
Title: History of Sufism in the Ottoman Empire (1299-1924): A New Interpretive Reading of the Bektashi and Naqshbandi Order In Istanbul

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Abstract:

This study deals with the history of Sufism in the Ottoman Empire as a new interpretive reading, from the inception of the empire in 1299 until its end in 1924, Sufism is a socio-religious phenomenon of great importance, dating back to the first centuries of Islamic history, and scholars even date it back to ancient civilizations alien to Islam, but the ways of practicing Sufism and asceticism varied according to different eras and civilizations and especially according to different beliefs, but we find the relationship between Islam and Sufism more logical compared to other religions, as for the relationship between Sufism and the Ottoman Empire, they are almost coupled to each other.

Keywords: Sufism, Ottoman Empire, Istanbul, Order, Naqshbandi, Bektashi.

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Introduction

Sufism has been the subject of many studies and from various aspects and has raised great controversy as a topic that has an important impact on societies and individuals. Sufism was not a product of the modern era, but rather a product of a series of changes and developments that began from the emergence of Islam until our present time. It appeared among Muslims influenced by the asceticism that characterized the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his companions, and with the mixing of Arabs with other peoples after the Islamic conquests, some elements from other religions entered Islamic asceticism, which led to the emergence of mysticism, which is higher than the degrees of asceticism, characterized by love for the divine self, so it developed through historical stages until the present time.

It is difficult to define a precise and comprehensive concept of mysticism. Throughout history, mysticism has gone through many stages as an evolving and renewed social phenomenon. To study this phenomenon, we had to give a general idea of it, taking into account the chronological order from previous civilizations to the Islamic world.

Islamic mysticism has also known a historical development starting from asceticism based on seclusion and solitude as a purely spiritual experience until it ended up in a self-contained system in the form of Sufi orders, and in order to better understand the topic, we first tried to identify the most important definitions and studies that dealt with mysticism and its first origins, Therefore, we pose the following question: How was Sufism in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire? What was Sufism like in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire, and what were the most prominent Sufi orders that spread at that time?

1- Definition of Sufism:

1.1 Linguistic concept:

In the Waseet Dictionary, the word Sufism is derived from the verb “Suf”, which means one who follows the way of Sufism, i.e. adopts the ethics of Sufi devotees. The word Sufism is taken

from the word “serenity”, and serenity means the purity of the heart from lusts such as self-love, flattery and praise of people, and its purity from karadar means from diseases. The word Sufism is taken from serenity, and serenity means the purity of the interior from lusts and distractions, as it is concerned with the purity of the heart from lusts such as self-love, flattery and praise from people, and its purity from distractions means from heart diseases such as envy, pride, vanity and mistrust of people, and this interest in the integrity of the heart is due to the heart being the most important element in the integrity of the body and its parts (Ibrahim Anis, 1972, p.529), (Abdo Ghaleb, 1992, p.p.11-12).

Some of them attributed it to the previously mentioned concept that it is taken from serenity because of the purity of the soul, while others attributed it to the wearing of wool, which was preferred by the Sufis over others as an exaggeration of asceticism and austerity, so that several definitions appeared, especially by Ibn al-Jawzi, al-Asbahani, and others (Abdullah Hussein, 2017, p.15).

The linguistic concepts of the word Sufism have varied. Some attribute it to serenity. In this regard, Al-Qushayri says: “Serenity is present in every tongue, and its opposite is kadhrah, which is disfavored ... Then this name prevailed, so a man is said to be a Sufi and a group is said to be Sufi. This is confirmed by the owner of Al-Lama'a, who says: “If a slave is clear of the dross of humanity, he is said to have Sufi, he is a Sufi (Al-Qushayri, 2000, p.428), (al-Saraj al-Tusi, 1914, p.47).

While others attributed it to the characteristic of the Prophet's mosque, which was at the back of the Prophet's mosque in Madinah, where poor Muslims who had no family to shelter in would stay (Bassiouni, 1969, p.09).

Ibn al-Jawzi mentions that some people in the Jahiliyyah were called Sufis, who withdrew to God Almighty and inhabited the Kaaba, so whoever

resembles them is a Sufi, and in this he says "that al-Ghoth bin Tanga bin Ilyas bin Murr was the first to serve the Sacred House and the first to be named Sufi because his mother did not live to have a son, so when her dream was realized, she fulfilled her promise to attach a fleece to his head and to make him the ribit of the Kaaba and his sons carried this name with him with him" (Ibn al-Jawzi, 1987, p.186).

