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Why Label Alevi Islam as Shi`ite?: A Comparative Inquiry into Alevi Identity Outside of the Sunni-Shi`ite Framework

by

Reyhan Erdogdu Basaran

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APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

[Signatures]

David B. Cook, Chair, Associate Professor, Department of Religion

Jeffrey J. Kripal, J. Newton Rayzor Professor, Department of Religion

Lora Wildenthal, Professor, Interim Dean, School of Humanities

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ABSTRACT

Why Label Alevi Islam as Shi`ite?: A Comparative Inquiry into Alevi Identity Outside of the Sunni-Shi`ite Framework

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The Alevis represent the most significant minority religious group in Turkey and the Alevi question represents a unique ethnic and religious challenge for the Turkish state. Although the number of academic studies on Alevism have dramatically increased in the last three decades, the question of whether Alevism is a branch of Shi`ism still remains a neglected subject of the Alevi literature. The majority of recent works on Alevism have automatically and straightly classified Alevism as Shi`ite due to the shared religious elements by the two groups. They did not intend, however, to analyze, compare and contrast those Shi`ite currents as to how they are applied/perceived in Shi`ism and Alevism. By using a comparative study of religion methodology, this research seeks to provide an elaborative analysis on the distinguishing features of the Alevi belief system, in relation to the Alid cause. While analyzing the contemporary approaches and archival of the official and historical records on Alevi belief, the particular focus of this dissertation is to understand, decode, and theorize the status of Alevism in conjunction with and separate from Sunnism and Shi`ism. In doing so, this dissertation argues that most of the existing scholarship fails to conceive of the Alevi differences outside of the Sunni-Shi`ite framework.
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Introduction

What Alevism Really is in Terms of Sectarian Discourses?

Scope and Method of the Research

The question of “what Alevism really is in terms of sectarian discourses?” is centered at the heart of this dissertation. The current scholarships on Alevism offer different views on the nature of the Alevi belief. Debates over the definition of Alevism varied as follows: Alevism is a religion apart from Islam, a method [way of life], a mystic movement, a cultural phenomenon, a secular and nationalist structure, an ethno-religious group, or a sect of Islam, particularly Shi‘ism. In this dissertation, drawing from my work in the archives of Gazi Üniversitesi Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Merkezi and the British Library, I explore historical, official and archival records along with modern works on Alevism to ascertain how and why Alevi belief must be assessed apart from Sunni and Shi‘ite Islam. This research argues that most of the existing scholarship fails to conceive of the Alevi differences outside of the Sunni-Shi‘ite framework.

The Alevis constitute the largest and geographically expanded minority religious group in Turkey. As yet, there appears no official record delineating the number of Alevis living in Turkey. Estimates claim that they range between 15 to 25 percent of the total population of the Turkish state. Despite the strong historical, cultural, political and religious presence of the Alevi community existing from the late fifteenth century,¹ the interest in studying Alevism at an academic level was begun only by the late twentieth

¹ From the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth century, Alevis had come to be known as Kızılbaş.
century. And yet the political environment still is lacking in recognizing the Alevi community as having their own historical identity, idiosyncratic traditions, typical religious rites, and separate worship places and institutions apart from Sunnism.

Although since the beginning of the Turkish Republic the Alevis have been recognized as equal citizens of Turkey, Turkish policy makers have neglected to acknowledge their religious, theological and cultural differences. In terms of providing separate religious spheres (cemevis, a name given to the Alevi worship places) and employment of their own religious leaders (dedes), and funding of their cultural and religious institutions, the Alevis have been downplayed in favor of Sunnism. Rather the intention has been to assimilate the Alevis into the majority Sunni community that rhetorically excluded them from the Turkish society. This caused a mutual miscomprehension between the Sunnis and the Alevis. Hence the labels including rafidi (rejectionist), zindiq (heretic), mulhid (apostate) are given to the Alevis by other religious groups; namely, by their Sunni neighbors.

The “Alevi Opening”2 in 2007 marks an essential step undertaken by the current Turkish government (Justice and Development Party) to formally recognize Alevis with their distinguished historical, cultural and religious futures. The “Alevi Opening” has been regarded as the most noteworthy move of the Turkish government in understanding and recognizing the problems and concerns of the Alevis. No other Turkish state

representatives have ever given such attention to the issues of the Alevi. They organized a number of workshops that brought together the state officials and Alevi representatives. A number of problems that concern the Alevis in Turkey were brought forth and discussed. Through the public attention given to those meetings, the Alevi issues in Turkey not only came into the spotlight in public debates but also became the focus of the public attention. Even though the Alevis found a place where their voice could be heard, this process, which ended in January 2010, did not end up as successfully as hoped. Their demands for recognition of the Alevi worship places (cemevi) as equal to that of the Sunni based mosques and for the employment of the Alevi dedes (religious leaders) to their own religious institutions were left unfulfilled. According to Dressler, one of the reasons that blighted the trajectory of the dialogue between the state and the Alevis was the inability of the government representatives to approach the issues outside of the Sunni norms of Islam. Dressler states that “The JDP’s (Justice and Development Party) general approach to the Alevi question clearly displays a Sunni Islamic bias and is thus in continuation with an approach to the Alevi question typical for the Turkish state since the beginning of the republic.”

In political discourse, Sunni interest in Alevism might have been one of the essential causes that jeopardized the foremost step in recognizing Alevism as a separate entity. By extension, there is still a lack of public awareness and sympathy for the problems and rights of the Alevi community. On the other hand, in the academical sphere, it is the concern of this dissertation that the lack of academic interest in studying Alevism outside

of the Shi`ite and Sunni Islamic norms is one of the foremost reasons for the non-recognition of the Alevi identity in their own right. That is why I have come to believe in the necessity of studying Alevi belief as a subject of sectarian domain.

Using the history of religions, which is by nature a comparative discipline as my methodology in this dissertation, I seek to provide an elaborative analysis on the distinguishing features of the Alevi belief system, its philosophy, rituals, traditions, and methods both from the Sunni and Shi`ite patterns. While engaging in analyzing the contemporary approaches and archival of the official and historical records on Alevi belief, the particular focus of this dissertation is to understand, decode, and theorize the status of Alevism in conjunction with and separate from Sunnism and Shi`ism. Although the number of academic studies on Alevism has dramatically increased in the last three decades, the question of whether Alevism is a branch of Shi`ism still remains a neglected subject of the Alevi literature. The majority of recent works on Alevism have automatically and straightly classified Alevism as Shi`ite due to the shared religious elements by the two groups. They did not intend, however, to analyze, compare and contrast those Shi`ite currents as to how they are applied/perceived in Shi`ism and Alevism. Hence, I aim to fill this gap. In doing so, the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to unearth justification of how and why we must assess Alevism apart from Sunni and Shi`ite Islam.

In chapter one, I explore the approaches of modern scholarship as to how and why they regard Alevism as a branch of Shi`ism. First, I will give brief information on the historical development of Alevism/Kızılbaşhism. By taking a comparativist approach, I will then discuss the varied current discourses on Alevism to indicate how political, nationalistic, secular and religious tendencies have an influence on academic researches.
The following section of this chapter will address the notions of ‘heterodoxy,’ ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘metadoxy.’ The use of the term heterodoxy by Fuad Köprülü to explain the nature of Alevi belief as opposed to Sunni Islam (viewed as ‘orthodox’ Islam) has initiated an essential discussion in which different perspectives have been offered by the following academics. This discussion led my research to examine two different suggestions. While some scholars recognize Shi`ite elements in Anatolia before the presence of the Safavid, the others suggest that those Shi`ite currents became prevalent in Anatolia with the Safavid influence. The recognition of those Shi`ite sentiments led the majority of recent scholars to label Alevi as Shi`ite. Through introducing the views on this, I will come up with the questions and debates over the identification of Alevism as Shi`ite.

Chapter two will compare and contrast three separate but interconnected Buyruk texts (Alevi central religious books). While introducing Shi`ite elements like the concept of the Alevi ‘trinity’ (Allah, Muhammad, and Ali), the glorification of Ali, the ahl al-bayt (the Family of Muhammad’s house), the doctrine of the Imamate, the matter of the Fourteen Infallibles applied in the Buyruks, with a comparativist approach, I will theorize and unpack the differences of their application in the Alevi belief versus Shi`ite Islam. I will then draw attention to some other primary Shi`ite teachings that are disregarded in the Buyruk manuscripts.

Chapter three centers on the Ottoman role in representing the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief in the sixteenth century. Through analyzing varied archival documents like the Muhimme registers (Ottoman administrative records), historical and religious narratives and travel accounts, the chief aim of this chapter is to offer a deeper understanding of the Ottoman construction of the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief. I argue here that in the eyes of the Ottoman
officials, the Alevi/Kızılbaş case acquired a new religious dimension due to the Alevi/Kızılbaş connection with the Safavid Empire. The military and political support of the Alevi/Kızılbaş for the Safavids eventually made them become the foremost threat to the Ottoman integrity. Starting from the early sixteenth to the late sixteenth century, the Kızılbaş had been exiled, imprisoned, and persecuted. The fatwas (Islamic religious sayings) issued by the chief religious scholars, Ibn Kemal (873/1469 – 940/1534) and Ebussuud (895/1490 – 981/1574), played a vital role in the Ottoman justification for ongoing persecution of the Alevi/Kızılbaş. Terms like rafidi (rejectionists), mulhid (apostate), khawarij (seceders), zindiq (heretic), kafir (unbeliever), non-Sunnis, bandit, and burglar are used to defame the Alevi/Kızılbaş and discriminate them from any other Islamic groups. However, we do not appear to have found any reference to the term Shi`a in explanation of the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief. Rather a fatwa of Ebussuud⁴ has come to the fore, in which he firmly distinguishes the Kızılbaş belief from Shi`ite Islam.

In the fourth and final chapter of this dissertation, I will construe how and when the Alevi- Bektaşi link began and how such relationship affected the religious themes of both groups. Of key argument, this chapter offers that the Alevi- Bektaşi alliance played a pivotal role in constructing the final form of Alevi belief free from the Safavid control. At first, I will discuss the historical and theological development of the Bektaşi order beginning from Haci Bektaş to Balım Sultan and then go on to mention possible links with other dervish groups existing in the Ottoman realm. After briefly analyzing the Janissary-Bektaşi association and abolishment of the Janissary army and the Bektaşi lodges, I will

then address the mission of the Alevi/Kızılbaş community in helping the Bektaşis to sustain their presence in secret. In contrast to what is normally claimed, I argue here that individual links between the Bektaşis and Alevi/Kızılbaş had begun by the seventeenth century and had progressed by the twentieth century to become an institutionalized link between the two groups.

### Literature Review

#### Chapter One: The Assessment of the Current Scholarship that Links Alevi with either Shi‘ism or Sunnism

Modern scholarship on Alevism will be the primary sources for this chapter of the dissertation. Building on my argument in the contemporary Alevi sources, I intend to understand, clarify, and theorize the role of Alevi belief in the contemporary sectarian discourses. I do so by comparing and contrasting, particularly, the accounts of Franz Babinger, Claude Cahen, Fuad Köprülü, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Irène Mélikoff, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Cemal Kafadar, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, Karin Vorhoff, Kathryn Babayan, and Ayfer Karakaya-Stump. By doing so, I aim to scrutinize the statements that either links Alevism with Shi‘ism or with Sunnism.

The first part of this chapter contains a brief historical account of the Kızılbaş movement in which I focus on how the Safavid order played a crucial role in the birth and development of the Kızılbaş group. While introducing the historical expansion of the Safavid order in Anatolia, I describe how a militant group (the Kızılbaş) transformed into a religious movement (the Alevis). I then address the different perspectives proposed on
the nature and structure of Alevi belief. By exploring the views of various Alevi and non-Alevi scholars, this chapter goes on to claim that most of the modern scholarships on Alevism has manifested a sectarian, nationalist, or secular bias.

The second part of this chapter engages the phenomena of ‘heterodoxy,’ ‘orthodoxy,’ and ‘metadoxy.’ While Fuad Köprülü and Irène Mélikoff have become widely-read modern scholars on Alevism and Bektaşism, their approaches to ‘heterodoxy’ and ‘orthodoxy’ have become the most cited concerning the Alevi belief. Heterodox Islam, in Köprülü’s account as promoted by Mélikoff, is used to define the religious nature of Alevism and Bektaşism as non-Sunni religious groups. While Sunni Islam is classified as orthodox, Alevism and Bektaşism, due to their non-traditional and uninstitutionalized form, have been regarded as heterodox. According to this theory, Alevism and Bektaşism established their religious dogmas based on a mixture of Islamic teaching compounded with Islamic philosophy and some other religious elements; particularly the mystical disciplines of pre-Islamic Central Asia.

In this regard, the two major books of Köprülü, namely Anadolu’da İslamiyet (translated into English as Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion)\(^5\) and Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar, (the translation of the book titled Early Mystics in Turkish

Literature)\textsuperscript{6} will be carefully scrutinized. A number of Mélikoff’s works including *Sur les traces du sou sme turc. Recherches sur l’Islam populaire en Anatolie* (translated into Turkish as *Uyur Idik Uyardılar: Alevilik-bektaşilik Araştırmaları*)\textsuperscript{7} and *Tuttum Aynayı Yüzüme Ali Göründü Gözüme*\textsuperscript{8} will also be analyzed.\textsuperscript{9} Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, as a firm supporter of Köprülü’s approach, provided information on the nature and scope of the term ‘heterodoxy’ versus ‘orthodoxy.’\textsuperscript{10}

Although the proposed theory of Köprülü has been firmly supported by a majority of the following scholarship, various recent academics have drawn attention to the problems of the identification and classification of Alevism as heterodox while offering a critique that challenge previous claims. Here I pay particular attention to the critiques and theories of Cemal Kafadar\textsuperscript{11} [the phenomenon of metadoxy] and Ahmet Karamustafa [the


\textsuperscript{8} Irène Mélikoff, and İlhan C. Erseven. *Tuttum Aynayı Yüzüme Ali Göründü Gözüme*. (İstanbul: ANT, 1997).


In the following section of this chapter, while engaging in debates over the discussions of and claims for the historical base of Shi‘ism as to how and when it emerged in Anatolia, I will address three different perspectives on this question. The first of these perspectives assert that Shi‘ite ideas began to be expanded in Anatolia under the rule of the Seljuks. While Franz Babinger commenced such debate he did not hesitate to assert that the Seljuks, unlike as claimed, recognized Alevism [he means Shi‘ism with the term ‘Alevi’] as an official religion. On the other side, Köprülü published Islam in Anatolia to criticize and offer a completely opposite perspective on the religious tendencies of the Seljuks, according to which the Seljuks were strong defenders of Sunnism. This view has been widely accepted by the Seljuk and the Ottoman historians. However, the matter of how and when did the Shi‘ite elements become prevalent in Anatolia is still the subject of question. For Köprülü and Mélikoff, Shi‘ite Islam appeared in Anatolia as early as the thirteenth century under the influence of Sufism. To Claude Cahen, however, the nature and characteristic of the Shi‘ite belief system was not clarified until the late fifteenth century. To him, the recognition and expansion of Shi‘ism in Anatolia had been actualized

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by the hand of the Safavid dynasty. Regarding this perspective, I address the following three works of Cahen: “Le Problème Du Shiʿisme Dans L'asie Mineure Turque Préottomane,”15 Pre-ottoman Turkey: a General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History,16 and The Formation of Turkey: The Seljukid Sultanate of Rûm: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century.17 The final part of this chapter attempts to present both the diversity and complexity of the current researchers which associates or disassociates Alevism with Shiʿism. I will then address the question of labeling Alevism as Shiʿite.

Chapter Two: Alid Cause or Shiʿite Sentiment: The Imamate Doctrine within the Alevi Buyruk Manuscripts

The Buyruk literature is going to be explored, decoded and compared in chapter two. Although the Buyruks literature has become more available during the past few decades, there has neither appeared a collection of the Buyruk texts nor any comparative work done on them. It is also surprising that within the Western scholarship there has been little attention given to the role of the Buyruks in the expansion and development of the Alevi belief. Not even a single English translation of a Buyruk text is available. It is only recently that Western scholars have begun to translate some particular sections from the

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Buyruks texts into English.\(^{18}\)

As the most respected narrative of the Alevi sources, the Buyruks are widely read and are foundational to the Alevi community. Buyruks played a particular role in shaping the Alevi belief about its rites, customs, doctrines, and methods. They simply narrate the Alevi way of life. The Alevi community regards the Buyruks as declaratory and complementary to the Qur’an. Today, Buyruks have come to be known as Shaykh Safi Buyruks and Imam Jafar Buyruks. The Shaykh Safi Buyruk is also known as Manaqib al-Asrar Behcat-al Ahrar or Büyük Buyruk. Although the Buyruks are attributed to Shaykh Safi and Imam Jafar, they are not written by either of the two. There appear different claims on the identity of the writers, but it is not yet clarified who, when, and where they were written. The well-received view, claimed Gölpınarlı, is that the first Buyruk text was composed by a certain Bisati in 1576 during the rule of Shah Tahmasb I (1524 – 1576).\(^{19}\)

Although there is a sixteenth century dated Shaykh Safi Buyruk, the earliest examples of Imam Jafar Buyruks do not appear until the nineteenth century. The available oldest Imam Jafar Buyruk is dated 1292/1875 and carries the title, Risale-i Tarikat-ı İmam Cafer Sadık.\(^{20}\)

For the scope of this chapter, I will limit my analysis to three different but interconnected Buyruk texts: two of the three texts that will be analyzed here have come to

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\(^{20}\) This manuscript was preserved in the private library of Yesari Gökçe
be known as *Shaykh Safi Buyruks* which are dated in the early seventeenth century – 1608 and 1612. The texts dated 1608 are preserved in Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Kütüphanesi, no 181. In 1994, a Turkish version of it was published by Mehmet Yaman, however, he did not provide a facsimile of the original.21 And the other *Shakıh Safı Buyruk* dated 1612 was formed by Mehmed Ibni Habib in Manisa. The original hand-written version of the manuscript is preserved in Konya Mevlana Müzesi Ferid Uğur Kitaplığı no 1172. Ahmet Taşğın transliterated this manuscript into the modern Turkish script using a facsimile of the original script.22 The third text that will be deciphered here is an undated copy of *Imam Jafar Buyruks*. The text published in 1958 by Sefer Aytekin23 will form the basis of our analysis. The *Buyruk* text composed by Aytekin, in 1982, has been reorganized by Fuat Bozkurt.24 Chapter two will refer to the both of those books when needed.

Although a substantial body of recent Alevi literature relate the Alevi belief with Shi‘ism, no one has yet compared and contrasted the concept of Alid loyalty with the doctrine of the Imamate applied in both teachings. Hence, through analyzing those aforementioned three interrelated *Buyruk* texts, the primal goal of this chapter is to explore the role of Shi‘ite elements including the concept of the Alevi ‘trinity’ (Allah, Muhammad, and Ali), the glorification of Ali, the *ahl al-bayt* (the Family of Muhammad’s House), the

24 Fuat Bozkurt. *Buyruk: Imam Cafer-i Sadık Buyruğu*. (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2004). Other published *Imam Ja’far Buyruks*; Hasan Ayyıldız. *Imam-i Cafer Buyruğu*. (İstanbul, 1962); Adil Ali Atalay. *Imam Cafer Sadık Buyruğu*. (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1995); Esat Korkmaz. *Yorumlu Imam Cafer Buyruğu*. (İstanbul: Alev Yayınları, 2007); Ahmed Sabri Hamedani. *İslamda Caferi Mezhebi ve Imam Cafer Sadık Buyrukları*. (Ankara: Kadioğlu Matbaası, 1983). Hamedani, was an *imam* in the Valide Han Iranlılar Mosque, the bases of the Jafari sect was discussed. As it can be understood from the title of the book, the writer links the *Imam Jafar Buyruks* with the Jafari sect.
doctrine of the *Imamate*, the matter of the Fourteen Infallibles as to how they are acknowledged and comprehended within the *Buyruks*. The following questions will guide this section of my dissertation: How were Ali and the Twelve Imams perceived in the *Buyruks*? How is this different or similar from/to Shi’ite belief? Do the *Buyruk* texts take heed of other Shi’ite subjects like the ‘isma belief (the doctrine about the infallibility of the prophets), the concept of khalifa (caliphate), and the doctrine of ghayba (occultation) of the Twelfth Imam?

**Chapter Three: Representation of the Kızılbaş Belief in the Ottoman Official Records**

Chapter three offers a broad overview of social and political factors that shaped the Ottoman apprehension and recognition of the Kızılbaş belief. In doing so, across this chapter, I will refer to the most essential Ottoman archival resources including administrative records, official historical and religious documents, and travel accounts. Through using these sources, this chapter tends to explore the Ottoman policy of the sixteenth century towards the Kızılbaş as to how it reached and impacted the Kızılbaş community. Second, I will discuss the major elements that had a huge impact on directing the Ottoman view of the Kızılbaş. Regardless of specifying the Kızılbaş faith in terms of sectarian standing, the focus of this chapter is to decipher and theorize the Ottoman construction of the Kızılbaş belief. This is done in order to gain a more in depth view of the Ottoman persecution of the Kızılbaş and to explore the reasons of why and how they were exiled, imprisoned, and persecuted.

The Muhimme *defterleri* (Muhimme registers) reveal an insider’s perspective of
the Ottoman propaganda of the Kızılbaş due to the fact that they contain all kinds of official documents in terms of political, militarily, social and financial matters. As such, they provide preeminent source material for this chapter. In total, there appears a collection of 419 folios of Muhimme registers saved between the dates 961/1333 – 1553/1915. For the scope of this chapter, however, we shall limit our sources to the fermans (rescript) describing the Kızılbaş. The central concern of the fermans is to restrain social deviance. The fermans about the Kızılbaş are not only related to their rites, customs, beliefs, but also they contain commands about the imprisonment, trials, exile, and persecution of the Kızılbaş.

In 1932, Ahmet Refik, a well-respected Turkish academician on the Kızılbaş discourse, published a number of the fermans (54 items) from the Muhimme registers. He appears to have been the earliest scholar who studied the fermans of the Muhimme derfirtleri. In his studies he addressed the non-Sunni minorities living within the Ottoman realm with a rather broad interest in the Kızılbaş community. Then in 2002, Saim Savaş published a book XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik in which he analyzed 108 documents from the Muhimme registers. All of these are attributed to the non-Sunni minority groups, particularly to the Kızılbaş group in the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. Savaş has built his work relying on the Ottoman archives of the prime ministry. In the same year with

Savaş, Cemal Şener also published 78 fermans that deal with the matter of the Kızılbaş.  

Unlike the first two scholars, Şener also cited fermans composed by the nineteenth century with regard to the Bektaşi order and its abolishment. A discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this particular chapter. Therefore, here we will abstain from assessing these fermans and defer their discussion to chapter four.

Ibn Kemal (873/1469 – 940/1534) and Ebussuud (895/1490 – 981/1574) are two-widely read great scholars of the sixteenth century. The importance of the fatwas issued by them reflects the Ottoman perception of the Kızılbaş of that period. Therefore, in this chapter, their fatwas will function as primary sources for understanding and deciphering the Ottoman construction of the Kızılbaş faith. Ibn Kemel or Kemal Paşazade (hereafter, Ibn Kemal) was the pen name of Şemseddin Ahmed by which he was made famous. He also became famous in his position as shaykh al-Islam. It was through his works on history and theology that he became recognized as both a great canonist and a great historian. He served in the military and took part in the military campaigns of Bayezid II. He left the military to seek a formal system of Islamic education at a madrasah (theological school) in Edirne. After completing his education, he became a müderris (teacher/lecturer) and held teaching positions in different schools. After this, his position dramatically increased. He first became a judge of the army in Rumelia and Anatolia. Then in 1515, he was appointed as the kadi (Muslim judge) of Edirne and in 1516 he served as the kazasker (judge of the army) in Anatolia. In 1526, during the rule of Suleyman the Magnificent, Ibn

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28 Cemal Şener. Osmanlı Belgeleri’nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler. (İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2002). Şener also provided the original facsimile of the seventy-eight documents.
Kemal acquired enormous prestige by occupying the office of Mufti of Istanbul. This was regarded as the highest rank of the Ottoman ulama (religious scholars). The Mufti of Istanbul has also come to be known as shaykh al-Islam.29

Ibn Kemal is said to have written over two hundred books in Turkish, Arabic and Persian. A detailed discussion of those works is beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will instead draw attention to the pamphlets that are dedicated to restrain the propagation of the Safavid influence in Anatolia. Further these texts are written to encourage Sultan Selim I in his fight with the Anatolian supporters of the Safavid dynasty and to defend Sunni Islam as opposed to non-Sunni beliefs. The treatises that will be analyzed in this chapter are as follows: Risale fi ikfari Shah Ismail (declaration of Shah Ismail as an unbeliever),30 Risale fi beyan-i firak-i dalle (a pamphlet on the description of the heretical sects),31 Risale fi tasnif-i firak-i dalle (a pamphlet on the list of the heretical sects),32 and the Risale fi tekfiri’r-Ravafiz (the condemnation of the Rafidis).33 Another treatise of Ibn Kemal titled as Fetva-i Kemalpaşazade der Hakk-i Kızılbaş (the fatwas of Kemal Paşazade concerning the Kızılbaş).34 Almost exactly the same fatwas issued here on the Kızılbaş belief also are

reported in the *fatwas* of Ebussuud.

