i Kuşmânî fî ta'rîfî nizâmı İlhamî was a useful source to understand a dimension of the objections against Bektaşîyye.¹⁸ It is interesting that the military deficiencies of the last century and so-called moral degeneration in society were considered together in the very existence of the Janissaries corps and Bektaşî were held responsible from this degeneration. Es'ad Efendi's work *Üss-i Zafer* was written to justify the abolition process of the Janissaries.¹⁹ This work directly reflects the official Ottoman ideology. Cevdet Paşa and Lütî Paşa's works *Tarih-i Cevdet* and *Lütî Tarihi* are other notable sources to pursue the traces of the Bektaşî and Janissary images inside the mind of reformist bureaucrat circles.²⁰ Harputlu Ishak Hoca was a plainspoken critic of the Bektaşî and he must have frightened them. His work provides us a harsh defamation of the Bektaşî order.²¹ On the other hand, Harputlu Ishak Hoca's claims do not depend on verified sources. He generally relied on hearsay.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's work *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid* can be regarded as a response to the texts of criticism. Of course, he was not the only person who wrote in defense of Bektaşîyye against the order's detractors at the time. Ahmet Rifki and Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba penned apologetic treaties on behalf of the Bektaşî order, too. Ahmet Rifki published *Bektaşî Sırrı* and Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba published *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr Reddiyyesi*.²² In these works, they followed the example of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi and argued that the Bektaşî order is a Sunni order, adhering to the Hanefi-Maturidi creed. Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba strongly

¹⁸ Dihkanizade Ubeydullah Kuşmani, *Nizam-ı Cedid'e Dair Bir Risale: Zebîre-i Kuşmânî fî ta'rîfî nizâmı İlhamî*.

¹⁹ Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 1243. For more information, Arslan, *Üss-i Zafer : (Yeniçeriliğin kaldırılmasına dair)*.

²⁰ Ahmet Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, vol.XII, 1871-1892; Ahmet Lütî, *Tarih-i Lütî*, 1873.

²¹ Harputlu Ishak Hoca, *Kâşifü'l-esrâr ve dâfiü'l-esrâr*. For more information, Zübeyde Kafesçi, "İshak Efendi'nin Kâşifü'l-esrâr ve dâfiü'l-esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi", Unpublished MA Thesis.

²² Yüksel, *Bektaşîlik ve Mehmet Ali Dedebaba*; Ahmet Rıfkı, *Bektaşî Sırrı Nam Risaleye Müdafaa*, 1909.

objected to Harputlu Ishak Hoca's claims that Bektaşis were infidels and he directly polemicized with anti-Bektaşî accusations.

The critics of Bektaşis were active throughout the 19th century. In my opinion, these names were not just Sunni reactionaries acting on their own initiative but were rather representatives of a new wave of Sunnitization in the 19th century. Their disapproval of Bektaşîyye stemmed from a combination of religious and political reasons and these waves had been periodically repeated through the Ottoman history to some extent. Especially, the polemics around these names were very illuminating sources to understand the contemporary era. Ahmet Rıfat's *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid* can be regarded as a response to Harputlu Ishak Hoca and it is very important to highlight on the reasons why he wrote this book. Therefore, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's affairs about Bektaşîyye and accusations on Bektaşîyye can be evaluated in terms of a part of this new Sunnitization wave.

1.4 Thesis Summary

This thesis focuses on the work titled *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Defi'l-Mefâsid* written by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi. This work by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi is the first work written by a Bektaşî that describes the order in a compact manner. More strikingly, the work projects a very Sunni image of the Bektaşîyye. My aim is first to situate this work in its historical context, second to determine whether its representation of the Bektaşîyye conforms to the historical record, and third and last to conclude with some thoughts about why Ahmet Rıfat represented the Bektaşîyye in this manner.

In the second chapter, I set the larger scene by discussing the abolition of the Bektaşî order and its aftermath. I discuss how the Ottoman authorities persecuted the Bektaşis and how the Bektaşis in turn tried to protect themselves. The appointment

of Sufi sheikhs from more conformist Sunni orders to Bektaşî lodges is also discussed as an attempt by the Ottoman authorities to instill social discipline.

Chapter Three examines Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'il Mefâsid* in the context of a new wave of Sunnitization that started in the 1870s. With this aim, the first part of this chapter introduces Harputlu Ishak Hoca's *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfi-ül Eşrâr*, which was a refutation of the Bektaşîyye written in 1871. The work is contextualized by detailing the social, political and cultural environment in which Harputlu Ishak Hoca lived and the ways in which that environment shaped his views. Especially the missionary activities in the Ottoman lands and the revival of Bektaşîs are identified as factors that must have provoked Ishak Hoca to pen a work of refutation.

The second part of Chapter Three examines Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'il Mefâsid*. His religious stand and claims were important because he was the first Bektaşî author that had written a systematic book on Bektaşîyye. I compare the Bektaşîs described by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi with the creed of the Bektaşîsas described in other sources. I argue that what we know about the historical Bektaşîs does not match with how Ahmet Rıfat Efendi portrayed them. Then, I expound why Ahmet Rıfat Efendi represented the Bektaşîyye in this way. I argue that his work was an attempt to protect the surviving Bektaşîs against a new wave of Sunnitization wave that had started in the 1870s. The case for a Sunni Bektaşîyye in the 19th century seems to have been made mainly as a defense mechanism against the possibility of a new purge against the order.

CHAPTER 2

BEKTAŞIS AFTER THE *VAK'A-I HAYRIYYE*

2.1 Abolition of the Bektaşî Order

After the abolition of the Janissaries, a meeting was held in the mosque in Topkapı Palace on July 8, 1826, to discuss the situation of the Bektaşî order.²³ Among the participants were the grand vizier, the former and the current Şeyhülislam, and Nakşibendi, Mevlevi, Celveti and Halveti sheikhs.²⁴ At the meeting, it was decided to close the Bektaşî order. According to the decision, Bektaşî dervish lodges that had been in existence for longer than sixty years were to be transferred to a sheikh "from the right path and *ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemaat*", while the more recent lodges would be demolished, and the Bektaşî sheikhs and dervishes them would be exiled to cities with a strong ulema presence such as Kayseri and Birgi where they could be pressured to correct their beliefs. Lodges that had been built in the last sixty years would be demolished except for the adjacent tombs and shrines and officers would be appointed for this task.

One of the issues discussed at the meeting was the confessional status of Bektaşîs.²⁵ According to Şeyhülislam Kadızade Mehmed Tahir Efendi, who opened the meeting, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli had been a Sunni Sufi. Despite this, he stated that some ignorant people, in the name of Bektaşîyye, by following their own nefs, had corrupted the Bektaşîyye with acts against religion.²⁶ One of the striking elements in the meeting was that sheikhs from other orders remained silent about the accusations directed by the Şeyhülislam against the Bektaşîs. They avoided expressing a definite

²³ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarihi Cevdet* XII, 1309, 181.

²⁴ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarihi Cevdet* XII, 1309, 181.

²⁵ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, 181-182, Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer* 1243, 207.

²⁶ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarihi Cevdet*, XII, 1309, 182, Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 1243, 209.

opinion, saying "Since we do not have relations with members of this order, we do not know their status and attitudes".²⁷ Although it was agreed at the end of the meeting that Bektaşis committed acts against religion, the silence of the orders on this issue and their failure to provide supporting testimony suggests that there were significant hesitations among them about the closure of this Sufi order. According to the historian Lütfi, some Sufi sheikhs were not eager to close down the Bektaşî order.²⁸ Despite this, in the end the participants in the meeting voted unanimously to close down the order, a decision that they seem to have reached under pressure.

Significantly, the Bektaşis were accused not only of acts against religion but also of acts against the state. It was claimed that the Bektaşis had tried to cooperate with the Greeks during the Greek Revolt in 1821 and offered an alliance. Moreover, the Bektaşis in Anatolia were accused of having supplied the Iranians with weapons on the eve of the war with Iran in between 1821-1823.²⁹ Furthermore, if we consider the teachings of Nakşibendi-Halidis were spreading in the elites, the widespread ideological power of this era would be understood more clearly.³⁰ One of the most important decisions which were taken at the meeting and which will be discussed below is the appointment of sheikhs from the Nakşibendi order to most of the Bektaşî lodges.

Another significant issue regarding the prohibition of Bektaşîyye was the greater influence that Sunni oriented orders gained as a result. Among these, especially the Halidi branch of the Nakşibendi order assumed a remarkable role.³¹ The fact that Bektaşî beliefs were in complete opposition to the Nakşibendi-

²⁷ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarihi Cevdet* XII, 1309, 237.

²⁸ Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, *Tarih-i Lütfi*, v. I, 169.

²⁹ Şirvanlı Fatih Efendi, *Gülzar-ı Fütuh* ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, 19.

³⁰ Abu-Manneh, "Between Heterodox and Sunni Orthodox Islam: The Bektaşî Order in the Nineteenth Century and Its Opponents", 212.

³¹ Soyger, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik*, 59.

Mujaddidi principles and the latter order's influential position in Istanbul and in the eyes of the state officials also had an impact. In the end, it was understood that the Nakşibendi trend had a role in the prohibition of Bektaşîyye, and the Nakşibendi-Mujaddidi branch, which led the orthodox Sunni trend, gradually increased its effectiveness in Istanbul, the center of the state.³² The prohibition of Bektaşîyye was closely related to the modernization initiated by the state, and this was carried out together with the Sunnization process. The fact that the Ottomans engaged in a Sunnization effort towards Bektaşîs until the 20th century had an effect on the way the issue was handled through Bektaşîyye. It was believed that Bektaşîs, whose beliefs were "corrected" by the sanctions to be implemented, would become acceptable citizens.³³

2.2 Appointment of Nakşibendis to Bektaşî Lodges

The date of 1826 brought great destruction but not complete extinction for Bektaşîs. Bektaşîs were subjected to severe persecution in Anatolia and Rumelia, especially in Istanbul. The babas and their followers in the Istanbul lodges were gathered and imprisoned in the Darbhane dungeon. Shortly after, Salih Baba, Kıncı Baba and İstanbul Ağasızade Ahmed Efendi were executed.³⁴ However, mass executions were not carried out, and Bektaşîs were weakened through exile. Others were administrated the faith test by Şeyhülislam Efendi and their Sunnism was checked. As a result of the interrogations, it was determined that the Bektaşîs who were not executed did not have deep knowledge in Islamic sciences but were not zındık and mülhid. Still, it was decided to exile all of them politically. In Rumelihisarı, Mahmud Baba and his seven followers from the Şehitlik Lodge were exiled to Kayseri,

³² Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)*, 65.

³³ Soyuer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik*, 79.

³⁴ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşiliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 87.

Ahmed Baba in the Öküz or Paşalimanı lodge and Hüseyin Baba in the Kazlıçeşme lodge with two followers were exiled to Hadim, Mustafa Baba from Sütölce lodge and Mustafa Baba from Karyağdı Lodge in Eyüp, and his three followers were exiled to Birgi, Yusuf Baba from the Karaağaç Lodge, was exiled to Amasya, Mustafa Baba from Ayıntablı was exiled to Güzelhisar, Kınıcı's brother Mehmed Baba, and the other Mehmed Baba from the Merdivenköy lodge were sent to Tire with four of his followers.³⁵ According to Esad Efendi, the choice of these places of exile was due to the strong presence of Sunni ulama there and the aim of assimilating the Bektaşis.³⁶

Many Bektaşî lodges were destroyed, and their foundations were confiscated and transferred to the treasury to cover the expenses of the new army.³⁷ Bektaşî lodges older than 60 years were not touched, and Nakşibendi sheiks were appointed to these lodges.³⁸ Hamdullah Çelebi was exiled from the Hacı Bektaş lodge in Nevşehir to Amasya. After his brother Veliyüddin Efendi, who promised to rule the lodge according to the Nakşibendi rules, in 1834, Mehmed Said Efendi, who was directly from the Nakşibendi order, was appointed as the head of the lodge.³⁹ In addition, some Bektaşî lodges younger than 60 years were demolished, and some were allocated to mosques, madrasas and schools.⁴⁰ The state acted hastily in demolishing some Bektaşî structures. On the day of the verdict that Bektaşî buildings were demolished; Bektaşî buildings in Rumeli Fortress, Eyüb, Sütölce, Kara Ağaç, Yedikule, Çamlıca and Nerdübanlı Village were demolished.⁴¹

During this period, many sheikhs who had the title of "baba" at the end of their names, although they were not Bektaşî, also suffered the same fate. For

³⁵ Birge, *The Bektaşî Order of Dervishes*, 1937, 77, Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* v.XII 182

³⁶ Es'ad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 175.

³⁷ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşiliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 109-112

³⁸ Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet* v.XII 182.

³⁹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşiliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 92.

⁴⁰ Gündüz "Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın İlgası'ndan Sonra Meydana Gelen Bazı Tasavvufi Gelişmeler", *Üss-i Zafer*, 211, Barnes, *An Introduction To Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire*, 90-91.

⁴¹ Barnes, *An Introduction To Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire*, 88-89

example, Bayram Baba in Aleppo his lodge was closed first, and his property was confiscated. Since it was understood in the examination that it was not a Bektaşî but a Halvetî lodge, it was reopened in 1831 and Abdülhamid Dede was appointed again.⁴²

Undoubtedly, the Ottoman Empire, with this policy, wanted to dissolve the Bektaşîs within the official orthodox Sunni interpretation as soon as possible and to erase the name Bektaşî. At the same time, it gives clues that this movement did not develop spontaneously but was planned in advance. As another result of this process, communication and interaction between the Nakşîbendis and the oppressed Bektaşîs increased. One of the most important duties imposed on the Nakşîbendis was to ensure that the Bektaşîs perform the five daily prayers in congregation in mosques.⁴³ As it can be understood, from the perspective of the Ottoman Empire at that time, the Bektaşîs were an order with strong heterodox tendencies. We should not ignore the role of the Halidî Nakşîbendis in the formation of this point of view.⁴⁴ At the end of a long historical process, the Nakşîbendis were able to establish themselves in the Ottoman lands and they could penetrate the power elites. It is a consequence of a constant policy because Nakşîbendî mission from the Mujaddidî branch could not be reduced to gather new followers but to spread elite circles.⁴⁵ However, it is inconvenient to consider the Nakşîbendis only as a strictly orthodox sharia-abiding order. Mystical superiority and the mystical teachings of Ibn Arabî occupied a place within the Nakşîbendî order.⁴⁶

⁴² Soyyer, *Sosyolojik Açıdan Alevî Bektaşî Geleneği*, 115

⁴³ Ortaylı, "Tarikatlar ve Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Yönetimi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İktisadi ve Sosyal Değişim", 347

⁴⁴ For more information, Abu Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century", 1-36

⁴⁵ Yaycıoğlu, "Guarding Tradition and Laws", 1586.

⁴⁶ Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World 1450-1700*, 180.