Some of them attributed it to piety, austerity and wearing wool, following the example of the prophets and contradicting the worldly people in their luxurious clothing. In this regard, Al-Qushayri says: "As for the saying of those who said that it is 'i.e. Sufism' from wool, and that is why it is said Tasawwuf if he wears wool as it is said Takmus if he wears a shirt ..." (Al-Qushairi, 2000, p.428).

Some also attribute it to the wool of the nape, which is the skin of the back of the neck or the tuft of hair on the nape, and others attribute it to the first row, meaning that the mystic, while reaching the highest degrees of mysticism, becomes in the position of the first row (Badawi, 1978, p.07), Al-Asbahani limited the definition of Sufism to "seizing the time and being silent." Amr Ibn Uthman al-Makki was asked about Sufism and he said: "The slave should be at every time what is most important at the time (Zaki Mubarak, 1937, p.42), (Al-Asbahani, 1967, p.27).

Others believe that the Greek word "Sophos" and the word "Theosophy" was used by the ancient Greeks to refer to a spiritual doctrine espoused by hermits, ascetics and worshippers, thus attributing it to a Greek foreign origin and emphasizing that Ahmed Abdel-Al Al-Tahtawi that Sufism in its origin is far from Islam by saying: "The word Sufism moved with its content to our environment and then with the passage of time it was calculated on us and introduced into our religion and the scholars and Sufis felt the strangeness of this Sufi name and its absence in the Arabic language, neither language nor book nor sunnah, so they

began to stick it also in the Arabic language after they attached its content to the Islamic heritage and derived it from Islamic religious meanings and names, but they differed among themselves and did not agree on its pedigree and derivation", and this is what Al-Qashiri confirms in his statement that this name in terms of Arabic has neither a measurement nor a derivation and it appears in it as a surname (Al-Tahtawi, 2000, p.p.03-04), (Al-Qushairi, 2000, p.428)

Thus, the linguistic derivations have multiplied and differed, and each team sought to attribute concepts to Sufism according to their opinion and the arguments they came up with, including those who rely on the most likely linguistic derivation that attributes Sufism to wool because it is linguistically closer to the truth, but wearing wool is not sufficient to belong to the people of Sufism, because the Sufi is not restricted to wearing wool, and the issue of wearing wool is not a distinctive characteristic, because many Sufis took their share from the world and did not wear wool, but were mystics by their ethics and the purity of their hearts. All these definitions indicate the inability of historians, jurists, and language books to determine a comprehensive definition that can be agreed upon, which is evidence of the depth of the topic of Sufism and its being a sensitive point in the study of the history of Islam in general and the history of the Ottoman Empire in particular.

1.2 Etymologically:

The reason for this multiplicity is due to the nature of its expression, and we will try in this context to address some of them, as Sufism is an experience that belongs to the individuals concerned, not something common to all people, and each Sufi has a specific method and way of expressing his condition. Based on this, it is necessary to present several definitions of Sufism to counter this multiplicity (Sadiq Salim, 1994, p.34).

Sufism in general is the closeness to God Almighty in order to gain His love and satisfaction, and the mystic dedicates his life to God away from the lusts of the soul and the outside world as a whole. Al-Qushayri stated that Sufism is based on three qualities, the first of which is adherence to poverty and lack of God and realization by giving and altruism and leaving exposure and choice." (Al-Qushairi, 2000, p.429).

While Ibn Khaldun defines Sufism in his introduction: "The science of Sufism is a legitimate science that has occurred in the religion, and its origin is that the way of the people was still among the ancestors of the nation and its elders from the Companions, the followers and after them, the way of truth and guidance, and its origin is to retreat from worship and seclusion to God Almighty, to turn away from the decorations of the world and its adornments, to asceticism in what the public accepts from pleasure, money and prestige, and to be alone from creation in solitude for worship, which was common in the Companions and the ancestors" (Ibn Khaldun, 2004, p.225).

The Sufi stays up late praying and reciting prayers day and night until the human being is weakened in the physical aspect and strengthened in the psychological and spiritual aspect in an effort to achieve moral perfection of the soul and to know the divine self in its perfection. Sufism is a religious movement that calls for asceticism and intense worship as an expression of an act against indulgence in luxury, and then developed into distinctive ways, which adopted a set of different doctrines and invented practical fees, consisting of many approaches. Sufism is an organized doctrine that refers to different Sufi ranks and denotes successive stages that the Sufi goes through to reach the highest degree of transcendence, and the Sufi method of seeking the truth to reach it revolves around holding oneself accountable for actions and understanding its etiquette (Dajin Al-Sahli, 2005, p.p.10-11).