Mehmet Ebussuud al-Imadi, better known as Ebussuud (1490 – 1574) was also a distinguished Ottoman scholar of the sixteenth century. Ebussud as a well-trained religious scholar was appointed as a *müderris* (teacher/lecturer) to different schools. In 1533, he served as a *kadi* (judge), in 1537, as a *kazasker* (judge of the army), and then in 1545, he held the position of *shaykh al-Islam* (the Mufti of Istanbul), which position he held until his death. Thereby, he served as a *shaykh al-Islam* under the reigns of two Ottoman Sultans: Kanuni Sultan Suleyman (1494 – 1566) and Selim II (1524 – 1574). His *fatwas* had a huge impact on the development and formation of classical Ottoman law. The *fatwas* of Ebussuud concerning the Kızılbaş along with Ibn Kemal’s writings are placed at the heart of this chapter. The *fatwas* played a central role in supporting the Ottoman political and military campaigns towards the Safavids and the Kızılbaş. The killing of the Kızılbaş had been pursued and legitimated through the *fatwas* of Ebussuud which gave legitimacy to the war with the Kızılbaş. Those *fatwas*, in 1983, are published by M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ with the title of *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı.*

In this chapter, through decoding the *fatwas* one by one, I aim to explore the reason of how, and in what ways, did Ebussuud seek to issue *fatwas* for the persecution of the Kızılbaş? How did the Ottoman sultan benefit from those *fatwas*? How did the legitimacy of the fight with the Kızılbaş derived from theological reasoning? How did Ebussuud present the Kızılbaş belief, and in what ways, did he distance the Kızılbaş faith from Shi’ite Islam?

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The historical records are another set of resources that this chapter seeks to analyze. *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* of Ibn Kemal, Tevarih-i Ali Osman composed of ten volumes. Each volume has been transcribed and edited by different authors. We will only cite from the ones relevant to our subject. Aşıkpaşazade, a sixteenth century Ottoman historian, *Selim-name* of İdrisi Bitlisi will be addressed to compare the information provided in the Muhimme registers and in the writings and *fatwas* of the *ulama*. Further, the *Seyehatname* of Evliya Çelebi will be narrated when it is needed.

**Chapter Four: Reforming of the Bektaşi and Alevi Rites through their Interaction with One Another**

Aside from the books attributed to Hacı Bektaş, like the *Makalat* and the *Velayetname*, there was no comprehensive book until the late nineteenth century that addressed the rituals, beliefs and customs of the Bektaşi order. By the nineteenth century, the books named *Erkannames* appeared as foundational sources for describing the methods, doctrines and rites of the Bektaşi tradition. However, some scholars tied the

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36 *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* composed of ten volumes. Each volume has been transcribed and edited by different authors. We will only cite from the ones relevant to our subject.


38 *Selimnames* are also significant part of Ottoman historiography. These historical materials are dealing with the era of Selim I. The *Selimname* of Ishak Çelebi covers the time from the end of Bayezid II to the era when Selim I. İbrahim Parmaksızoğlu. *Üsküplü Ishak Çelebi ve Selimnamesi*. (İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953); The *Selimname* written by Sucudi begins with the period of Selim I’s sultanate. Sucuudi. *Selimname*. 2005. (Turkish/Ottoman); While the *Selim-Şahname* of İdrisi Bitlisi encompasses the entire era of Selim I. *Selim-Şahname* was written in Persian by the request of Selim I. In this work, the letters of Shah Ismail to Selim I were also narrated. İdrisi Bitlisi. *Selim-Şahname*. Edited by Hicabi Kırlanç, (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001).

39 The *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels) of Evliya Çelebi provides extensive information about entire regions of the Ottoman Empire. The original manuscript has been saved in the Museum of Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat, İstanbul, no 304, folio: 106b-217b; Evliya Çelebi. *Seyahatname* I. Edited by Şinasi Tekin ve Gönül Alpay Tekin with an introduction by Fahir Iz, (Harward University, Office of the University Publisher, 1989-1993).
scribing process of the *Erkannames* to Balım Sultan,\(^{40}\) the second Patron Saint of the Bektashi order. The known available *Erkannames* date from but not earlier than the nineteenth century.\(^ {41}\) Those *Erkannames* written from the nineteenth century onwards must not be viewed as sources that narrate the Bektashi tradition of the nineteenth century. Rather they are the central works that capture the belief and the doctrine of the Bektashi order that had begun to spring up from the time of Haci Bektaş.

The treatises attributed to Haci Bektaş are as important as the *Erkannames* in their description of the method, philosophy, doctrine, and costume of the Bektashi tradition. There appear to be a number of treatises, however, including *Velayetname* of Haci Bektaş, *Makalat, Tafsir-i Fatiha*\(^ {42}\), *Tafsir-i Besmele*\(^ {43}\), *Sathiyye*\(^ {44}\), and *Fevaid*\(^ {45}\) that are attributed


\(^{41}\) There are several books emphasizing the importance of the *Erkannames* on the Bektashi literature. However, as far as I am concerned, none of the recent books that talk about the importance of the *Erkannames* neither provided an original manuscript or a facsimile of any text. The book titled *Bir Bektashi Erkannamesi: 1313/1895 Tarihli Bir Erkanname Metni* published by Dursun Gümüşoğlu and Rıza Yıldırım is quite essential in this regard because it revealed the exact source of an original manuscript of an *Erkanname* dated 1313/1895 and provided a Turkish transcribed version of it. Dursun Gümüşoğlu, and Rıza Yıldırım. *Bir Bektashi Erkannamesi: 1313/1895 Tarihli Bir Erkanname Metni*. (Horasan Yayınları, 2006). The manuscript was compiled in 1313/1895 by Derviş Muhammed Şeyh Hüseyin Efendi, and preserved in the library of Türk Dil Kurumu, no. A-327. The text is also known as *Balım Sultan Erkannamesi*. It gives information on the Bektashi rituals – how they are going to be performed and the types of the prayers that need to be read during those rites.


\(^ {43}\) The original edition of the text dated 827/1422 by a certain Cafer b. Hasan was located in the library of Manisa, no 3536. For the Turkish translation of the text see, Hacı Bektaş Velı. *Velayetname*. Edited by Hamiye Duran. (Ankara: Türkçe Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2007).

\(^{44}\) Gölpınarlı talks about a two-page of *risale*, named *Sathiyye*, written probably by the 13th century. However, he does not state where the original text was located. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. “Bektaş,” *Türk Ansiklopedisi*, VI. 33.

\(^{45}\) Originally written in Persian and located in the library of Istanbul University, no 55. For the translation of the text, see, Hacı Bektaş Velı. *Kitabül-Fevaid*. (İstanbul: 1959).
to Hacı Bektaş, though none of these works were actually composed in his time.

The most known and well-cited Bektaşi hagiographies — the *Makalat* and the *Velayetname* of Hacı Bektaş — provide information on his genealogy, education, and travels and on his settling in Suluca Karahöyük. The *Makalat* was claimed to be written by Hacı Bektaş in Arabic. It was first composed, however, in Ottoman Turkish in 812/1409 by Hatiboğlu Muhammad. The *Velayetname* of Hacı Bektaş, also known as *Manaqib-i of Hacı Bektaş*, (hereafter *Velayetname*) appears to have been the most essential Bektaşi hagiography and the most known and well accepted within the *manaqib* collections. To Köprülü, however, the *Manaqib*, like the *Manaqib* of Haccim Sultan and Qayghusuz, is ‘full of nothing but supernatural stories of virtually no historical substance.’ The *Manaqib* of Hacı Bektaş has been well-cited due to its broad information on the life, method, and prophecy of Hacı Bektaş. The book was composed around the late fifteenth century. There appears no certain information, however, that proves the books are

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46 Baha Said Bey states that he found the Ottoman written edition of the *Makalat* in the Meydan Evi Library in Hacı Bektaş’s village. Esad Coşan edited poetical and prose versions of the text and published along with the missing Arabic copy of it, see Hacı Bektaş Veli. *Makalat*. Edited by Esad Coşan. (Ankara: Seha Neşriyat, 1982).

47 The Books contain the collection of legendary anecdotes about dervishes have been called as *manaqib* or *velayatname*. However, they were mainly written in the purpose of expanding their Sufi teaching and educating the disciples, they are rich of myths and legendary stories.

48 There are several editions of *Valayatname* of Hacı Bektaş Veli either preserved in the libraries or guarded by individuals. The oldest available edition dated 1034/1624 was located in the library of Hacı Bektaş Veli Müzesi. The 1035/1625 dated edition of *Vilayetname* was located in the Millet Kütüphanesi Ali Emiri Kitapları. This text was edited and translated into Turkish. The most referred ones are: Hacı Bektaş Veli. *Vilayetname: Menakib-i Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli*. Edited by Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı. (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 1995). Then Hamiye Duran wrote a well-organized edition of it through providing the facsimile of it. Hacı Bektaş Veli. *Velayetname*. Edited by Hamiye Duran. (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2007).


50 However it is claimed to be written by Musa the son of Ali, the well accepted view is that it was written by a certain Ilyas b. Ali also known with his pen-name ‘Firdevsî,’ who lived during the time of Fatih and Bayazid II. For the first view, see, Bedri Noyan. *Bütün Yönleriyle Bektasılık ve Alevilik*. Volume I. (İstanbul: 1998). 367-441. And for the second thought, see, Hacı Bektaş Veli and Esad Cosan, *Makalat*,
connected to Hacı Bektaş. Nevertheless, the Makalat and Velayetname have both been respected and well received by the Bektaşi community from the early fifteenth century to today. That is why these two books must be regarded as the primary sources on the beliefs, rites, and methods of the Bektaşis fromed in the fifteenth century.

There also exist several other historical resources of the early sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that provide information on the historical Bektaşi dervishes and their religious standing. The work of Vahidi Menakib-i Hvoca-i Cihan ve Netice-i Can, written in 929/1522, could be counted as the earliest available text that describes the Bektaşi along with other mystic dervishes who settled in the Ottoman dynasty.\(^{51}\) This book appears to have been one of the most essential resources to understand the belief, custom and way of life of the early sixteenth century Bektaşi dervishes.

While Vahidi’s text provides neutral information with regard to the Bektaşi doctrine, in the early seventeenth century there appeared different types of books that intended to defame the Bektaşi tradition. The text of Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi (d. 1047/1635), a Nakşi shaykh, could be listed here as an example. In his famous work Nur’l Hüda Limen-Ihteda, he is particularly interested in discussing the deterioration of the tariqah, including Abdals, Kalandars, Haydaris, Hurufis, Camis, Semsis, Mevlevis, and Ethemis, and the Bektaşis.\(^{52}\) He defines the Bektaşî order as corrupted. The book was actually the replica of the Vahidi’s aforementioned text. Regardless of his references to

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\(^{52}\)However the book was published in 1873, while Ömer Efendi died in 1635, Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi. Nur’l Hüda Limen-Ihteda. (İstanbul: Tasvirî’l-Efkar Matbaası, 1873). (Ottoman).

Especially after the early nineteenth century and onwards, several books written either by the official state scholars of the Ottoman dynasty or ones tied to other Sufi groups began to propagate to the detriment of the Bektaşi *tariqah*. The text titled *Uss-i Zafer* of Esad Efendi (1204/1789 – 1243/1830) an official Ottoman historian and a Nakşi *shaykh*, openly shows the Ottoman view of the Bektaşi *tariqah* of the nineteenth century. This book is a firsthand historical work that describes the dissolution of the Janissary army and the events that followed. It describes ‘the dispose of the Bektaşis that were under the form of *zindik* (profane), *mulhid* (apostate) and refine [expulsion] of deviant groups from the Muslim lands.’ According to his description of the Bektaşis, they are not firm followers of the Islamic law as they disregard the daily prayer, fasting, and ignore the ban on alcohol and defame the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs. That is why he viewed them as *ghulat* and *rafidi* and distinguished them from the personality of Hacı Bektaş. Another work written by the late nineteenth century that defames the Bektaşi order is *Kaşifü’l-Esrar ve Dafiü’l-Eşrar* by Ishak Efendi (d. 1892), a scholar trained in math, science and literature. The book was written to criticize the well-known book of Fazlullah, the founder of Hurufism. *Cavidan* was regarded to be a sacred book by the Hurufis. The book of Ishak Efendi intends to defame Bektaşism by relating it to Hurufism. *Tezkiye-i ahl al-bayr* is another book of

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53 Karamustafa also states that this book is the re-written version of the *Manaqib* of Vahidi.
54 Esad Efendi. *Uss-i Zafer*. (İstanbul: Süleyman Efendi Matbaası, 1830). (Ottoman)
56 Esad Efendi, *Uss-i Zafer*, 213-216.
Ishak Efendi that was actually written in 1295/1878 to negate the *Hüsnîye* which aimed to substantiate Shi`ite thoughts as opposed to Sunnis.

On the other side, some Bektaşi scholars wrote to dispose of the defamation directed to the order. The text of *Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid fî def’î’l-mefâsid* written in 1293/1876 by the historian, writer and accountant, Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, was one of those books written to restore the misleading knowledge about Bektaşi. While this book provides information on the matter of Sufism and tariqahs, it stated interest was in introducing the Bektaşi order by explaining the Bektaşi genealogy, methods and customs. It further addresses subjects linked to the Shi`ite creed, such as the *ahl al-bayt*, the Twelve Imams and their date of birth and death, and the Karbala tragedy.

By the early twentieth century, research on the Bektaşi order had dramatically increased. The writings of Hasluck, Jacob, and Birge appear to have been the earliest leading contemporary works that contributed to the progress of Bektaşi studies. Birge’s book has been viewed as the best introductory book on Bektaşi. This was because he discussed the Bektaşi from a wide perspective and included details of their beginning and subsequent history from the time of the Seljuks until the present day. He includes the poems of some of well-known Bektaşi babas and also deals with the beliefs, rituals, and philosophy of the Bektaşi order. Hasluck’s book is important because of its analysis of the

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59 Detailed information on *Hüsnîye* has been given in chapter two.
61 Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, *Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid fî Def’î’l-mefâsid*. (İstanbul: 1876).
geographical distribution of the Bektaşis and for its comparison of the Christian sacred places with that of the Bektaşis. Hasluck also provides information about the influence of the Bektaşi order, whose teachings reached the people of Albania, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Bosnia, Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and elsewhere. Jacob in his work of *Die Bektaschijje* investigated the relationship of the Bektaşi doctrine with some other religious creeds like those of Christiainity, Shi’ism and paganism. The common feature observed in the writings of all three scholars’ is that they paid special attention in recognizing Christian elements in the Bektaşi doctrines and practices.

On the other side, Mehmed Fuat Köprülü did not regard the Christian sentiments in the development of the Bektaşi order to be significant. For the very reason, the works of Köprülü explicitly set him apart from the aforementioned scholars. As Köprülü, however, the works of Mélikoff also do not relate the Bektaşi teaching with Christianity. Both of these scholars’ writings are also important for the reason that they sought a possible connection between the Bektaşis and the Alevi/Kızılbaş. With the works of Köprülü and Mélikoff, there has appeared an apparent interest in studying Bektaşism.

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66 Köprülü, “Bektaşılığın Menşeleri.”

Chapter 1

The Assessment of the Current Scholarship that Links Alevis with either Shi’ism or Sunnism

1.1. Introduction

Alevis represent the most significant minority religious group in Turkey and the Alevi question represents a unique ethnic and religious challenge for the Turkish state. Since the beginning of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Alevis have played a crucial role in the social and political realm. Their religious and socio-political identity has always been intimately intertwined. Beginning in 1970, scholars started showing an interest in studying Alevism, with a particular interest being paid to Alevi religio-political identity shaping political discourse about nationalism and secularism in Turkey. Even though there

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68 While the official number of Alevis has not been resolved, estimates claim they could represent, between 15 to 25 percent of the total population of the Turkish state.

69 Before the nineteenth century, the Alevis were known as the Kızılbaş, which literally means ‘redhead.’
has been scholarly interest in the Alevi religion, there has appeared no detailed text that I know of which explains Alevi beliefs from the ground up and situates them within the current sectarian landscape. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to fill this gap.

My analysis especially aims to examine the views that either consider Alevis as a branch of Sunnism or Shi‘ism. How is Alevism similar to and different from Sunnism and Shi‘ism? To what extent did Shi‘ism influence Alevism? How and when did it begin? Does this influence still exist? How does Alevism fit within the category of Shi‘ism? How do Alevis view Muhammad, Ali, the concept of Imama, the notion of occultation (ghayba) and Karbala? What does Shi‘ism mean to today’s Alevi community? To promote a more sophisticated hermeneutic than used by previous scholars discussing the Alevi belief system, I clarify my own theological, political and religious interests and locate myself as a reflexive scholar who uses both the insider and outsider lenses.

By using a comparative study of religion methodology, this project seeks to provide an explanation of the unresolved religious identity of the Alevis through comparing and contrasting the most recent scholarship that either links Alevism with Shi‘ism or Sunnism. Given that, in this chapter, I examine the contemporary works on Alevism to ascertain how and why we might account Alevism apart from Sunni and Shi‘ite Islam.

Specifically, referencing to the works of Franz Babinger, Claude Cahen, Fuad Köprülü, Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı, Irène Mélikoff, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Cemal Kafadar, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, Karin Vorhoff, Kathryn Babayan, and Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, I argue that Alevi Islam must then be conceived of as a question of continuum and change within the sectarian inquiry. Further, I propose that through associating Alevi religiosity
either with Sunnism or Shi`ism, current researches on Alevism has demonstrated a sectarian bias. Hence, I propose to explore Alevism outside of the Shi`ite-Sunni discourses. I will argue that today’s Alevis in Turkey are varied and cannot easily be categorized on either side. I propose that Alevi socio-cultural structures, rituals, and ceremonies are quite different from those of both Sunnis and Shi`ites, even though some rituals are conflated. Unlike the more uniform Sunni and Shi`ite practices, Alevi religious beliefs and rituals (even among people living in the same village or neighborhood) differ from one another. Further, I will allege that while the majority Alevi communities acknowledge themselves as Muslim, they would prefer to be viewed apart from the Sunni and Shi`ite majority. So here I will seek to investigate the question of whether Alevism was formed as a branch of Sunni and Shi`ite Islam or in some other way.

Therefore, my main questions center on the dispute over the identification and classification of Alevi Islam as somehow Shi`i, despite their differences in the central religious beliefs. Why is it challenging to accept that Islam is more than Sunnism and Shi`ism? Why does every new religious movement within Islam have to be part of either of the two? How can we talk about religious pluralism in Islam if we associate every religious group with either Sunnism or Shi`ism?

1.2. History: From Kızılbaş Movement to Alevi Belief

The rise of the Kızılbaş movement is intimately tied to the Safavid dynasty, which had its roots in the lineage of Firuz Shah, a Kurd from Sinjar. Firuz Shah is the ancestor of Shaykh Safi al-Din (1252 – 1334), the founder of the Ardabil lodge from which the Safavid dynasty originated. After Shaykh Safi al-Din passed away, the Ardabil lodge was led by
his son Sadr ad-Din (1334 – 1392), and then by Shaykh Hoca Ali (d. 1429). During his rule, Timur supported the Safavid dynasty by giving it Aradabil, which became the homeland of the Safavids. From the time of Shaykh Safi al-Din until the presence of Hoca Ali, the Ardabil lodge was known for its Shafi’i-Sunni religious stance.

The political and religious agitation had initially begun during the rule of Hoca Ali and grew stronger when Shaykh Jafar, the brother of Ibrahim (832/1429 – 850/1447) — the fourth ruler of the order — overtook the governance of the order instead of Junaid (d. 864/1460), the son of Ibrahim. Junaid (850/1447 – 864/1460) struggled against his uncle Shaykh Jafar to be the legitimate shaykh of the Safavid tariqa (order), but could not manage to take it over. With the support of Cihanşah (839/1436 – 871/1467), the Kara-Koyunlu ruler, Shaykh Jafar stayed as the ruler.70 As a result of this failure, Junaid left Ardabil and settled in Anatolia where he declared his sheikhdom and the number of his disciples gradually increased.71 Instead of Jafar, the Safavid order maintained its religious and political position through Junaid. The religious tendency of the Safavid dynasty, by the way of Junady’s link with the Turkish tribes, gradually transformed from a uniformed Shafi’i-Sunni line into an amorphous Sufi discipline, whose main concern was to establish

70 The Safavids separated into two parts. The branch, which Shaykh Jafar ruled, protected its Sunni characteristic, blended with Bayramiyya tariqa, established through the teachings of Hacı Bayram Veli (1353–1430). Bayramiyya tariqa established a good relationship with the Ottomans unlike the other branch of the Safavid, which was driven from Shaykh Junaid. For this information, see; Bilal Dedeyev. “Safevi Tarikatı ve Osmanlı Devleti İlişkileri,” Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi 5, (Kasım 2008), (264-266), 216; Ahmet Akgündüz and Said Öztürk. 700. Yılında Bilinmeyen Osmanlı. (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1999), 70. For further explanation regarding the Bayramiyya tariqa, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocaş. Osmanlı Toplumunda Zindiklar ve Mulhidler 15.-17. Yüzyıllar, (İstanbul; Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998); F. Betul Yavuz. The Making of a Sufi Order between Heresy and Legitimacy: Bayrami: Malamis in the Ottoman Empire. (Rice University, 2013), (Un-published PhD. Thesis).
a powerful order rather than to sustain the religious thoughts of its ancestors. Therefore, this research argues that the Safavid order underwent a type of religious transformation on the ground of Junaid’s political pursuit in Anatolia.

Junaid’s connection of himself to Ali and claim of divinity and of sayyid-hood (coming from the family of Muhammad) was the first stage made to attract Turkish tribes and clans who were not firmly attached to mainstream Sunni Islam. The declaration of himself as a sayyid was a smart move that inherently redounded to Junaid’s perennial charisma. Actually, as pointed out by Ahmed Azfar Moin, claiming sayyid-hood was a popular move in a number of Sufi orders, particularly during the post-Mongol Iran. “It is plausible that the rise of the popular Sufi orders in post-Mongol Iran and Transoxania and their absorption of Ismaili ideas on the spiritual primacy of Ali had something to do with it. Indeed, nearly all the Sufi families in this period traced their descent from Ali and through him to the Prophet Muhammad. Ali was revered in this period as the first saint (wali) of Islam. His descendants, the sayyids, were akin to a caste-like status group that, carried within its blood a permanent charisma. Sayyids were the preferred choice for religious office and Sufi rituals.” With the position of sayyid-hood, the Safavid order was naturally associated with Shi`ism. However, until the presence of Shah Ismail, the grandson of Junaid, the order did not claim to be Shi`ite in spite of substantial Alid loyalty.

The sayyid-hood move led Junaid to reach out to more followers within the Anatolian Oghuz Turkmen, who in the later period were named the Kızılbaş. By the

nineteenth century the Kızılbaş began to be called Alevis. They played the most vital role in the establishment of the Shi’ite Safavid empire as they eventually became the militant supporters of the order. Junaid propagated his beliefs in various areas of Anatolia until he sought refuge under the sultanate of the Ak-Koyunlu. The Ottoman Sultan, Murat II, did not approve his activities and made him leave Anatolia. During his fight in Trebizond Rum lands, Junaid met Uzun Hasan, the ruler of the Ak-Koyunlu, Junaid strengthened his power by marrying the sister of Uzun Hasan, but was later killed in the Shirvan fight.