2.3 Recovery of the Bektaşî Order

The Bektaşî order entered a difficult period after it was closed in 1826. The demolition of Bektaşî dervish lodges, the appointment of representatives of Sunni Sufi orders, mainly Halidi Nakşibendis, to the lodges that were not demolished, the exile of the sheikh in the central Hacı Bektaş lodge and many other Bektaşîs were some of the concrete forms of oppressions that the Bektaşîs faced. In the face of all these measures, Bektaşîs seem to have felt the need to hide their identities for a period. Although the order was too widespread to be completely eradicated, fear for their lives forced the Bektaşîs to hide or dissumulate.⁴⁷ In this period, the need to hide themselves was of vital importance for Bektaşîs. As Ahmed Safi said, “*We wore the clothes of Sharia and to seemed to the Yazids.*” speech can summarize their situation.⁴⁸ However, these pressures were not always of the same severity, and the strategy of Bektaşîs against these pressures also changed over time. In addition, it is a fact that Bektaşîs developed some different solutions to overcome the state pressure on them. For instance, they hid themselves in other order lodges like Halveti, Rifai or Mevlevi and this situation gave way to a kind of fusion in these lodges.⁴⁹

It is known that Bektaşîyye became operational in 1839, the date when Sultan Abdülmecid ascended the throne and Tanzimat was declared, thanks to Halil Revnaki Baba and the sheikh of Merdivenköy Şahkulu Sultan Lodge Ahmed Baba.⁵⁰ It is even known that during the reign of Mahmud II, that is, before 1839, some exiled Bektaşîs were pardoned. For example, in the petition for the pardon of Mahmud Baba, the sheikh of the Şehitler Lodge, who was exiled to Kütahya, it was

⁴⁷ Birge, *The Bektaşî Order of Dervishes*, 93.

⁴⁸ “Şeriatı büründük, Yezidlere göründük”

Ahmed Safi, *Sefinetü’s Safi*, v.4, 361, cited in Maden, “*Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*”, 196.

⁴⁹ For more information, Koç, “Determinations in Revnakoğlu’s Documents Regarding Bektaşîzation among Bektaşî Fathers and Other Dervish Lodges”, 391-409.

⁵⁰ Zarcone, “Bektaşîliğin Rönesansı: Batı Karşısında Mistik Bir İdeoloji”, 27 cited in Yılmaz Soygyer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 75.

stated that the sheikh had given up Bektaşîyye and joined the Nakşibendi order.⁵¹

This pardon entailed the refutation of the Bektaşî identity. After the abolition of the Janissaries, the dissolution of Bektaşîyye must have reached a satisfactory level, and Mahmud II did not see any harm in some Bektaşîs continuing their activities in Istanbul.⁵² After Mahmud II, there was an increase in the number of Bektaşîs who were forgiven and returned to their lodges.⁵³ With these developments, the prohibitive policy softened a little, and Bektaşîs started to carry out their activities openly.⁵⁴ This situation led to the formation of a de facto two-headedness in the dervish lodges. After the middle of the century, a new separation occurred between Nakşibendi sheikhs and the Bektaşî babas in Bektaşî lodges beside the historical separation between Babagan and Çelebi branches.⁵⁵

Towards the middle of the 19th century, Bektaşîyye not only recovered, but also spread among the elites. Bezmi Sultan, who was the legal wife of Sultan Abdülmecid, attributed her ascent to this position to her stepping on a wish stone at the famous Bektaşî lodge in Merdivenköy, near Istanbul.⁵⁶ A British traveler Charles MacFarlane noted that the Bektaşî order could recover itself in 1840s in Bursa and area around.⁵⁷ Bektaşîs gained greater freedom with the accession of Sultan Abdülaziz to the throne. According to Melikoff, the sultan's sympathy for the Bektaşî order played an important role in this development.⁵⁸ On his trip to Europe, Sultan Abdülaziz visited Gül Baba lodge, a Bektaşî lodge in Budapest, and his mother

⁵¹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 205.

⁵² Ayar, "Yeniçeri Ocağı'nın İlgasından Sonra Bektaşî Tarikatı", Unpublished MA Thesis, 64.

⁵³ Soyuer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, 76-79.

⁵⁴ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 208.

⁵⁵ For more information. Noyan, "Bütün Yönleriyle Bektaşîlik" vol.1 p.318-319 cited in Özkan Karabulut, "Rehabilitation of the Bektaşî Order (1826-1876)", Unpublished MA Thesis, Sabancı University, 44.

⁵⁶ Birge, *The Bektaşî Order of Dervishes*, 93.

⁵⁷ MacFarlane, *Turkey and its Destiny*, 499.

⁵⁸ Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektaş Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, 305 cited in Fahri Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 209.

Pertevniyal Valide Sultan built a lodge for the Bektaşî sheikh Emin Baba in Edirnekapı.⁵⁹ Although they were not officially reopened and faced some pressures, the Bektaşî lodges were able to recover considerably 40 years after they were closed. Although the Bektaşîs were able to continue their activities in this period, they could not officially end the existence of the appointed sheikhs. The fact that Bektaşîs did not fulfill their wishes despite the freedom granted by the state shows that the Ottomans were determined to keep the control of Bektaşî within the Sunni circle. The fact that people who wore Bektaşî dresses in Istanbul in 1853 were asked to be warned not to wear them again shows that Bektaşîs were no longer hiding themselves, but they were never officially recognized as they were before 1826.⁶⁰ This situation occurred partly thanks to the connivance of the new Ottoman policy. Probably, the religious tolerance brought by the Tanzimat period also diffused the tensions. Therefore, Bektaşîyye had a structure that continued its activities de facto for a few decades after its abolition and still accepted its existence de facto.

During this period, our sources of information about Bektaşîyye increased. The Bektaşî tradition, which had been generally transmitted orally and with dispersed manuscripts, embraced written culture to a much greater extent. Of course, it can be predicted that the quality of the works published in this period was different from the standards of the pre-1826 period. Despite this, the same situation undoubtedly points to a cultural revival related to Bektaşîyye. At this point, the publication of the *Nesimi Divan* and the *Işkname* in this period is a very important event.

⁵⁹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 209.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

A REFUTATION AND A DEFENSE OF THE BEKTAŞI ORDER

3.1 *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr* and Harputlu Ishak Hoca's Charges against the Bektaşis

At a time when Bektaşis were trying to position themselves according to new social balances, the reaction of Sunni circles to the publication of works related to Hurufism emerged. This reaction can be considered as a part of a new Sunnitization wave in the case of the Ottoman Empire which had begun at the beginning of the 1870s. At this point, one of the most prominent names is Harputlu Ishak Hoca. He was born in Perçene village of Harput in 1801 and his father was Abdullah Efendi, one of the famous scholars of Harput.⁶¹ Harputlu Ishak Hoca completed his primary education in Harput, then went to Istanbul and completed his education at Fatih Sahn-ı Seman Madrasahs and received his diploma. After Harputlu Ishak Hoca returned to Harput, he was appointed as a teacher at the Meydan Mosque Madrasa. After staying in Harput for two years, he returned to Istanbul and started to teach in Fatih madrasahs, where he received his licence, and later taught at the Valide School. By proving his scholarly competence, he was appointed as the Shahzada's tutor at the Palace, and his success here won the love and favor of Sultan Abdülaziz Han, and he was given the duty of chief tutor.⁶² Harputlu Ishak Hoca received the honorary rank of the Kadi Istanbul (Istanbul *Payeliği*) during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.⁶³ After receiving this rank, he was appointed as a member of a commission in the Ministry of Foundations. Ishak Efendi died on April 11, 1892 and was buried in the

⁶¹ Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 125.

⁶² Demirpolat, *Harputlu İshak Hoca'nın Hayatı ve Eserleri*, 2.

⁶³ Ibid.

Fatih Mosque. His son, Cemaleddin Molla, was the last person to be a judge in Egypt in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴

To understand the mentality of Harputlu Ishak Hoca, it is important to look at Harput, the region where he was born. During his lifetime, Harput was a region where American missionaries were active. In 1847, Harput, which was designated as a missionary base due to the difficulty of managing the activities from Istanbul.⁶⁵ These activities mainly aimed to proselytize Protestantism among the Armenian community. However, it is worth considering how the Muslim majority in the region welcomed these missionary activities and what kind of reactions these activities evoked in them. Harputlu Ishak Hoca must have had his share from this point of view. It would not be logical to think that Harputlu Ishak Hoca, who was born in Harput and received his early education there, would be indifferent to the educational activities of foreign Christian elements in the region.

As a matter of fact, Harputlu Ishak Hoca, in his work titled *Şemsü'l-Hakika*, refutes the claims made by Christian missionaries and asks some questions about them. Another work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca *Ziyâü'l-Kulûb* was written with the aim of responding to the efforts of Christian missionaries, especially Protestants, on a scholarly platform. In this work, he especially brings up the issue of the authenticity of the Gospels for discussion.⁶⁶ He also participated in the religious debates in the Palace and engaged in discussions with the missionaries.

In the light of this information, we can argue that the social and religious situation of the region where he was born informed Harputlu Ishak Hoca's attempt to defend the religion of Islam against missionaries. Furthermore, the relatively liberal

⁶⁴ Kara, "Harputlu İshak Efendi", TDVİA, 531.

⁶⁵ Kılıç, "Kendi Yazdıları Işığında Amerikan Misyonerlerin Harput'taki Faaliyetleri", 479.

⁶⁶ Alıcı, "Osmanlı Son Döneminde Müslüman-Hristiyan Tartışmalarına Dair Bir Karşılaştırma: Şemsü'l-Hakika ve Râfi'u's-Şübühât y'ani, Cevâb-i Risâle-i Şemsü'l-Hakikat", 32.

atmosphere of the Tanzimat era had alienated a considerable cross section of the Ottoman Muslims. In the 1870s, the need for a religious response to this relatively liberal atmosphere as well as to the missionary activities took the form of a new Sunnitization wave. This inclination is generally identified with the policy of Abdülhamid II's reign even though its origins went back a few years ago before Abdülhamid II's reign.⁶⁷

The work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca, titled *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr ve Daîü'l Eşrar* was a very comprehensive rejection against Bektaşîyye. After this treatise, Harputlu Ishak Hoca wrote another work called *Îzâhü'l-esrar*, and tried to corner the Bektaşîs with the questions he asked. These works were written in a very aggressive language. Although these were quite original, even if they were not the first criticism of Bektaşîsm in history. *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr*, published in 1871, is a reaction to these works since it was written at a time when Bektaşî publications were being printed more and more. According to Ahmed Rıfkı, the aim of Harputlu Ishak Hoca was to organize a second *Vaka-i Hayriyye* that would eradicate the remaining Bektaşîs.⁶⁸ This possibility could not be disregarded by the Bektaşîs. Harputlu Ishak Hoca, on the first page of *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr*, treats the Bektaşîs as an order that leads Muslims to heresy.

Let it be known that the most significant group that tries to lead the Muslim community astray with their words and deeds is the Bektaşî order and even if everybody knows their aim, they clearly revealed in 1288 that they do not belong among the people of Islam.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Abu-Manneh, "Between Heterodox and Sunni Orthodox Islam", 203-218; Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 269.

⁶⁸ Ahmet Rıfkı Efendi, *Bektaşî Sırrı*, vol. 1, 126-127 cited in Unpublished MA Thesis of Ozkan Karabulut.

⁶⁹ Ve sonra ma'lum ola ki Ehl-i İslâm'ı ıdlâl ile meşgul olan taifenin en başlıcası Taife-i Bektaşîyan olup hâlbuki bunların akval ve e'allerinden, Ehl-i İslâm'dan olmadıkları ma'lum ise de 1288 tarihinde bütün bütün izhar eylediler. Harputlu Ishak Hoca, *Kâşifü'l-esrar ve daîü'l eşrar*, cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, *İshak Efendi'nin Kâşifü'l-esrâr ve dâîü'l-esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi*, 86.

However, Harputlu Ishak Hoca sees Bektaşis as Hurufi and considers the publication of Firişteoğlu's work, *Câvidân*, which is called *Işkname*, as a dangerous situation. He states that his purpose in writing the work is to prevent this danger.

The books they published under the title of "Cavidan" consist of six versions. One version belongs to their actual misleader Fazli Hurufi and the other five versions belong to his successors. As their blasphemy is very apparent in the abovementioned five versions, they taught and learned the secret among themselves, but since their blasphemy is somewhat concealed in Firişteoğlu's *Câvidân* titled *Işknâme*, they dared to publish it in 1288. Since it is without doubt a duty upon the community (*farz-ı kifâye*) to inform the people of faith about their state and about the blasphemies in these books, I put my trust in God and set out to write this treatise in three parts.⁷⁰

Harputlu Ishak Hoca, who often identifies Bektaşîyye with Hurufism in his work, claims that Aliyyü'l Âla, the disciple of Fazlullah Hurufi, mixed Hurufi principles into Bektaşîyye when he came to the Hacı Bektaş lodge, and kept Hurufism alive under a veil of secrecy.

After Timur's son murdered Fazlı Hurufi, tied a rope to his leg, and had him dragged in front of the people in the marketplace, subjected him to different kinds of insults, and removed his filthy body from the world, his followers fled and scattered all around the lands of Muslims and began to corrupt and lead the community of Islam astray. His disciple, known as Aliyyü'l-Âlâ, came to the Hacı Bektaş lodge in Anatolia, went into seclusion and secretly taught the *Câvidân* to the people of the lodge. He said that this is the way of Hacı Bektaş Veli, and because the people of the dervish lodge were all ignorant, they denied the sublime injunctions in accordance with *Câvidân* and accepted its teachings, as they were in agreement with the imperious self (*nefs-i emmare*). They called it secret and urged everyone to keep it secret. They were so careful that if someone who took part in their rituals were to disclose the secret, they would order this person to be killed. What they call secret are those blasphemous parts of the *Câvidân* that are marked by the letters which are non-connectors like (elif, vav, cim, ze), and they wrote a

⁷⁰ Bunların "*Câvidân*" tesmiye eyledikleri kitapları, 6 nüsha olup, birisi asıl mudilleri olan Fazlullah Hurufî'nin ve beşi hulefasının tertibatı olup, nüsha-i hamse-i mezkûrede küfürleri pek zâhir olduğundan beynelerinde sırrı tâlim ve taallüm eyleyip Firişteoğlu'nun "*Işknâme*" tâbir olunan *Câvidân* 'ında küfriyatını bir miktar mesrurane tuttuğundan 1288 tarihinde tabedip neşre cür'et eylediklerinden bunların ahvalini ve kitaplarında olan küfriyatını Ehl-i İman'a ehbar için bir risale kaleme almak bişek farz-ı kifâye olduğundan mütevekkilen Alellah üç bâbı müştemil olarak tahrir iclisar eyledim. Harputlu İshak Efendi, Kaşîfî'l esrar cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin Kâşîfî'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 86-87.

treatise by the title of *Miftâhu'l-Hayat* regarding these signs and called it "secret."⁷¹

We need to approach the claims that equated the Bektaşîyye with Hurufism carefully.

Ahmed Rıfkı states in his book *Bektaşî Sırrı* that Hoca İshak Efendi confused Bektaşîyye and Hurufism, and that Bektaşîyye and Hurufism have no relation.⁷² This inference that there is no relationship between Bektaşîyye and Hurufism is a forced conclusion. J. K. Birge, on the other hand, approaches this issue a little more cautiously. He points out that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries some Hurufis had continued their activities under the guise of Bektaşîyye. As a result, there were indeed some Bektaşîs who inclined towards Hurufi writings but unlike Harputlu İshak Hoca, he also points out that there are also many Bektaşî works that reject Hurufism.⁷³ According to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, the author of the work *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*, which I will mention in the next section, neither Bektaşîs were Hurufis nor Hurufis were Bektaşîs. However, Hurufis say that the book *Câvidân* is a work of Bektaşî in order to cause strife. He denies that there are Bektaşîs who are currently inclined towards Hurufism.⁷⁴ The fact that Ahmed Rıfat Efendi wrote his work in a time period when Bektaşîyye was associated with Hurufism brings to mind that this is a defense statement.