In addition to this definition, we also mention what Imam Al-Qassab stated that it is a decent morality that appeared at a generous time from a generous man with generous people. In addition to this definition, we mention what Imam Al-Junayd said as staying with God Almighty on what he wants, you own nothing and nothing owns you, while Sheikh Zakaria Al-Ansari defines it as a science that knows the conditions of souls and a filter for morals, and a reconstruction of the external and internal to obtain eternal happiness, thus concluding that mysticism has two basic rules: the need to respect decent ethics and the practice of asceticism (Sadiq Salim, 1994, p.34).

Both al-Qushayri and al-Ghazali described asceticism as follows: "Then people differed and ranks varied, so the special people accepted those who were most concerned about the matter of religion, the ascetics and worshippers: The ascetics and worshippers ... who watch their breath, who are constantly engaged in worship with surveillance, who do not take a breath without holding themselves accountable to God Almighty, and who keep their hearts from falling into oblivion." (Al-Qushairi, 2000, p.54). Abu Hamid al-Ghazali stated that there is a strong link between asceticism and mysticism, saying: "Their path is completed by knowledge and action, and the outcome of their knowledge is to cut off the obstacles of the soul and remove its reprehensible morals and malicious qualities until it leads to the abandonment of the heart from other than God and its sweetness by remembering God"(Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, 1969, p.35).

Sufism is an authentic Islamic phenomenon based on piety and the development of spiritual values. It is also a sport for the soul. We cannot deny the close link between Sufism and psychology, as their subject matter is almost the same, which is the human soul, because some people do not find it embarrassing to say that Sufism is the science of psychology or the science of the afflictions of the soul. It is also a science of experiments, tools, and esoteric science, and half of its followers are

slaves, poor people, ascetics, people of dignity, righteousness, and guardianship, and in this regard, Ibn Ahmad al-Baghdadi says: Sufism is based on three qualities: On the other hand, Sufism is the absolute love of God by making the devotee endure all the pains and misfortunes that God inflicts on him to test his love, purify him and make him enjoy them (Al-Asbahani, 1967, p.255).

Through the above-mentioned definitions, it can be said that the term Sufism is a religious movement that spread in the Islamic world in the third century of the Hegira that calls for asceticism and increased worship as an expression of an opposite action to indulging in luxury, amusement and all kinds of evils, which is a type of asceticism, with more descriptions and many additions without which a man is not a Sufi, even if he is an ascetic, that creates the rule that every Sufi is an ascetic, but not every ascetic is a Sufi, which creates the rule that every Sufi is an ascetic, but not every ascetic is a Sufi.

2- Definition of the method:

2.1 Definition of method in language:

According to Al-Jarjani in his book Dictionary of Definitions, it is "the specialized path of those who travel to God Almighty from the cutting of houses and advancement in the maqamat", and according to the Waseet Dictionary, the method is the path and the doctrine, the doctrine, the habit, the habit, the wide path and the path of a group of Sufis, which is the path and the way of a man, i.e. his doctrine, and it is said that so-and-so is still on one way, meaning on one state, and a good way and the way is the state (al-Jarjani, 2004, p.119).

2.2 The method is a term:

Sufism is the methodology that Sufis specialize in in order to purify hearts from all influences that distract him from the love of God, and this methodology is based on mujahidah and following a specific path to get closer to God Almighty, as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali says that the path of Sufism

is to present mujahidah, erase the reprehensible pages, cut off all ties, and turn all attention to God Almighty; as Sufis saw that these qualities are the way to reach God Almighty, and it is a special path for a type of people who are distinguished from others. It is a special path for a type of people who are distinguished from others in the methods that can be followed to reach the absolute truth through stages. Each Sufi method relies for proof of its authenticity and legitimacy on a series of righteous people and flags, as it is the path of truth and peace to reach salvation through poems and dhikr that differ from one method to another (Marzouki, 2016, p.40), (Tili al-Ajili, 1992, p.35).

The way for Sufis is those steps towards heading towards God, the way is the path that the Sufi takes, and this path is the Sharia that every Muslim must follow, so the Sufi must follow the path of the Sharia sincerely in order to reach the goal, which is complete monotheism by knowing the oneness of God with true knowledge, and the names of the Sufi orders differed during the Ottoman era according to the names of their founders, and they aim for one goal, which is a moral goal of self-denial, honesty in speech and action, patience, reverence, love of others, tawakkul, and other virtues that Islam calls for (Abu Wafaa al-Qimi, 1979, p.236).

3- Sufi orders of the Ottoman Empire:

Sufi orders were one of the most prominent religious and social manifestations in the Ottoman states. They played a pivotal role in shaping spiritual and public life and greatly influenced the patterns of popular religiosity and the institutions of local authority. These orders represented an extension of the centuries-old tradition of Islamic mysticism, but in the Ottoman context they acquired new dimensions due to the intertwining of religion and politics and the diverse geographical and social environments in which they were active.