After Junaid passed away, his younger (one-year-old) son Haidar became his successor. This was because Haidar was born from the sister of the Ak-Koyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan. Haidar maintained his father’s military activities and increased the number of followers in Anatolia. Haidar was both a religious and military leader of the order. He armed his disciples and designed a red hat named “Haydari taç.” Haidar also began using a seal in the form of a tughra (sultan's signature) like Sultans. All of these represent that Haidar pursued his father’s goal to establish a free state. Because of his independent behavior, Yaqub perceived him as a threat. Bayazit II supported Yaqub against Haidar, and

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73 There appears no argumentative opinion on the transformation of the Kızılbaş to Alevi. So far I have only seen a journal composed in 1927 that regards Alevism as a branch of Kızılbaşism not the other way around. According to which, Kızılbaşism has been divided into seven different branches: Batiniyye, Ismailiyye, Babekiyye, Shiyye, Karmatiyye and Aleviyye. This journal does not seem to have a solid explanation in terms of the alleged branches of Kızılbaşism. Enver Behnan. “Kızılbaşlık: Esrarı Nedir?” Büyük Gazete, no. 20/33, (İstanbul: 1927).


75 Dedeyev, “Safevi Tarikatı ve Osmanlı Devleti İlişkileri,” 212.

76 Sümer, Safevi Devletinin Kuruluş ve Gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin Rolü, 1-4.


Haidar was killed while fighting in the Caucasus. Right after this, Yaqup imprisoned Haidar’s sons in a distance state. The son Ismail, who was able to escape from the prison with the help of the disciples, pursued his father’s religio-political motives.

Ismail was the sixth hereditary successor to the prominent Sufi master Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili. Ismail had been historically pictured as a Shi’i Muslim of a particularly extreme heterodox form because of his mystagogical and messianic appearance. In his poetry, Ismail glorifies Ali, *ahl al-bayt* (Family of Prophet Muhammad’s House), and he even identifies himself as the *pir* (spiritual guide) of the Twelve Imams. Additionally, he possessed a significant political lineage, as his matrilineal descent attached to the Ak-Koyunlu, a powerful dynasty in Iran and eastern Anatolia. Although he benefited from being related to the Ak-Koyunlu in that he was able to consolidate the sultanate under his rule, his relationship with the Ak-Koyunlu had never been peaceful. Like his ancestors, Haidar and Junaid, Ismail’s political and spiritual authority was intimately intertwined. However, unlike them, he announced a uniformed sect of Shi`ism as the official religion of Safavid Iran. The dominantly Sunni populated Iran was gradually forced to convert to an authoritative Shi’ite belief.

When Twelver Shi`ism was declared as the official religion of Iran, the following steps were taken by Shah Ismail to hasten its acceptability among the dominant Iranian Sunni population: the expression of “*ashhadu anna Aliyyan waliyyullah*” [I bear witness that ‘Ali is *Wali* of Allah’] was added to the *azan* (the Muslim call to prayer), the *khutbahs*...

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79 Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*, 67, One of the claims is that Haidar was a Shi’ite leader to some degree, even though he was raised in a Sunni court.

80 The Safavid ruled in Iran from 1501 to 1722.
(religious sermons) were read in the name of the Twelve Imams, and the phrase “la ilaha illallah muhammedan rasulullah wa Ali waliyyullah” was written on the coins.\textsuperscript{81} Irrespective of these modifications, Shi`ism could not become an efficient religion during the early stage of the Shah Ismail’s governance (906/1501 – 963/1556). There was neither Imami jurisprudence books in existence nor authorized Shi`ite jurisprudence. Instead of Jafari/Shi`ite law, Sufi way of thinking was dominant in the practice of faith.

By the time of Shah Tahmasp, the son of Shah Ismail, the transformation from a radical Sufi application of belief to an institutionalized Imami Shi`ite system was fully ensued. Hence, Shi`i jurisprudence became an essential element of the Shi`ite colored Safavid state in consolidating the legitimacy of the Shah’s verdict.\textsuperscript{82} The Ottoman method was adopted by leaving religious matters to the Shi`ite ulama, while the secular subjects were controlled by the Shah. In this way, the extreme religious role associated with the Shah lost its power over his Kızılbaş followers. The Kızılbaş were not pleased with the authority of the official ulama (scholars who trained in Islam) and sharia law. Therefore, to maintain a healthy relationship, the ulema had to subdue the religiosity of the Kızılbaş. This necessitated their maintaining a common ground with the qhulat spirit of the Kızılbaş by providing religious understanding suitable to the flavor of the Kızılbaş.\textsuperscript{83} This had the effect of weakening both the political and the religious bond that existed between the two.


\textsuperscript{82} Ali Akhzari, and Ali Akbar Kajbaf. “Structure and Social System of the Clergy in Safavid Era,” \textit{Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business}, volume, 4, no. 11, (March 2013), (216-223), 216-218. However the primary role of the religious jurisprudents was to support the Sultan’s political power, across time, the religious authority of the jurisprudents had precluded the Sultan’s power.

\textsuperscript{83} Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis,” 140-143.
The Kızılbaş began to rebel even against their beloved Shah. The conflict and chaos that ensued proceeded until the time of Shah Abbas I. Although the Kızılbaş adopted Alid loyalty due to the intervention and influence of the Safavids, it seems that recognition of an institutionalized religious system did not please them. Given that, this chapter argues that the political and religious separation of the Kızılbaş from the Safavid was one of the primary causes, if not the main one, in the transformation of the Kızılbaş movement into an idiosyncratic and self-reliant religious group; the Alevi.

1.3. The Proposed Theories on Alevi Belief

Past scholarly research on the Alevi religious identity has demonstrated a clear unacknowledged sectarian, nationalist or secular bias. Scholars writing from the secularist, Kemalist, Marxist, conservative Sunni, Turkish and Kurdish Alevi standpoints have attempted to reclaim Alevism and impose their own definitions upon it. That is primarily why, even today, Alevi religious identity appears unclear, mysterious and exotic. The approaches taken by those scholars remind me of the theory of Bruce Lincoln. In his work *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship*, Lincoln puts forward “Is not scholarship just another instance of ideology in narrative form? Do not scholars tell stories to recalibrate a pecking order, putting themselves, their favorite theories, and their favorite people on top?” In many studies on Alevism, ideology has become a part of the research, but not the whole. Alevism has been weaponized in order to support and empower a

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84 Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis,” 140-143.
particular ideology. Scholars insist on defining Alevism in a particular way based on their own personal background or leanings. Due to the problems which the ideological approach of the scholars has created, this chapter argues that Alevism has been weaponized throughout the Alevi-Bektaşi literature to consolidate a religious or a political system.

Under the influence of such political, national or religious tendency, different approaches proposed on the nature of Alevism. For some Alevism is not even a religious phenomenon, but simply a philosophical nascence. A number of scholars including some Alevis regarded Alevism outside of Islamic parameters. To them, Alevism is a lifestyle — it is not a religious entity but a cultural formation. For them, the tie between Islam and Alevism is too weak. So Alevism cannot be attached to Islam. Two well-known Alevi writers, Nejat Birdoğan and Lütfi Kaleli, promote the idea that Alevism is an un-Islamic movement. Another Alevi scholar, Cemşid Berder, asserts that Alevism is a continuation of Zoroastrianism. On the other side, there appeared a good number of Alevi scholars and politicians including Rıza Zelyut, Reha Çamuroğlu, Bedri Noyan Dedebaba, Fuat Bozkurt, and Belkis Temren and Uğur Sümer, who objects this thought and pursue to prove the opposite.

A nationalist approach has become quite visible in the Alevi literature. Even Turkish and Kurdish Alevi researchers purport different hypotheses regarding the root of

Alevism. The central claim of the Kurdish Alevi scholars is that Alevism was born out of Zoroastrianism. Further, Marxist scholars like Ismail Kaygusuz claim that Alevism was developed throughout the contribution of Marxism and Communism. On the other hand, Turkish Alevi writers have argued for a syncretic basis for the Alevi religion, according to which Alevism was formed relying on the primitive Turkish cultures and religions. At this juncture, shamanism has become the central focus. This thesis has been supported by many scholars since the writing of Fuat Köprülü. Moreover, some scholars state that not only Alevism, but also Bektaşism has carried shamanist tenets. They pointed out that Bektaşhis, Alevis and shamans are somehow connected with one another because there appears some shared common features. For example, in three of them, unveiled women are involved in worship. Music and dance (sema) is the essential part of their rituals. The belief that a charismatic leader who can show miracles is shared by all three of them. Scholars who advocate the shamanism thesis as the origin of Alevi religion rely on the works of Wilhelm Radloff and Mircea Eliade. Ocak criticizes those scholars who claim that shamanism is the origin of Alevism. He stated that these scholars are in fact mistaken in their understanding of Turkish primitive religion. According to him, shamanism is not the earliest religion of the Turks, but the belief in a sky god is.

Furthermore, an intra-sectarian dispute has emerged with regard to the nature of Alevi belief. Some scholars, particularly Westerners, hold onto the idea that Alevism is a branch of Shi’ism without questioning the sectarian identification of the Alevi community.

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88 For detailed information, see Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes.
as how do they acknowledge their religious identity. On the other side, some Sunni writers have struggled to prove that Alevism is closely attached to Sunnism. Some even stated that Alevism is a Turkish form of Sunnism. Alevi dedes (religious leaders similar to imams) also put forward multiple thoughts regarding the Alevi religion; however, they are mostly in agreement with the idea that Alevism is an indigenous Turkish interpretation of Islam. In conjunction with this view, this chapter aims to initiate an argument, according to which, the proposed theory of relating Alevi belief to the pre-Islamic Turkish traditions is also a way to distance Alevi Islam from Shi’ism and naturally neighboring it with Sunni Islam which is the dominant religion pursued by the mainstream Turkish population.

1.4. Nationalization or Sunnitization: the Phenomena of Heterodoxy, Orthodoxy and Metadoxy

Beginning with the works of Fuad Köprülü, a Turkish historian and politician, scholars started using a new term, “heterodox Islam,” as opposed to orthodox Sunni Islam. For those scholars, while Sunni Islam represents an orthodox form of Islam, which is the institutionalized form of a religion, heterodox Islam shows up outside of the institutionalized forms in a religion that is simply an un-mosqued Islamic form that to some extent is tied to the ancient Turkish religion and tradition. In another words, when the Turks adopted Islam, they did not abandon their pre-Islamic traditions, rituals, and doctrines, such

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as their belief in the presence of the sky god (*gök tanrı*) but replaced them with the dogma of Ali.\textsuperscript{91} Therefore, when Islamic teaching was blended with pre-Islamic religions, there appeared a new form of Islam: “heterodox Islam.”\textsuperscript{92}

Köprülü’s approach was adopted by Irène Mélikoff (1917 – 2009), the French Turkologist. She defined the heterodox Islam as an intense mystical combination of pre-Islamic elements of Central Asia including Christianity, Manicheanism, Buddhism, and especially Shamanism, were clustered.\textsuperscript{93} Since it reflects a complex mixture of various religious tenets, it is a syncretic form of Islam.\textsuperscript{94} And then this approach was taken by A. Yaşar Ocak, a Turkish historian, as he points out three major characteristics of heterodox Islam that distinguish it from Sunni Islam. The first is the political dimension: In Turkish history, Sunni Islam has been chosen as a formal religious sect (*mazhab*) of the state; however, heterodox Islam represents the ideology of a group of people who are not part of the state bureaucracy. In other words, heterodox Islam exists in opposition to the state religion. The second is the social dimension: overall, Sunni Islam is the religious preference of the settled people while heterodox Islam constitutes the beliefs of nomads. The third and last is the theological dimension: Sunni Islam has been developed systematically and written down; whereas heterodox Islam is non-systematic and includes non-Islamic myths and doctrines. Basically the heterodox Islam represents an intense mystical composition,

\textsuperscript{91} Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia*, 6, footnote 25.
\textsuperscript{92} Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, foreword-xvi.
\textsuperscript{93} Unveiled women are participants of the central rituals. Ritual dance (namely *sema* in terms of Alevi belief) in company with religious hymn is the essential part of a religious ceremony. Saints are believed to perform miracles.
\textsuperscript{94} Mélikoff, *Üyur Idik Uyardilar*, 25.
which includes pre-Islamic elements, which is mixed with various other religious doctrines.\(^95\)

According to this theory, Alevism and Bektaşism are the only two forms of heterodox Islam, which carries an idiosyncratic belief of Islam that is solely peculiar to Turks.\(^96\) At this point, I propose that the phrase “heterodox Islam” was originated in order to assimilate Alevi to the Turkish nation. The fact that the saying of “heterodox Islam” was represented as a form of Turkish Islam endorses my argument. “Heterodox Islam” has not been represented as a different religion from Islam or a new kind of sect (mazhab), but was described as a popular Turkish Islam [Türk Halk İslami]. This Islamic form is unique to Turks with its non-traditional, non-costumed and un-mosqued characteristics. It is unlikely to claim that people deserted all other pre-Islamic traditions and embraced Islam when Islam expanded around the world. Hence, it is probable to say that every culture approached Islam differently and remolded it with their pre-Islamic rituals. Even if there are some established rules, the religious ceremonies and rituals differ from one culture to another all around the Islamic world. When we consider the range of Islamic countries, there appear everywhere a variety of traditional cultural doctrines which have been combined with Islam, but we do not see them described as “Arab Islam,” “Persian Islam,” “Hindu Islam,” “African Islam,” etc., In the eyes of Turkish scholars, pure Turkish Islam is considered to be Alevism. I argue here that the position held by Köprülü, Mélikoff and Ocak, was also promoted by the Turkish state that situated Alevis in line with the Turkish

national identity, conceiving of Alevi as integral to the Turkish nation, and associating their religiosity with Sunni Islam.\footnote{For further information of how the Turkish State has attempted to assimilate Alevi Islam into Sunni Islam, see Dressler, Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam, xiv.}

Heterodox Islam possesses a messianic character and centers on a charismatic and divine leader. While the identification and classification of heterodox Islam is quite similar to Sufism, scholars do not discuss it under the rubric of Sufism. Ocak states that there exist two forms of Sufism in Turkey: orthodox Turkish Sufism and heterodox Turkish Sufism; however, he does not further explain the social, theological, and political characteristics of heterodox Sufism. In this regard, here my question centers on the dispute over the identification and classification of heterodox Islam as somehow different from Sufism, in spite of their similar characteristics. How is heterodox Sufism different from orthodox Sufism? How can we identify orthodox Sufism? To what extent it is different from heterodox Sufism?

Here I also propose that the phrase “popular Turkish Islam” has been promoted for ideological reasons to champion Turkey’s nationalization process. At this point, it is important to analyze the historical beginning of the Alevi literature. Alevi literature has dramatically increased with the formation of the Turkish Republic. Since then, scholarship has been produced to support Turkish nationalism against Ottomanism and Islamism. Some scholars, including Ziya Gökalp, who is known as the father of Turkish sociology, asserted that there has to be a form of Islam which is purified from Arab and Persian influence and merely peculiar to Turks. I seek to substantiate that such an approach (Turkifying Islam)
parallels the attempt of Turkifying the Turkish language through eliminating Arabic and Persian words, and promotes essentially the same aim. However, Turkifying Alevism began with a political concern, not with a sectarian one, this chapter claims that nationalization of Alevi Islam was a political intentional move to distance Alevi Islam from any kind of Shi`ite populated Iran influences. Given the account of Köprülü, according to which, ‘some Shi`ite beliefs were accepted by Turks in the place of old primitive Turkish culture’, this seems unlikely but a possibility to teeing the origin of Alevi Islam with Shi`ism. But as I argue here that it rather paves the way for informing Turkish originality of Alevi Islam. Hence, the nationalization of Alevism played a vital role in its divergence from Shi`ism.

**Critics of Heterodoxy and Orthodoxy**

Köprülü’s formulation of ‘heterodox’ Islam in describing the nonconformist nature of Alevi Islam, has ever since become the view of predominante scholarship. Although the majority of the following scholarships have rooted for it, a number of outstanding scholars, like Kafadar, Karamustafa, Karakaya-Stump, Yıldırım, studying the early Sufi movements in Anatolia and Islamization of Anatolia, categorically criticized this theory.

Ahmet Karamustafa has developed an alternative theory counter to Köprülü’s sharp description of the Islamization of Anatolia, according to which Anatolian Turkish religiosity developed as a continuum of the pre-Islamic cultural and religious dogmas of the Turks that lived in Central Asia. Köprülü’s view has been criticized due to its
inadequacy to perceive the activeness of the religious lives of local Anatolians. Rather, Karamustafa offered the new notion of ‘vernacular Islam’ to explain the religious atmosphere for the local Turkish speakers in Anatolia. The term ‘vernacular’ was associated with dervish piety, which while probably not the main source, was certainly an essential one in the formation of the religious belief and rites of vernacular Turkish speakers. The historical records links dervish piety with Abdals of Rum of which, unlike other dervish groups, such as the Qalandars, Haydaris, Jamis and the Shams-i Tabrizis, privileged Turkish over Persian in its exercise of religious rites. The Abdals of Rum, Turkish-speaking dervishes, who were considered as one of the dominant deviant renouncers in the Ottoman lands at the turn of the tenth/sixteenth century, provide us with the perfect example representing dervish piety.

Ascetic dervishes were not all illiterate men coming from the lower classes as Köprüülü stated. The presence of poets, scholars, and writers of certain proficiency shows that Sufi dervishes were composed of various social groups, not only from the lower rank but also from both the middle and high strata. Ascetic dervishes renunciation must not be simply labeled as popular Islam. Neither can it be defined as the continuum of the pre-Islamic Turkish belief patterns, despite their resemblance. This new deviant renunciation had its own social and political agenda. It was not formed to reform the society. Instead it, as proposed by Karamustafa, completely rejected the social forms and structures due to the

100 Karamustafa, God's Unruly Friends, 10.
101 Karamustafa, God's Unruly Friends, 11.
society’s failure to find God. “They did not aim to replace the existing social order by a rival one, nor did they seek to reform society; they simply negated all cultural norms and structures. The negative, reactive nature of renunciation manifested itself in the form of blatant social deviance, which became the hallmark of dervish piety. In order to implement their anarchist agenda, the dervishes adopted numerous deviant practices.”

Abdal piety, as ‘provincial’ and ‘latitudinarian’ religious discourse, according to Karamustafa’s account, emerged as a rural vernacular reaction to the institutionalized social norms that are ‘metropolitan’ and ‘authoritarian.’ Here Karamustafa particularly refers to the writings of Kaygusuz Abdal in description of abdals piety. Relying on the works of Kaygusuz Abdal, Karamustafa states that Sufism is the primary source that nourished the abdals religiosity. The abdals see themselves as the ‘true’ Muslims in defiance of traditional, authoritarian, metropolitan, learned, and sharia centered Islam. “The abdals, by contrast, sided with the Turkish speaking rural masses and chose to ‘blend in’ with regular people by avoiding special dress, urban speaking and sharia-based recipes for social conduct and ritual. Their vernacular latitudinarian form of Islam, through it had its roots thoroughly imbedded in Sufism, was set up in complete opposition to the ‘fraudulent’ Islam of urbanite Sufis.”

Not only did abdal piety refashion the vernacular Turkish speakers’ religious tendency from the early twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century in Anatolia, but its

102 Karamustafa, God's Unruly Friends, 13.
anomalous features — formed outside of learned traditions and *sharia* based religious creed — played a central role in the birth and development of what is today called the Alevi-Bektaşi tradition. Hence unlike many other scholars, Karamustafa traces the history of the birth of the Alevi belief back to the beginning of the twelfth century when the Islamization and Turkification of Anatolia begun. The divinization of the human (in the case of Alevi rite, veneration of Ali) has been the central religious norm of the *abdals* religiosity. This tenant has shaped the religious learning of numerous Turkish nomads.\(^{105}\) However, in his book titled *God’s Unruly Friends*, Karamustafa stated that ‘*abdals* openly professed Shi‘i beliefs, was probably the result of their attempt to negate the dominant Sufi-Sunni alliance within the Ottoman Empire.\(^{106}\) He seems fairly cautious in the way he relates Ali-centered Islam performed by the *abdals* with the Shi‘i practice of it.

Karakaya-Stump also criticizes the well-received view of Köprülü, according to which the pre-Islamic Turkish customs were the most effective factors in the development and formation of the Anatolian Turkish tribe’s religious stance.\(^{107}\) As for that, pre-Islamic Turkish religions underwent a transformation by the Turkmen tribes of Anatolia from Central Asia to Anatolia. Such claim paved the way in fashioning the nationalistic approach in description of Alevi-Bektaşi tradition as if it was the pure representative of Turkish folk Islam, also defined as ‘heterodox’ Islam. This view naturally links the origin of Alevi belief to the Central Asian Yesevi tradition. This is where Karakaya-Stump comes to the forefront

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\(^{106}\) Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, 95.

and offers an alternative origin, the Iraqi-born Vefa’i order, for Alevism/Kızılbaşism. This theory turns upside-down the nationalistic formulation that treats the Alevi-Bektashi tradition as sole representative of Turkish folk Islam. However, due to the absence of sources that mention the Vefa’i presence in Anatolia before the late fifteenth century, she is unable to be definitive if the Vefa’i order was efficient in the early formation of the Alevi/Kızılbaş movement. The information on the existence and activities of the Vefa’i order is missing in the well known Ottoman chronicles with some exceptions. Aşık Paşazade mentions the Baba Ilyas’s Vefa’i connection. According to which, Baba Ilyas was one of the disciples of Tacu’l-Arifin Sayyid Ebu’l-Vefa (d. 500/1107). Therefore, the recent works have begun to relate Baba Ilyas and his religious principles with the Vefa’i teaching. Further, although she cites three Vefa’i ijazas (certificate) dated 905/1499, 855/1451 and 990/1582, the information provided by them are insufficient to claim a Vefa’i origin for the Alevi/Kızılbaş religion. Unless there exist newly discovered Vefa’i documents that provide further information on the link between the order and Alevi/Kızılbaş, we could merely and respectfully mention individual links between the Alevi/Kızılbaş dedes and the Vefa’i order.

Cemal Kafadar must be mentioned here as one of the leading scholars who rejected Köprülü’s thesis and offered an alternative theory. He questions the representation of Sunni Islam as orthodoxy with its institutionalized form of a religion and Shi’ite Islam with

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heterodoxy that shows up outside of the institutionalized forms.\textsuperscript{111} Possibly inspired by Claude Cahen as he emphasizes the absence of a strict Sunni-Shi`ite dichotomy in medieval Anatolia, Cemal Kafadar also argues that before the appearance of the Safavids in the sixteenth century, there was no sectarian controversy in Anatolia as the recent scholarship claimed. “Sectarianism was meaningless or pragmatically undesirable until the sixteenth century.”\textsuperscript{112} He criticized the practice of categorically ascribing Shi`ism to the Baba`is and all sort of other dervish groups though adopting the revisionist view that regards the Baba`is as Sunni.\textsuperscript{113} Anatolia, according to Kafadar, was more or less subjected to Shi`ism from the sixteenth century. “The religious picture of Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries appears much more complex than the neat categorizations of a simple Sunni/Shi`i dichotomy would allow.”\textsuperscript{114}

Contrary to the theory of heterodoxy and orthodoxy, Kafadar suggests to conceptualize a new term “metadoxy — a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naive and not being doxy-minded” — for the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries in which the content of the terms orthodoxy and heterodoxy were not yet established in Anatolia.\textsuperscript{115} The formulation of ‘metadoxy’ has been adopted or respected by the latter scholarship like Karakaya-Stump and Yıldırım. Yıldırım while criticizing Köprülü’s twofold approach on the conceptualization of Alevism and Shi`ism

\textsuperscript{111} The modern scholarship with the influence of Köprülü characterized Sunni Islam with orthodoxy and Shi`ism with heterodoxy.
\textsuperscript{112} Kafadar, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 74-75.
\textsuperscript{113} The information Baba Ilyas’s son was named as Umar and he had a disciple named as Uthman is presented as proof of Baba`is pro-Sunni position since a Shi`i cannot be expected to honor these names. See Kafadar, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 74-75-76.
\textsuperscript{114} Kafadar, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 75–76.
\textsuperscript{115} Kafadar, \textit{Between Two Worlds}, 76.
as ‘heterodoxy’ and Sunnism as ‘orthodoxy,’ states that the religious environment of thirteenth and fourteenth century Anatolia exposed a heterogeneous setting of religiosities. Hence it cannot be divided as merely heterodox on the one side and orthodox on the other side.\textsuperscript{116}

To a certain extent this dissertation is in an agreement with the proposed critics in relating ‘heterodoxy’ with Shi`ism, and ‘orthodoxy’ with Sunnism. I argue here that any act or sign of belief which remains outside of Sunnism does not necessarily mean the beliefs Shi`i. Baba`is cannot be labeled as Shi`ite just because the Baba`is differed in their religious understanding from the Sunni Islam. The formulation of the notions heterodoxy and orthodoxy along the sectarian disputes as Sunni and Shi`ite Islam initiates the problems. Hence when some particular item of faith is considered as heterodoxy, then automatically it is regarded as Shi`i.

