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II. The Worldview of a Sufi in the Ottoman Realm

HAKIKI AND HIS BOOK OF GUIDANCE

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It has been attested in the scholarship that the era after the Mongol invasion and before the rise of the early-modern Muslim empires (roughly between the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) was a religiously chaotic and pluralistic time. In part due to the lack of political authorities proclaiming the rightful way of being a Muslim, significant adjustments were made at all levels of society to more syncretistic views of the universe and the human being, more inclusive perceptions of time and history, and diverse applications of social identities and rituals.¹

In particular with regard to Sufism, this era saw the rise of brotherhoods as encompassing networks of spiritual and social authority over the lands of Islam. Sufi shaykhs came to be understood as community leaders, asserting authority in the worldly affairs of their followers as much as in the spiritual realm. There was also an infiltration of Shi'ite ideals and concepts, including those that had been deemed excessive and marginal (ghulat) in heresiographical books of the past. Among those ideas, we find the teaching of the unity-of-being (wahdat al-wujud) understood in quite materialistic terms, the cyclical view of the time and existence, the heightened love and dedication for 'Ali (Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, and the first of the Shi'i imams) as the head of the saints, and an aura of social protest against the privileged classes.

All three Muslim empires of the early modern era seemed to have had to deal with manifestations of such divergent forms of Sufism to claim and protect their sovereignty. For the Ottoman Empire, noteworthy research has been done regarding the transformation of various Sufi orders in an attempt to understand

how they adjusted to the new conditions of state-enforced religious doctrines and practices.²

The Bayrami Sufi Order, which was founded in the mid-fifteenth century by a beloved Turkish Sufi shaykh, Hacı Bayram Veli (d. 1430) was split into two when the older, illiterate, and unassuming devotee (Emir Dede, d. 1476) disagreed with the younger and madrasa-educated successor (Akshemseddin, d. 1459). Emir Dede's followers differentiated themselves from the main body of the Bayramiyye by refusing to wear specific Sufi garments and practice common Sufi rituals that were established in the lodges. During the sixteenth century, their messianic proclivities peaked, and their opposition with the state took a particularly intense form. Several pirs (spiritual leaders) of the order were executed for holding heretical beliefs and engaging in active propaganda to disseminate them.

By the seventeenth century, however, the order shifted its main locality from small Anatolian and Balkanic cities to Istanbul, the capital of the empire, and tried to fit into the world of intellectual and administrative elite in this city. The effort was remarkably successful, and by the late seventeenth century, the order had formed a network among the intellectuals, bureaucrats, court officials, and military administrators. It is during this time in Istanbul that we come across various manuscripts produced by authors who belonged to this branch of the Bayramis and tried to explain the worldview of the order to the literati in Istanbul. The excerpt from the treatise that is translated below, *Irshadname*, was written in the year 1601 by an author known as al-Hakiki (the Truthful). Hakiki wrote in simple and clear Turkish, although he seems to have been fairly educated and capable of understanding classical sources in Arabic and Persian. His poetic quotations in these languages do not appear in this translation in an effort to keep the text simple.

In the *Irshadname*, Hakiki first explains the formation of the universe through emanation from the divine origin thanks to the creative force of the eternal and limitless love (*ishk*). The first essence that appears is the prophetic essence (*hakikat-i Muhammadiyya*), which continually manifests itself through the prophets and holy saints (*evliya*) on this earth. Hakiki also explains that the cosmos is comprised of a constant circulation of the four elements (air, earth, water, fire), which continually construct new beings (minerals, plants, animals, and humans) as they move in a yearning to find their way back to the original abode of oneness. This can be achieved by reaching (i.e. taking part in the formation of) the human being who attains the gnosis, accomplishes perfection, and becomes absolved from this eternal cycle of life. Hakiki explains that one cannot become aware of this knowledge and tread on this path without a proper master (*shaykh*) who possesses certain qualities. The sign of a real master is that he should be able to lead and manage his disciples' through real spiritual experience and ecstasy. One cannot become a shaykh by just putting on a Sufi garment and playing the role, and many of those who do that are simply liars and deceivers. Finally, Hakiki endeavors to clear the order from accusations of heresy and unruly behavior. He explains that when such problematic belief and behavior are detected, the offenders are admonished and punished through the internal dynamics of the order.

150-153