In this paper, we will try to review the most prominent Sufi orders that spread in the Ottoman Empire during the period (1299-1924), which had a great impact and wide popularity, while clarifying the cultural and religious dimensions that Sufism acquired at that time. During this era, a number of major orders emerged that had a remarkable presence, whether in terms of geographical extension or religious, social, and political influence. Several orders emerged, including Bektashiya, Rifaiya, and Naqshbandiya, each of which had its own footprint in the social milieu in which it was active.

3.1 The Bektashi method:

The Bektashiya emerged as an heir to all the incoming Sufi orders spread along the trade routes (Silk Roads) and the areas of Turkmen population density, where the summer pastures near Ankara and Kayseriya, and therefore the first Ottoman princes admired Haji Bektash and those who came after him, the Bektashiya order is attributed to Haji Bektash Wali, who ascribed himself to Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him), as one of the children of Ibrahim bin Musa al-Kazim bin Jaafar al-Sadiq bin Muhammad al-Baqir bin Ali bin Zain al-Abidin bin Hussein bin Ali (may Allah be pleased with them all) (Abdul Zaid al-Waeli, 1439, p.244).

Haji Bektash Wali (1210 AD - 1320 AD) was born in Nishapur, the capital of Khorasan, and was influenced by the ideas of Jalal al-Din ibn Rumi, Shams al-Din Tabrizi, and Ahmad Yassawi (1166 AD (561- 561 AD)). Haji Bektash stayed in Najaf for two years, where he studied jurisprudence, went on pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, visited the shrines of Damascus and Aleppo, and settled in Anatolia, moving between Konya and Sivas, and settled in the Amasya region, where he was hosted by the Gelpi family, especially her son Idris Gelpi (Mamdouh Ghaleb, 2019, p.22), (Badiaa Mohamed, 2010, p.p.28-30).

The Ottomans relied on popular mysticism in building their state, and embraced mysticism as a moral force during their expansion at the expense of Byzantium, and the state relied at the beginning of its establishment on the Turkmen tribes and neighboring emirates, and on the sheikhs, poles and dervishes of the roads, especially in the border areas, where a popular culture spread Sufi methods, epic literature, and customary laws, while in the interior regions and major cities, approved religious doctrines, schools of kalam, court etiquette, and sharia rules prevailed, and the Turkish language was the language of administration and literature, while the society of the border regions was characterized by diversity, tolerance, and complexity (Abdul Zaid al-Waeli, 1439, p.p.242-243).

As a result of the Safavid-Ottoman political conflict, Alawite Shiite beliefs were introduced into Bektashiya. This happened as a result of a shift in Bektashiya beliefs at a late stage, especially in the sixteenth century. At that time, the dervishes of Al-Malamniyya, Qalandariya, and Haidariya were spread, which were several sects that entered Bektashiya, and were opposed to the direction of the Ottoman state while Naqshbandiya, Mawlawiya, and Khalutiyya were in favor of the state (Abdul Zaid al-Waeli, 1439, p.244).

When the Janissaries tried to rebel against the Ottoman Empire, the Bektashiya stood by the Janissaries, supported them in their disobedience, and killed the Grand Vizier and Shaykh al-Islam during the reign of Sultan Mahmoud II (1818 AD - 1839 AD) in the early nineteenth century, which contributed to the weakness of the state, and Sultan Mahmoud II succeeded in the plan to eliminate the Janissaries and abolish the Bektashiya, and closed its takayas in 1826 AD (Khalid Muhammad, 2015,p.p.13-14).

Despite the Ottoman rapprochement with the Bektashiya, recognizing it, and allowing it to establish takayas in Anatolia and Rumeli, the decision to ban Bektashiya activity came as a result

of its support for the Janissary rebellion rejecting the reforms approved by Sultan Mahmoud II in 1826, and this incident was known in history After the state destroyed the small takiyas of the Bektashi order, confiscated the money and property of the order, and converted the useful buildings into mosques, mosques, schools, and government institutions, which led to the Bektashi convergence with the Qizilbash in a big way, and accepted their union (Badiaa Mohamed, 2010, p.42).