I have also come to believe that as proposed by Cahen and then supported by Kafadar, from the eleventh to the fifteenth century of Anatolia, the Sunni and Shi`ite boundaries were not categorically determined yet. However, unlike them, and bearing some of the historical records of the early Ottoman in mind, it can be argued that the early stage of the Ottoman state was not entirely free of ‘doxies.’ While Sunni Islam was dominant all over the Ottoman realms (from the vulgar to the elite, from the uneducated to the well-trained, from the first layer of the state officials to the Sultan), the term non-Sunni had been used as opposed to Sunni Islam until Shi`ism had gained power in the sixteenth century with its recognition as the official religion of Safavid Iran. In the Ottoman records,

\footnote{Yıldırım, \textit{Sunni Orthodox vs Shi`ite Heterodox?}, 290.}
the religious groups who were antagonistic to the Ottoman state’s policy and religious tendency have been called ‘Rafidi.’ In other words, non-Sunni religious groups including the Qalandars are labeled as Rafidis.\textsuperscript{117}

The usage of the notion ‘rafidi’ by Ibn Battuta in his famous work \textit{Rihla}, is the best example to represent the presence of doxy-minded Anatolians of the fourteenth century Ottoman state. According to the account of \textit{Rihla}, Sunnism was widespread in all Anatolia: “all the people of this land belong to the school of Imam Abu Hanifa and are firmly attached to the Sunna — there is not a Qadiri, nor a Rafidi, nor a Mu’tazili, nor a Khariji, nor any innovator amongst them.”\textsuperscript{118} He then makes mention of an anecdote that proves that people were aware of Sunni and non-Sunni practices of Islam. According to this anecdote, “the people of Sinop were suspicious about Ibn Battuta and the people with him as being Rafidi. To verify their religious leaning, they asked them to eat rabbit meat. Ibn Battuta and people who travel with him slaughtered the rabbit and ate it. Thereby, the doubt about them being Rafidi vanished.”\textsuperscript{119} The usage of the term ‘rafidi’ has further been analyzed in chapter three.

\textsuperscript{117} Mehmet Zeki Pakalın. \textit{Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü}. III/2, Volume 3, (Istanbul 1993). The Qalandars are also regarded to be exterem Shi’ite by some of the modern scholarships. For this information, see John Robert Barnes. “The Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire,” (33-49) in \textit{The Dervish lodge: architecture, art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey} by Raymond Lifchez. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).


1.5. Recognition of the Shi`ite Sentiments in Anatolia: Before and After the Safavid Influence

**Before the Safavids**

Although the majority of current scholarly research acknowledges some Shi`ite elements appear in the Alevi belief system — unlike Babinger, F. Hasluck and Gökalp who recognize Alevis as a Shi`ite community — scholars are actively puzzling over just how to regard the relationship of Alevism to Shi`ism. There is no consensus among historians regarding the historical roots of Shi`ism as to how and when it penetrated into Anatolia. Some scholars like Babinger, Köprülü, and Mélikoff affiliated the presence of Shi`ism before the Safavids. According to which, the spread of Shi`ite ideas in Anatolia began long before the establishment of the Safavid dynasty in Persia. Others, inspired by Cahen, Ocak, Kafadar, Yıldırım, Babayan state that Sunni and Shi`ite creeds were not rigorously defined before the late fifteenth century. The Safavid dynasty has to be held responsible for the recognized Shi`i elements fit in Anatolia. Hence those elements claimed to be Shi`ite by the latter were in fact Sunni.

*Der Islam in Kleinasien: Neue Wege der Islamforschung* is the first controversial book devoted to the construction of the Shi`ite elements in the early religious history of Anatolia, published in 1922 by Franz Babinger. He commenced a debate on the

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120 Franz Babinger. "Der Islam in Kleinasien. Neue Wege der Islamforschung," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, (1922), 126. *JSTOR Journals*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 13, 2016): 146-147; the Turkish translation of the study was published in Darülfünün Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası (DFEM) in 1922; Gray Leiser shortly summarized the mentioned article in the introduction of Köprülü`s well-cited work “Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion.”
Shi’itization of Anatolia during the reigns of the Seljuks. According to Babinger, the Seljuks met with Shi‘ism during their journey from Transoxiana and Iran to Anatolia. While the Alevi creed was quite prevalent, claimed Babinger, Sunnism was not welcomed in either of the countries. Counter to the common consensus, Babinger claims that the Seljuks did not perform Sunni Islam, but rather embraced the Alevi creed and made it the official religion of the state. Babinger uses the terms Alevism and Shi‘ism interchangeably and probably meant Shi‘ism by the term of Alevi.

The Ottomans, asserted Babinger, became a Sunni state by the time of the emanating of the Safavids at the end of the fifteenth century. By that time, the religious struggle escalated between the Ottoman and the Iranian Sufis. Hence, the Ottomans specified Sunni Islam as the official religion in opposition to the Safavids for whom Shi‘ism was held as the authorized religion. Unlike the common consensus, Babinger traced the Shi‘itization of the Safavid back to the Sufi Shaikh Safi al-Din, who considered being the founder of the order.

The second controversial claim of Babinger is about the ethnicity of the Seljuks. According to which, thus then Iran played the most direct role in the institutionalizing of the Seljuk state. The religious, political and literary life of the Seljuks was developed under the influence of Iran. Therefore, the culture of the Turks, and consequently the Turks themselves, over time, were Iranized. The influence of Iran became even more overpowering during the Ottoman era due to the effort of the Iranian scholars, shaykhs, poets, artisans, and particularly Sufism — that was colored with the Shi‘ite elements. Persian intellectuals have to be held responsible for the expansion of Shi‘ite sentiments in the Ottoman regions. Babinger, therefore, stated that those Shi‘ite tendencies were carried
to Anatolia through the Sufi-Shi`ite admixture that was observed in two of the well-accepted Sufi brotherhoods — the Mevleviyye and the Bektaşiyye.121 With respect to the Sufi-Shi`ite admixture, Karamustafa notes that even though to some extent Sufism and Shi`ism are related to one another, in the formative period from the last decades of the second/eighth to the beginning of the fourth/tenth century, no Shi`ite entity appears among the Sufi ranks. 122

The view that Sufism was one of the key resources, if not the main one, for the involvement of Shi`ism in Anatolia was also presented by Moojan Momen. His approach to the Islamization of Anatolia differs from Babinger’s in that he states the adoption of Sunni Islam, first by the Ghaznavids and then by the Seljuks, caused the decline of Shi`ite domination in Islamdom. Particularly during the era of Nizamü’l-Mulk, the powerful minister of the Seljuk Sultans and a known strong opponent of the Shi`is, there was a great pressure on the Shi`is. For this very reason, the number of Shi`is living under the control of the Seljuks gradually declined until the assassination of Nizamü’l-Mulk in 485/1092. 123 Momen states that the intimidation of Shi`ism by the Seljuks triggered the growth of Sufism. Many Sufi orders during the process of being formed into organized schools, adopted an apparent pro-Shi`ite leaning in their thought and expression. Even some of the Sunni orders like the Kubrawiyya order in Khurasan gradually evolved from Sunnism to

121 Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia, xvi.
123 Moojan Momen. An Introduction to Shi`i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi`ism. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 86-88; (Nizam al-Mulk devoted a long section in his Siyaset-name to the denunciation of the Ismailis, reflexing his anxiety over their growing importance in Persia. For detailed information see: Farhad Daftary, The Isma`ilis, their history and doctrines. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 220.
Shi’ism. Such Shi’ite orientation among the Sunni orders began to expand around Anatolia. The futuwwa orders in Anatolia, whose members were known with the name of akhis, noted Momen, adopted a strong pro-Shi’ite roots in its way of life.\textsuperscript{124}

F. Hasluck, an English archaeologist, followed in Babinger’s footsteps and developed his own argument in which he overemphasizes the influence of Christianity on the Turks’ conversion of Islam. It is even claimed that the heterodox religious practices performed by the Turkmen tribes supposed to have been originally Christian and that later on reemerged in Shi’ite Islam.\textsuperscript{125} For him, Shi’ism serves as a liaison between Christianity, paganism and “Mohammedanism” — that was for Hasluck Sunni Islam.\textsuperscript{126} Probably with the influence of Babinger, he associates the Kızılbaş with Persian nationality.\textsuperscript{127}

Mehmed Fuat Köprülü, the leading Turkish scholar of his generation, wrote Islam in Anatolia in 1922, partly as a response to Babinger.\textsuperscript{128} This work appears to have been the most elaborate work of Köprülü on the emergence, development, and formation of Shi’ism in Anatolia. It unequivocally controverted the two central themes of the Babinger’s work: first, the Turks in Anatolia, particularly the Seljuk sultanate was Alevi; second, the

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\textsuperscript{124} Momen, An Introduction to Shi’i Islam, 96-97; The Ahi Institution in Anatolia served as a well-balanced and productive socio-economic system that activated the resources of the society in the most rational and humanistic way between the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.
\textsuperscript{125} Hasluck, Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans, 125. Hasluck has been criticized owing to a lack of materials on the Turks and Islam in his research. Köprülü, for instance, states that Haslucks predominantly cited from the Western and Christian sources, but not from the classical Turkish and Islamic books. Hence his inferences cannot be dependable completely. See F. Hasluck. Bektasilik İncelemeleri. Translated into Turkish by Ragıp Özdem, (İstanbul: Say yayımları, 2012), 19.
\textsuperscript{126} Hasluck often uses the term Mohammedian to refer to Islam, particularly Sunni Islam. What is quite interesting here is that he does not correlate the term Mohammedian with Shi’ism but associates it solely with Sunnism. I argue that this is one way for him to distinguish Shi’ism from the mainstream Islam owing to its characteristic as it was originated based on multiple religious dogmas.
\textsuperscript{127} Hasluck, Christianity and Islam, 140.
\end{flushright}
culture of Seljuks in Antolia was Iranized. Babinger was particularly criticized due to the laxness of his use of the primary sources for his research. Köprülü especially questioned Babinger’s approach to the region as he solely focused on Anatolia as if it was an independent unit from the surrounding areas. Because the Turks lived in different regions of the Middle East and Central Asia, including Syria, Iraq, Azarbaijan, and Khurasan, these places (particularly the part in which the Oghuz Turkmen lived), according to Köprülü, should be studied all together. To fully grasp the early history of Turks in Anatolia, it is indispensable to study the journey of the Oghuz Turks before they settled in Anatolia. Since Babinger’s work, according to Köprülü, lacks in analyzing the local and foreign elements blended in the culture and tradition of the Turks of Anatolia, Babinger was unable to fully comprehend the historical context of the region in which Islam was evolved.\textsuperscript{129}

A completely counter-assertion was proposed by Köprülü regarding the religious orientation of the early Seljuks. The Seljuk rulers, with the exception of Sultan Sanjar, were enthusiastic and passionate in defending Sunnism, particularly Hanafism. Two important Seljuk rulers, Toghril Beg and Alp-Arslan, became prominent on their effort to defend Sunnism and to restrain the spread of the heretical Shi’ite–Ismaili ideas.\textsuperscript{130} According to Köprülü, the claim that the Seljuks were Shi’ite cannot be historically proven.

Although the Seljuks embraced Sunni Islam, some Shi’ite currents were observed during the Seljuks reigns. Köprülü specifies several causes of the expansion of Shi’ite

\textsuperscript{129} Köprülü, \textit{Islam in Anatolia}, 1-5.
\textsuperscript{130} Köprülü, \textit{Islam in Anatolia}, 6-8. The political and religious influence of the Fatimid caliphs was destroyed by Alp-Arslan. Not only Anatolia embraced Sunnism, but with the fear of Alp-Arslan, also the city of Aleppo accepted Sunnism. For further information, see Köprülü, \textit{Early Mystics in Turkish Literature}, 8. Here this is not I who identify Shi’ite–Ismaili ideas as heretical. I simply cite from Köprülü.
sentiments in Anatolia: first, the Arab and especially the Persian cultures notably fascinated the intellectual sphere in Anatolia. Another cause of the spread of Shi’ism begins after the Mongol invasion with conversion of Öljeitü, the eighth Ilkhanid ruler in Iran between 703/1304 – 715/1316, to Imami Shi’ism at 710/1310. During his sultanate, Shi’ism was favored and supported at the court and the saying of ʿAli wali Allah (‘Ali is the friend of God) was incorporated into the phrase of tawhid which is la ilaha illa ‘llah Muhammad rasul Allah (There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God). The expansion of Shi’ite ideas did not last long, though, and with the death of Öljeitü, all of the signs of Shi’ism (Alevi tendencies/pro-Ali teaching) were gradually rescinded.

Kara-Koyunlu and Ak-Koyunlu beyliks are given as the third reason. Even though Shi’ism was not held as an official religion of the dynasties, Shi’ite/batini trends were not suppressed but tolerated by the Kara-Koyunlu and Ak-Koyunlu states. Shi’ite/batini elements expanded among the Turkmen tribes, especially under the sultanate of Uzun Hasan, the most important ruler of the Ak-Koyunlu dynasty. Uzun Hasan, claimed Köprülü, followed a two-faced policy towards the Safavids. Although the content of their social and religious preferences were rather different, the two states had important things in common — fighting against the Ottomans. Sufism also played a central role in the expansion of Shi’ite/batini ideas. In this respect, Köprülü particularly talks about the Baba’i movement associating with Bektaşism — Baba’i/Bektaşi movement. What is

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133 Köprülü often correlates the term Shi’i with the word batini and generally refers to it as Shi’ite/batini. The notion of the phrase Shi’ite/batini will elaborately be discussed in the second part of this chapter.
134 Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia*, 47.
quite interesting here is that Köprülü somehow categorizes the Bektaşi order as a continuum of the Baba`i movement. Without providing any concrete evidence, he further claims that Hacı Bektaş was one of the principle successors of Baba Ishaq. Hence, according to Köprülü, after the execution of Baba Ishaq, the Shi`ite/batini sentiments continued to be spread and popularized in Anatolia by the hand of Hacı Bektaş Veli and some other Turkmen babas. After Köprülü, the contemporary works began to correlate religious rite of Hacı Bektaş Veli with Shi`ism. With the Mongol invasion, many Sufis settled in Anatolia, which appeared to be a safe place for everyone who was fleeing from the Mongols. Sufis contributed to the intellectual and economic developments in Anatolia. Sufism seems to have facilitated the conversion to Islam, both in Anatolia and in the new countries that the Seljuq sultans conquered. The Sufi movement also became substantially popular within Turkey. Hence, the Islamic elements appearing in Alevism branched out of Sufism, and therefore, Shi`i patterns became involved in Anatolia initially with the contribution of Sufi babas.

On the other hand, Mélikoff systematized the involvement of Shi`ite elements in Anatolian Islam in accord with three stages: Shi`ite elements such as glorifying ahl al-bayt, the Kerbela cult, and demonizing Yazid, initially incorporated in Anatolia with the influence of Ahi groups — Turkish Islamic Guild. Ahism, regarded Salman the Farsi as the fourth important pir, was originated in Iran and by the 13th century reached over

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137 The question of whether Hacı Bektaş displayed Shi`i sentiments or not will exclusively be elucidated in chapter 4.
139 Salman the Farsi, a companion of Muhammad, was known as the first Persian convert to Islam.
Anatolia. Ali became the subject of the primary belief in Ahism.\(^{140}\) The second stage of the Shi‘itization of Anatolia began with the martyrdom of Fazlallah Hurufi, the founder and spiritual head of the Hurufi movement, in 796/1394.\(^{141}\) Some of his teachings were adopted by the Bektaşi order with the influence of Nesimi, a disciple of Fazlallah, who settled in Anatolia.\(^{142}\) Although the content of their methods and teachings were rather different, Hurufism and Shi‘ism (Ismaili Shi‘ism) shared similar characteristic.\(^{143}\) Finally, the emergence of the Kızılbaşism intensified Shi‘ite sentiments of the Bektaşism. In other word, Safavi propaganda played the most important role in the Shi‘itization of Bektaşism and Alevism/Kızılbaşism.\(^{144}\)

**After the Safavids**

One position suggests that the Shi‘ite tenets, involving reverence for Ali, \textit{ahl al-bayt}, the Karbala cult etc., were initially incorporated in Alevi Islam due to the intervention and influence of the Safavids. In this regard, Claude Cahen appears to have developed an alternative theory on construction of Shi‘ism in the early history of Anatolia that had the most direct and enduring effect on the following scholars. According to the argument supported by Cahen, we still do not know as a matter of fact what a Shi‘ite belief system meant to the local traditional Anatolians before the fifteenth century. That is because at

\(^{140}\)Mélikoff, \textit{Hacı Bektas: Efsaneden Gerçeğe}, 159; Irène Mélikoff, \textit{Prof. Irène Mélikoff'un Ardından: İnceleme, Son Yazıları, Mektuplar}. (İstanbul: Demos Yayınları, 2009), 36.

\(^{141}\) Hurufi movement was a mystical \textit{kabbalistic} Sufi doctrine that elucidates the Qur’an based on a \textit{kabbalistic} system of letters. Arabic letters are used by Hurufis to reveal God’s manifestation in the world.

\(^{142}\) Today Nesimi is regarded as one of the seven important Bektaşi-Alevi poets— Nesimi, Hatai, Fuzuli, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kül Himmet, Yemini and Virani.


\(^{144}\) Irène Mélikoff. \textit{Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Türkiye'de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler}. Beyazıt, (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 1999), 20-21; Mélikoff, \textit{Hacı Bektas}, 254.
that time, clear boundaries between Shi`ism and Sunnism were not yet determined. Therefore it is likely to claim that the Turkmen tribes that were specified as Shi`ite by the latter were in fact Sunni.

The former Turkish dynasties, such as the Karakhanids and Ghaznavids, existed before the Seljuk sultanate, according to Cahen, performed Sunni teaching of Islam in contrast to the Shi`ite doctrine of the Buyid dynasty that controlled central Iran and Iraq. Both states recognized the legitimacy of the Abbasid Caliphate and defended it against the Buyid dynasty in return for legitimation of their own authority. The Seljuks were no different on their religious leaning. They regarded themselves as the champions of Sunni Islam, which gave them a suitable pretext for wanting to free the Abbasids from the tutelage of the Shi`i Buwayhids and to rid the Muslim world of the Fatimids.

Cahen states that even though certain forms of Shi`ism existed among the Turkmen in the fifteenth century, the question of whether a Shi`i movement was present by the thirteenth century of Anatolia remains unsolved. By that time, according to Cahen, there appeared no movement hostile to the Sunni policy of the Seljuks other than the Baba`i uprising, led by Baba Ishaq — this was not developed as a pro-Shi`ite movement, as it lays

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146 Daftary, *The Isma`ilis*, 205.
outside both Sunnism and Shi`ism alike.\textsuperscript{147} Also, there was no recognized religious foundation of the Shi`is during both of the Seljukid regime before 640/1243 and of the Seljukid-Mongol regime afterwards.\textsuperscript{148} The Shi`ite tenets that penetrated Anatolian Sunnism before the Safavids were performed without being regarded as Shi`ite.\textsuperscript{149} There is no example of the existence of a separate Shi`ite formation even during the sultanate of Oljaytu, the eight Ilkhanid dynasty ruler in Iran, despite his pro-Shi`ite leanings.\textsuperscript{150} In short, certain difference between Sunnism and Shi`ism were not made clear for the masses before the official recognition of Shi`ism by the Safavids. Cahen therefore held the Safavids responsible for the Shi`ite elements in Anatolia.

This theme of Cahen was borrowed by Cemal Kafadar as discussed and also by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak. In his short article \textit{Islam’s Second Aspect in Turkey’s History}, Ocak analyses the Shi`ite elements in the religious history of Anatolia with a particular interest focused on Alevism. Like many other scholars who recognize Shi`ite currents, such as the Alid loyalty, veneration of \textit{ahl al-bayt}, the Karbala cult, both in the Seljuk and the early

\textsuperscript{147} Cahen, \textit{Pre-Ottoman Turkey}, 259; There appears a conflict over the name of the person who led the Baba`i uprising. While the name of Baba Ishaq has become popular and well-received, the historical documents show that Baba Ishaq was a disciple of Baba Ilyas and the chief commander in the Baba`i uprising. Baba Ilyas was the founder of the Baba`i movement, but it seems that he did not promote a rebellion. On the other side, his disciple Ibn Ishaq unlike his master’s wish initiated the Babai uprising against the Seljuq in 1239. Ibn Bibi also mentions of Ibn Ishaq as the governor of the Baba`i rebellion. Given that, it does not seem awkward the popularity of Baba Ishaq as the leader of the rebellion. For further information on the discussion of the identity of the leader of the Baba`i rebellion, see Yıldırım, “Sunni Orthodox vs Shi`ite Heterodox?,” 292. And for detailed information on the matter of Baba`i rebellion, see Çelebi, Erünsal, and Ocak. \textit{Menakibu’l Kudsiyye fi Menasibi’l Unisyye}. Due to the description of Ibn Bibi, the name of Baba Ishaq has become popular as the leader of the Baba`i uprising.

\textsuperscript{148} Cahen and Holt, \textit{The Formation of Turkey}, 166.

\textsuperscript{149} Cahen, \textit{Pre-Ottoman Turkey}, 260; Cahen, \textit{The Formation of Turkey}, 165.

\textsuperscript{150} Cahen, \textit{The Formation of Turkey}, 166.
Ottoman era, he states that they cannot be taken as a sign of Shi‘ism. That is because the boundary between Shi‘ism and Sunnism was not clearly defined before the 16th century.\textsuperscript{151}

Rıza Yıldırım unequivocally rejects the presence of Shi‘ism in Anatolian Sufism before the thirteenth and fourteenth century. He claims that the Safavids have to be held responsible for the construction of Shi‘ism in Anatolia. He states that Köprülû’s view regarding the existence of Shi‘ism in early Anatolian Sufism deserves to be rejected, as it is not corroborated in any of the sources.\textsuperscript{152} Even though within the hagiographic sources, such as the Maktel-i Hüseyin, Ebu Müslim-name, Saltuk-name, and Battal-name, there appears an ahl al-bayt centered Islamic view, though this was not comprehended outside of the Sunni fold of Islam. He further indicates that the concept of Imama as conceived by Twelver or Isma‘ili Shi‘ism is entirely absent in this literature.\textsuperscript{153}

Babinger’s work of Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke written in 1923, appears to have been the earliest material that associates Baba Ilyas’s teaching with Shi‘ite belief.\textsuperscript{154} Mazzaoui Michel, likewise, mentions of Shi‘ite influence on the religious tendency of Baba Ilyas.\textsuperscript{155} However, the historical records on Baba Ilyas do not mention of any kind of Shi‘ite influence. Neither Garib-name written by Aşık Ali Paşa,\textsuperscript{156} the son of

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{152} Yıldırım, “Suni Orthodox vs Shi‘ite Heterodox?,” 300.
\bibitem{154} For the Turkish translation of this study, see Franz Babinger. Osmani Tarih Yazarlari ve Eserleri. Translated into Turkish by Coşkun Üçok, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1982), 39-40.
\end{thebibliography}
Baba Ilyas, nor *Menakibu’l-Kudsiyye fi Menasibi’l-Unisyye* composed by Elvan Çelebi\(^{157}\) relate Baba Ilyas to Shi’ite Islam. Further, the name of Umar, was neither preferred nor liked by the Shi’is, yet it was given to the son of Baba Ilyas. The usage of the name of Umar does not seem likely for any Shi’ite inclined being. At this point, Yıldırım rightly claims that the effort to link Baba Ilyas to the Shi’ite doctrine has been formed by recent scholarship that relied on the sixteenth century Ottoman bias. “One might expect the accusation of Shi’ism to have been used as a powerful weapon of propaganda against the _baba_.”\(^{158}\) Through adopting the theme proposed by Cahen, he suggests that there were no borderlines between Sunni and Shi’ite faiths before the social recognition of Shi’ism in the sixteenth century under the Safavids, but rather religious elements of both creeds were intermingled.\(^{159}\)

### 1.6. Associating/Disassociating Alevism with/from Shi’ism

Yet to date, however, there are few individual examples on the Alevi community that acknowledge a social, cultural, and more importantly a sectarian tie with the Shi’is. I argue that labeling the Alevi community all together as Shi’ite is the common mistake held by the majority of current scholarship, especially by the non-Turkish outsider academics. While there appear some individual examples who relate themselves with either Sunnis\(^{160}\) or Shi’ite, in a broader sense, the Alevi community do not establish a sectarian tie with

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\(^{158}\) Yıldırım, “*Sunni Orthodox vs Shi’ite Heterodox?*,” 302.