⁷¹ Timur'un oğlu, Fazlı Hurufî'yi katleyleyip bacağına ip takıp, çeşitli hakaretlerle çarşı ve pazarda insanlar önünde sürükletip vücut-u habaisi, ol dini âlem-i dünyadan defettikten sonra hulefası firar ederek bilâd-ı müslimine münteşir olup millet-i islâmiyeyi idlâl ve iğfal ile meşgul oldular. Lâkin Aliyyü'l-Âlâ ismiyle müsemma olan halifesi, Anadolu'da Hacı Bektaş tekkesine gelip inziva ederek ve *Câvidân*'ı hafiyen ehl-i tekkeye tâlim ederek ve bu tariki Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin tarikidir dedikte, ehl-i hankah dahi cümlesi câhil ve nâdân olmasıyla mukteza-yı *Câvidânı* cümle teklifat-ı aliyyeyi inkâr ve nefsi emmarenin hevasına muvafakatı aşıkâr olduğundan kabul eyleyip, ismini sır koyup gayet-i ihfayı tembih eylediler. O derece ihtimam ettiler ki bir kimse dâhil-i ayinleri olup, sırrı ifşa ederse ol kimsenin katlini iltizam eylerler. Ve bu sır dedikleri şey *Câvidân*'ın içinde olan küfür mahalleri (elif, vav, cim, ze) gibi huruf-ı mukatta ile remz ve işaret olunup ve bu rumuzat için *Miftâhu'l-Hayat* namında bir risale telif eyleyip ismini "sır" koydular." Harputlu İshak Hoca, *Kaşîfî'l-esrar*, cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin Kâşîfî'l-esrâr ve dâfiu'l-esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 90-91.

⁷² Ahmed Rıfkı, *Bektaşî Sırrı*, 6-7.

⁷³ Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 283.

⁷⁴ Ahmed Rıfat Efendi, *Mirâtü'l mekâsid* (Gerçek Bektaşîlik), 231.

On the other hand, the fact is that there is no evidence of an actual Hurufi or Noktavi existence, whether in or outside the Bektaşî order in the 19th century. As a matter of fact, we would say that the criticism against Bektaşîs by charging them with Hurufism was a defamation policy. It is another fact that Bektaşîyye contained some Hurufi elements but the function of Hurufism here appears as a defamation label. In other words, misunderstandingly, any publications about Hurufism were directly related with the interests of Bektaşîs.

Harputlu Ishak Hoca claimed that Bektaşîs took great care to protect their secrets, and that their members were secretly carrying out their activities in the Nakşibendi, Rufai, Kadiri dervish lodges during the time the order was closed, even though they seem to be trying to have a respectful attitude towards the Ehl-i Beyt by appearing from the Shia. He claims that they deem wine-drink to be licit and this is an unbecoming manner.

Does have any doubt that the way you have embarked on entails the proclamation of wine and raki to be halal just like Yazid and the abandonment of the namaz prayer following the path of Yazid?⁷⁵

According to Harputlu Ishak Hoca, Bektaşîs were not actually Shias, they were idolators (*taife-i müşrikin*), they approved of Jews and Christians, but they could not attract them, and they attracted Shiites by pretending to be from Shia. When you ask a question to the Bektaşîs, they say, "We are Jafari", but they do not know about him either.⁷⁶ He also states that Bektaşîs lead the congregation to evil, and that they do not recognize and practice outward acts of worship such as prayer and fasting.

Harputlu Ishak Hoca evaluates the examples he gave in the axis of Ali's adherence to

⁷⁵ İşte sizin gittiğiniz yol dahi Yezid misilli daima şarap ve rakı istihlal ve savm ve salatı terk ederek meslek-i Yezid'e sâlik olmanızda kimsenin şüphesi var mıdır?, Harputlu Ishak Efendi, *Kâşîfü'l esrâr*, cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve dâfiu'l esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 94.

⁷⁶ Harputlu İshak Efendi, *Kâşîfü'l esrâr*, cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin Kâşîfü'l esrâr ve dâfiu'l esrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 89.

the sharia and often considers Bektaşîs as an element that puts strife among Muslims and puts forward esotericist (*batîni*) views on apparent worship.

This poor one, I asked: Can there be namaz without standing, recitation, bowing and prostration? He answered: Of course, the namaz performed inwardly is without standing, recitation, bowing and prostration. This poor one said: You became an infidel. Because the namaz that our lord, pride of the cosmos, upon him be the most perfect of the salutations, and his distinguished companions, upon them all be the satisfaction of God, prayed is the namaz that we have been praying until now. Even there are occasions they could not perform the namaz, they did not intend to perform it in an esoteric way. It has been understood that what you call esoteric namaz is nothing but drinking wine and rakı, getting drunk pulling your cap over your eyes and entertaining false dreams and other delusion.⁷⁷

In addition, Harputlu İshak Hoca mentions Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli as a perfect mentor, but claims that Bektaşîs later went astray by acting in accordance with the *Câvidân*.

We answer: Hacı Bektaş Veli, may his secret be blessed was a perfected and perfecting master and like other great masters, he observed the immaculate sharia and the exalted Sunnas of the Prophet, but those of his successors who observed his way passed away in a very short while. Some people who sought the path of God in the darkness of ignorance and not-knowing and in the article of unbelief and error, and who sought every opportunity to follow the inclination of their imperious soul claimed to be followers of Hacı Bektaş and thus landered him, just as idolaters claim to follow the path of religion of Jesus Christ and just as Shiites (Rafidites) claim to follow the way of Jafar al-Sadiq. There is no doubt that Hacı Bektaş would have been the first person to denounce such people.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Fakir sual ettim ki: “Kıyamsız, kıraatsız, rükûsuz, secdesiz böyle bir namaz var mıdır?” Cevap eyledi ki: “Elbette batınca namaz kıyam ve kıratsız, rükû ve secdesiz olacak.” Fakir dedim ki: “Sen kâfir oldun, zira (Fahr-i Kâinat) Aleyhi Ekmeli’t-Tahiyyat Efendimiz ve Ashab-ı Güzin rıdvanullahi teala aleyhim ecmein hazeratının kıldıkları namaz bizim kıldığımız erkan-ı maluma ve ef’al-i mahsusadır, hatta bir vakit namazları kazaya kalsa, kütüb-ü ehadieste mestur ve mazbut ve cümle ulema-ı ehl-i imân ve meşayih-i kiram ve cümle ehl-i iman ila yevmuna haza kıldıkları namaz yine bu erkan-ı maluma üzere olup hiçbirisi bu erkânı terkedip “batınca namaz” diyerek başka bir yol tutmamış. Anlaşıldı ki senin batınca namaz dediğin şarap ve rakı nûş edip, mest ve medhuş olarak külâhı gözünün üstüne indirip kâh hülyay-ı fasideleri ile birtakım kuruntunun adını salat-ı batına koydunuz”.

Harputlu İshak Efendi, *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr*, (İshak Efendi'nin Kâşifü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Eşrâr Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi), 92.

⁷⁸ Cevap veririm ki; Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli kuddise sırruhu hazretleri mürşid-i kâmil ve mükemmil ve meslekî sâir piran-ı izam gibi şeriat-ı mutahhara ve sünen-i seniyye-i rasulü kibriyaya mutabık olup ancak halifesinden süluk üzere hareket edenler az müddet içinde dâr-ı bekaya rihlet etmiş. Ve birtakım zulmet-i cehl ve nâdânîden ve itikadat-ı küfr ve dalâlden tarik-i hak arayanlar ve meyl-i nefis-i emmarelerini icraya tarik-i vesile ittihaz eden müşriklerin Hazreti İsa Salevatullah-i âla Nebiyyina ve Aleyh Efendimize mensubiyet iddiasında bulundukları ve Rafizîlerin İmam Ca'fer-i Sâdık radiyallahu anhu hazretlerine mensûbiyet davasında bulundukları gibi bunlar kendilerini (Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli) Kuddise Sırruh Hazretlerine mensup tutup

In this respect, the author embraces the classical Ottoman discourse that criticizes the behavior of some Bektaşis against the law. Namely, he depicts Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli is a perfected sheikh while he deems the latter day Bektaşhis as heretics who have gone astray. The influence of Kuşadalı İbrahim Halveti, who equates being a non-sharia-abiding Muslim with being a Bektaşî, finds a wide place in the work.⁷⁹

Harputlu Ishak Hoca devotes an important part of his work to the blasphemous claims in the *Câvidân* and attributes them to the Bektaşis. According to him, Fazlı Hurufi's claim of divinity and his antinomianism (*ibahiye*) and abolishing the provision of worship directly penetrated Bektaşîyye.

God forbid, they dismiss the canonical prayer as one of the exoteric/apparent (meanings of the divine world) and claim that another form of worship is meant by it esoterically. The aim of Fazlı Hurufi is to deny the exoteric meaning of sharia rules (*ahkam-ı şer'iyye*) like the canonical prayer to claim each one (of these rules) means something else esoterically, and to deny all the valid sharia rules through forced interpretation (*ala tariki't-tevil*) and to subscribe to the divinity of Fazlı Hurufi.⁸⁰

Even though such beliefs as denial of the resurrection, considering Fazlullah Hurufi to be superior to the prophets, and disregard for the canonical forms of worships, were not held by the early Bektaşis, they later spread among them because of Fazlullah Hurufi's disciple. Indeed, Fazlullah Hurufi is at the center of all blasphemies. According to him, Fazlı Hurufi, as an ignorant figure who gives

mürşid-i müşarûn ileyh hazretlerine birtakım iftiralar eyledikleri erbâb-ı vukûfun malumu olunduğundan onların birinci davacısı kendileri kat'a olacağından şek ve şüphe yoktur. Harputlu Ishak Hoca, *Kaşifü'l esrar ve dâfiü'l eşrar* cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Esrâr* Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 98-99.

⁷⁹ Öztürk, *Kuşadalı İbrahim Halveti*, 5.

⁸⁰ Haşa, salâtı, zâhirinden sarf ederek bâtinca başka namaz murâddır, derler. Bu Fazlı Hurûfî'nin murâdı, salât misillü cümle ahkâm-ı şer'iyyeyi bütün zâhirden menedip her birini bu ahkâmdan murad bâtinca başka birşeydir, diyerek cemî ahkâm-ı zâhib-i şer'iyyeyi ala tariki't-te'vil inkâr eyleyip ve Fazlı Hurûfî'nin ulûhiyetine zâhib olmuştur. Harputlu Ishak Hoca, *Kaşifü'l esrar ve dâfiü'l eşrar* cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Esrâr* Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 103.

meaning to letters, is the leading actor in the way the Bektaşis go astray and misinterpret religion.

Even though there are so many other blasphemies of this kind, I have refrained from discussing them in detail. Let it not be concealed that as described above Fazlı Hurufi claimed, God forbid, that he was God himself and that it was also Fazlı Hurufi who was meant by Adam. Hence throughout his life he had prostrated to himself and after him, according to their false belief, (believers) were joined to prostrate as the vicegerents of God (*halifetullah*). This was the gist of his commands.⁸¹

Therefore, he attributes the immorality in social life to Bektaşîyye through Hurufism and attributes the whole burden of social degeneration to Bektaşîyye. He explains that the words of Bektaşî lead people to disbelief, with the events, people and examples he chose from Islamic history and mythology, and attacks Bektaşîyye through Hurufism. However, Harputlu İshak Hoca does not base these accusations on solid documents, he generally only repeats the claims he claims to have heard from others. This situation greatly damages the credibility of Harputlu İshak Hoca's work. Besides, bringing together Bektaşîyye and antinomianism is not something Harputlu İshak Hoca put forward. Beginning from Eflaki's *Menâkıbü'l Arifin*, it is a common view in the public opinion that Bektaşîyye had a distance to nominal religious obligations. This situation has been shaped as Bektaşî anecdotes in the social subconscious.⁸² In this type of anecdote, the Bektaşî hero, who does not obey the religious rules but has some social sensitivity, gives various lessons of virtue through the funny events he has lived. In brief, Harputlu İshak Hoca equated Bektaşîyye with irreligiousness and blamed the Hurufi influence that permeated into the real Bektaşîyye for this situation. Another work that was written in this period

⁸¹ Ve bu bâbda birçok küfür var ise de tafsîlinden sarfı nazar olundu ve hafî olmaya ki bâlâda tasrih olunan vech üzere Fazlı Hurufî haşa kendisi Allah olup, Âdem'den de murad yine Fazlı Hurufî olduğundan daima hayatında kendisine secde ve kendisi murad olduktan sonra zu'm-ı bâtîllarınca halifetullah olan Bektaşî babalarına secde etmek ile emretmek olup cemi talimatı bunlardan ibarettir. Harputlu İshak Hoca, *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiü'l-Eşrâr* cited in Zübeyde Kafesci, İshak Efendi'nin *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiü'l-Eşrâr* Adlı Eserinin İslam Mezhepleri Tarihi Açısından Değerlendirilmesi, 123.

⁸² For more information, Yıldırım, *Türk Edebiyatında Bektaşî Fıkraları*.

and continues the criticism style of Harputlu Hoca Ishak Efendi is *Îzâhü'l-Esrâr*. The main theme of *Îzâhü'l-Esrâr* is that Bektaşism emerged from Hurufism, acts against religious rules, Bektaşî lodges became a nest of mischief, Dedebabas were sinners, and Babas deceived those around them, as in *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr*.⁸³ In the work, it is seen that Nakşibandiyye is recommended against Bektaşîyye from time to time.⁸⁴ He also mentions important muderrisses and hodjas who did religious science in Anatolia, emphasizing that most of them are Halidi. Manisa mufti Hacı Evliyazade illuminated Aydın, Antepli Hoca from Uşak gave *ijaza* to 1200 people, Süleyman Efendi made *ijaza* in Karaağaç, and also Beyzâde Ali Efendi and Eskişehir mufti Süleyman Efendi in Harput. Reminding the prophets, he repeats that all of these people are Nakşibendi-Halidi. However, there is not enough information about whether Harputlu Ishak Hoca was a Halidi. The fact that Harputlu Ishak Hoca wrote his work during the grand vizierate of Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha in 1873 or 1874, the son of the Caucasian İsmail Siracüddin Şirvani, who was a Nakşibendi sheikh, is also a sign that Harputlu Ishak Hoca had a strong Nakşibendi-Halidi side.⁸⁵ This situation shows us the rising Nakşibendi disposition in the 19th century could determine the religious conversations in public manner.

3.2 Analysis of *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*

The refutation of Harputlu Ishak Hoca, called *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr*, was met with concern by Bektaşî circles. Therefore, some works were written in response to this work. Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba's *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr'a Reddiye* is one of them. Ahmet Rıfkı's *Bektaşî Sırrı* is another one. In all of these works, the Bektaşî order is considered a Sunni order, refuting Harputlu Ishak Hoca's Hurufism and infidelity

⁸³ Varol, "Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr'ın İzinde" 49-57.

⁸⁴ Varol, "Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr'ın İzinde", 38.