The Alawite Bektash were subjected to bloody events in 1826, under the pretext of their interference in governance and authority, their attempt to control the institution of the Ottoman Caliphate, and their attempt to burn its march, as they controlled the Janissary Army (New Soldiers), so they gained political and popular importance, and the New Soldiers were the infantry of the Ottoman armed forces and most of them were Alawites, practicing Sufi rituals in their villages. The Bektashi relationship with the Ottoman state was not always favorable, but it was an ebb and flow relationship, while some supported the state, others opposed it, as Sultan Mahmoud II ordered the abolition of the Janissaries and the Bektashiya. However, Sultan Abdul Majid (1839-1861 AD) allowed the Bektashiya to return again, while prohibiting the infiltration of the Bektashiya into the army barracks (Khalid Muhammad, 2015,p.p.13-14).

In general, the Ottomans were known for their religious, psychological and military training and their adherence to Sufi orders, as the Bekdashi order led them, influenced them, protected them, pushed them to jihad and spoils, and blessed their actions, so they owed their men loyalty, blessed them, and looked at them as a murid to his sheikh and a master to his master, then there were many Sufi orders and their effects on the population and the Ottoman Empire, as the Naqshbandi order also spread among them.

3.2 The Naqshbandi method:

The Naqshbandi order was founded in the eighth century AH by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah

Naqshband, who died in the year ninety-one and seven hundred, to whom the order is attributed, and Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Khani al-Khalidi Naqshbandi mentioned: Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Khani al-Khalidi al-Naqshbandi mentioned that the order was previously attributed to Abdul Khaliq al-Ghajduani. The order has been called "Mujaddidiyya" or "Faruqiyya" after Sheikh Ahmad al-Faruqi al-Sarhindi, and "Khalidiyya" after Khalid al-Naqshbandi, known as the pilot with two wings (Abdullah al-Khani, 2005,p.p.37-39).

The proponents of the Naqshbandi order say that their order was called "Siddiqiyya" after Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, then it was called "Tayfuriyya" after Abu Yazid al-Bastami, whose name was Tayfur, and "Naqshband" is actually a nickname for Muhammad Baha al-Din: The first: Because the image of the word Allah is imprinted on the surface of his heart from the frequent mention of Allah and the second: He was named so because the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, placed his palm on his heart and it became an inscription in the heart (Abdullah al-Khani, 2005,p167).

The method was limited to spreading in Bukhara and its vicinity because it was the city where its founder Naqshband lived, then it spread in the Levant after that through Sheikh Khalid Naqshbandi after he received the method from Sheikh Abdullah al-Dahlawi, the Naqshbandi method spread in many places, especially in the Caucasus, Bukhara, Samarkand, Turkmen, and the former Indian subcontinent, as the masters of the Naqshbandi method are from those countries. It is also spread in most Arab countries, especially in the Levant (Ahmad Warneika, 1987,p16).

During the Ottoman era, the Naqshbandi order flourished in the states of the Levant, especially in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, such as Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk, and was transmitted through influential sheikhs such as Mulla Muhammad Khalid Naqshbandi, who died in 1827 AD, who

founded a reformist branch of the order, known as “Khalidiyya”. His influence extended to the Levant, the Hejaz, and Anatolia. The Khalidi method was characterized by its emphasis on strict adherence to Sharia law and the rejection of some popular practices that characterized other methods, which made it acceptable to the groups of scholars, educated people, and those in power (Ahmad Warneika, 1987,p28).

The Naqshbandi order does not differ in its origins from other Sufi orders, which are based on matters of dhikr, worship without evidence from the Book or the Sunnah, and exaggeration of the sheikhs. The presence of the Naqshbandi order in the Ottoman Levant is a vivid example of the role of Sufi orders in guiding religious life, building influential social and cultural networks, and their ability to adapt between traditional Sufism and reformist religious discourse. Sheikh Abdul Khaliq al-Ghajduani, Sheikh Muhammad Baha al-Din Naqshband, Sheikh Ahmad al-Faruqi al-Sarhindi, and Sheikh Muhammad Osman Seraj al-Din are among the most famous shaykhs of the order (Ahmad Warneika, 1987,p.p.16-19).

Conclusion:

The Ottoman Empire's attitude towards Sufi orders was not a single or rigid one, but fluctuated between patronage and support on the one hand, and monitoring and limiting influence on the other, depending on political circumstances. From the earliest times, the Ottomans realized that Sufi orders could play the dual role of supporting stability and political loyalty through their influence on the common people, or, conversely, turning into rival centers of influence that could threaten the empire's central authority, especially in periods of turmoil.

For this reason, the early modern period was not only a period of confrontation, but also produced new types of religious fusion in which Sufis played an important role. Moreover, the Ottoman Empire and its sultans encouraged the settlement of sharia-conscious Naqshbandi Sufis in their

territories as part of an attempt to spread adherence to a largely normative, sharia-based Sunni Islam among the Turkmen tribes in the countryside.

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