\(^{159}\) Yıldırım, “*Sunni Orthodox vs Shi’ite Heterodox?*,” 300-301.

\(^{160}\) For the examples of some individual Alevi’s Sunnitization, see Orhan Türkdoğan. *Alevi-Bektaşi Kimliği: Sosyo-antropoji̇k Ara préstma*. (İstanbul: Timas Yayınları, 1995), 243.
either of the two. They rather prioritize their Alevi identity as separate from the institutionalized forms of Sunnism and Shiʿism.

However, due to the reverence for Ali, the reciting of the names of the Twelve Imams and their holding a particular place for the martyrs of the Karbala tragedy in the cem (gathering) ritual has led many of the current scholarship trend to lump all of the Alevi groups in Anatolia together as Shiʿite.161 This academic trend is despite the fact that Alevism not only rejects the formal laws of mainstream Sunni Islam, but also rejects the established doctrines of mainstream Shiʿism (that is, both Sevenener and Twelver Shiʿism). Hence this chapter aims to further discuss and redefine the Alevi religious identity within the ongoing Sunni-Shiʿite discourses.

The common information provided by those scholarship is that with the influence of the Safavids in the sixteenth century, some Turkmen tribes/the Kızılbaş converted to Shiʿism. Although they remained Shiʿis to the present day, they also began to be called Alevi.162 Another well-known information, also presented by Altan Gökalp, a Turkish anthropologist, is that Alevi relate themselves to the Twelver Shiʿism through the Sixth Imam, Jafar Sadiq. Gökalp therefore regards Alevi as Shiʿite victims of Sunni

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162 Halm, Shiʿism, 132-133.
persecution.\textsuperscript{163} A few Alevi intellectuals, not many, also supports the view associating Alevism with Twelver Shi’ism.\textsuperscript{164} In this respect, a different approach was taken by Rıza Yörũkoğlu who claims that people, who do not believe in the Imamate doctrine, could not be regarded as Muslims.\textsuperscript{165}

In this regard, Alevism naturally have been linked to the Jafari fiqh (Jafari Islamic law) of Shi`ite Islam. Due to the activities of a few known Jafari mosques, such as the Ahl al-bayt mosque in Çorum and the Zeynebiyye mosque in Istanbul, the effort of associating the Alevi belief with Jafari/Shi`ite denomination has been sustained. The mosques not only pursue to transform the Alevi society into Twelver Shi`ite Islam, but also distance the Alevis from the Bektaşi.\textsuperscript{166} Other than the followers of these two mosques and some individual examples, neither the Jafaris in Turkey want to be categorized as Alevi, nor do the Alevis want to be called anything but ‘Alevi.’\textsuperscript{167} Especially after Iran’s Islamic Revolution in 1979 by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Alevis of Turkey have become more cautious in distancing themselves from Shi`ism. That is primarily because, according to them, Shi`ite practice of Iran illustrates a radical image that can never be correspond with the Alevi way of life.\textsuperscript{168}

Momen appears to have been another scholar who labels the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief as Shi`ite. Momen lists the Bektaşi and the Kızılbaş, as one of the four main Shi`ite groups

\textsuperscript{163} Gökalp, \textit{Une Minorité Chîte En Anatolie}, 748.
\textsuperscript{166} İlyas Üzüm. \textit{Günümüz Aleviliği}. (İstanbul: TDV İSAM Yayınları, 2000), 57-59.
\textsuperscript{168} Türkdoğan, \textit{Alevi-Bektaşı Kimliği}, 111; Shankland, \textit{The Alevis in Turkey}, 24.
in Turkey. The other three are listed as: the Nusayri Alawi community, Arabic-speaking group centered on the Mediterranean cost between Anatakya and Mersin; Ahl-i Haqq, mainly the Kurdis-speaking group who were predominant in south-east Turkey; and the final group is the Azeri Turkish refuges from Russian Azerbaijan.\textsuperscript{169}

Recently, with responding to the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there appeared a new group that was called by Faruk Bilici as ‘Shi’ite-inclined Alevism.’\textsuperscript{170} Teoman Şahin appears to have been one of the strong advocators of this group. The will of this group is to assimilate the Alevis to the formal laws of the respective mainstream Twelver Shi’ite doctrines. For that purpose, Iran freely distributed large quantities of books among the Turkish Alevis, and many Alevis trained in Iran and were sent back to Turkey to be imams for the Alevi communities.\textsuperscript{171} ‘The members of this group, who declare themselves to be followers of the Twelve Imams and Iranian Shi’ism, make a clear distinction between Bektaşism and Alevism, drastically rejecting the former and connecting the latter with the Twelver Shi’a.’\textsuperscript{172}

**The Questions over the Identification of Alevism as Shi’ite**

One position that tends to ascribe greater importance to the influences of Shi’ism on the formation of Alevism, however, does categorically distinguish Alevism from

\textsuperscript{169} Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, 269.
\textsuperscript{171} Bilici, “The Function of Alevi-Bektashi Theology in Modern Turkey,” 65.
\textsuperscript{172} Bilici, “The Function of Alevi-Bektashi Theology in Modern Turkey,” 65-66; For the religious leaning of this groups see Şahin, *Alevilere Söylenen Yalanlar*
Shi’ism. Karin Vorhoff can be listed as one of those scholars who associate Alevism with Shi’ism without labeling it as Shi’ite. Karin Vorhoff addresses the problems of labeling Alevism as Shi’ite. She put forwards the question of how can Alevism be claimed as being Jafari/Twelver Shi’ite while it rejects the fundamental doctrines of Shi’ism. Overall, although this trend, subjects Alevism to Shi’ism, it does not specify Alevism as a branch of Shi’ism. Karakaya-Stump likewise recognizes the common religious aspects shared by the Alevis/Kızılbaş and the Imami Shi’is. However, she is cautious to distance the Alevi belief from the mainstream Shi’ism due to the fact that Alevi Islam promoted a type of mystical teaching that is neither welcomed in the mainstream Shi’ite nor Sunni faith. Further and more importantly the Alevi foundational communal ritual that is known as the cem (literally means gathering), is itself a sufficient factor that set apart the Alevi belief from the mainstream Shi’is. The cem ceremony, once a week, is performed in the form of gathering of both men and women in which they perform a type of dance under the supervision of a religious figure known as a dede, and to the accompaniment of music and alcoholic beverages.


174 Gloria L. Clarke can be mentioned as one of those scholars. Based on the writing of Clarke, it can be understood that she sides with the view that the spread of Shi’ism in Anatolia actualized through the Sufi-Shi’ite admixture. With the inspiration of Köprülü and Mélikoff, she traces the birth of Alevism back to the very beginning of Bektaşism without separating the first from the latter. See Gloria L. Clarke. The World of the Alevis Issues of Culture and Identity. (New York: AVC Publication, 1999), 37-86.

A parallel approach can be observed in the works written by recent Alevi intellectuals who are highly critical of the view connecting Alevism with Shi`ism. Cemal Şener is one of those Alevi scholars who perseveringly distinguishes Alevism from Shi`ism.176 Another Alevi scholar and writer — Baki Öz, claims that the view subjecting Alevism to Shi`ism has no historical base.177 It is also suggested by Fuat Bozkurt that the view that links Alevism to Shi`ism is ideologically motivated propaganda that not only intended to assimilate Alevism, but also causes the corruption of the Alevi identity.178

That view was first proposed by Cahen and then championed by Köprülü who developed a rigid argument on the matter of penetration of Shi`ite tenets in Anatolian Islam. Köprülü argues that the Turks who were defined by some scholars — particularly referring to Babinger — as Shi`ite were in fact extremely inclined to Sunnism. Those Alevi tendencies such as glorifying Ali and ahl al-bayt were merged in Sunni fold of Islam without being regarded as Shi`ite. Hence Alid loyalty can in no way be regarded as a sign of Shi`ism. As stated by Köprülü “Affection for Ali and the Prophet's family was an unchanging principle among the Turks and the widespread tariqas. From the earliest times, the heroic deeds of Ali were adopted and popularized in the literature of the Anatolian Turks. Indeed, they have not lost their appeal up to the present time.”179 The information about Timur provided by Köprülü supports his view. According to which, Timur, despite his loyalty to Sunnism, displayed a very open Alevi sympathy. The phenomenon of Alid

176 Cemal Şener. Alevilik Olayı: Toplumsal Bir Başkalırdının Kısa Tarihçesi. (İstanbul: Etik Yayınları, 2010).
177 Baki Öz. Alevilik Nedir?. (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), 167-200.
179 Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia, 6, footnote, 22.
loyalty has been quite popular future of the Timurids that are certainly known as Sunni. Köprülü claims that the very reason of Timur’s being an Alevi sympathizer was rather political.

Those Shi‘ite currents also were common futures of the Sunni colored Sufi brotherhoods. Alevi tendencies had long been rather strong among even the most ardently Sunni orders such as the Yeseviye, Naqshibendiye and Mevleviyye. The saying of Ghalib Dede, a Mevlevi shaykh, ‘Biz shah-i vilayet kuluyuz hem ‘Aleviyiz (We are the men of Shah-i Vilayet [one of the titles of ‘Ali] and we are all Alevis) is represented to prove his point.

Pro-Alevi sayings, according to Köprülü, does not make any individual a Shi‘ite, but those Shi‘ites who adore Ali could be regarded as Alevi. The argument — those elements such as reverence for Ali and ahl al-bayt, lament for the martyrs of the Karbala tragedy, were specified as Shi‘ite by the latter, must not be taken as a sign of Shi‘ism — as formulated by Köprülü was also borrowed by Mélikoff and was upgraded by her. As discussed earlier, she stated that those Shi‘ite currents originally had a deeper meaning subjected to old Turkish customs. They resembled to the pro-Islamic Turkish traditions. That is why Shi‘ite creeds were readily acknowledged by the Turkish tribes — particularly the Bektaşis and the Kızılbaş. Pro-Ali phrases appeared to have been the unifying point between the ancient customs with Shi‘ite terminology. For the very reason, the Turks had

181 Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia, 40-41.
182 Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia, 19-20, footnote, 79.
183 Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia, 6, footnote, 22.
no problem to blend them with their old customs. Hence they should not be traced back to Shi’ism.\(^{184}\) The example of Baba Ilyas is in the position to prove her point. The religious orientation of Baba Ilyas was represented rather outside the parameters of Sunni Islam, close to Shi’ite/batini current. The fact that one of his sons was named as Osman and a disciple of him was known with the name of Omer shows that those elements regarded as Shi’ite were in fact equally distant both from Sunnism and Shi’ism.\(^{185}\) So according to Mélikoff, neither Alevism/Kızılbaşışm nor Bektaşışm must be regarded within the fold of Shi’ite Islam, but the Safavi propaganda specified them as Shi’ite.\(^{186}\)

Unlike previous scholars, Babayan highlights the role of the ghulat belief on the Shi’itization of the Kızılbaş. She states that Ismail, to gain the total obedience of the Kızılbaş, deliberatively played on the ghulat spirit of the Kızılbaş.\(^{187}\) Ghuluww as explained in the previous section, according to Babayan, does not explicitly mean Shi’ism.\(^ {188}\) The ghuluww, according to Babayan, was the dominant characteristic of the Safavids. The Safavids adopted Imami Shi’ism right after they felt politically secure enough in their new role as shahs and even though the teaching of Imamism was not corresponding to the nature of the Kızılbaş belief. When Ismail established his empire, he approached to the Imamite ulama in defiance of the Kızılbaş Islam. Hence, soon

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\(^{184}\) Mélikoff, *Uyur Idik Uyardılar*, 97.

\(^{185}\) Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektas*, 84.

\(^{186}\) Mélikoff, *Uyur Idik Uyardılar*, 54.


\(^{188}\) Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis,” 135-161.
afterwards, Shah Ismail declared Imamite Shi’ism the religion of his realms, and the
counter between the Kızılbaş Islam and Imamism got off the ground.\textsuperscript{189}

The theory of Jean Aubin, supported by Babayan, states that the adoption of
Imamite Shi’ism by Shah Ismail as an official religion of the state, was the fall of the
Kızılbaş state, but not the rise. In another words, the Kızılbaş had no role in the choice of
Imami Shi’ism for the Safavid state.\textsuperscript{190} Therefore, the Kızılbaş religiosity and ghulat-
inspired other movements were marginalized.\textsuperscript{191} This chapter agrees along the same line
as Babayan. This study argues that the Kızılbaş would have been one of the ghulat-inspired
movements. As Cahen suggested and this idea was supported by the latter scholarship, the
central religious skeleton of Shi’ism was not specified by the fifteenth century; however,
at that time ghuluww belief was quite prevalent. As stated by Babayan, ghuluww was one
of the initial religious resources of the Safavids before the official recognition of the
Twelver Shi’ism. Secondly, the fact that the struggle between the Safavids and the Kızılbaş
had begun right after theImami Shi’ism was acknowledged as the official religion proves
the point that the Kızılbaş were not pleased by the official recognition of an
institutionalized religious sect.

Rather than referring to the Kızılbaş as Kızılbaş Shi’ism or extreme Shi’ism,
Babayan favors the usage of Kızılbaş Islam.\textsuperscript{192} Ghuluww, defined by Babayan, was a belief

\textsuperscript{189} For this information, see Kathryn Babayan. \textit{Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of
Early Modern Iran.} (Cambridge, Mass: Distributed for the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard
University by Harvard University Press, 2002), xxxii-xxxiii; Babayan, \textit{The Waning of the Qizilbash, 5};
Babayan, \textit{The Safavid Synthesis}, 137.

\textsuperscript{190} Jean Aubin. “La Politique Religieuse Des Safavides,” in \textit{Le Shi’isme Imamite}, (Colloque de Strasbourg)

\textsuperscript{191} Babayan, \textit{The Waning of the Qizilbash, 17}.

\textsuperscript{192} Babayan, \textit{Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs}, xxxix.
system in which a cluster of various religious traditions mingled. The *ghuluww* belief was marginalized and regarded as heretical by the mainstream Islamic movements. *Ghuluww*, stated by Babayan, played the most central role in the formation of the Safavid and the Kızılbaş Islam. The *ghulat* do not believe in resurrection (ma‘ad) — one of the five tenets (*usul al-din*) of Shi‘i Islam. For the *ghulat*, the human being dies but to be reincarnated (*hulul*) and returning (*raj‘a*) to this world in a different form. There is no heaven or hell for the *ghulat*. The advent of the personification of the Holy Spirit, bearing glad tidings of a new dispensation of social justice is in the here and now — not at the end of monotheistic time. She also states that *ghuluww* was the main motivation force behind the Baba Ishaq (1240) and the Shayk Bedreddin (1416) rebellions, as well as the other social and political uprisings that arose in Anatolia, Iraq, and Syria.

The *ghulat* movements, stated Babayan, existed even before the nature of the Shi‘ite Islam was articulated. The examples of Kaysaniyya (beginning with Mukhtar, d. 67/687) and the Abu Muslimiyya (beginning in 137/755 A.D. with the death of Abu Muslim) were the initial representation of the *ghulat* movements. The idea of anticipated

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193 Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, xxiv; The word *ghuluww* is derived from the Arabic root “gh-l-w” literally to exceed the proper boundary, hence *ghali/ghulat* is rendered incorrectly as extremist. Exaggerator is a more correct rendering of the word. The *ghulat* is specified as those Shi‘is who deify the Imam Ali and the rest of the Imams. See Wadad al-Qadi. “The Development of the Term *Ghulat* in Muslim Literature with Special Reference to the Kaysaniyya,” in *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, ed. Etan Kohlberg, volume 33, (Ashgate/Variorum, 2003). The common trend in scholarship, on the other hand, erroneously claimed that the *ghulat* spirit represents the extremist form of Shi‘ism; For this information, see Matti Moosa. *Extremist Shiites: the Ghulat sects*. (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1988), xiii; Moosa therefore regards the Kızılbaş, the Bektaşîs and the Alevîs as extremist *ghulat* groups.

194 The belief in the advent of the messiah is not only discussed and believed by the Shi‘is. This is also a well-accepted doctrine of the mainstream Sunnis. The resurrection dogma has become one of the well-discussed subjects of the Islamic Apocalypse. For more detailed information on the both Sunni and Shiite colored Muslim apocalypse see: David B. Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*. (Princeton, N. J., 2002).


messiah (Mahdi) and Alid cause are the common themes of the both ghulat groups and the Shi’ism. For the very reason, the distinct lines of demarcation between ghuluww and Imamism were yet not clarified. The Alid cause played the most direct role in the unification of the Shi’ism and the ghulat. While in the early periods, those ghulat groups were not related to Shi’ism, later on they either accepted Ismaili or Imami Shi’ism.197 By the twelfth century, the ghulat ideas of ghayba and raj’a had already become an integral part of orthodox Shi’ism.198 The anticipated khuruj of the Mahdi had become an accepted cultural paradigm both by the ghulat groups and Shi’ism.199 Because of the Alid oppositional stance toward mainstream Islam, Shi’ism and ghuluww intermingled. Just as ghuluww was grafted onto the Shi’i, Shi’ism was grafted onto the ghulat. So far, Babayan’s theory seems to be the most feasible one. I propose that recent scholarship attributed any group like Baba’i movement to Shi’ism when its religious stance do not perfectly map with Sunni doctrine. However, the presence of other religious formations like ghuluww should be re-considered as a possible motivational force behind the non-Sunni sentiments in Anatolia.

Farhad Daftary also highlights the point that the conflict between the Safavids and the Kızılbaş began with the proclamation of the Twelver Shi’ism as the official religion of the state. The advent of the Safavids and the proclamation of Twelver Shi’ism as the state religion of Safavid Persian in 906/1501 promised yet more favorable opportunities for the activities of the Nizaris and other Shi’i movements in Persia. The Safavids, however, soon

adopted a rigorous religious policy that aimed to suppress the popular types of Sufism and various Shi‘i movements that fell outside of the boundaries of Itha‘asharism. This policy was directed even against the Kızılbaş, who had brought the Safavid dynasty into power. Hence, under the reigns of the subsequent Safavid shahs, the loyalty to the Safavid house had been shaken and the language of rebellion against Safavid absolutism emanated. Eventually the first Kızılbaş revolt, the Dervish Rıza rebellion against the Safavid autocracy, occurred only seven years after the successful revolution of 906/1501.

Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı, a devout Sufi/Shi‘ite dervish, on the other side, approaches to the issue from a very different angle. Despite the fact that Alevism like Bektaşims and Rafidism have displayed pro-Shi‘ite sentiments, he neither recognizes Alevism as a branch of Shi‘ism nor regard Alevis as Shi‘ite due to the following matters. First, Alevis do not recognize the fundamental beliefs of Twelver Shi‘ite. Secondly, the religious leaning of Alevis rather corresponds with batini ideas. Batinism, in contrast to Shi‘ism, disregards religious rituals as they believe that religious principles are fabricated to organize the universe and that they are not essential to Islamic teaching. They rather concentrate on esoteric/mystic knowledge. He, further, states that people who embraced the batini elements like reincarnation/tanassukh (beden göçü), metempsychosis (divinity

201 For a detailed description of this rebellion, see Babayan, *The Waning of the Qizilbash*, 4.
202 Abdülbaşı Gölpinarlı. *Tarih Boyunca İslam Mezhepleri ve Şiilik*. (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1997), 87-91; Abdülbaşı Gölpinarlı. *Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar*. (İstanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1997), 272. I found four different currents associated with the notion Alevi: batini, the extreme Shia or ghulûw, Bektaşi, and Turkish shamanism. For this information, see Abdülbaşı Gölpinarlı. *Tasavvuf*. (İstanbul: Milenyum, 2000), 130-132.
of Ali), and anthropomorphism (ascribing human characteristics to non-human) are not genuine Muslims.203

At this point, he has an important role in distancing Shi`ism from the extremist batini thoughts including Rafidism and Alevism/Kızılbaşism. To Gölpınarlı, Shi‘ism, unlike Rafidism, is one of the authentic sects of Islam. The Sufis who professed extremist path in preforming their belief, asserted Gölpınarlı, are the primary reason in the emergence of wicked presumption about Shi`ism.204 Shi`ism, counter to Batinis, Rafidis and Alevis, are genuine observer of religious services, which are believed to be ten: daily prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, alms-giving, khums (a required action in fiqh according to which people are behooved to give one fifth of the annual business income), jihad, tawalla (loving Muhammad and Ali and the ones who love Muhammad), tabarra, (hating the ones who do not love Muhammad and Ali), informing goodness and God’s commands and restraining from evil-doing.205

In addition to that Gölpınarlı is critical of the Safavid’s policy, according to which, the Safavid had made concessions to Alevis in the practice of religious matters to keep them on their side. However, they claimed to rule Iran relying on the Jafari law, they did not abide with the real teaching of the Jafari jurisprudence in their relationship with the Alevi community. For example, Ardabil had become an equivalent of Mecca and Medina for the Alevi/Kızılbaş followers of the Safavid Iran. Further visiting of Ardabil had been considered equal to Hajj ritual. Such rites cannot correspond with the actual teaching of

203 Gölpınarlı, Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar, 125.
204 Gölpınarlı, Tarih Boyunca İslam Mezhepleri ve Şiilik, 98-135.
205 Gölpınarlı, Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar, 53-54.
Jafarism. He further states that the loyalty of Alevis/Kızılbaş to Safavid Iran lasted when the Safavid hegemony ended in Iran. Since then the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief has been formed through the teaching of the dedes. The dedes did not hold on to the Jafari jurisprudence, rather they minded the fondness of ahl al-bayt. Exaggeration of the fondness of ahl al-bayt is not the sign of Shi’ism, but rather the indication of batini influence.

He, furthermore, proposes a new argument: Alevism cannot be considered as a tariqa. That is because social and cultural forms of tariqa are not applicable in Alevism. Alevism developed idiosyncratic characteristics. The belief that someone has to be born within an Alevi family in order to be an Alevi is not observed in any other form of tariqa or sect of Islam. Secondly, Alevis have a dedelik position that asserts an Alid genealogy. Only the people who are descended from the ahl al-bayt could reach to the position of dede. And only the people who are born from an Alevi parent can be an Alevi. That distinguishes Alevism from the rest of the tariqa. I think Gölpınarlı made a coherent point here. However, this view was supported by the latter scholars, there appeared a completely opposite approach. According to this opposed view, Alevism adopted a tariqa form in despite of the dogma of bloodline.

Due to the lack of the properly systematized theology and jurisprudence, scholars are confused to locate Alevism within the Islamic circle. The question of whether Alevism

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206 Gölpınarlı, Tarih Boyunca İslâm Mezhepleri ve Şiiilik, 149.
207 Gölpınarlı, Tarih Boyunca İslâm Mezhepleri ve Şiiilik, 180.
208 Gölpınarlı, Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar, 272.
is a sect, or a method, or a Sufi order, or a religion has not yet found a place. The primary Alevi documents like Buyruks, Manaqib, Velayetnames, etc., are dealing with the theological subjects like God, its place for humanity, and its tie with human being. Further, the cem ceremony has become the primary rite of the Alevi community with its established rules that definitely separate the Alevi community from the rest of the Sunnis and Shi`is. It is a fact that matters related to fiqh (Islamic law) are not as definitive as it is for Sunnis and Shi`is. At this point, this chapter throws a question about the nature and determinants of a sect? Were the categories of a sect determined and by whom? Are these categories too clear? And what are those categories to define a group as a sect? Why cannot Alevism exist as free of Sunni/Shi`ite binaries?

After giving all these information proposed by different scholars, this chapter insists on its central argument that Alevism must be conceived outside of Sunni-Shi`ite parameters, not a religion in itself, but a separate sect of Islam that was heavily dominated by Sufi teaching. Further, I argue that traditions like honoring ahl al-bayt, blaming Yazid for the murder of Husayn, grieving for the martyrs of Karbala were not merely the common elements of the Sunni/Sufi orders living in the Ottoman realm. Even today, regardless of being a Sunni or Shi`ite, Muslims overall acknowledge those currents without assessing them as Shi`ite. Hence, these phenomena cannot be taken as a sign of Shi`ism.
1.7. The Confusion over which Branches of Shi‘ism Influenced Alevism

Scholars that acknowledge the Shi‘ite sentiments blended in Alevi Islam collide regarding the question of which branch or branches of Shi‘ism had influenced Alevism. There appeared three different suggestions: Twelver Shi‘ism, Ismaili Shi‘ism, Zaydis, or the Nusayris of Syria.