⁸⁵ Yücer, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf, XIX. Yüzyıl*, 711.

accusations. According to these works, Bektaşîs strictly follows the religious obligations. However, even if there is no other direct refutation of *Kâşîfû'l-Esrâr*, we will examine the work of Ahmed Rıfat Efendi called *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid ve defîü'l mefâsid*, which was published right after the publication of this work.

Before examining this work, it would be useful to examine Ahmed Rıfat Efendi and the historical conjuncture he was in. We have limited information about the life of Ahmed Rıfat Efendi, he was a *sayyid* according to his own statement.⁸⁶ In one of his works, Ahmed Rıfat Efendi describes himself as “Dersaadet Muhasebecisi es-Seyyid Ahmet Rıfat b. İsmail”⁸⁷ He was born in Istanbul. In the sources, there is no information about his family, education life and upbringing, and there is little information about him in his works. He started his civil service life in the finance department. He was a member of the *Divân-ı Muhâkemat*, Finance Department. Then, working in the Department of Customs, he became an accountant of this department in 1863 and continued in this position until 1865. In 1869, he worked as the Bursa treasurer. Later, he left this job and returned to Istanbul. According to Franz Babinger, after he quited his job, he took a rest in his father’s hometown Bursa for a while. He was also described as “lame” because of his problem in his leg.⁸⁸ He was buried in the cemetery outside Edirnekapı after his death.⁸⁹ Although his date of birth is not known, 1875, 1876 or 1891 are given about his death date. The date of death is given as 1875 in Mehmed Süreyya's collective biography "*Sicill-i Osmani*". However, considering that Ahmed Rıfat Efendi presented his work to Murat V, it is understood that this date is wrong.⁹⁰ Ahmed Rıfkı, who gave the date of his death as

⁸⁶ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'atül-Mekasid fi Def'i'il Mefasid)*, 165.

⁸⁷ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, “*Ravzatü'l Aziziyye*”, 3 cited in Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'atül-Mekasid fi Def'i'il Mefasid)*, 15.

⁸⁸ Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, 394.

⁸⁹ Beyhan, “Rıfat Efendi, Topal” TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi v.35 104.

⁹⁰ Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani* v.II 408.

1891, probably confused Ahmet Rıfat Efendi with Rumelian Rıfat Efendi, so the most accurate date should be 1876. It is not known how Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, who in some parts of his work implies that he is also a Bektaşî, entered the Bektaşî Order, from whom he took possession, and his position in the order.⁹¹ However, considering that he has the most detailed information about the Bektaşî order, we can say that he was a Bektaşî. The manuscript of *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*, the masterpiece of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, who wrote many works in prose and verse, should be between May 25 and August 31, 1876, as it was dedicated to Murat V. Apart from his masterpiece *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*, he published a few works which were compilations of the Ottoman statesmen's biographies. The titles of these works are *Devhatü'l-Meşâyih ma'zeyl*, *Devhatü'l-Nükabâ*, *Verdü'l-hadâ'ik* and *Ravzetü'l-Aziziyye*.⁹² The biographies of the Ottoman sadrazams, Şeyhülislams, *nakib-al eşrafs* (the descendants of the Prophet) and the Ottoman rank holders were compiled in these works. Another important relationship of Murat V in terms of Bektaşîyye history is his relationship with Ruhi Baba, one of the followers of Nafi Baba Lodge in Istanbul. Ruhi Baba was a Bektaşî Baba who had a close relationship with Murat V.⁹³ However; we do not have any information about the relationship between Ruhi Baba and Ahmet Rıfat Efendi. J.K. Birge's claim regarding the publication of the work is that Pertevniyal Valide Sultan, the mother of Sultan Abdülaziz, covered the printing costs of the work.⁹⁴ In the light of all this information, we can claim that there were various relations between Bektaşî circles and the Ottoman palace. However, we should not forget that Bektaşîyye was formally banned during this period and Nakşibendi sheikhs were officially in charge of Bektaşî lodges. From this, we come

⁹¹ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 304.

⁹² Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, 394-395.

⁹³ Işın "Bektaşîlik" İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, 137.

⁹⁴ Birge, *The Bektaşî Order of Dervishes*, 81.

to the conclusion that although Bektaşîyye had partial freedom, the Ottomans persisted in their policy of controlling the religious orders. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi explains *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid* was written to vindicate Bektaşîyye, pointing to the activities of malicious people who have recently been involved in Bektaşîyye, inclined to Noktavi and Hurufi.⁹⁵ It is significant that the work was published two years after Harputlu Ishak Hoca's rejection of Bektaşîyye titled *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr*, and that Ahmet Rıfat attributes the deterioration of Bektaşîyye to the influence of Hurufi and Noktavi. In our opinion, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, with this work, made a refutation against the understanding of Harputlu Ishak Hoca who criticizes Bektaşîyye and Hurufism. However, neither Ahmet Rıfat Efendi mentioned Harputlu Ishak Hoca or his work. However, unlike Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedeşaba, he did not dare to confront Harputlu Ishak Hoca directly. He would have hesitated to directly polemicize with Harputlu Ishak Hoca.

The language generally used by Bektaşîs in their written and oral literary works was written in plain and understandable Turkish. But Ahmet Rıfat Efendi is outside of this generalization. Because the language used in the work is quite heavy. The work of the author, who tries to express himself by creating many phrases consisting of Arabic and Persian words from time to time, clearly appeals to a limited readership from the Ottoman intellectual class rather than ordinary readers. When the sources of the work are examined, it should not be overlooked that the author has benefited from many mystical works and is at a level of education that can read and understand the books written for the Ottoman ulama group.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 271.

⁹⁶ For more information, Çift "Modern Anlamda İlk "Bektaşîlik Kitabı" Olarak *Mir'âtü'l-Mekâsid* ve Kaynakları", 199-204.

At the very beginning of his book, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi states that Ali and Abu Bakr were the originators of the Sufi paths. Practices of these Sufi paths issued from Ali and Abu Bakr.

And after this, as is not secret to the people of knowledge and gnosis, the matter of spiritual guidance (*irşad*), pledging of allegiance (*ahz-ı biat*), and oral communication (*telkin*) of *zikr* (remembrance and chanting of the names of God) issued from two people of high repute: One was trained by vocal *dhikr*, the other by silent *dhikr*.⁹⁷

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi then gives information about Islamic mythology and terminology. Then, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi begins with the subtitle like "*Der-Beyân-ı Çehar-yârı Güzin*" on the front page of his work and gives information about the first four "rightly guided" caliphs starting from Abu Bakr and uses expressions full of praise.⁹⁸ This attitude is in full harmony with the Sunni perspective that dominates the work in general. For instance, he writes:

It was said: "Who are the ones who will achieve salvation?" It was said: "The ones who obey me and my companions". It is understood that those who will achieve salvation are those who follow my path and that of my companions'.⁹⁹

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's knowledge of other orders is also interesting. Because in the next chapter, the author gives the lineages of many orders and general information about these orders. He talks about all these orders. But interestingly, after giving the

⁹⁷ Emmâ ba'd: Nezdi ashâb-ı ilm-ı irfânda hafî olmadığı üzere tarîki'l irşâd ahz-ı bî'at ve telkîn-i zikr husûsu iki zât-ı celîlu'l-ünvândan münşe'ibdir ki, birisi zikr-i hafî ve ol birisi zikr-i cehrî ile mürebbâdırlar.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 111.

⁹⁸ Akdem-i ashâb-ı safâ intisâb-ı yâr-ı gâr Habîb-i rabbi'l-erbâb büzürgvâr-ı âl-i mikdâr mazhar-ı sâniye'sneyni fi'l-gâr siddîk-i celîlu'l-kadr bâhiru't-tasdik halîfe-i rasûlillâh ale't-tahkîk Ebû Bekir es-Siddîk radiyallâhu anh.

A'del-i ecille-i ashâb ekmel-i edille-i şâh-ı râh-ı ecr u sevâb zînet efza-i minber u mihrâb rehnümâ-i tarîk-i sıdk u sevâb a'nî emîru'l-mü'minîn Ömer ibn el-Hâttâb radiyallâhu anh.

Sâhib-i envâr-ı hayâ ve îmân câmi'-i âyâtî'l-Kur'ân suffice-i ashâb-ı safâya zan sâlisu şeyhayn akdem-i hatneyn emîru'l- mü'minîn Osman zi'n-nûreyn radiyallâhu anh.

Hâtem-i evliyâ imâm-ı Hüdâ vasiyy-yı muhtâr-ı Mustafâ gârşk-i bahr-i belâ harîk-i nâr-ı velâ râfî'-i âlem-i rasûl-i müctebâ mazhar-ı ene medînetü'l-ilmi ve Aliyyun bâbuhâ zevc-i betûl ibn ammi rasûl sâhib-i mehâsin-i menâkıb emîru'l- mü'minîn Ali ibn Ebî Tâlib radiyallâhu anh

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 121.

⁹⁹ Denildi ki: "Ehl-i necât olan ne halli kimselerdir?" Buyruldu ki: "Benim ve ashâbım tarîkine gidenlerdir." Anlaşıldı ki fırka-i nâciye Rasûlullah'ın ve ashâbının tarîkine gidenlerdir.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 125.

lineage of the Nakşibendi order, he also gives the lineage of the Halidi branch of the Nakşibendi order. After that, he finally gives the lineage of the Bektaşî order.¹⁰⁰ This situation brings to mind the effort of the author to bring together the Bektaşî order and the Halidi branch of the Nakşibendi order. Finally, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi surprisingly adds the Bektaşî order to the list of orders on the right track, whose lineage is linked to Abu Bakr. Until the author wrote this claim, the Bektaşî order was known as a Sufi order based on a *silsila* going back to Ali, but the claim of *bakri* silsila was not found. The author must have been aware of this situation because he followed a path like this. He connected all the orders to Jafar Sadik via Junayd-i Bagdadi and from there to Ali. Therefore, according to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, all orders are 'alevi orders. The superiority is to be *bekri*-originated order. This superiority is shared by Nakşibendi, its Halidi branch, and Bektaşîyye.

It has been established by the books of the *tariqa* that as will be discussed below the lineage of exalted path of the Nakşibendiyye and Bektaşîyye and others goes back to Sıddîk-ia'zam, the first "rightly guided" caliph. These (orders, in turn,) have branched into different sub-orders and many great men of God have come down via these lineages.¹⁰¹

The author often mentions the names of these two orders together where he attempts to explain the link between these lineages.

Therefore, Ebu'l Hasan Harakânî who appears in the abovementioned lineages of Nakşibendiyye and Bektaşîyye, having come to the world after Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî, was trained by the spiritual presence of Bâyezîd...¹⁰²

In my opinion, his endeavor to bring these two orders can only be explained by the Halidi influence on the Bektaşî order after the latter's abolition. In

¹⁰⁰ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 157.

¹⁰¹ Bâhusus zikri mürûr edeceği vechile silsile-i tarîkatta Sıddîk-i a'zam ve halîfe-i akdem hazretlerine peyveste olan tarîkat-ı alîyye-i Nakşibendiyye ve Bektâşîyye ve sâire ki bunlar da bir hayli şu'abâta munkasım olarak bu koldan dahî nice ehlullah-ı izâm zuhûra geldiği kütüb-i tarîkat ile sâbittir.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 141.

¹⁰² Pes, bâlâda mezkûr silsile-i Nakşibendiyye ve Bektâşîyye'de vâki' Ebu'l Hasan Harakânî dahî Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî Hazretleri'nin intikallerinden sonra dünyâya gelmiş olmakla rûhâniyyet-i Bâyezîd ile mürebbâ oldukları misillü...

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 160.

fact, the effort to bring Abu Bakr and Ali side by side stands out on the first page of the work. In the issue of separation between the orders, he argues that the audible dhikr is characteristic of the orders based on Ali and the silent dhikr on Abu Bakr. As a result, he adds that both ways are permissible. In this work, the author approves all Sunni orders, includes the *Ehl-i Sünnet* and tries to bring the Nakşibendis together with the Bektaşis. It is also important that another endeavor is to bring together *bekri* origin with the '*alevi*' origin.

Because the connecting name in the lineages of Nakşibendiyye and Bektaşiiyye is Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî, in the scrolls this has been recorded as "through the spirituality of Imam Jafar-i Sadiq..¹⁰³

This can be another proof of Nakşibendi influence on Bektasis. In the next chapters, the author gives information about basic religious issues. Dhikr, deeds, spirit, attraction, preservation of gifts and trusts, five daily namaz, fasting, zakat and pilgrimage are among the leading ones. These parts take up most of the work.¹⁰⁴

The rest of the book is devoted to the Bektaşî order. Here, there is detailed information about Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, the rites, rituals and methods of Bektaşiiyye. How to enter the Bektaşî order, the structure of the order and religious information about the order are included. After giving this detailed information about the Bektaşî order, the author also responds to the criticisms of the order, especially the criticisms of Hurufism. In the following sections, detailed information about the Ahl al-Bayt is given, along with the birth and death dates of the 12 Imams. The names of the members of the *Ehl-i Beyt* who were killed in Karbala are given.¹⁰⁵

One of the important points in terms of the style that dominates the work is related to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's attitude towards other members of the order. Ahmet

¹⁰³ Silsile-i Nakşiiyye ve Bektaşiiyye'de vâsıta bend-i tarîk Bâyezîd-i Bistâmî Hazretleri olmakla tomarlarda an rûhâniyyeti'l İmâm Ca'fer-i Sâdık diyerek yazılmıştır.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fi Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 159.

¹⁰⁴ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fi Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 161-295.

¹⁰⁵ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekâsid fi Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 361.

Rıfat Efendi uses tolerant language towards other order members in this work. He wants to stay away from polemics as much as possible, as in the example that all orders are one and the difference is due to the types of *dhikr*. However, this attitude of his is completely different when it comes to those who interpret the shari'a provisions in an esoteric way. It insists on the fulfillment of the basic daily religious practices of the religion of Islam. What he is trying to do throughout his work is to respond to the claims that Bektaşîyye is trying to be portrayed as a gathering place for those who want to live a religiously unruly life. He tries to express that the real Bektaşîyye abides by the rules of sharia and lives in a religiously and mutually, like many other orders.