Köprülü particularly emphasizes the influence of Ismaili current in the spread of Shi‘ite/batini ideas and Alid loyalty in Anatolia. Ismaili elements, stated Köprülü, were integrated in Anatolia by the time of the emergence of the Baba‘i revolt in 640/1243. For Köprülü, there is no sign of the emergence of the Twelver Shi‘ism in the early history of Anatolia, but the Ismaili propaganda was quite prevalent. Even when Köprülü talks about the Safavid order, he does not associate it with Imami Shi‘ism, neither he does link it with Ismaili Shi‘ism. He simply defines it as a Shi‘i/Sufi order of the ninth/fifteenth century. There appears two unclear points with respect to the characteristic of the Safavid in Köprülü’s writings. First, he strangely represents the Safavid as if it was the continuum of the Baba‘is. The other one is about the Shah Ismail’s adoption of Shi‘ism. Shah Ismail, according to Köprülü, had a political agenda in his fondness of Shi‘ism. Ismail adopted Shi‘ism to empower his position against the Ottoman state.

Ocak, with the influence of Köprülü, argues that the Safavi religious orientation was colored with the Ismaili elements. He presumes that despite the Safavid propaganda,

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which is based on the Imamiyya current of Shi`ism, the Shi`ite elements emergent within the Alevi religion coincides not with the Imamiyya current, but with the Nizari Ismaili current. According to this argument, Shah Ismail carried out his propaganda based on the Ismaili faith in order to keep the Kızılbaş on his side despite the fact that he was an Imami Shi`i who desired to establish a state based on Imami Shi`ism. His reason for his doing this was that he knew it was the only way to succeed in his campaign against the Ottomans. This was because the rural people of eastern and central Anatolia had been influenced by the Ismaili batini faith since the thirteenth century and that by approaching them with a different concept of Shi`ism would be devastating.\(^{213}\)

Cahen takes a different position with respect to the Shi`ite sentiments existing in the Alevi belief. The fundamental characteristic of Alevi — exaggerated devotion to Ali — was introduced into Asia Minor by propagandists of the Alid sects like the Nusayris of Syria and the Ali-ilahis of eastern Iran. Although he states that this is not more than a pure speculation, it is a strong possibility that needs to be elaborated.\(^{214}\)

An entirely different line of scholarship was presented by Momen. The Safavid, according to Momen, played the most direct role in the Shi`itization of the Kızılbaş. The Safavids, however, claimed to be Twelver Shi`is, and as asserted by Momen, ran their propaganda on the basis of a Zaydi-style Imamate.\(^{215}\) Momen comes to this conclusion due to the sayings of Shah Ismail as ‘he represented himself as not merely the representative of the Hidden imam, but the Hidden Imam himself and beyond that even claiming divinity

\(^{213}\) Ocak, *Islam’s Second Aspect in Turkey’s History*, 22-23.
\(^{214}\) Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey*, 166.
\(^{215}\) Momen, *An Introduction to Shi`i Islam*, 108.
for himself.’ Such saying contradicts with one of the most fundamental teachings of the Twelver Shi’ism according to which with the start of the Greater Occultation, no-one can claim to be the representative of the Hidden Imam until the return of the Hidden Imam.

Another scholar who associates the Alevis with the Zaydi is Ismail Kaygusuz arguing that one of Zayd’s three remaining sons carried Zayd’s bloodline and legacy to Anatolia. He further claims that epic Seyyid Battal Gazi, grew up in Malatya and was in fact a descendant of Zayd. Battal Gazi later on, according to Kaygusuz, appeared to be one of the important figures in the Alevi-Bektaşi tradition. Hasluck, as opposed to the aforementioned scholars, relate the Alevis of Turkey with the Nusayris of Syria. To him, Alevi belief is beyond the dogmas of the mainstream Shi`ite sects.

1.8. Conclusion

Discussing Alevism within the currents of Sunni-Shi`ite discourses has been the subject of primary argument of this project. My main questions center on the dispute over the identification and classification of Alevism as either Shi`ite or close to Sunni. The minority religious groups recognizing Ali are usually listed as branches of Shi`ism. Since the Alevis in Turkey also perceive Ali as an important figure in their religious faith, they have also been considered as a branch of Shi`ism. I find it very important to discuss the question of the elements that characterize someone as a Shi`ite or Sunni. Is it sufficient to identify a group as Shi`ite if they revere and honor Ali? Could acknowledgement of Ali be

216 Momen, An Introduction to Shi‘i Islam, 105.
217 İsmail Kaygusuz. Alevilik İnanç, Kültür, Siyaset Tarihi ve Uluları. (İstanbul: Alev Yaynevi, 1995), 55
218 Kaygusuz, Alevilik İnanç, Kültür, Siyaset Tarihi ve Uluları, 45.
219 Hasluck, Christianity and Islam, 156.
only a symbolic exotic characteristic of a group which is involved in the mystical teachings of Islam? How could Alevism be labeled as Shi’ite while rejecting its fundamental religious doctrines? It is important to note that almost all Sufi groups in Anatolia honor and respect Ali more than any other historical figure. If Shi’ism merely means loving and honoring Ali, Hasan and Husayn (the grandsons of Muhammad), then all Sunnis appear to be as Shi’ites.\textsuperscript{220} I think, at this point, we need to redefine and reanalyze the concept of Shi’ism. What makes a person Shi’ite and what does not?

As rehearsed a number of times across this chapter, researchers on Alevi Islam have proposed different views from on another concerning the Alevi religiosity. On the one side, one position served to tame the religiosity of Alevism and to convert them to Shi’ism without acknowledging the fact that Alevis neither recognized the fundamental doctrines of Shi’ism nor desire to be labeled as Shi’ite. They insist on defining themselves as Alevi — neither Sunni nor Shi’ite. In connection with this, Alevis must be distinguished from the latter ‘Shi’ite-inclined Alevism.’ On the other side, I argue that modern knowledge on Alevism was constructed to assimilate the Alevis to the formal laws of the respective mainstream doctrines of Sunnism. My argument is undergirded by the recent works of Markus Dressler and Kabir Tambar.\textsuperscript{221} With a particular reference to Köprülü’s writings, Dressler argues that the most existing modern scholarship on the Alevis fails to conceive of Alevi differences outside of this framework — attributing Alevism to Turkish

\textsuperscript{220} John Birge in his work \textit{The Bektashi Order of Dervishes} states that when he visited Turkey, he was very surprised to see that all these Sufi groups honor Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and they blame Yazid for the murder of Husayn. Therefore, he states that even if Turkey is a Sunni populated country, and even if these Sufi groups are called Sunni Sufi groups, they actually appear with to have Shi’ite tenets. That is probably why he discusses the Bektashi within the concept of Shi’ism. See Birge, \textit{The Bektashi Order of Dervishes}.  
\textsuperscript{221} Dressler, \textit{Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam.}; Tambar, \textit{The Reckoning of Pluralism}.
nationalism and Sunni Islam. The main purpose, according to Dressler, was to create a mono-religious Turkish nation-state.”\textsuperscript{222} Tambar, on the other side, argues that the Turkish state failed to recognize Alevism as a separate community, but associated its religiosity with Sunni Islam despite Alevi plea to the contrary.\textsuperscript{223} Alevis, claimed Tambar, would prefer to be viewed apart from the Sunni majority. The effort of the Turkish state to adhere Alevis to Islam closer to Sunnism obstructs the possibility of applying pluralism in a Sunni majority state. Hence, rather the forcing Alevism to converge on either Shi`ism or Sunnism, I argue to regard Alevism as an independent sect on its own right.

\textsuperscript{222} Dressler, \textit{Writing Religion}, 15-23.
\textsuperscript{223} Tambar, \textit{The Reckoning of Pluralism}, 54; Unlike the Turkish state’s claim, Alevis, according to Tambar, have historically adhered to at least some traditions of Islam closer to Shi`ism than to those followed by Turkey’s Sunni majority. Kabir Tambar. “Iterations of Lament: Anachronism and affect in a Shi`i Islamic revival in Turkey,” \textit{American Ethnologist}, volume 38, no. 3, (2011), 486.
Chapter 2

Alid Cause or Shi`ite Sentiment: The Imamate Doctrine within the Alevi Buyruk Manuscripts

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the role of Alid loyalty and the doctrine of Imamate within the Buyruk manuscripts. The Buyruks are acknowledged as authoritative Alevi documents dealing with beliefs, rituals, customs, and ethics of the Alevis — a sizeable minority religious community in Turkey.\(^{224}\) There are of course different types of Alevi

\(^{224}\)The term *buyruk* has been translated into English as ‘decree’ by Shankland while Karakaya-Stump prefers to use the word ‘command.’ Shankland, *The Alevis in Turkey*, 79; Ayfer Karakaya-Stump. “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families: An Overview,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 37/3, (December 2010), 279.
documents that have come to be known as *Velayetnames, Manaqibs, Divans, Cenknames, Fütüvvetname, Faziletname, Kitab-ı Cabbar Kulu, Hüsnıyе, Kenzu’l Mesai̇b, Nefesler* and *Deyişler,* and yet there are common elements shared by many of them in the expression of Alevi faith. In this work, I will limit this discussion of the Imamate and Alid loyalty to the *Buyruks* due to the fact that the *Buyruks* are the most common and well-received texts within the Alevi community.

It is of interest to note that the *Buyruk* texts are mostly part of or connected in one way or another to the other Alevi books. Different titles, including *Manaqib al-Asrar Behcat-al Ahrar, Manakib-al Evliya, Manaqibname, Fütüvvetname, Duvazdeh İmam,* and

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225 Extensive information on the *Velayetnames* and *Manaqibs* will be given in chapter 4.
226 *Divans* are the collections of poems and sayings of Alevi poets. There are a number of various *Divans* written by different poets and scholars: Pir Sultan Abdal, and Esat Korkmaz. *Pir Sultan Abdal Divam.* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1994); Nesimi, Adil Ali Atalay, Shahram Bahadori Gharache, and Hüsamettin Aydin. *Şeyyid Nesimi Divanı.* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2009); Aşık Virani, and Adil Ali Atalay Vaktidolu. *Virani Divanı ve Risalesi.* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1998). This book is the collections of all of the poems of Virani.
229 *Faziletname* is a term given to the books that illustrates the virtues of Ali and ahl bayt. The most popular *Faziletname* is the one composed by Yemini, one of the seven most celebrated Alevi poets. Derviş Muhammad Yemini, and Yusuf Tepeli. *Faziletname.* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2002).
231 *Hüsnıyе* is one of the few Alevi resources that extensively addresses to the Shi’ite subjects lie the *isma* (infallibility) of the prophets and the *imams,* Ali’s succession to the Prophet Muhammad, the authority of *imamate* how it has proceeded through the descent of Ali, etc. The author of the text is anonymous. While it is originally written in Arabic, it was translated into Turkish by Muhammad Ra’na Bağdadi and published in 1853. Mehmet Küpeli. *Tam ve Hakiki Hüsnıyе.* (A. Barış Kitapevi, 2017).
233 *Nefesler* are the collections of hymns written by Alevi and Bektaşi poets. Its central theme is *wahdat al-wujud* (oneness of Being). It also mentions of the principles of Alevism and the rules of *tariqa.* See, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. *Alevi-Bektaşi Nefesleri.* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963).
so on were given to the works that today have become popular with the name ‘buyruk’.\(^{234}\)

What is quite obscure here is that the term ‘buyruk’ did not appear in any of the original titles of those manuscripts.\(^{235}\)

There is no one single book known as Buyruk, but there rather appear to have been various multiple later-made copies of Buyruk-texts of different lengths and content. These are thought to have been made by individual copyists who recklessly pieced different parts together, or intentionally omitted some parts, or interpolated new material based on personal interest or leaning. Topics, including *sharia*, *tariqa* (teaching of the secrets of religion), *ma`rifa* (reaching a higher degree of knowledge of God), *hakiqa* (experiencing the essence of reality) – (seriat-tarikat-marifet-hakikat), *dört kapı* (four gates)\(^{236}\), *kırk makam* (fourty positions),\(^{237}\) *üç sünnet* (three traditions), *yedi farz* (seven religious duties), *on yedi erkan* (seventeen rules),\(^{238}\) *cem* ritual (the principal Alevi ceremony that is

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\(^{235}\) Across time, the terms *buyruk*, *manaqib* and *vasiyet* have come to be used interchangeably. For further information, see Turhan Yörükan. *Anadolu’dan Alevi ve Tahtacılar* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1998), 38, 39, 478; Aziz Kılınç, “Alevi Bektası Geleneğinde Vasiyet ve Buyruk Üzerine,” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 45, (2008), 84-87.

\(^{236}\) Four gates are classified as ‘*sharia*, *tariqa*, *ma’rifa*, *hakiqa*.’ For the explanation of the concept of four gates, see, Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, 168-175; The book titled *Four Gates-Forty Stations: The Stages of Spiritual Journey: Hajji Bektash Veli and His Maqālāt* also explains the meaning and the concept of ‘four gates-forty stations’ relying on the Makalat. See Hacı Bektaş Veli, Kemal Argon, Tahir Uluç, and Thomas McElwain. *Four gates-forty stations: the stages of spiritual journey: Hajji Bektash Veli and his Maqālāt*. (Abo [Finland]: Ábo Akademis tryckeri, 2006)

\(^{237}\) Due to the information given in the book of *Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid fī def’i’l-mefâsid* written by Ahmet Rifat Efendi in 1293/1876, the concept of forty positions has become one of the essential teachings of Alevi belief, regardless of its absence in the *Buyruk* texts. Unlike *Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid*, the *Buyruks* mention of fifteen positions. Forty positions are consisted of ten positions for each gate of four gates. For the *makams* (positions), see, Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, 176.

\(^{238}\) The matter of ‘*üç sünnet*, *yedi farz*, *on yedi erkan* (seventeen rules) is only mentioned in the *Imam Jafar Buyruks*. See, Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, 181-186.
practiced in a form of gathering led by the chief religious elder called a dede) and so on, are indicative of strong commonalities between different Buyruk copies.

Themes like the concept of the Alevi ‘trinity’ (Allah, Muhammad, and Ali), the glorification of Ali, the ahl al-bayt (the Family of Muhammad’s House), the doctrine of the Imamate, the matter of the Fourteen Infallibles, and the references to the Safavid genealogy and Hacı Bektaş Veli constitute the distinctive side of the Buyruks. Unlike the previous doctrines, these dogmas are ambiguous. And yet, there appears no conclusive explanation propounded by the majority of scholarship with regard to their significance in terms of sectarian inquiry.

The ambiguity of the Buyruk manuscripts arises from a lack of academic interest. Neither a collection of the Buyruk manuscripts nor a comparative work on them has yet appeared. In 1918, Fuat Köprülü, in his pre-eminent work Türk Edebiyatında ilk Mutasavviflar, talked for the first time in Turkish literature about the Buyruks. The source of his information was a manuscript available from his own private library. In 1950, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı made references to them.239 Then, by the early 1980s and with the presence of the Buyruk manuscripts transcribed to the modern script, the number of works studying the Alevi faith had increased. Although the interest in Alevi faith is quite noticeable within Western scholarship, there has not yet appeared an English translation of

239 Gölpınarlı, “İslam ve Türk İllerinde Fütüvvet Teşkilatı ve Kaynakları.”
the any of the *Buyruk* texts. Association of Alevi belief with Shi`ite Islam is the common future of the majority of those sources. Nevertheless, no exhaustive and comparative research has been done to analyze the Alid cause and the Shi`ite elements visible within the *Buyruks*. Hence, this chapter aims to fill this gap using the following questions as a guide: How come Alevism is associated with Shi`ism? How do *Buyruks* speak of Shi`ite themes? What do they mean to the Alevis? Is the existence of some subjects regarded as Shi`ite sufficient to attribute Alevism to Shi`ism?

### 2.2. The Origins of the *Buyruks*

The well-accepted view is that the *Buyruks* originated from the Safavi propaganda texts that arrived in Anatolia through the *khalifas – khalifas* are believed to be the preeminent religious scholars who trained in Iran and came to Anatolia to propagate the Safavid’s religious and political discourses. This idea has its origin in the sixteenth century Ottoman Muhimme Registers that speak of thirty-four pieces of *rafidi* books (heretical books) that were distributed in Çorum by the Kızılbaş *khalifas*. According to this view, the link between the Kızılbaş and the Safavids had continued even after the *Chaldiran* war in 919/1514. The question that needs to be asked here is: what is the true

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242 Refik, *On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşılık*. 
nature of this connection? Is the connection religious or political? How did this affect the Kızılbaş’s position at that time in Anatolia? By then, the Safavids had declared Shi‘ism to be the official religion of the state. Why is that those books are defined as rafidi books but not as Shi‘ite?

On the other hand, this chapter claims that the BUYRUKS could possibly have originated from the SAFWATU-S SAFA, a hagiographic book that describes the life and thoughts of Shaykh Safi (649/1252 – 734/1334). None of the works that I am aware of, however, discuss the BUYRUKS in relation to the SAFWATU-S SAFA. Sönmez Kutlu is the only scholar who refers to the SAFWATU-S SAFA with the name ‘BUYRUK.’ In his work of exploring the SAFWATU-S SAFA, Sönmez Kutlu used the title MAĞLĀT: ŞEYH SAFI BUYRUGHU. Depending on the title and the content of his work, I have come to the conclusion that Kutlu connects the BUYRUKS with the SAFWATU-S SAFA.243

SAFWATU-S SAFA appears to have been the earliest book that discusses the Safavid genealogy. The oldest copy analyzed by Mirza Abbaslı was assembled in 758/1357.244 Throughout time, the text has gone through noticeable changes. In the later-made copies of the SAFWATU-S SAFA, Shaykh Safi was presented as a sayyid — his genealogy was attributed to Musa Kadhim, one of the Twelve Imams. This information, however, has been criticized and denied by historians. Historical data shows that the Safavid dynasty comes

243 Safi al-Din, Sönmez Kutlu, and Nizamettin Parlak. MAĞLĀT: ŞEYH SAFİ BÜYRUĞU. (İstanbul: Horasan Yayınları, 2008). Kutlu provided the edited Ottoman text and a facsimile of the original text; Tevekkülü b. Ismail Ibn Bezzaz. SAFWATU-S SAFA. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi: Ayasofya Bölümü, no. 3099, folios: 31a-31b, 196a.

from the lineage of Firuz Shah, a Kurd from Sinjar. Firuz Shah is the ancestor of Shaykh Safi-al Din (649/1252 – 734/1334), who came to the region near Ardabil during the tenth century. Attribution of Shaykh Safi’s descent to Muhammad is not the only change in the book. Every single piece of information related to Sunni Islam was either displaced or completely erased from the texts written after the fifteenth century. In the original text, the first three caliphs — Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman along with Aisha (the beloved wife of Muhammad) — were praised. In the latter texts, however, these parts were defaced and instead, statements of reverence to Ali, *ahl al-bayt*, and the Twelve Imams, were added. In the place of the saying ‘*hulefa-i Rasidin*’ (four rightly-guided caliphs), the phrase of ‘*Emir-ul muminin Ali*’ (Ali is the Commander of the Faithful) was interpolated. Every single term concerning Sunnis was wiped out or replaced by a Shi`ite one. The grandfather of Shaykh Safi was called ‘*Kutbeddin Abu Bakr*’ in the previous manuscripts, but only the name ‘*Kutbeddin*’ was mentioned in the later ones.

All of those expressions linked to Shi`ism are not an unfamiliar occurrence in the *Buyruks*. It is of great interest in the context of the present section to report that subjects like *sharia*, *tariqa*, *ma`rifa* and *hakiqa* mentioned in the *Safwatu-s Safa* (*Tezkire-i Seykh Safi*) bear much resemblance to those cited in the *Buyruks*. Additionally, the scope of the *Safwatu-s Safa* has substantially changed with the writing of Ebul Feth Huseyni (976/1569) by the request of Shah Tahmasp I (948/1576). It is quite essential to point out

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the fact that the earliest Buyruk manuscript was also formed around the same time, again with the command of Shah Tahmasp I. Accordingly, it is likely to claim that the writer of the former Buyruk text did benefit from the Safwatu-s Safa.

2.3. The Shaykh Safi Buyruks & The Imam Jafar Buyruks

The Buyruk texts are divided into two categories based on the persons to whom they are attributed. Some are claimed to be the collected teaching of Shaykh Safi, the founder of the Safavid order, while others are traced back to Imam Jafar, the sixth Imam of Twelver Shi’ism. Although the Buyruks are attributed to these two important figures, it is beyond doubt that these texts were not written by either of these two. The texts attributed to Imam Jafar were not even based on the sayings of Imam Jafar.

Shaykh Safi Buyruks are written in the question/answer form used between Shaykh Safi and his son Shaykh Sadreddin. One of the texts that will be scrutinized here is claimed to be the earliest written by Shaykh Safi Buyruk. It was formed, according to Gölpinarlı, by Bisati around the sixteenth century during the reign of Shah Tahmasp I (930/1524 – 983/1576) to promote the propaganda of the Safavid ideology among his Anatolian partisans. In 1020/1612, this manuscript was copied for the first time by Mehmed Ibni Habib in Manisa. The original hand-written version of the manuscript is preserved in Konya Mevlana Müzesi Ferid Uğur Kitaplığı no 1172. Ahmet Taşğın transliterated this

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248 There also appears an underrepresented third category _ The Virani Baba Buyruk. Virani Baba. The Virani Baba Buyruk: Nazım ve 1. Hazret-i Virani Baba. (Kahire: Matbaat ül-Hacer ül-Fahire, 1873).
249 Even today, the majority of Alevi, stated Bozkurt, an Alvevi scholar, have come to believe that the Buyruks are the collected teachings of Imam Jafar. Bozkurt, Buyruk, 5.
250 Gölpinarlı, Tarîh Boyunca Islam Mezhepleri ve Şiiilik, 178.
manuscript into the modern Turkish script using a facsimile of the original script. Another manuscript (dated 1016/1608) that will be analyzed here is saved in Mevlana Müzesi Abdülbaki Kütüphanesi, no 181. In 1994, a Turkish version of it was published by Mehmet Yaman, however, he did not provide a facsimile of the original.

The Imam Jafar Buyruks are narrated as if it was dictated by Imam Jafar. It even begins with a statement announcing that the Buyruk is composed entirely from the words of Imam Jafar. This section continues, ‘its words are quite clear and precise. It explains the subjects of sharia, tariqa, ma’rifa and hakiqa and the methods related to them.’ There also appear non-Qur’anic expressions as if they were said by God — these statements are neither cited in the Qur’an nor regarded as qodzi hadith. The known Imam Jafar Buyruks were not dated until the nineteenth century. The oldest text (dated 1291/1875) seems to be Risale-i Tariyat-ı Imam Cafer Sadık, which consists of 21 folios. Though there are references to Ali, this manuscript does not have any particular section peculiar to the Twelve Imams. A longer manuscript (also dated 1292/1875) titled Hâzâ Risâle-i Cebbar Kulu, which consists of 83 folios. None of the chapter titles mention Ali or the Twelve Imams. A third manuscript (dated 1308/1890) called Menâkıb-ı Imam Cafer Es-Sâdik

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253 Aytekin, Buyruk, 6; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 11.
254 Qudsi hadith regarded to be the words of God, however, expressed in Muhammad’s words. Bozkurt, Buyruk, 46.
255 This manuscript was preserved in the private library of Yesari Gökçe.
256 For the titles of the each part, see Kaplan, “Aleviliğin Yazılı Kaynaklarından Buyruklar ve Muhtevaları Üzerine,” 4.
257 This is also guarded in the family library of Yesari Gökçe.
Radiyallahu Anhu, contains 87 folios. While the names of Ali, Hasan and Husayn occur in the chapter titles, there is no specific section dedicated to the Twelve Imams. The rest of the known Imam Jafar Buyruk is undated. Here we will also rely on an undated copy that was published in 1958 by Sefer Aytekin. Aytekin’s work is the first published Buyruk text in Turkish. Even though he did not provide the original facsimile of these manuscripts, Aytekin’s work has been the most cited and well accepted by later scholarship. Then in 1982, Fuat Bozkurt wrote a Buyruk in Turkish, which is descendant upon the same manuscripts used by Aytekin. Bozkurt reorganized the sections and matched the related ones, which appears to have made it more useful. This research will refer to the both of those Buyruks when needed.

This chapter will compare the shared and unshared functions of the Alid cause or Shi’ite elements within three different Buyruk manuscripts — two are from the Shaykh Safi Buyruks, which are dated in the early seventeenth century (1016/1608 and 1020/1612), and one is from the Imam Jafar Buyruk, which was copied in the early twentieth century. The primary goal of this research is to reveal as fact whether or not the information related to Shi’ite beliefs provided by the three manuscripts is coherent. I then intend to compare and contrast those given statements linked to the Alid cause

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259 This manuscript was also reserved in the library of Yesari Gökçe.
261 Aytekin, Buyruk.
262 Before Aytekin’s book, an Arabic book known as buyruk was published in Iraq by Ahmad Hamid al-Sarraf. Ahmad Hamid al-Sarraf. al-Shabak, min Firaq al-Qulat fi’l-Iraq. (Bagdad: Matbaat al-Maarif 1954). This buyruk written for the Shabak community, claimed Togan, was formed based upon the Turkish buyruk manuscript – Manaqib of Seykh Safi. (Zeki Velidi Togan. “Londra ve Tahrandaki İslami Yazmalardan Bazılarına Dair,” in İslami Tetkikleri Enstitüsü Dergisi, III, (Istanbul 1959-1960), Parts 1-2, 152.
263 For this information, see Introduction.
264 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu; Taşgın, Şeyh Səfi Buyruğu; Aytekin, Buyruk.
between Shi`ite and Alevi. Further, this chapter will highlight how the three texts employ Ali as a key component of their expression of belief, while the remaining eleven Imams are only occasionally mentioned by name. This chapter will then ascertain how some doctrines essential to Shi`ism are disowned in the Buyruk texts. The information with regard to Ali, the Imams, ahl al-bayt, and so on, given in the Imam Jafar Buyruk overlapped almost entirely with the Shaykh Safi Buyruks. There appear two essential sections, however, on the praise of the Imams and the Shi`ite sect that are partially different from the older Buyruks. It is because of this that I will provide both sections in translation and independently analyze them.

### 2.4. Alevi Trinity: Allah-Muhammad-Ali

The saying of Allah-Muhammad-Ali (in Nusayri texts it is Ali Muhammad Saloman) has become popular as the Alevi ‘trinity’ concept. These three terms are pointed out one after another without having a preamble between. In the Shaykh Safi Buyruks, there is only one expression of the Alevi ‘trinity’ placed in the 1020/1612 dated text, where Shaykh Safi says, ‘if a fugitive talib (disciple) does not perform the saint’s morals, Allah-Muhammad-Ali would have had enough of him.’ On the other hand, this expression is often referred in the Imam Jafar Buyruk. ‘Erkan (convention), belongs to the Allah-Muhammad-Ali.’ It is of great importance to clarify the fact that with this phrase, Allah was not classified to either of the two, or was he equated to them. In the Buyruks, Allah is

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265 Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 64
266 Bozkurt, Buyruk, 50.
described as the only real entity and the ultimate Divine Being. Only Allah should be the worshipped. Allah is the Supreme Beloved, Creator and Constructor. Muhammad was described as the Prophet of Allah and Ali was specified as the wali (saint) of Islam.

In terms of its perception of God, the Alevi trinity concept of ‘Allah-Muhammad-Ali’ has no parallel with the Christian Trinity of ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’ The Alevi trinity of Allah-Muhammad-Ali, as pointed out by Bedri Noyan, a respected Alevi dede and scholar, represents the sequence of love. There is only One God who is Allah. Muhammad and Ali have never been regarded as God. In contrast, the idea of ‘One God’ in the Christian Trinity has been expressed as ‘One God in three Persons.’ It should be noted, however, that the three divine Persons are not the same as persons or individuals in a human sense, but instead refer to the interpersonal distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within the one Divine Being of God. Furthermore, the three distinct Persons are said to indwell one another within the divine unity with no division of essence. Therefore, according to the Christian concept, the One God is triune in nature. It should be clear then, that the Alevi trinity is not the same as the Christian concept.

There appears an extra reverence for Ali who is characterized as the Asadullah (Lion of Allah), the Amir al-Mu’minin (Commander of the Faithful), and the Aliyun Waliyullah (Friend of Allah). It is quite important to point out that many of these expressions, such as the ‘Asadullah’ and the ‘Amir al-Mu’minin’ that are used to define

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267 Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 73; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 131.
269 Yaman, Erdebulli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu, 43-78; Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 25, folio 9a.
Ali, also are common feature of the Sunni and Shi`ites books.\textsuperscript{270} The phrase ‘Aliyun Waliyullah’ is the only statement lacking in the Sunni sources, however, it has a great importance in the Shi`ite belief. The Shi`ites even recite ‘Aliyun Waliyullah’ in the Kalima Shahada and Adhan. The Kalima Shahada in Shi`ism is ‘la ilaha illallah muhammadur rasulullah ali un wali allah’ (There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God. Ali is the Wali of God.) Referring to Ali as the ‘Wali of Allah’ in Shi`ism means that Ali has the political authority over the entire Muslim community. The recital of Aliyun Waliyullah within the Buyruks does not, however, carry the implication of leadership, but rather denotes that here the Sufi understanding is dominant. Hence, I preferred to translate the phrase ‘Wali of Allah’ as the ‘Friend of Allah.’ Such a translation corresponds with the whole content of the Buyruk texts. This is because in the Buyruks, Ali is never referred to as having political authority over the Muslim community.

It is believed in Shi`ism that Ali was appointed by Muhammad at Ghadir Khum as his successor. According to the tradition, the Prophet Muhammad performed the last pilgrimage to Mecca. Thus the last pilgrimage has become popular as ‘Hajjatul-Widaa’ (the Farewell Pilgrimage). During his return journey, Muhammad delivered a sermon to the people who were with him at a place called Ghadir Khum. This event of Ghadir Khum is not only mentioned in the Shia sources, but some of the Sunni hadith books also confirm the event. Here I will cite the hadith from the Musnad of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Sunni hadith

\textsuperscript{270} Some hadiths describing the relation of Muhammad with Ali, are also stated in the Sunni Books. The hadith of ‘I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate.’ Yaman, Erdebili Şeyh Saif Buyruğu, 44; A hadith ‘I am the house of wisdom and Ali is its door’ that parallels this one also cited in the Sunan of al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH.), one of the Six Authentic hadith books for the ahli Sunnah. Al-Tirmidhi. Sunan. V/IX, (Ezher Universitesi, 1975), 237.
collections. Muhammad said:

Do you not acknowledge that I have more right over the believers than what they have on themselves? And people replied as ‘Yes.’ And then, Muhammad held up Ali’s hand and said: to whoever I am his leader (mawla), Ali also his leader (mawla). God, love those who love Ali, and be the enemy of those who are hostile to him.271

This tradition has caused much debate between Sunni and Shi`ite believers. Relying on the aforementioned hadith, the Shi’a have come to believe that the main reason for Muhammad’s final sermon at Ghadir Khum was to announce Ali as his successor. This stands in opposition to Sunni belief, according to which any of the sahaba (Companion of Muhammad) who is trustworthy, reliable and supported by the ulama could be nominated for the leadership of the community.272 Conversely, the Shi’a only recognize Ali as the first legitimate ruler of the Muslim community, the first Imam, and named him Commander of the Faithful (amir al-mu`minin). Hence, Shi`ism established its central dogmas on the view that the leadership was determined by divine order and given to Ali. So that only the one descended from Ali can be the leader.273 Therefore, the legitimacy of the first three caliphs that succeeded Muhammad has not been acknowledged by the Shi`a. Eventually, Ali became the central object of a cult unlike any other personality in the history of Islam, including the Prophet himself. The historical personality of Ali evolved into a mythological personality. Many minority religious groups, including the Imamiyya, Ismailis and

Zaydiyya, Nusayris, ahl-i Haqq, the Druze, and Alevis have placed Ali at the center of their belief system.

The perception of Ali, however, differs in the Buyruks, as they do not address the matter of Ali being the successor of Muhammad. Even in the saying that explains the last will left to Ali by Muhammad, there is no sign of the succession of Ali. Muhammad delivers his last will and testament to Ali — this speech is about sharia, tariqa, ma’rifa and hakiqa. Muhammad says: ‘sharia is for prophets, tariqa is for saints (walis), ma’rifa is for the people who are following the path of the saints, and finally hakiqa is reunion with the Haqq (the Divine Truth). All these matters are left to Ali as a trophy.’\(^{274}\) This passage proceeds with the statement, ‘Ali, the Lion of Allah, acknowledged the will and sermon of Prophet Muhammad and wrote them in a precious and great book. He always read this book and performed his deeds with them.’\(^{275}\)

The chapter ‘Musahip’ (companion) is the common theme of all three Buyruk texts. It talks about how Muhammad and Ali have become companions. Three of them mention an anecdote about how such companionship was actualized, according to which Muhammad and Ali entered into one gown and showed their heads from one collar. Muhammad and Ali had become one body.\(^{276}\) Even though the information in this particular chapter parallels with one another in all three Buyruks, in the 1016/1608 dated text there exists information that challenges my argument. ‘Come Ey Ali! Pay homage to me and the sahabe (companions of Muhammad) should pay homage to you. Whoever back

\(^{274}\) Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu, 43.
\(^{275}\) Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu, 44.
\(^{276}\) See Shankland for the entire narrative, Shankland, The Alevis in Turkey, 82-84.
down from the homage that means they turn away from me. Whoever turns away from me, turns away from Allah.’ The following expression is, ‘whoever accepts me as a master, Ali is his master.’ Then it cites the verse ‘O Believers, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those entrusted with authority from among you.’ It further states that with this verse the imamate of Ali has become definite. The concern that I raise here is that if this part existed in the original version of the Buyruk text, then this part would probably appear in at least two other of the referred texts. There does not, however, appear any other information that supports this statement. Therefore, I claim here that this section was added to this particular text by the copyist. Aside from this particular section, Ali; however, provides the basis of the Alevi faith, he is identified as the political authority over the Muslim community.

Ali is often referenced along with Muhammad but is sometimes mentioned separately. Muhammad was ranked in a higher position than Ali in that Muhammad is the Prophet, and Ali is the wali. In one particular place, Ali appears to have a higher position than Muhammad: “When Muhammad saw Ali he made him room, with a salute. The forty, Muhammad joining in, bowed, made way and gave him room.” This chapter came to be known as ‘the cem of the forty,’ that delivers an anecdote about the gathering of the forty. Although the content of this specific chapter overlap each other within all three texts, the statement that ranks Ali over Muhammad was only cited in the Imam Jafar Buyruk. Also, it is important to note that the information provided in this Buyruk appears to have been

277 The Qur’an 4/59.
278 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyrüğu, 78.
279 Aytekin, Buyruk, 7-8; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 13-18.
280 For an English translation of the section of ‘the cem of the forty,’ see, Shankland. The Alevi in Turkey, 84.
quite obscure and peculiar. One noticeable bizarre expression is that “however, Muhammad sat by the side of Ali, he did not realize he was him.” Muhammad realizes that Ali was there when they said. “Our holy leader is Ali, without doubt and without dispute.”

2.5. The Doctrine of Imamate

This chapter argues that the Buyruk texts do not recognize the Imams as the political and legal basis for the community as do the Shi’a, but only emphasizes their religious position by defining them as Imams. This chapter further argues that the Alevi Buyruk manuscripts did not embrace the Shi’ite Imamate doctrine, but rather addressed the Imams as objects of veneration with special attention given to the ahl al-bayt. In the text dated 1608, a part titled Haza Kitabi Hutbe-i Düvaz-deh Imam (A khutbah of the Twelve Imams), purely glorifies Muhammad and makes reference to the ahl al-bayt without even mentioning any of the Imams, not even Ali. The outstanding theme here is that ‘loving the household of Muhammad is as important as loving Muhammad.’ The phrase ‘of the Twelve Imams’ appeared in the title only to imply descent from Muhammad. Depending on this section and a few similar ones, I have come to the conclusion that the Imams are important only because they are from the ahl al-bayt.

The real emphasis has always been on the ahl al-bayt. The well-known hadith concerning the division of the Muslim community into seventy-three sects or orders can be

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281 Aytekin, Buyruk, 7-8; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 13-18.  
282 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu, 41.
cited here in support of this claim. According to the hadith, Muhammad says, ‘My Ummah (people) will split up into 72 sects. Seventy-one of them will go to hell; only the one will be saved.’ When it is asked, which one is the saved one? Muhammad says, ‘the one that follows the path of my descent will be saved.’

The coming hadith parallels with the previous one. Muhammad says, ‘my God, be a friend to the one who is a friend of Ali and his descent. And be hostile to the one who is hostile to Ali and his descent…’ A similar expression is said by God, ‘Muhammed! Whoever likes you and your household, I would forgive his sins no matter how big they are, my mercy will be upon him. And whoever does not like you and your household, hell is the only place for him no matter how often he has worshipped.’

All of these statements show that reverence to ahl al-bayt has a particular importance in the Alevi faith. Such love and reverence is not limited to the Twelve Imams. Loving Muhammad-Ali and the ahl al-bayt is actually expressed with the term ‘tawalla.’ In contrast, the word tabarra is used to define the position where a person who loves ahl al-bayt is also required to disconnect himself from the enemies of Muhammad-Ali. Tawalla and tabarra are regarded to be one of the most essential requirements that an Alevi has to acknowledge.

The notion Twelve Imams is also concerned in the context of ‘tawalla, however, the real emphasis is being placed on the ahl al-bayt. In contrast, in Shi’ism, tawalla also means acknowledging the religious and political authority of the Imams.

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283 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buıruğu, 80; This hadith is also cited in the Sunni hadith resources, however here it states ‘My Ummah will split into 73 sects.’ Ibn Hanbal. Musnad. Volume 2/6, (Cairo: Matba’a al-Maymaniyya, 1313/1869), 332.
284 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buıruğu, 80.
285 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buıruğu, 41.
286 Yaman, Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buıruğu, 73.
Additionally, unlike the Shi’ite sources, in the relevant Buyruk texts, the first three caliphs have never been subjected to the hatred in the context of tabarra. Only in a particular section of the Imam Jafar Buyruk are the names of the first three caliphs addressed:

When nothing was created yet, the light of Muhammad-Ali existed and they were one. They had became two during the time of Abdullah and Abu Talib. The light of Muhammad sprung from Abdullah and the light of Ali originated from Abu Talib. No one knew the mystery of Muhammed-Ali. And then, seventy-two communities became seventy-two sects. Thirty-six of them became kharijite who liked Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. And the rest of the thirty-six factions have become from the sect of Shia they were all together with Muhammad and Ali on the matters of dört kapı (four gates), kirk makam (forty positions), and on yedi erkan (seventeen rules). They entered from the same gate and left from the one. They eat at the same table and drink from the same cup. There was no curtain between them. They say that, ‘this path is the sharia of Muhammad-Ali.’ They did not hide anything from one another . . . However, the Kharijite did not learn this method from Muhammad-Ali. Their works were not coherent with one another on the rites of dört kapı (four gates), kirk makam (forty positions), and on yedi erkan (seventeen rules). Hence they eat in their own table and drink from their own cups and enter and leave from their own gates.\(^{287}\)

As mentioned earlier, the names of the first three caliphs are omitted from the later Buyruks so that this is the only passage in which the names are mentioned. The problem of this part is that the people who support the Caliphate of Ebu Bakr, Omar and Uthman were called ‘Kharijite’ and not Sunni. However, the term ‘Kharijite’ has never been used to classify Sunnis. It is instead used as a term to define the first Islamic group that traced its beginning to the crisis of Caliphate that appeared right after the death of Muhammad. At first, a group of people supported the Caliphate of Ali, but later broke away from him and

\(^{287}\) Aytekin, *Buyruk*, 214.
were subsequently called *Kharijite* (seceders) due to their rejection of Ali’s Caliphate. The *Kharijite* were neither favored by the Shi’ites nor by the Sunnis. Hence, although this part reflects an Alid-centered Islam, it appears to have been outside the scope of the classical Sunni-Shia discourse.

While for Sunnis, the Caliphate means to be both political and religious leader of the community and *imam* means to be the person who leads prayer and teaches religion, the ultimate authority has always been the Qur’an and the Sunna. Even the Caliph and the *imam* can be challenged and questioned in his decision. For Shi’ites, however, *imam* means more than this and takes on a different meaning that centers in the emergence of the Imamate. As Amir-Moezzi pointed out (from classical Shi’ite sources) in his work, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi’ism*, the esoteric, hidden, secret (*batin*) side of the Divine Truth (*al-haqq*) is revealed through the Imamate.\(^{288}\) He even states that according to Shi’ite tradition, the Imams are always compared to the prophets — some even see the Imams as superior to the prophets. There are also some supernatural characteristics of the Imams stated in the classical Shi’ite sources; they are always conscious even in their sleep and the Imam continues to live even after he leaves the physical world.\(^ {289}\) In the *Buyruks*, however, there only appear simply references to the Imams as only their names are indicated without giving detailed information about their characteristics.

In both *Shaykh Safi Buyruks*, the entire names of the Twelve Imams are only once


Neither of them gives detailed information about the Imams. The names of each Imam are stated in the former text in the content section ‘musahip’ (companion). Here it says, ‘Imams, one by one, winded the belt around their waist. That belt was inherited from the prophet Ibrahim to Muhammad. Muhammad gave it to Ali, and Ali legated it to his sons.’ In the other Shaykh Safi Buyruk, there exists one particular section that talks about the Imams, their tombs, and the name of the person who martyred each Imam. The title makes it clear that it is all about the Imams, but it interestingly begins with Muhammad stating he was sixty-three when he died and was buried in Medina. It continues with Ali, calling him Imam Ali, *Karramallahu Wajhah* (may Allah honor his face), and says that he also lived for sixty-three years and served as an Imam for only five years. He was martyred by Abdurrahman Ibn Muljam and buried in Najaf. The following Imams are mentioned as Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, Imam Zayn al-Abidin, Imam Muhammad Baqir, Imam Jafar Sadiq, Imam Musa Kadhim, Imam Ali Musa al-Ridha, Imam Muhammad Taqi, Imam Ali Naqi, Imam Hasan al-Askari, and it ends with Imam Mehdi saying that his situation is known. Apart from Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Zayn al-Abidin and Imam Jafar, the names of the rest of the names of the Imams are only mentioned in this section. Only in one part the names of Hasan and Husayn are linked to Muhammad-Ali.

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291 David Shankland has given a literal translation of this section. See, Shankland. *The Alevis in Turkey*, 82-84.
2.6. Repudiation of other Shi`ite elements

After an elaborate research, this work claims that with the exception of reference to the Twelve Imams, the fundamental doctrines of Shi`ism are not recognized and are even denied in the Buyruk texts. The ‘isma belief (infallibility of prophets and Imams from committing sin and error), which is one of the essences of religious doctrine of the Shi`a and Sunni, can be mentioned here as an example. The notion of ‘isma is believed to be a natural faculty of the prophets and the Imams that protects them from sin, even though they have the capacity of committing sin.\(^\text{295}\) For the Sunnis, only the prophets are regarded as infallible. According to Shi`ite scholars, the Imams are equal to the prophets in the matter of the ‘isma. The evidences for the infallibility of the prophets are also applicable to the Imams.\(^\text{296}\) Ibn Ishaq al-Kulayni (255/869 – 328/940), a Shia hadith collector, in his famous book al-Kafi,\(^\text{297}\) states that:

Imams, however are not nabi, are the person who has been given revelation, their maqam (position) is the same with the prophet’s. The matter of revelation, as the prophets hear the sayings of the angels and see them distance them from the prophets due to their incapacity of seeing the angels. Imams are away from doing mistakes and committing sins. The Holy Spirit that transferred from the Prophet Muhammad to Imams is the main source of infallibility of the Imams.\(^\text{298}\)

In the Buyruks, there is no mention of the ‘isma in relation to the Imams. Rather there appear some statements in opposition to this dogma. The anecdote about Imam Zayn

\(^ {295} \) Muhammad ibn Mukarram ibn Manzūr. Liṣān al-ʿArab, XII, (Beirut: al-Matbaʿat al-Kutub, 1990), 403.
\(^ {297} \) An important Shia hadith collection.
al-Abidin proves my point: “When he was imprisoned by evil Yazid, he cried through thinking of [the] afterworld. He is asked why are you frightened, since Muhammad-Ali are your grandfathers. He said: if I am asked who is my grandfather, saying Imam Husayn would be enough form me. However, we will not be judged depending on who our father is, but what we had done in this world [it is that which] will designate our afterlife.”

In all three texts, there is only one passage, where the term ‘masum’, which means infallible or innocent, is used to describe Ali: ‘ve eshedu enne emirulmuminin Ali ibn Ebi Talib esedullahi’l-galib imamen masumen’ (I testify that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib is an infallible [or innocent] Imam). Does the term ‘masum’ here refer to the ‘isma of Ali? The term ‘isma’ not only means infallible, but also means innocent. The literal translation of the Turkish word ‘masum’ also means innocent. There also appears no further information supporting the infallibility of ‘Ali. Given that, I argue that the term ‘masum’ here actually means innocent.

Additionally, in Shi‘ite belief the Twelve Imams along with Muhammad and Fatima are classified as the fourteen infallibles. Within the Buyruk texts, however, the section titled Der beyan-i cihardeh-i masum-u pak talks about the fourteen infallibles but do not refer to the Imams. They only refer to the sons of the Imams who died in early age — it is the sons of the Imams who are recognized as the fourteen pure infallibles. The belief in ‘isma not only protects the Imams from committing sins and error, but also gives legitimacy to their absolute authority. Reference to the children of the Imams (who died at

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299 This anecdote is only cited in Bozkurt, Buyruk, 31.
300 Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 95.
301 Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 70, folio 62b-63a-63b.
a very early age instead of the Imams) under the title of the fourteen infallibles shows that the ´isma of Ali and his descendants is not recognized in the Alevi faith. In the following part of this particular section, it says ´if someone does not acknowledge Twelve Imams and fourteen pure infallibles, then he cannot be a true dervish.´ This displays that the recognition of the sons of the Imams who died at an early age is as important as the acknowledgment of the Imams and that they are regarded as essential in the faith; interestingly, the names given by Sayhk Safi Buyruk and Imam Jafar Buyruk contradict one another. For example, in the former text Imam Mehdi is referred to as the fourteenth infallible, while in the latter text the son of Imam Taqi is stated as the fourteenth one. Tayyib, the son of Ali Musa al-Ridha is referred to as the Eleventh Imam in the Shaykh Safi Buyruk, while in the other text, Tayyib’s father is said to be Musa Kadhim (the Seventh Imam). The sequence of the names is also different in both texts.

The concept of khalifa (Caliphate) in the Buyruks is also embraced quite differently from both the Sunni and Shi’ite understanding. In the Shaykh Safi Buyruk, in a particular part explaining the notion of khalifa, its meaning, feature and requirement, the prophet Adam is presented as the first khalifa and Muhammad as the second one. The prophets between these two are also regarded as khalifa. With the death of Muhammad, Ali and then

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302 Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 71.
303 For the comparison, see Bozkurt, Buyruk, 298, footnotes 121-12, and Taşğın, Şeyh Sâfi Buyruğu, 70-71, folio 62b-63a-63b. Since the list given by Bozkurt is the most common one, here I will give the names based upon that text. 1) Muhammed Akbar — the son of Ali, buried in Bagdad. 2) Abdullah — the son of Hasan, buried in Badgad. 3) Abdullah — the son of Husayn, buried in Karbala. 4) Kadhim — the son of Husayn, buried in Karbala. 5) Husayn — the son of Zayn al-Abidin, buried in Basra. 6) Kadhim — the son of Zayn al-Abidin, buried in Basar. 7) Ali al-Aftar — the son of Baqir, buried in Sivas, Turkey. 8) Abdullah —the son of Jafar, buried in Bistam. 9) Yahya el-Hadi — the son of Jafar, buried in Kufa, Iraq. 10) Salih — the son of Musa Kadhim, buried in Sivas, Turkey. 11) Tayyib — the son of Musa Kadhim, buried in Shiraz. 12) Jafar — the son of Muhammad Taqi, buried in Quds. 13) Jafar— the son of Hasan al-Askari, buried in Deyr. 14) Kadhim — the son of Hasan al-Askari, buried in Algeria.
the remaining eleven Imams had become *khalifas*, one after another, but the Caliphate, however, does not end there. The entire lineage of the Imams is also admitted as *khalifas*. Anyone of *sayyid* descent who is sent to a city as a deputy is considered to be a *khalifa*. According to the *Buyruks*, the Caliphate does not begin with the Islamic era. Also the process continues for as long as *sayyid* descent exists. In one place in the *Imam Jafar Buyruk*, the Twelve Imams are defined with the notion of *khalifa* where it says: ‘The Twelve Imams are the Caliph.’ Furthermore, the term *khalifa* and the term *rehber* (religious guide) are often used interchangeably. And in one particular place, the term *khalifa* is used as a synonym for the word *pir* (spiritual master).