Thus, since the majority of those who make this mistake do not know the secret of the words of the great sheikhs and do not have the ability to interpret and verify, they take them literally and fall in to error and those who are their companions also fall in to the same abyss. For instance, they interpret what the venerable Junayd-i Baghdadi (according to their fancy) and make their case based on it. Or, they keep it a secret and (only) tell it to their confidants. God forbid that this saying of Junayd-i Baghdadi amount to a nullification of the obligations of the sharia! The profession of faith, canonical prayer, ritual fasting, pilgrimage, alms and other duties like these are religious obligations based on the divine word and the normative traditions of the Prophet. There is no need for forced interpretation and wordplay (*şathiyyat*) on this matter.¹⁰⁶

Bektaşîyye as represented by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi is a religious tradition that disapproves of the forced interpretation of *sharia* provisions. It is also *ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemaat*. At this point, we need to explain what Ahmet Rıfat Efendi understands from part of *ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemaat*. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi refers to the

¹⁰⁶ Fe-emmâ bu vartaya düşenlerin ekseri kelimât- meşâyih-i izâmın sırrını bilmediklerinden ve te'vîl u tahkîke kâdir olmadıklarından nâşî zâhirine haml ile bu vartaya düşüp bunlara musâhib olanlar dahî bu girdâba giriftâr olurlar. Ve bu takımdan Hazret-i Cüneyd-i Bağdadi'nin buyurdıklarını semt-te'vîle çekip hüccet ibrâz eylerler. Veyâhut derûnlarında saklayıp mahrem-râzlarına söylerler. Hâşâ ki Cüneyd-i Bağdâdî'nin bu kelâmından iskât-ı teklîfât-ı şer'iyye ola. Kelime-i şehâdet ve salât ve savm ve hacc ve zekât ve bu gibi teklîfât-ı ferâiz-i İlâhiyye ve sünen-i seniyye-i Peygamberiye'den olup Müslüman olanlar bunların icrâ ve ifâsiyla mecbûr u mükelleftir. Bu bâbda bir gûne te'vîl ü şathiyyât gerekmez.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 293.

well-known hadith that Muslims will be divided into 73 sects and out of those only one will reach salvation, and that is the *ehl-i sünnet ve'l cemaat*.¹⁰⁷

Now, as indicated in the noble hadith, only one of the aforementioned sects will reach salvation, while the rest are bound for Hell. “And what is meant by the sect that will reach salvation is *Ehl-i sünnet ve'l cemâ'at*. And *Ehl-i sünnet ve'l cemâ'at* are the Mâturidiyye and Eş'ariyye in creed. What is meant by Mâturidiyye is the creed of Ebu Mansur Maturidi and what is meant by Eş'ariyye is the creed of Abu'l-Hasan Ash'ari. The sheikh of the Hanefis in creed is Ebu Mansur Maturidi, and the sheikh of the Shafiis in creed is Ebu'l-Hasan Eş'ari. Oh follower of the order! In the previous age there were many mujtahids. However, after that, (the community) decided on the madhhab of thefour imams. The first of thefour imams is the Greatest Imam Ebu Hanife Nu'mân b. Sabit, may God be satisfied with him. His wondrous deeds and virtues (menakıb) have been narrated above. Now, it is necessary for a dervish to know his Imamin both practice and creed and to remain stead fastin following the madhhab of *Ehl-i sünnet ve'l cemâ'at*.¹⁰⁸

Therefore, the understanding of Ahl as-Sunnah meant by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi does not differ significantly from the prevailing understanding of *ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemaat* in his time. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi is an inconspicuous Hanafi for his time. Besides, he is a Bektaşî who emphasizes his loyalty to the *Ehl-i Beyt*.

According to the sources written about Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli about a century after his death, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli is known for not obeying the sharia beyond being a respected saint.¹⁰⁹ His treatment of basic Islamic practices is more esoteric rather than regular.¹¹⁰ In the Velayetname, it is seen that Hacı Bektaş did not go to the mosque and prayed together with his abdals, even though he was standing on prayer times, often mixed with miracles. All at once, they were climbing up to Hırkadamı

¹⁰⁷ Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'âtül Mekâsid fi Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 221.

¹⁰⁸ İmdi fırka-i mezbûreden ber-mûcib-i hadîs-i şerîf birisi nâciye, ma'dâsı hâlikedir. Ve fırka-i nâciyeden murâd ehl-i sünnet ve'l cemâ'attır. Ve ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemâ'at i'tikâdda Mâtüridiyye ve Eş'ariyye'lerdir. Mâtüediyye'den ve Eş'ariyye'den murâd Ebû Mansûr Mâtüridî ve Ebu'l-Hasan Eş'arî'dir. Ve Hanefiyye'nin i'tikâdiyyâtında şeyhi Ebû Mansûr Mâtüridî ve Şâfi'iyye'nin Ebu'l-Hasan Eş'arî'dir. Ey tâlib-i tarîkat! Ahd-i sâbıkda müctehidin bisyâr idi. Lâkin sonra eimme-i erba'anın mezâhibi üzerine karardâde oldu. Ve eimme-i erba'anın evvelkisi İmâm-ı A'zam Ebû Hanîfe Nu'mân b. Sâbit radiyallâhu anh'dır. Menâkıb-ı celîleleri sâbıkda zikrolundu. İmdi dervîş olana lâzım olan amel ü i'tikâdda İmâmını tanıyıp ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemâ'at mezhebi üzere kâim u müdâvim olmak lâzım gelir.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'âtül Mekasid fi Def'i'il Mefasid)*, 222.

¹⁰⁹ Elvan Çelebi, *Menâkıbü'l-kudsiyye*, 98, Ahmet Eflakî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*.

¹¹⁰ Soileau, “Conforming Haji Bektash”, 430.

and going to a secluded place.¹¹¹ However, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi does not mention this aspect of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli in his work.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi tried to reflect the love of the *Ehl-i Beyt* at the highest possible level in his work, in which he took care to emphasize the *ehl-i sünnet ve'l-cemaat*. This situation sometimes leads to the emergence of interesting comments at a remarkable level. For example, in the section where he gives information about Abu Hanifa, after talking about his virtues, he focuses on Abu Hanifa's ties with the *Ehl-i Beyt* and savings leaders and says the following:

In fact, the Greatest Imam (i.e., Ebu Hanife) and Hasan Basrî are of the same spiritual disposition (*meşreb*) as the prophets Musa and Hızır, upon them be peace. Exoteric knowledge dominated the spiritual constitution (neş'e) of Imam-i A'zam, esoteric knowledge prevailed over the spiritual constitution of Hasan-i Basrî, upon them be the mercy of God. Yet, both of them reached the Real and the truth. Someone who is more virtuous (in one respect) is less virtuous in another respect. It is incumbent on a person possessed of reason that he thinks well of the mujtahid imams., for as the great men of God say, it is unlikely for the leaders of a people to be deficient and the people themselves to be perfect. Imam-i A'zam was born in the city of Kufa in the eightieth year after the Hijra. His father Sabit received many prayers from Imam Ali, and he himself, when he was just three years old, was blessed with the good opinion of Almighty Zeyne'l-Abâ... In fact, he was educated by Imam Jafar-i Sadiq himself.¹¹²

As can be clearly seen, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi firmly underlines the relationship between the leaders of the Ahl al-Bayt and Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Sunni Hanafi school. The underlying reason for this interpretation of his must have been to try to bring Bektaşîyye into a circle with Sunni Hanafi and Maturidi, but also to combine it with the strong philo-Alidist tendency in Bektaşîyye. Actually, this

¹¹¹ Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektaş Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, 125.

¹¹² “Hattâ İmâm-ı A'zam ile Hasan Basrî Hazerâtı Mûsâ ile Hızır Aleyhime's-selâm meşreblerindendir. İmâm-ı A'zam Hazretlerinin neş'esinde ilm-i zâhir gâlib ve Hasan-ı Basrî rahimehullahın neş'esinde ilm-i bâtın gâlib idi. Lâkin ikisi de Hakk'a ve hakîkate vâsıl idiler. Efdal olan kimesne min-vechin mefdûl olur. Pes âkile lâzım olan budur ki eimme-i müctehidîn hakkında hüsn-i zan üze ola. Zîra bir kavmin muktedâları nâkıs olub kendileri kâmil olmak ba'id olduğunu ehlül-lâh-ı izâm hazerâtı beyân eder. İmâm-ı A'zam Hazretleri dahî hicretin sekseninci senesinde Kûfe şehrinde vücûda gelmiştir. Pederleri Sâbit Hazret-i İmâm Ali'nin hayli du'âsın almıştır. Ve kendileri dahî üç yaşında iken Cenab-ı Zeyne'l-Abâ'nın hüsn-i nazarına mazhar olmuştur... Bâ-husûs ki İmâm Câ'fer-i Sâdık radiye anhu'l Hâlik Hazretleri'nden ta'lîm-i ilm eylediler. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül Mekasid fî Def'i'il Mefasid)*, 202.

tendency is not so far from the Ottoman Sunnism viewpoint which had a significant *Ehl-i Beyt* disposition.¹¹³ Not only Abu Hanifa and the leaders of the *Ehl-i Beyt*, but also Imam Ghazali and Yunus Emre are remembered with respect. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's way of dealing with Yunus Emre is an issue that needs to be emphasized on its own. The author compares the ontological status of Muhammad and Ali by referring to Yunus Emre.

When the venerable Ali said 'I am the dot under the (letter) *ba* (...)' he was speaking in the language of the perfected man, who is nothing but the coming together of all the levels of divinity and existence, be they prophets (*nebi*) or saints (*veli*). The fact that the Muhammadan reality is the first entification (*ta'ayyün-i evvel*) does not prevent the Alid reality from (also) being the first entification. For, all of the perfect humanbeings are from the first row (*saff-i evvel*); they are united (*müttehîd*) in existence (*vücud*). This is why Yunus Emre, may his secret be blessed, who was one of the masters of this great secret, said, "I came from the road ahead through the road ahead." (With these words) he was pointing to the world of the dot, which is the meeting place of the levels of divinity and existence and is a copy of the celestial and temporal worlds.¹¹⁴

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi does not put Ali's ontological status ahead of Muhammad's, but considers him as one of the perfect human beings in Bektaşî philosophy, and argues that Ali has a self-declared secret and that he shares this secret with many other perfect people. Accordingly, Ali's ontological status is not equated with Muhammad, as in various esoteric interpretations. The fact that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi refers to Yunus Emre in this deduction can be understood as an effort to melt the names related to Bektaşîyye in his own Sunni Hanefi and Maturidi pot. On the other hand, it

¹¹³ Erginbaş, "Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History: Approaches toward Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya in Ottoman Historical Writing", 473, in Krstić & Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire*, c. 1450-c. 1750.

¹¹⁴ "Pes Hazret-i Ali "taht-ı "bâ"da olan nokta menem buyurduğu cemi'-i merâtib-i İlâhiyye ve kevnîyyenin cem'inden ibâret olan insane-ı kâmil lisânındandır, gerek nebî olsun ve gerek velî olsun. Zîra hakikat-ı Muhammediyye'nin ta'ayyün-i evvel olması hakikat-ı Aliyye'nin ta'ayyün-i evvel olmasını mâni değildir. Zîra insane-ı kâmilin cümlesi saff-ı evvelendir, vücûdda müttehiddir. Bu sır-ı azîmin âgâhlarından Yûnus Emrem kuddise sırruhûnun "İleri yoldan geldim ileri yol ile" dediği âlem-i noktaya işaret eder ki mecmu-i merâtib-i İlâhiyye ve kevnîyye ve nüsha-i avâlim-i âfâkiyye ve enfûsiyyedir."

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid)*, 253.

is clear that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi was inclined to consider Yunus Emre as a Sunni sufi. In other words, he saw at Yunus Emre what he wanted to see by decontextualizing him. In fact, Ali's status, according to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, is on the same level as Omar and Osman, behind Abu Bakr. "Because of this reason, any new thing came from Jafar-i Sadiq but he was the most virtuous person in the ummah. Moreover, Omar, Osman and Ali were the caliphs of the *umma* and these ones were also the most virtuous people of the umma."¹¹⁵ Equating Ali's ontological status with the other Rashidun caliphs and putting forward Abu Bakr as the superior one seems unfamiliar for a Bektaşî Sufi.

Another important issue that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi focused on is *tevella* and *teberra*. According to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *tevella* and *teberra* mean the following.

The apparent meaning of *tevella* and *teberra* is that we love what the Prophet loved and we praise it; and we dislike what the Prophet disliked and we condemn it. As for the true meaning of *tevella* and *teberra*, the *tevella* of the people of spiritual state is God's approval and their *teberra* is all else besides God such that the person even gives up his own self. Good deeds are *tevella* in that they meet God's approval. Bad deeds are *teberra* in that they do not meet God's approval.¹¹⁶

First, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi dealt with *tevella* and *teberra* with the liking or hating the enemies of Muhammad, then put these concepts in a metaphorical meaning. According to the author, in the real sense, *tevella* and *teberra* refer to attain the grace of God. In substance, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi generally tries to reject the esoteric interpretations of the religious matters but in that sense he applies to evaluate

¹¹⁵ "Onun için Cenâb-ı Sıddîk'ten hârik-i âdât nesne zuhûr etmemiştir. Ma'a hâzâ efdalü'l ümmedir. Hazret-i Ömer, Osman ve Murtezâ Ali radiyallahu anhum hazerâtı dahî halife-i Râsûlullah olub ümmetin efdali ve eşrefi bunlardır."

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 128.

¹¹⁶ "Tevellâ ve teberrânın ma'nâ-yı zâhiri Risâlet-penâh Efendimiz hazretlerinin sevdiğini sevip tevellâ ederiz ve sevmediklerini sevmeyip teberrâ eyleriz demektir... Fe-emmâ işbu tevellâ ve teberrânın ma'nâ-yı hakikîsine gelince: Hâl ehlinin tevellâsı rızâ-yı Hakk'dır, teberrâsı mâ-sivâllahtır. Hattâ kendi nefsinden dahî geçe. Hakikat-ı tevellâ ve teberrâ budur ki kişi bunları kendi nefsinde bulmak lâzım gelir. Hüsn-i a'mâl Hakk'ın rızâsına muvâfık olmakla tevellâdır. Akbeh-i ef'âl Hakk'ın rızâsına gayr-ı muvâfık bulunmakla teberrâdır."

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsid fî Def'i'il Mefâsid)*, 127.

these concepts in a esoteric meaning. It seems that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi had considerable hesitations on controversial issues like the nature of *teberra* which might evoke Sunnism – Shi’ism difference

So far, we have witnessed that Bektâşîs are handled in line with the *ehl-i sünnet ve ’l-cemaat*, according to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's interpretation. At this point, the issue of vital importance is the issue of the Bektâşî Jafarism. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, while discussing the relationship between Bektâşîyye and Jafarism, embraces the concept of becoming Jafari. However, he adds that this Jafari occurrence has been misinterpreted. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, who has a couplet like

“None of the seventy-two paths were saved
If you are right, be a Jafari, always“

points to the *ehl-i sünnet ve ’l-cemaat* as a madhhab.¹¹⁷ To clear up the confusion at this point, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi argued that Imam Jafar-i Sadiq was not a *sahib-i mezheb*, and being a member of Imam Jafar madhhab means following the right path, that is, following the path of Jafar al-Sadiq himself.

“I am from the Jafari madhhab. In meaning, madhhab refers to the path that has to be followed; it also denotes the path one follows as a member of the singular umma of the Prophet in terms of the branches of jurisprudence (*füruat*). Since the aforementioned venerable (Ja’far al-Sadiq) did not delve into that field, he does not have a madhhab (in the latter sense).”¹¹⁸

In other words, according to him, being a member of the Jafari madhhab means following Imam Jafari Sadiq, who was in any case part of the *ehl-i sünnet ve ’l-cema’at*. It does not imply affiliation with a legal school outside the four Sunni

¹¹⁷Yetmiş iki milletin hiçbirî nâci olmadı
Mezheb-i hak ister isen Ca’ferî ol dâimâ

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektâşîlik (Mir’atül-Mekasid fi Def’i ’il Mefasid)*, 224.

¹¹⁸İmâm Ca’fer mezhebindenim. Mezheb bi-ma’nâ tutulacak yol ve dîn-i vâhid yani peygamber-i vâhid ümmetinden olarak fûrû’atta ayrıca tutulan tarîk demektir. Müşârun-ileyh hazretleri kendilerince bu vâdiden müstağni olmakla sâhib-i mezheb değildirler.
Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektâşîlik (Mir’atül-Mekâsid fi Def’i ’il Mefâsid)*, 396.

legal schools. According to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, those who make this claim, that is, those who treat Ja'farism as a separate legal school are malicious people who have infiltrated into the Bektaşî order.

“Therefore, to be from the Jafari madhab means to be on the path that they followed in the path of the Real. It does not have the false meaning that some people of blameworthy innovation (*ehl-i bid'at*) have attributed to it, so understand”¹¹⁹

This attitude was unfamiliar in the Bektaşî tradition. Thus, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi argues that Jafar-i Sadiq was not the founder of a separate madhab as claimed by Shiites, but he took four basic Sunni madhabs as reference. He claims that the Bektaşî order also adopted this principle. At this point, we have to underline what we understand by Jafari Shiism. In fact, Jafari Shiism has a strong *tevella* and *teberra*.¹²⁰ This is an approach that was accused of heresy and atheism by the Ottoman Sunni ulema, and it was almost impossible for it to flourish in the Ottoman lands without any problems.¹²¹

Another striking element in Bektaşîyye, which Ahmet Rıfat tries to describe in this work, is the issue of seclusion and forty-day penitences. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi argues that these elements existed at the beginning of the order but were forgotten later. His approach can be considered as an endeavor to indicate Bektaşîyye has had many common points with other Sunni Sufi paths.

“In fact, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, may his secret be blessed, spent his saintly life in seclusion and forty-day penitences. All of the people on the path of God are like that. Just as in the Mevlevîyye and other Sufi paths, so also in the Bektaşîyye, withdrawing from the people and occupying oneself with seclusion and forty-day penitences is the custom of the pir and the rite of the path. However, because of the veils that have fallen over them, most of them are prevented by a veil and a thickness from the elemental in toxication and the colorful garments of entification and hence

¹¹⁹ Binâenaleyh mezheb-i Ca'ferî'denim demek tarîk-i hakda onların girdikleri yola girdim demektir. Yoksa birtakım ehl-i bi'datın verdikleri ma'nâ-yı bâtlı gibi değildir, fe'f-hem.

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşîlik (Mir'âtül-Mekâsîd fî Def'i'l Mefâsîd)*, 397.

¹²⁰ For more information, Daftary, *A History of Shi'î Islam*.

¹²¹ For more information, Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler: 15-17. Yüzyıl*.

there is no trace of a spiritual state in the mirror of their understanding, and oblivion has entirely come over them so that now there are very few who know and perform this rite. Despite this, many of those who enter the order before reaching maturity, namely the age of 40 violate their oath of allegiance in a shortwhile. This is why the spiritual countenance of dead-looking followers like this is blackened. In the original path of Bektâşîyye, one would not be accepted into the path as a mücerred (celibate), if one had not yet passed the age of forty, and had not served in the kitchen, at the bread oven, in the houses of the guides and in the meydan for twelve years, and occupied oneself with seclusion and forty-day penitences in the path of the Real, and neither would one's ears be pierced and one admitted into the circle of the slaves with pierced ears."¹²²

The most important point that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi tried to emphasize in *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid* was to show the Bektâşîs as sharia-abiding and ahl-al Sunna order. Although a strong philo-Alidism marks the work, this is its general purpose. On the other hand, the Ottoman Sunnism was not far away from philo-Alidist tendencies. Ottoman historians usually prevailed the ruling right of Alid lineage over the Umayyids.¹²³ This is a very strong and contrary claim. Because Bektâşîs are known as the only non-Sunni and heterodox order allowed by the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁴ As I mentioned above, Vahidi's depiction of Bektâşi is not much different from the Bektâşi understanding of these works, at least compared to the Bektâşi's attitudes towards sharia-abiding and Sunnis. Lâmi'î Çelebi says that, even though Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli was a *evliyaullah*, a perfect mystic, his followers went astray as sinful

¹²² "Hattâ Hacı Bektâş-ı Veli kuddise sırruhû'l-celî hazretleri müddet-i ömr-i azîzlerini çile ve erba'în ile geçirdiler. Cümle tutuk-ı hak ehli de böyledir. Mevlevîyye'de ve sair turukda olduğu gibi Bektâşîyye'de dahî halktan uzlet ile çile ve erba'în ile meşgûl olmak kânûn-ı pîr ve âyin-i tarîktandır. Velâkin istilâ eden gavâşî cihetiyle ekserinin neş'e-i unsûriyye ve melâbis-i mütelevvine-i ta'ayyunâtta hicâb ve kesâfet ârız olup âyine-i idrâklerinde sûret-i hâlden eser kalmayıp bi'l külliye nisyân gelmekle şimdi min-gayr-ı tahsîs bu usûlû ârif olup icrâ edenler kâti nadir kalmıştır. Ve ma'a hâzâ devr-i kâmilî devr etmeyen yani sinnen kırkını tecâvûz etmeyip de dest-i inâbet bulan ve telkîn-i tevbe alanların pek çoğu zamân geçmeyip nakz-ı ahd etmektedirler. Onun için bu misillü mğrde-sîret müridlerin sûret-i bâtnaları memsûh olmaktadır. Târik-i Bektâşîyye'de fi'l-asl mücerred takınmak kırk sinnini tecâvûz etmeyen ve sırasıyla on iki sene matbahta ve etmek ve mihmân evlerinde ve meydanda hizmet etmedikçe tarîk-i hak'da çile erba'în ile isbât-ı vücûd etmedikçe ne ikrârı alınır ve ne de kulakları delinip bende-i halka-i begûş alâmeti ta'lik olunurdu."

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Gerçek Bektaşilik (Mir'atül-Mekasid fi Def'i'il Mefasid)*, 121.

¹²³ Erginbaş, "Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History: Approaches toward Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya in Ottoman Historical Writing", 473, in Krstić & Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750*.

¹²⁴ Ocak, "Bektaşilik", TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi.

dervishes.¹²⁵ A 16th-century Ottoman historian, Gelibolulu Ali depicted Bektaşis with these words: “Bektaşî dervishes in our time, and those who are far from fasting, whose madhhab is unknown, and who wander around in a group. Their affiliation with Hacı Bektaş Veli is only with their words; their relation to it in terms of deeds and beliefs there is none. The saints, who are called the sons of that Veli, could not be like him.”¹²⁶ These authors generally blamed Bektaşis but they kept apart Hacı Bektaş Veli from these accusations. Therefore, being a Bektaşî had been equated with being a non-sharia abiding person in many times.

An important exception at this point is Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*. At this point, we also remind that Evliya Çelebi had come from a very different social structure than the aforementioned Bektaşî authors. Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, one of the most important sources of the 17th century, offers us stronger descriptions of Bektaşis. Evliya Çelebi, who claims that he visited dozens of Bektaşî lodges in his travel book, expressed the sights he saw in these Bektaşî lodges. Evliya Çelebi, who visited the Koyun Baba lodge and tomb in Osmancık, says that there is no shortage of visitors here and that food is constantly cooked in his kitchen. It had a tomb, mosque and a large dervish lodge built on the site of the tomb of Koyun Baba, one of the disciples of Hacı Bektaş Velî. There were dervishes like sheep and lambs, mild-tempered, *ahl al-sunna ve'l-cemaat*, *abdullah* and *arif-i billah* in the lodge. When Evliya Çelebi came to the city of Osmancık, whose people were Bektaşî, he visited Koyun Baba's grave and read a *hatim* for his soul. Upon this, the sheikhs and dervishes in the lodge put a Bektaşî coin on Evliya's head with *dhikr* and *takbirs*, praying for health, well-being and blessings for Evliya, and recited the *Gülbang-ı*

¹²⁵ Lâmiî Çelebi, *Nefehâtü'l-üns: Evliyâ Menkıbeleri*, ed. Süleyman Uludağ and Mustafa Kara, 1995, 18-47.

¹²⁶ Schmidt, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims: A Study of Mustafa 'Âli's of Gallipoli's Kühü'l-Ahbâr* For more information, Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire. The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*.

Muhammedî and recited *Fatiha sura*.¹²⁷ However, it would be useful to make a critical analysis of Evliya Çelebi. Suraiya Faroqhi advises to approach carefully what Evliya Çelebi said about the devotion of the dervishes living in these lodges to the sharia.¹²⁸ If we consider that Evliya Çelebi was a figure of the Sufi world in the 17th century, a philo-Alidist Gülşeni, we can understand why he avoid saying negative words about Bektaşis.¹²⁹ As a matter of fact, when Evliya Çelebi went outside the borders of the Ottoman realms, he said that the Bektaşî lodges in Iran were not Sunni. It should be noted that Evliya Çelebi also showed this attitude about other Sufi groups in Iran. However, Evliya Çelebi does not display this attitude towards Anatolian Kızılbaş, Iraqi and Iranian Jafaris.¹³⁰ It turns out that the discussions on the axis of Sufism rather than madhab orientations are decisive in the conflict of historical subjects. Therefore, a Sunni can take a position of defending the Sufi orders, even if his viewpoint on sharia is different when appropriate. This is explained by a poem by the Kadızadelis, who are known for their extensive attacks on the Sufis. The poem, which treats the Mevlevi, Bektaşî and Kadiris as centers of evil, attacks the Sufi identity of these orders, regardless of their view of sharia and sectarian differences.

“Mevlevis are the chief of heretics/Bektaşis are their brothers/Kadiris are the confidants of the Devil.”¹³¹

Another point that draws attention at this point is that there are no records in the Mühimme registers complaining about the Bektaşis. Accusations such as being

¹²⁷ Evliyâ Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zillî, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* ed. Dankoff, Kahraman, Dağlı, 89.

¹²⁸ Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi Orden in Anatolia*, 37.

¹²⁹ Terzioğlu, “Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-building: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400–1700”, 596.

¹³⁰ Ibid; Karakaya-Stump, “Irak’taki Bektaşî Tekkeleri”, 689-720.

¹³¹ “Mevlevîlerdür mülhidün başı/Bektaşîlerdür anun kardaşı/Kadirîlerdür şeytân sırdâşı” Terzioğlu, cited in “Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-building: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400–1700”, 597.

non-sharia-abiding, performing rituals together with men and women, and blasphemy against the first three Rashidun caliphs and Aisha against Kızılbaş are not used in the person of Bektaşis. However, the beliefs and rituals of the Kızılbaş and Bektaşis show great similarities.¹³² The factor that caused this situation can be read as the Bektaşis being accepted by the state, the Ottoman political mechanism being considered as an element, that is, its inclusion in the system. This language will not be abandoned until the beginning of the 19th century, when the balances in the Ottoman state mechanism would be reshaped. Therefore, we can conclude that the *ilmiye* class in the Ottoman Empire used a measured language when talking about Bektaşis. In this case, being accepted by the state comes to the fore as a matter of political standing rather than religious orientations.

In summary, there is a profound difference between the Bektaşiyiye that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi describes and the historically lived Bektaşiyiye. Bektaşis, if we take into account the non-sharia-abiding groups they have gathered, have generally been indifferent to sharia norms. Although they did not have a *teberra* understanding that directly insulted the first three Rashidun caliphs like the Kızılbaş, they cultivated an intense love of the *Ehl-i Beyt*, emphasized the ontological unity of Muhammad and Ali, and did not generally praise the first three Rashidun caliphs, who were the main pillars of the Sunni creed. This situation must have been a necessary consequence of living in the Ottoman country. As I cited above, Sunnism label ends for Bektaşis outside the Ottoman borders as Evliya Çelebi recorded. In the next chapter, I will discuss why Ahmet Rıfat Efendi wrote such a work and why he portrayed such a sharia-abiding and *Ehl-i Sünnet* Bektaşiyiye.

¹³² Yıldırım, “Bektaşî Kime Derler?: “Bektaşî” Kavramının Kapsamı ve Sınırları Üzerine Tarihsel Bir Analiz Denemesi”, 34.

3.3 The Background of *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*

In the Ottoman Empire, religion has been a dynamic concept. Religion has always played a role in the structure of Ottoman institutions, social organization and the development of political events. Central authority's relationship with religion is inevitably strong. Although the concepts of orthodoxy, Sunni, Hanafi and Maturidi come to mind when it comes to the religious foundations of the Ottoman Empire, the way these concepts were handled and applied has also changed and developed in the historical process. Religion has a sociological dimension, as it is not only the work of a narrow circle of intellectual ulama, but is effective in controlling the masses and directing the movement of the masses. Therefore, the more dynamic the social structure is, the more dynamic is the understanding and practice of religion with its many dimensions.

Especially after the Mongol invasion, preponderance of Alid tendencies were common in Islamic geography, and the distinction between Sunnism and Shi'ism was less sharper than it was in the 16th century.¹³³ Cemal Kafadar uses the term metadoxy for this period when there was no political and religious central authority to inculcate the true religion.¹³⁴ The veneration of Ali, *Ehl-i Beyt* and even the Twelve Imams could be observed in the Sunni communities. In Ottoman context, historiographers like Ahmedî, Enverî and Yazıcıoğlu expressed philo-Alidist tendencies and they criticized Yazid and Umayyids in the 15th century. Although the position of Ottoman Sunnism on the assessment of Umayyid dynasty moderated in time, Ottoman intellectuals did not develop a rigid Sunni discourse that justify the

¹³³ Karakaya-Stump, *Kizilbash Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia*, 258.

¹³⁴ Kafadar, *Between The Worlds*, 76.

consequences of early Islamic history.¹³⁵ It was the way of Ottoman Sunnism that continued to venerate ahl al-Bayt and upheld the ruling right of the sons of Ali over the Umayyid dynasty's right.

Terzioğlu points to the second half of the 15th century for the first Sunnitization era in the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the self-confident imperial learned bureaucracy must have laid the building blocks for such a process. The centralization efforts of Mehmed II and the political centralism of the conqueror of Istanbul, who was responsible for protecting his subjects, must have also found its religious meaning. At the same time, the formation of a state religious discourse that determines what true belief is cannot be explained by top-down policies alone. Because during this process, state-independent middling literati and preachers also contributed to the creation of a new kind of Sunni normativity.¹³⁶ Rumi scholars, too, must have contributed to the era of Sunnitization among themselves and independently of state enforcement. In fact, these Sufis play an important role in the Sunnitization process, at least as much as the state-affiliated ulema class, even though they are not assigned by the state. The struggle of the Halveti dervishes at the end of the 17th century in the Balkans is one of the best examples of this.¹³⁷ At this point, it should be reminded that there had not always been a deep conflict between the Sufis and the ulama, and that they can sometimes unite on the same goal.

However, the effects of the Safavid-Ottoman conflict and the Ottomans' opening to the Middle East should not be ignored. Although, as Terzioğlu and Krstić show us, the Sunnitization tendency of the Ottoman Empire had showed itself up beyond the

¹³⁵ Erginbaş, "Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History: Approaches toward Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya in Ottoman Historical Writing", 460, in Krstić & Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750*.

¹³⁶ Terzioğlu, "How to conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 322, Krstić, *Entangled Confessionalization*, 72.

¹³⁷ For more information, Terzioğlu, "Sunna-minded sufi preachers in service of the Ottoman state: the nasihatname of Hasan addressed to Murad IV"; Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the age of state building and confessionalization," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead.

religious and political competition between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires. Congregational prayers as a religious policy, Sunnitization agencies like *imam*, *müezzin*, *namazcı* and *judge* were elements of this tendency.¹³⁸ In addition, it should be noted that the messianic expectation, which generally showed its effect in the Mediterranean at the beginning of the 16th century, was also effective at the beginning of the Sunnitization era.¹³⁹

The performance of religious rituals is one of the most important features of the Sunnitization era. In the 16th and 17th centuries, as described by Terzioğlu, congregational performance of supererogatory prayers, Friday mosques were effective instruments.¹⁴⁰ This created a class of middling literati and preachers that produced an Ottoman styled Sunni normativity in many parts of the empire. It would be appropriate to look for the social origin of the Kadızadeli movement, which left its mark on the 17th century, here. Kadızadeli occupied the Ottoman agenda for a long time and created social polarization, especially with the war they waged against some Sufis and their violence against bid'ats.¹⁴¹ Even though Kadızadeli, who had complex relations with the state that changed according to the period, lost its influence as of the end of the 17th century and was left alone by the state, we can see the Kadızadeli movement especially in various provinces during the 18th century. This is a sign that the Sunnitization wave that took place in the personality of the Kadızadeli may have occurred independently of the state.¹⁴² The process that started with the murder of Feyzullah Efendi in 1703, on the other hand, corresponds to a break for Sunnitization policies. In this process, the visibility of radical religious

¹³⁸ Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 313-315.

¹³⁹ Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse", 19.

¹⁴⁰ Terzioğlu, "'Bid'at, Custom and the Mutability".

¹⁴¹ For more information on Kadızadeli, see Terzioğlu, "Sunna-minded sufi preachers in service of the Ottoman state", 241-313; Zilfi, "The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul", 251-269.

¹⁴² Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 301-338.

movements decreases and cultural diversity and intellectual interests increase.¹⁴³ In this conformity process, even the move that suggested softening the borders between Sunnism and Shi'ism from Iran is noteworthy.¹⁴⁴

At the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, a new Sunnitization wave appeared in the Ottoman Empire that would end the existence of Janissaries and almost Bektaşis. As I have summarized above, this process corresponds to a period of Sunnism and reform. As Butrus Abu Manneh has stated, we need to look for the origins of the Tanzimat here.¹⁴⁵ The pressures and prosecutions against Bektaşis during the reign of Mahmud II are the results of the new state of the Ottoman religious structure. The fact that the orders were tied to the central authority in this process is one of the signs that the state is trying to control religious life in this way is a remarkable development. In the following period, there was a period of relatively tolerance towards Bektaşis and even the functioning of other orders in the Ottoman Empire. This period corresponds to the reign of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz (1839-1875) and the effects of Tanzimat bureaucrats were too widespread. Bektaşis recovered in this period and accelerated their publishing activities. Indeed, there was a considerable development in Bektaşî publications during the reigns of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz (1839-1875). A number of works on Bektaşîyye were published, which produced many polemics. Bektaşîyye also expanded its influence.¹⁴⁶ The Bektaşî order could not formally reopened. They could not get rid of the Nakşibendi sheiks who were appointed to their orders.¹⁴⁷ On the other hand, it is clear that the Bektaşî order enjoyed this relatively freedom era

¹⁴³ For more information on the deconfessionalization in the early 18th century Ottoman case, Küçük, *Early Enlightenment in Istanbul*, Unpublished PhD Thesis.

¹⁴⁴ Tucker, "The Peace Negotiations of 1736: A Conceptual Turning Point in Ottoman-Iranian Relations", 16-37.

¹⁴⁵ Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript", 173-203.

¹⁴⁶ Çift, "1826 Sonrasında Bektaşilik ve Bu Alanla İlgili Yayın Faaliyetleri, 249-268.

¹⁴⁷ Kılıç, "Yenileşme Döneminde Meşruiyetten Gayrimeşruluğa Bektaşilik: Otorite, İtaat, Mücadele", 169-184.

from some aspects. It does not mean the Ottoman political system only facilitated activities of the Bektaşî order. Many other orders such as the Mevlevî and Nakşibandîs were supported by the state in this period and continued their activities by increasing them.¹⁴⁸ This situation should be considered as a general policy of the Tanzimat period.

In the same years, we see an increase in missionary activities. Cultural and religious diversity increased in the Ottoman lands as a result of the wave of relative liberation, brought by the Tanzimat and the Islahat Edicts. Here we need to state that the Tanzimat Edict did not remain only as a written text. It caused widespread movements within the empire and caused deep shocks in the traditional social structure.¹⁴⁹ These shocks mainly originated from the change in the classic Ottoman understanding. According to classical social formation of the Ottoman Empire, Muslims could enjoy the superiority over non-Muslims. Although Tanzimat Edict was written in the need of equality to prevent the dissolution of the Empire. It means that Muslims could lose their superiority over the society. Nonwithstanding, the Tanzimat Edict did not aim to equalize all the religious differences over the society.¹⁵⁰ Muslims had never equalized completely with Muslims. On the other hand, the Muslim majority of the Ottoman Empire looked suspiciously to this way of reforms. The missionary schools that were established were also training thousands of students from the Ottoman Muslim subjects, and the Ottoman cultural and educational life was getting richer.¹⁵¹ At the same time, the rights granted to Christians by these edicts were also an important issue, which drew the reaction of Muslim subjects. Furthermore, Harputlu İshak Hoca complained harshly about the

¹⁴⁸ Varol, “Bektaşîliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti’nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)” Unpublished PhD Thesis, 190.

¹⁴⁹ İnalçık, “Tanzimatın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkiler”, 646.

¹⁵⁰ Engelhardt, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma Hareketleri: Tanzimat*, 77.

¹⁵¹ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876*, 204.

increase in Bektāṣi activities. I mentioned above that the basis of his reaction would have been the non-Muslim missionary activities. This situation can be read as an expression of a reaction to the partial freedom and cultural enrichment process created by the Tanzimat process. This environment of partial freedom during the reigns of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz (1839-1875), the increase in the activities of local and foreign Christians, the increasing foreign interventions in favor of non-Muslims, must have organized a reaction among Muslims against foreign elements since the 1870s.¹⁵² Considering the previous privileged position of Muslims for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, the fact that Christians began to play a role in the administration must have drawn the reaction of Muslims. Along with the Islahat Edict, there were Christians who were able to enter the administrative system. A significant part of these names originated from well-established families with a high level of wealth. The military service was another significant point. The non-Muslims individuals could be exempt from the military service.¹⁵³ It would be more correct to say non-Muslim individuals had options either doing military service as an equal citizen or paying an amount of money. Muslim individuals had only one option, doing military service for long years. Therefore, this situation might have gotten reaction from the Muslim community. Because in the reform policy, some issues were regulated to equality theoretically but practically it would be in favor of non-Muslim communities. The increasing influence of the Ottoman non-Muslim community was under the guarantee of the Ottoman Empire itself by the edicts that were under the surveillance of the Westerners. It is a plausible option that the Bektāṣis, as a non-Sunni community, had their share as a result of their increasing activities. It is quite possible that the Bektāṣis were made the focal point of

¹⁵² Alkan, "The Ottoman Policy of 'Correction of Belief(s)'" in *Ottoman Sunnism*, 177.

¹⁵³ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876*, 93.

opposition to foreigners and alienating reforms, especially given how demonized they were by the political authority in the milieu of fifty years ago. Targeting the Westerners and non-Muslim community would be more dangerous than targeting a non-Sunni element. This work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca might have been written as a result of this impulse. Well, was the work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca really the subject of a wave of Sunnitization? In order to understand this, we need to examine the events before and after the work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca. The relatively 'liberal' periods of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz correspond to the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s. Abu-Manneh indicates roles of Ali and Fuad Pasha for the liberal atmosphere in this era.¹⁵⁴ In this period, the freedom for conversion to Muslim Ottoman citizens and the guarantee that conversion would not be punished was an indication of the religious liberalism of this period. Ottoman Empire could tolerate the conversions.¹⁵⁵ This relative liberalization was manifested not only religiously, but also in many areas of education and administration.¹⁵⁶ It should also be kept in mind that institutions that provide education in the Western sense were opened and more and more Westerners are involved in the determination of the curriculum of these institutions.¹⁵⁷ The increasing Western image must have gotten a reaction from the Muslim population.

However, the relative liberalization brought by the Tanzimat era should be read correctly. This relative liberalization, as well as allowing the existence of orders, also aims to prevent the orders from getting involved in the state administration. Tanzimat bureaucrats are very sensitive about this issue. For this reason, the *Meclis-i*

¹⁵⁴ Abu-Manneh, "Between Heterodox and Sunni Orthodox Islam: The Bektāṣī Order in the Nineteenth Century and Its Opponents", 216.

¹⁵⁵ Ortaylı, "Tanzimat Döneminde Tanassur ve Din Değiştirme Olayları", 314.

¹⁵⁶ For more information, Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*.

¹⁵⁷ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 236.

Meşayih was established in order to bring the orders under state control.¹⁵⁸

Therefore, a situation arose where the central government opened up space for the religious orders but directly supervised them.

In 1871, that is, in the last years of Abdülaziz's reign, we come across the discourse and policies of correction of creed. Berkes talks about the years 1871-1876, when the Islamist movement took a sharp form, the radical reforms carried out for Westernization for fifty years stopped, and the Islamic discourse became widespread.¹⁵⁹ Davison asserts that during the chaos that started with the death of Ali Pasha in 1871; secularization, taking the Ottomanism as a basis and therefore the general modernization policies were interrupted.¹⁶⁰ In any circumstance, the beginning of 1870s must have brought a conservatism wave to the Ottoman Empire by various scholars. It is the point that reinforces my argument about the Sunnitization wave that Ottoman Empire experienced at the beginning of 1870s. The anti-Tanzimat reaction, which showed its effect socially in this period, must have taken on a conservative character and established itself in the religious, social and political arena. It is important to evaluate the work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca in this context. It is an interesting fact that the reaction against this relatively liberalization period did not thoroughly direct to the non-Muslim subjects or Westerns. Instead of directing this reaction to the non-Muslim groups Westerns, coming over non-Sunni groups would be a more preferable attitude. Therefore, this can be summarized by the power balances of the era. Bektaşis were kept in the minds of public opinion in the 19th century as a useful subject to accuse scapegoat. Especially after the 1826

¹⁵⁸ Varol, "Bektaşiliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)" Unpublished PhD Thesis, 441.

¹⁵⁹ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 309.

¹⁶⁰ Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, 26.

abolition, accusing of Bektaşis must have been so much easy. As a non-Sunni subject, Bektaşis provided a target for them. This target is themselves.

In an article in the newspaper titled *Hakayik-i Vekayi*, it is mentioned that there were soldiers belonging to various Islamic madhabs in the Ottoman Empire Army, which were not within the circle of Sunnism, and that the beliefs of these soldiers had to be corrected by the officials. Among these 'wrong' madhabs are the Kızılbaş, Zaydis, Nusayris, Yezidis, Druze and Wahhabis. It is recommended to prevent their diffusion and to send the assigned *dais* to various parts of the Empire by training.¹⁶¹ The fact that the Ottoman Empire followed a religious standardization policy within the army and accepted Sunni Islam as the only valid Islamic form, it is an issue that needs to be emphasized. Religious uniformity might be instrumentalised as a tool in the hands of the ruling class to impose some sort of behavior standards on the population. In the reign of Abdülhamid II, the Islamic identity became the ideological basis of the empire's policy.¹⁶² In fact, this disposition started in 1872, a few years before Abdülhamid II's accession to the throne. Abdülhamid II's pan-Islamism was the child of this disposition rather than the creation of a strong monarchy.¹⁶³ However, this situation also served to strengthen the monarchy and paved the way for the strong application of the central authority.¹⁶⁴ This happened as a result of the liquidation of liberal bureaucrats and claimed that the Muslim population was based on traditional loyalty and faith.¹⁶⁵

Another Ottoman writer and soldier named Mehmed Arif states in his memoirs that a quarter of the Ottoman soldiers belonged to other Islamic madhabs

¹⁶¹ *Hakayik el-Vekayi*, No. 416, 6 Ramazan 1288/18 November 1871, 2–3 in Alkan, "The Ottoman Policy of 'Correction of Belief(s)'" in *Ottoman Sunnism*, 178.

¹⁶² Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia", 139-155.

¹⁶³ Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 269.

¹⁶⁴ Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam*, 9–79; Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 155-183.

¹⁶⁵ Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam*, 165.

and that this situation should be urgently corrected. The author attributes the loss of the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War to the lack of religious unity among the soldiers. The author describes Bektaşis as close to paganism.¹⁶⁶ In terms of discourse, the author's work resembles the treaties that were written at the beginning of the 19th century. In this book, the author strictly underlined the disheveled structure of the Ottoman Army and Muslim Ottoman society diminish to get the will of Allah.

Protestant missionary activities attracted the attention of the Muslim public during the reign of Abdülhamid II. Abdülhamid II stated that these activities were very harmful for the Ottoman Empire in the 1880s and 90s, when missionary activities increased.¹⁶⁷ There were fears that many regions might convert to Christianity as result of their missionary activities. It was a common practice for Abdülhamid II to send clergy to various parts of the country.¹⁶⁸ Especially when it comes to various Islamic madhabs outside the circle of Sunni Islam, the Ottoman political authority did not hesitate to make counter moves. The politicization of Sunni Islam as an imperial ideology focuses on this area. It is known that the Ottoman Empire revoked the Protestant schools in the Nusayri regions in the 1880s and 90s. Missionary activities were prevented, the Nusayris were tried to be converted to Sunni Islam, the Ottoman authorities of the period identified Nusayris as ignorant and needed to be educated, and they developed a political reflex in this direction.¹⁶⁹ In order to achieve this goal, the Ottoman political authorities both gave importance to counter-educational activities and made direct meetings with the tribal

¹⁶⁶ Mehmed Arif, *Başımıza Gelenler*, 394.

¹⁶⁷ Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis: Ottoman Christians and the Foreign Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century", 56.

¹⁶⁸ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 75-91.

¹⁶⁹ Alkan, "The Ottoman Policy of 'Correction of Belief(s)'" in *Ottoman Sunnism*, 183; Kramer, *Arab Awakening*, 191; Deringil, 'The Invention of Tradition', 14.

leaders.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, throughout the 1880s and 90s, the official Sunni Hanefi madhhab was imposed on groups marginalized by the central authority in the empire such as Yezidis, Nusayris, Shi'is and Kızılbaş. We can say that these efforts of the Ottoman authorities were sometimes met. To a certain extent, these "marginal" elements surrendered to this imposition, and some local Nusayri leaders contacted the central authority to convert to the Hanafism.¹⁷¹ We know that in the 1890s, the Ottoman Empire made similar religious imposition efforts against the Shiite elements in Iraq. It is appropriate to think that especially Iran's propaganda activity against the Shiite elements in the region has accelerated this situation. Süleyman Pasha, one of the Ottoman officers who served in the region in those years, and Mehmet Rifat Menemenlizade, the treasurer of Baghdad, were very careful against the Shiite propagandists in the region. He states that Süleyman Pasha saw religious unorthodoxy as a big problem and that a religious imposition should be entered in a Sunni Hanefi roof through primary and secondary education. Through this education, the love of religion, homeland and nationality will be instilled, and Muslims will be a society free from differences under the Caliph.¹⁷² These cases can be regarded as a continuation of the new Sunnitization wave that began in the beginnings of 1870 which corresponded to the publication of *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fî Def'i'l Mefâsid*.

As a result, increasing missionary activities and expansions in minority rights in the period following the Tanzimat Edict, the Western influence being felt more and more in all areas. The formation of a colorful cultural sphere with the missionary schools, rising Bektaşî activities and publications would have drawn attention of some circles. It is very plausible to think that these policies created a

¹⁷⁰ Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*.

¹⁷¹ Deringil, *The Invention of Tradition*, 12-29.

¹⁷² Deringil, "The Struggle against Shiism in Hamidian Iraq: A Study in Ottoman Counter-Propaganda", 53.

Sunnitization wave like the one at the beginning of the 19th century. Interestingly, in the first Sunnitization process at the beginning of the 19th century coincided with the Greek Revolt in 1821. The hostility and fear against a non-Muslim community must have helped to organize a Sunnism wave against a non-Sunni subject, Janissaries corps that sympathized to the Bektaşî order. At this time, reaction against the rising Western influence and missionary activities would have organized a new destructive wave against the Bektaşî order that becoming visible. This Sunnism wave showed itself towards Bektaşîs in the work of Harputlu Ishak Hoca. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's work, *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*, is a product of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's reflex to protect the Bektaşî order against the coming new wave of Sunnitization and to prove to the public that Bektaşîyye is on a Sunni line. Undoubtedly, the memory of events that took place fifty years ago had a great influence on the formation of this reflex. Whether it was Ahmet Rıfat Efendi himself or the circles that encouraged Ahmet Rıfat Efendi to write this work, the effort to describe the Bektaşî order in a Sunni way must have seemed the only way out. The fact that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi carries Bektaşîyye to a completely different dimension and shows it in harmony with Sunni and other orders in this work is an indication of his desire to fully adapt to the system. As a matter of fact, the political process including the writing history of this work, namely the 1870s, 80s and 90s, has been a process that imposed Sunni Hanafi Islam on non-Sunni belief groups throughout the empire.¹⁷³ It is also an other fact that Bektaşî publications stopped during in 1870s.¹⁷⁴ This Sunnitization wave found its expression in the reign of Abdülhamid II and Bektaşîs were oppressed in this era. According to Abdülhamid II's regime, Bektaşîyye is seen in the form of masses living in brutality, ignorance and perversion. Bektaşîyye is described as idolatry and

¹⁷³ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 75-91.

¹⁷⁴ Çift, "1826 Sonrasında Bektâşîlik ve Bu Alanla İlgili Yayın Faaliyetleri", 249-268; Abu-Manneh, "Between Heterodox and Sunni Orthodox Islam", 203-218.

a harmful creed. They were trying to be drawn into Hanafism, which is the official ideology. For the “education” of Bektaşis, building of mosques, madrasahs and schools were advised.¹⁷⁵ This situation shows us that the central authority and low ranking conservative Ottoman officials had a harmony in terms of insulting the non-Sunni Muslim religious groups and they had common ideas on the education of these masses. Under these conditions, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi probably wrote this work to save Bektaşî order from a new 1826 destruction. It is also interesting that there is no mention of the prohibition of the Bektaşî order in the work, although only fifty years have passed since 1826. It is clear that the author must have not wanted to remind of previous negative memories of Bektaşis to the audience. It can be recognized that the same attitude is valid for the cem rituals and the participation of women in these rituals. It is hard to imagine that the author had tried to deliberately mislead his audience. However, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi may have tried to show the efforts of Sunnitization reached its goals. In this way, the main readership would be imagined Ahmet Rıfat Efendi might be the one who indoctrinated the Sunnitization policy to the public. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi may have responded to this readership by his work, *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*, for the ruling class' policy implemented by some of the Bektaşis. Otherwise, the possibility of repetition of 1826 must have been a strong memory in Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's mind. The dreadfulness of the 1826 abolition process may have obligated Ahmet Rıfat Efendi to depict such a Sunni-oriented Bektaşîyye.

The main goal of the author is to resist a possible calamity. For this reason, the author claims that the Bektaşî order was later corrupted, that it was essentially a Sunni order, and that he would reveal the original of the order with this work. In addition, the effort to establish a similarity between the Halidî Nakşibendis and the

¹⁷⁵ Akpınar, “II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Devlet Zihniyetinin Alevi Algısı”, in *Kızılbaşlık Alevilik Bektaşilik Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel* ed. Çakmak and Gürtaş, 215.

Bektaşis in the work is quite interesting. Both the similarity of the items used by both orders, their similarities in lineage, and the fact that these two orders are generally tried to be mentioned together in the work can be explained by the author's seeing the Halidi Nakşibandis as a shelter. At the same time, it is necessary to think about the connection of Harputlu Ishak Hoca with the Nakşibendi order. Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, who tried to respond to Harputlu Ishak Hoca, who perhaps exhibited the biggest criticism of Bektaşiiyye, may have aimed to fend off the criticisms from the Nakşibendiyye in this way. Therefore, we can state that the Nakşibendis played an important role in the new Sunnitization wave that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi tried to face, and that the Nakşibendi sheiks appointed to the Bektaşî lodges had an impact on the Bektaşis. For instance, *Erkânname* of Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba contains Sunni elements like praying *namaz* five times in a day and fasting *oruç* in Ramadan.¹⁷⁶ His guide and master, Mehmet Sait Efendi was a Halidi Nakşibendi sheikh formerly but he converted to Bektaşiiyye when he had appointed to Bektaşî lodge. In that respect, his caliph Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba decided to make a differentiation on the traditional *Erkânname* of Balım Sultan and he embedded Sunni creedal rituals into the Bektaşiiyye. The publication of this work was at the beginning of the 20th century but Mehmed Ali Hilmi Dedebaba ordered writing of this work in 1876. Therefore, it can be concluded that 1870s were the scene of a reorganization process of the Bektaşî order. This reorganization process depended on reframing the Bektaşî order in terms of a Sunni framework. The reason of this policy must have stood up to the possible destructive effect of the new confessionalization wave in the 1870s. Therefore, possibility of a Sunni Bektaşiiyye in the 19th century indicates the defence

¹⁷⁶ Erdem, "Muhammet Ali Hilmi Dedebaba Erkân-namesi", 248-255.

mechanism for Bektaşis who strived to survive against the possibility of a new 1826 calamity.

3.4 Effects of the *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*

Ahmet Rıfat Efendi died shortly after his work was published. Therefore, he could neither contribute to the polemics about his work nor have an idea about the prevalence of his work. The first criticism of this work of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi was put forward by Ahmet Rıfkı. In addition, this criticism is not very wide-ranging and is about whether the lineage of Hacı Bektaş continues.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, he did not criticize the theological dimension of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's work. Besim Atalay was the first to criticize Ahmet Rıfat Efendi for glorifying Bektaşîyye. He stated that “I have been very careful to be impartial in my writings. Neither did I rant against Bektaşis like the owner of *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiü'l Esrâr*, nor did I take to the skies like *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'i'l Mefâsid*”¹⁷⁸ and he claimed that Bektaşis were depicted differently than in Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's work. As for the prevalence of the work, John Kinsley Birge gave a list of works introducing the Bektaşî order to Tiranlı Sülo Bey, whom he met personally during his research, the first work in this list was *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid*. This shows us that the work has become very popular in a short time and polemics have been produced about it. Therefore, by publishing this work, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi enabled the discussion of the creedal dimension of Bektaşism and served as an ideological shield on the Bektaşî creed. This shows that unlike the process going back to 1826, when Bektaşis were slammed in the intellectual public opinion, Bektaşis developed defenses to protect themselves. The

¹⁷⁷ Ahmed Rıfkı, *Bektaşî Sırrı*, 16.

¹⁷⁸ “Yazılarımda bî-araf olmaya çok dikkat ettim. Ne Bektaşîlerin aleyhinde *Kâşîfü'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiü'l Eşrâr* sahibi gibi atıp tuttum, ne de *Mirâtü'l mekâsid fi def'i'l mefâsid* gibi göklere çıkardım.” Atalay, *Bektaşîlik ve Edebiyatı*, 3.

necessity of this defense is to adopt the discourse of the developing Sunnitization wave and to portray Bektaşîyye in a way that is compatible with this Sunnitization process, albeit formally. On the other hand, it should be strongly indicated that the Ottoman Empire's desires on Bektaşîs in terms of performing the religion could not reach its goal.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, there was no adequate proof that Bektaşîs experienced a religious transformation in this process. These Bektaşî authors' claims should be understood as a kind of endeavour to show Bektaşîs as an acceptable order against the public opinion. By this way, they also gave message to the ruling class that enforced Sunnitization to the society. The content of message can be understood as Bektaşîs adopted to the Sunnitization policies and they signed this situation by writing books that proposed a Sunnified Bektaşîyye. On the other hand, there is no sign that millions of Bektaşî in a vast geography experienced a transformation in terms of their creedal attitudes. These Bektaşî authors generated polemics to some extent and they aimed to defend Bektaşîyye against new tragedies. Because the memory of the 1826 abolition was not so old.

¹⁷⁹ Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826) ve Bektaşîliğin Yasaklı Yılları*, 195.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Bektaşis have left their mark on the history and geography of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. In terms of their ability to reach large masses, the relations they established with the Ottoman administrative and military bureaucracy, and the social base they represented, Bektaşiyye was able to make its presence felt both during the establishment and collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Not only Bektaşis influence the Ottoman Empire and its institutions, but the political conditions of the Ottoman Empire also affected Bektaşiyye closely. Even today, Hacı Bektaş Veli is at the level of a great saint, to whom millions of people have attached with love in wide geography, and the Alevi-Bektaş community constitutes the most populous religious element in Turkey after Sunnism. Therefore, social, political, and historical analyzes related to Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Balkan geography cannot be made by excluding Bektaşiyye. Although a considerable level of research on Bektaşiyye has reached in the last hundred years, there are still many points that remain in the dark and need to be clarified. As these points illuminated, our ability to understand this geography and history will increase.

In this thesis I focused on the creed of Bektaşiyye after it was closed in the 19th century. The increasing publication activities on Bektaşiyye, especially in the 19th century, provided a significant opportunity for Bektaşis to express themselves. Although there is a dominant view in the general public that the Bektaşis are an antinomian order, a remarkable part of these publications have been quite different from the generally conceived Bektaş understanding. The main primary source of this thesis, the work titled *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'i'l Mefâsid*, and the following works of

Ahmet Rıfıkı Efendi's *Bektaşî Sırrı* and Mehmet Ali Hilmi Dede'baba's *Kâşîfî'l-Esrâr'a Reddiye* drew a quite Sunni narrative in Bektaşîyye. According to these works, Bektaşîyye was at first a Sunni and nomian order, later non-Islamic elements were included in it. Analyzing this approach, which can be called a defense mechanism, is the main point of my thesis.

In the second chapter, I mainly discussed the appointment of Nakşibendi sheikhs to Bektaşî lodges. I summarized where the Nakşibendi sheikhs were appointed and what their duties were. In the next section, I argued that the Bektaşîs were able to gradually overcome the conditions they were in in the 19th century, not only recovered but also spread to the elite classes, and in this way, they became an important and rich power center again.

In Chapter III, I studied on Harputlu Ishak Hoca, who emerged as a reaction to the increasing Bektaşîyye activities, and his work *Kâşîfî'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiü'l Eşrâr*. In particular, I examined the impact of the missionary activities on Harputlu Ishak Hoca on the development of his ideas. I focused on the harsh criticism of Harputlu Ishak Hoca against the Bektaşîs. Even though Harputlu Ishak Hoca had not cited sources of his assertions, I stated that these criticisms helped to indicate the world of thought of that period.

In the next section, I analyzed the text of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi's *Mirâtü'l-Mekâsid fi Def'i'l Mefâsid*, which was written a few years after the publication of Harputlu Ishak Hoca's work. I noted how much of a Sunni and sharia-abiding Bektaşîyye Ahmet Rıfat Efendi portrayed. I expressed how Bektaşîyye and Nakşibandiyya are tried to be brought together in this work, the correlation that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi tried to establish between these two orders, the common order items and the silsila. I have tried to summarize what this effort means. Ahmet Rıfat

Efendi's views on theological issues; I examined the relationship between Hurufism and Bektaşîyye, and how the basic worships and Islamic prohibitions were approached according to Ahmet Rıfat Efendi in Bektaşîyye. By the way, I stated that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi did not deal with controversial issues such as the cem ritual and the prohibition of Bektaşîyye fifty years ago, and he interpreted some items and traditions in the order in a different way. Then, I consulted historical data to test how similar the Bektaşîyye that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi described was to the actual Bektaşîyye. I saw that the Bektaşîyye described by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi and the Bektaşîyye that had actually experienced did not match, at least for the most part, and that Ahmet Rıfat Efendi made taqiya and distorted some historical data.

In the next section, I explained why Ahmet Rıfat Efendi followed such a path, and under what concerns he described this form of Bektaşîyye. Beginning in the 1870s, I found that a new wave of Sunnitization flourished in Ottoman geography. I argued that the atmosphere of relative freedom in the reigns of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz increased both Bektaşî activities and foreign influence, cultural diversity emerged, a kind of conformity environment was created, and a new wave of Sunnitization emerged as a reaction to this situation. Just as the process leading up to 1826 led to a Sunnitization wave and had devastating consequences for Bektaşîs, I stated that Bektaşîs faced a similar situation in the 1870s. I correlated the reaction created by the Muslim public opinion of the Greek Revolt before 1826 and the reaction created by the missionary activities. I found that these two effects triggered or at least strengthened the wave of Sunnitization. As a result of the Sunnitization process that started in the 1870s, I cited the decrease in Bektaşî broadcasting activities. Also, I asserted the indoctrination of the state religion to non-Sunni groups, and the emergence of a wave of religious stereotyping, especially in

the army. The point of view of Abdülhamid II's regime to the Bektaşis and the policies implemented on Bektaşis are the other important points. I stated that some Bektaşî writers, led by Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, tried to integrate Bektaşîyye into the new religious discourse by appearing to accept the standardization to withstand this wave and save Bektaşîyye from a new 1826 calamity. The concept of Sunnitization, which the Ottoman Empire faced twice in the 19th century, is an ebb and flowed concept. In this period, the concept of Sunnitization, which can be considered together with Ottoman modernization, was a process that could be triggered by domestic and foreign influences, and the reaction was usually shown to the nearest non-Sunni or alleged groups. The interlocutors who had resolved this situation found various ways to survive. By doing this, the polemic about Bektaşîyye was produced. With these polemics, the public was prevented from taking a stand against the Bektaşis.

In this study, I tried to show how the Bektaşî order struggled with the wave of Sunnitization that emerged in the second part of the 19th century. I believe that this study will contribute to the 19th century section of Bektaşî literature. The dimensions of social transformation went hand in hand with religious dynamics and the belief systems were being shaped in terms of this dialectical relationship. Especially, understanding the dynamic nature of Ottoman Sunnism and its dimensions would be helpful to imagine how religion was perceived in the historical process.

In this present thesis, I tried to reveal the condition of surviving as a religious group at the second half of the 19th century, the dawn of nation building process and the last Sunnitization wave in the history of Ottoman Empire. The implementation of Sunnitization wave in the second half of the 19th century and response of a Bektaşî intellectual, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi are the focus of this thesis.

Defining the historical paths of the Alevi-Bektaşı identity, which is being reshaped today, will help us to understand the transformations of this identity have gone through and will experience.



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