The usage of the notion *khalifa* in the *Buyruks* is nearly applicable to that in Qur’an. The Qur’an addresses Adam as the first *khalif* on the earth: “Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, “I am going to appoint a *khalifa* (Caliph) on the earth.” A quite similar expression is, “It is He, who has made you the *khalifa* (Caliph) on the earth, and raised some of you above others in ranks so that He may test you in what he has given you. Indeed your Lord is swift in inflicting punishment” yet he is also very forgiving and Merciful.” Howbeit, the concept of *khalifa* has always been perceived as the position of Islamic leadership (religious and political) by both Sunnis and Shi`is.

The Sunni theory of Caliphate differs from the Shi`ite in theological, political and ideological terms. For Sunnis, there seems to have been no systematized, canonical, and

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305 Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, 68.
308 The Qur’an 2/30.
309 The Qur’an 6/165.
methodological rules for determining the leadership of the community: Abu Bakr was an elected *khalifa*, Umar was appointed by Abu Bakr, Uthman was also a selected *khalifa* by a committee of six men who were chosen by Umar, and Ali was elected by a number of prominent *sahaba* (Companion of Muhammad) by the way of paying homage to him. After the Caliphate of Muawiya and his son Yazid, the title was adopted by two Islamic dynasties in which the office of the Caliphate became hereditary in the two lines of the Umayyads and the Abbasids. In opposition to Sunnis, Shi’ites did not recognize the legitimacy of the first three caliphs, and to them, the Caliphate begins with Ali. The office of the Caliphate has been commemorated as the office of the ‘*Imamate*.’ As stated earlier in this chapter, it is believed that Ali was appointed by divine order at a place called *Ghadir Khum*. Only the one who is a lineal descendant of Ali and through him to the Prophet Muhammad can be the *Imam*. The office of *Imamate* ended with the occultation of the Twelfth Imam in 873.\(^{310}\) In the Sunni tradition the office of the Caliphate continued for a longer time\(^{311}\) transferring from the last Abbasid Caliph of Cairo in 1517 to the Ottoman Sultans and then lasting up to the beginning of the Turkish Republic in 1923, after which it was abolished. After analyzing the concept of the Caliphate, how it was recognized and practiced by Sunnis and Shi’ite, and by studying its scope within the *Buyruk* texts, it seems likely to argue that the office of the Caliphate as adopted by the Sunnis and Shi’ites is neither applicable nor recognized in the Alevi *Buyruk* texts.

Further, there is also no reference in the *Buyruk* manuscripts to the *ghayba*

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\(^{311}\) The Office of Caliphate has been abolished with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey.
(occultation) of the Twelfth Imam. While the Imamate ended with the occultation of the Twelfth Imam in the Twelver Shi’ism, the Ismailis continued to have an Imam. According to Twelver theology, this major occultation will not end until the end of time and at that time Imam Mahdi will come out to fight against cruelty and ensure justice on earth. In the Buyruks, however, Imam Mehdi is only mentioned as the ‘Imam of the time,’ and there appears no further information about his disappearance appears. Depending on all the above given statements, this chapter challenges the scholarship that labels Alevi as Shi’ite.

Before making my final point on this, I would like to mention the differences in the application of sharia law between the Alevi and the Shi’is. The sharia law of Shi’ism is derived from the teaching of Imam Ja’far Sadiq, the Sixth Imam. As stated earlier the notion of sharia has been regarded as one of the dört kapı (four gates), with the other gates being classified as tariqa, ma’rifa, and hakiqa. The information given in the Buyruks about the concept of sharia does not parallel with the scope of the makams (position) of sharia as addressed in the book of Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid fî def’i’l-mefâsid of Ahmet Rıfat Efendi. While, like Shi’ite Islam, Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid lists daily prayer, alms-giving, fasting, pilgrimage to Hajj as the essential requirements of sharia, the Buyruk describes the sharia in terms of knowing, hearing, and worshiping God. In one place, the Buyruks state that sharia belongs to the Prophet Muhammad and is the almighty door that secludes

313 Daftary, The Isma’ils, 140-143.
315 Ahmet Rıfat Efendi, Mir’âtü’l-mekâsid, 222-249.
the Hakk (the truth) from the batil (deception).\textsuperscript{316}

To the best of my knowledge, none of the essential religious requirements of the sharia are described in the Buyruk, not even the five pillars of Islam adopted by the mainstream Shi`is and Sunnis. Additionally, while four of the five pillars are not applicable in the Alevi belief system, some other rules including the ban on drinking alcohol are also not applied by the Alevis. Instead the Alevis premeditate the consumption of alcohol and do so particularly during their public religious practice called cem. Besides that, there is no requirement for women to wear a veil. And they do not go to the mosques. Rather they choose to perform their rituals in a place called cemevi (community house). It is evident that as far as Alevism is concerned, the sharia rules are not strictly applied nor are they understood as essential to Islam, nor are they regarded in the same vein as the Shi`is and Sunnis.

The information within the Buyruks, interpreted as a sign of Shi`ism, is in fact a confirmation of the Alid loyalty that, from the eleventh century onwards, had become quite popular within nearly all of the Sufi orders: in their silsiles (chains), nearly all of which traced their genealogy back to the Prophet Muhammad through Ali.\textsuperscript{317} That might be because of the charm associated with the position of sayyid-hood as it naturally provides a religious authority and an endless charisma. This reality verifies the central theme of this chapter, according to which, the glorification of Ali and ahl al-bayt must not be entangled with sectarian concerns. And thus, Alid loyalty does not necessarily reflect the

\textsuperscript{316} Bozkurt, Buyruk, 171.
\textsuperscript{317} Moin, Islam and the Millennium, 60-61.
characteristics of classical Shi’ism.

Up to now, I have analyzed the scope of three different Buyruk texts to delve into the nature of the Ali-centered religious view, the office of Imamate, the perception of Twelve Imams and Fourteen Infallibles, and other Shi’ite base religious dogmas. However, the texts engaged in this chapter are presented under a comprehensive title of the Buyruk, each of which appeared to have been three different books, and yet each with rich and complex interrelated themes. There only appear two exclusive chapters in the Imam Jafar Buyruk that were dedicated to the Twelve Imams and Shia faith: İmamların Övgüsü [The Praise of the Imams] and Şia Mezhebi [The Shi’ite Sect]. For the purpose of this chapter, I point to the need for a literal translation of the related parts of these two chapters through offering an explanation when needed.

2.7. İmamların Övgüsü – The Praise of the Imams

This section in the Imam Jafar Buyruk is written in the form of poetry. The content of this section is somehow different from the other texts in which the entire names of the Imams are stated. The end of the poem shows that it was written by Kul Himmet, a 16th century poet who is regarded to be one of the seven important Alevi poets. At the end of this section, he was labeled as Husayni. However, Bozkurt states that this poem does

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318 Aytekin, Buyruk, 90-91; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 121-123.
319 Aytekin, Buyruk, 150-152; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 219-222.
320 Aytekin, Buyruk, 90-91; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 121-123.
321 The term Husayni will further be explained in the following passages.
not exist in any of the books written by him. Because the poem is long, I will only translate the related lines.

The poem begins with Ali, referring to him as Asadullah Haidar (The Lion of Allah). There is a reference to Ali’s warrior characteristic and his legendary sword, named Zulfıqar, is also stated. ‘Onun için ona dedi: ‘Esadullah-u Haydar - Ki gelmeyе hergiz Ali gibi yeryüzüne er - “La seyfe ilia Zulfıkar.’ ‘Said to him, the Lion of Allah Haidar ‘Haidar a name given to Ali’, there is born no other fighter like Ali in the world, there is no sword but Zulfıkar.” And then it refers to Hasan: “Hasan ağı verdi avrati, Muaviye meşveretiyle. Ol yüzü dönmuş bivefa, ol tohma lanet.” (Hasan’s wife poisoned him in accordance with the prearranged plan made with Muawiya. O disloyal [Muawiya]! May he get a slap in the face. Damn to the sperm that caused him to be born.) It has been narrated that Hasan died of poisoning. Three different names have been offered as to the identity of the person who poisoned him: Muawiya, Yazid [the son of Muawiya], and Hasan’s wife. The tradition, according to which Hasan’s wife poisoned him at the instigation of Muawiya, is not only narrated in the Shi‘ite resources but also reported in Sunni histories. The convergence of these lines of tradition has held a strong position in supporting this belief.

In the following lines, Huseyin was praised and defined as Shah. The term ‘shah’, however, is generally used to refer to a Safavid political and military leader. This is the first time an Imam is characterized with this term. Husayn was even ranked over the rest of the Imams as they are defined with the term ‘Husayni,’ which is derived from the name

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322 Bozkurt, Buyruk, 121.
of Imam Husayn. Even Kul Himmet described him as ‘Husayni.’ “Huseynidir Zeynelabidin, Huseynidir Muhammed Bakir. Huseyni tarikin beyan eyledi Imam Cafer. Imam Musa Kazim kan-i eyliyadir, Hem Ali Musa Riza'dir. Cevher bunlara taniktir. Imam Muhammed Taki, ve Ali Naki, Hasan al-Askeri! Ahir gelip Muhammed Mehdi-i sahib-i zaman.” [Zayn al-Abidin is a Huseyni, Muhammad Baqir is a Huseyni, Imam Jafar explained the path of Huseyni, Imam Musa Kadhim is a descendant of a wali (saint), likewise Ali Musa Ridha, the essence is the witness of all of these, Imam Muhammed Taqi, and Ali Naqi, Hasan al-Askari, Muhammad Mehdi comes before the day of judgment.]

Being ‘Husayni’ means following the path of Husayn. In Shi`ite faith, the notion Jafari, was derived from the name of Jafar Sadiq to describe the Shi`ite school of jurisprudence. Hence, the word Jafarism is used to describe the religious structure of Shi`ism that corresponds to the Sunni form of jurisprudence. I argue here that referencing to the notion ‘Husayni’ instead of the term Jafari displays the fact that this book is not formed to establish the religious principles and pillars of Alevism. It does tend, however, to clarify the esoteric, hidden, secret side of the Divine Truth. Hence, this chapter claims that the nature of the Buyruks evidence a high incidence of likeness with the Sufi books.

2.8. Şia Mezhebi – The Shi`ite Sect

The final chapter of the Imam Jafar Buyruk is titled ‘Shi`ite sect.’ It is essential to note that the term ‘Shi`ite’ appeared in the Buyruks for the first time in this particular passage. The content of this chapter demonstrates parallelism with the section of ‘musahip’

324 Aytekin, Buyruk, 150-152; Bozkurt, Buyruk, 219-222.
that talks about how Muhammad and Ali had become companions. It describes the nascence of the Shi`ite sect, according to which the Shi`ite sect was established on the doctrine of Muhammad and Ali’s four gates, forty positions, and seventeen rules. As it is understood here, the declaration of the birth of Shi`ite sect does correspond with what is believed in the historical context. This section ends with a poem in which the name Virani, a late 17th century Alevi poet, was stated. Although it is still uncertain if the entire part was written by Virani, it is certain that the end poem was declared by him. Here I give a literal translation of this section:

Even when there was no sign of the world, there were the light of Muhammed Mustafà and Ali Murtaza, another name of Ali meaning chosen. Their lights were evident and one. It become two during the time of Abdullah, father of Muhammed, and Abu Talib, father of Ali. Muhammed’s light came from Abdullah. Ali’s light came from Abu Talib.

According to the popular Islamic tradition addressed in the early Islamic sources, the light of Muhammad has existed in the world before his birth. It had transferred from father to son until the birth of Muhammad. The concept of the pre-existence of prophet, pointed out by U. Rubin in his research “Pre-Existence and Light: Aspects of the concept of Nur Muhammad,” has a particular place in the Shi`ite sources: ‘The Shi’a is, indeed, the Muslim sect that has made the utmost use of light. The Shi'i imams are regarded as the exclusive representatives of the divine light on earth… The divine light is reached only through the imams: knowing them is sufficient for salvation from darkness.’

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325 For forty positions, see, Bozkurt, Buuruk, 176-180.
326 Aytekin, Buuruk, 150.
particular section referred in the *Buyruk* not only mentions of the light of Muhammad as pre-exited before the creation of the world, but it also speaks of Ali’s light as it was joint with Muhammad’s light. It seems to be the explanation of Imam’s divine mission as it has transmitted from Ali to his son and from his son to his son, and so on.

No one knew the mystery of Muhammed-Ali. At that time, seventy-two communities became two troops.\(^{328}\) The thirty-six of them became *Khawarij*.\(^{329}\) They favor Ebu-Bakr, Omar and Osman, the other thirty-six of them are from the Shi`ite sect. They favor Ali.\(^{330}\)

The ones from the Shi`a sect are together with Muhammed and Ali in the four gates, forty positions, and seventeen rules. They enter from one door and leave from the other. They eat in the same table and drink from the same vessel. There is no curtain between them. They say, ‘this path is the Muhammad-Ali’s *sharia*.’ They were sincere to one another. And Shi`a’s rams do not depart from the sheeps, and bulls from the cows, and cocks from the chickens.\(^{331}\)

The *khawarij*, however, had not learned these ways from Muhammad and Ali. Their works do not coincide with one another in the performance of the four gates, forty positions, and seventeen rules. That is why they eat in the different tables, drink from different vessel, and enter in and leave from different doors.\(^{332}\)

Muhammad knew all of these and he gathered all the seventy-two communities. He preached. He called Ali next to himself. The two showed their heads from one collar. One head but two legs appeared. But then one

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\(^{328}\) Aytekin, *Buyruk*, 213.

\(^{329}\) *Khawarij* is a group appeared in the first century of Islam when there was the crisis of leadership after the death of Muhammad.

\(^{330}\) Pretty much the same expression was given in the *Shaykh Safi Buyruk*. Hence, I have scrutinized this statement in the previous pages. Yaman, *Erdebilli Şeyh Safi Buyruğu*, 73.

\(^{331}\) Aytekin, *Buyruk*, 150.

\(^{332}\) Aytekin, *Buyruk*, 213.
leg, two heads appeared. Then Ali wore the gown of Muhammed and left. Muhammad said: ‘I and Ali are from the same light. I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the door of that city, Ali is my brother in this world and hereafter. We are from the same flash. Our inner world and external (zahir/batin) are the one. Ali is the custodian of the ones of whom I am the custodian.\textsuperscript{334}

This chapter ends with a poem that is dedicated to the Shi`ite sect.

Here two subjects have attracted my attention. Firstly, for the first time in the \textit{Buyruks}, there appears to have been references to the first three caliphs Ebu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman. Three of them are described as being \textit{khawarij}. On the contrary, the group who favors Ali over the other caliphs are regarded as Shi`ite. This is the only section that parallels with the Shi`ite understanding of the Sunni-Shi`ite split. Is this section itself enough to label Alevi as Shi`ite? Does the entire \textit{Buyruk} text accord with this particular passage? The following paragraph actually displays what the notion of the phrase ‘Shi`ite sect’ means in the \textit{Buyruks}. According to this, the Shi`ite sect was originated depending on the doctrine of four gates, forty positions, and seventeen rules indoctrinated by Muhammad and Ali. These tenets are not the indispensable teachings in Shi`ism.

\textbf{2.9. Conclusion}

An opposition over the legitimacy of the first three caliphs who succeeded Muhammad induced the early sectarian split. Shia faith established its theology on the right of Ali to the Caliphate. This was supported by the belief that Ali was assigned to that office

\textsuperscript{333} Bozkurt, \textit{Buyruk}, 19-26; Aytekin, \textit{Buyruk}, 11. An almost identical anecdote is mentioned in the section entitled, ‘\textit{Musahip}’ [Muhammad and Ali are companions].
\textsuperscript{334} Aytekin, \textit{Buyruk}, 214-215.
by way of divine order. Hence, a number of religious groups that carry a distinct Alid flavor have naturally been classified as a branch of Shi‘ism. In particular, this chapter focuses on the Alevi faith, which in a general sense is commonly held to be Shi‘ite. Through engaging with the essential Alevi religious sources, the Buyruks, I have aimed to question and challenge the dominant approach of modern scholarship that label Alevis as Shi‘ite. After analyzing the admiration of Ali, the concept of imama, the place of the Twelve Imams, and other elements including the office of khalifa (Islamic leadership), the notion of isma (infallibility of the prophets and the Imams), the belief of ghayba (occultation of the Twelfth Imam), I have shown that the Buyruks are composed with a distinctly non-sectarian attitude. Shi‘ite elements, addressed in the Buyruks, should not be held equal to the mainstream Shi‘ite practice of them.

It is also of interest to this chapter to note that an extra reverence for Ali over other well-known Islamic figures has become quite prevalent within the self-identified Sunni Sufis. The Mevlevi, known as Whirling Dervishes, and the Bayrami orders both of which are self-professedly Sunni Sufis, have a deep penchant for Ali, ahl al-bayt, the martyrs of Karbala and the Twelve Imams. These in fact are the common themes of their well-received literatures. The poems or anecdotes that exhibit an intense admiration for ahl al-bayt, particularly for Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and from time to time eulogizing the Twelve

335 Bayrami order was founded by Hacı Bayram (d. 1430). However it has been defined as a Sunni Sufi order, its literature carry a distinct Shi‘ite flavor like many other Sufi order. On how Alid loyalt was expressed in the poems of Bayramis, see Betul Yavuz. The Making of a Sufi Order between Heresy and Legitimacy: Bayrami: Malamis in the Ottoman Empire. (Rice University, 2013), (Un-published PhD. Thesis), 183.
Imams can even be observed in the *Mesnevi (Masnavi)* and *Divan-i Kebir*. Further, the poems of Yunus Emre, who appears to have been one of the most respected and glorified Turkish Sufi poets by the mainstream Sunni Turks, also reflects a distinct Alid flavor. Hence advocacy of the *ahl al-bayt* or Alid loyalty are actually essential to Muslims. Therefore, the Alid discourse does not always doubtlessly appear as an indicator of Shi’ism.

Additionally, there appear a number of documents in which not only the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs are glorified but also the Twelve Imams are respectfully mentioned. The *Ijazetnames* dated 1496 and 1545 composed for the members of Dede Kargin Ocak can be given here as an example that testify the above mentioned claim of this chapter. The document written in 1496 states that:

The Prophet Muhammad said: ‘*ruku* and prostration are always prayer. May Allah consent Abu Bakr, the honest and thoroughly afraid of Allah, and Umar, the pure human being who knows how to differentiate the bad ones from the good, and Uthman, the pure human being who holds two divine lights, and Ali, generous, faithful and the chosen one, Hasan and Husayn, virtuous, honorable and precious to the Prophet Muhammad as worth as two eyes and ears, Hamza and Abbas, the uncles of the Prophet Muhammad and the most favorable ones, *Muhajiruns* (the first converts who emigrated with Muhammad to Medina) and *Ansar* (means helper who helped the *Muhajirun*) and all the people who follow the path of Muhammad.

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337 *Divanı Kebir* is the book that pooled the poems on Divine Love written by Mevlana. For the original text, see, İstanbul Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esat Efendi Kitapları, no: 2693, 347 folios. For a Turkish translation, see, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi. *Divan-i Kebir*. Translated by Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı, volume XIII, (İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015). For detailed information on how Ali and *ahl al-bayt* has been represented in those books, see Mehmet Temizkan. “Mevlevi ve Bektaşi Edebiyatında ‘Ehl-i Beyt’ Teması Üzerine Karşılaştırmalı Bir İnceleme,” *Türk Kültürü, Edebiyatı ve Sanatında Mevlâna ve Mevlevilik – Bildiriler I*, (2007), (585-595), 586.
339 Broad information on the Dede Kargin Ocak and relationship with Alevis is in chapter 4.
And then each of the names of Twelve Imams are mentioned in the following part in which it reveals the *silsile* (chain) of the descent of Ebul’ Vefa, the founder of the Vefai order:

Imam Ali the son of Abu Talib, (May Allah honor him), Imam Husayn the son of Imam Ali, his son Imam Zayn al-Abidin, his son Imam Muhammad Baqir, his son Imam Jafar Sadiq, his son Imam Musa Kadhim, his son Imam Musa Ridha, his son Imam Taqi, his son Imam Naqi, his son Muhammad, his son Muhammad, his son Muhammad.\(^{341}\)

The 1545 dated document shows respect to the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs and then mentions of the names of the Twelve Imams in the same vein with the previous record.

Help is from Allah and triumph is close and herald the Mumins Ey Muhammad, Ey Abu Bakr, Ey Umar, Ey Uthman and Ey Ali.\(^{342}\)

As it is quite clear, these two records not only respect the first three Sunni caliphs but also pay tribute to Ali, Hasan, Husayn and even the Twelve Imams. If they were written under the influence of Shi’ism, then the glorification of the first three Sunni caliphs would surely have been omitted from the text.\(^{343}\) As far as this chapter is concerned, these two documents substantiate the argument of this dissertation: because of their importance for the whole Muslim community, the reverence for Ali, Hasan, Husayn, the Twelve Imams

343 The reference to the first Sunni caliphs disappeared in the documents of the Dede Kargın Ocak dated from 1555.
and the lament of the Karbala tragedy cannot always be interpreted as a sign of Shi’ism.
Chapter 3

Ottoman Construction: The Representation of the Kızılbaş Belief in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Official Records

3.1. Introduction

Current research has often been tempted to view the Ottoman-Safavid struggle as a sectarian fight occurring between Sunnis and Shi’ites. The Kızılbaş in the course of its alliance with the Safavid became so closely associated with Shi’ism that the tendency has been to classify them in fact as a branch of Shi’ism. All of the provided information on the Kızılbaş’s political and religious orientation illustrate that the Kızılbaş institutionalized their religious rules contradictory to the Ottoman centralized religious leaning, namely Sunnism. It is of great interest in the context of the present chapter to note, however, that although the Kızılbaş religion is mostly part of or connected in one way or another to the Shi’ite tradition, there is no confession of the Kızılbaş group’s adoption of Shi’ism. Rather than discussing the Kızılbaş religion as Sunni or Shi’ite, in this chapter that follows, I will
explore in more detail the Ottoman State’s perception of the Kızılbaş religion. Did the
Ottoman-Safavid fight have any impact on the construction of the Kızılbaş religion? Did
the Ottoman administration classify the Kızılbaş as Shi`ite? Were the Kızılbaş different
from the other non-Sunni minority religious groups in the eyes of the Ottoman authority?

This chapter aims to analyze different types of archival documents including
Ottoman administrative records, historical and religious narrative chronicles and other
available sources like travel accounts to provide solid information on the Ottoman
construction of the Kızılbaş faith. And yet I cannot claim to have exhausted all the available
sources. It is essential to point out the fact that the description of the Kızılbaş religious
orientation within the Ottoman official documents is substantially compatible with the
information provided by the historical and religious treatises. Thereby the scholars of
history and religion have given a one-sided picture of the Kızılbaş religion and political
affiliation, supporting thus far the Ottoman policy. As stated earlier, our intention,
particularly in this chapter, is not to have a claim with regard to the Kızılbaş sectarian
orientation, but simply to unfold and clarify the Ottoman thought of the Kızılbaş belief.

The Muhimme defterleri (Muhimme registers), will be probed as one of the most
essential Ottoman archival records. There is a collection of 419 folios of Muhimme
registers saved between the dates 960/1553 – 1333/1915. Every kind of internal and
external official documents related to politic, military, social and financial issues are
preserved in the Muhimme registers.\textsuperscript{344} The primary concern of this research is the fermans

\textsuperscript{344} Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi, (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2000). 7.
(rescript) attributed to the Kızılbaş with regard to punishment, arrest, trial or persecution from the Muhimme registers. The fermans that I seek to explore, as detailed in the Introduction of this dissertation, are already published. The works of Ahmet Refik, Saim Savaş and Cemal Şener will be cited here to establish an analytical framework of the fermans, and in doing so, to explore the Kızılbaş in a broader sense.

The fermans provided by those scholars will be cross-checked and compared with the historical and religious treatises written by the official historians and religious scholars to illustrate the sectarian orientation of the Kızılbaş in the eyes of the Ottoman regime. Pertaining to Ottoman historiography, the history of Aşık Paşazade, one of the leading historians of the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire, Tevarihi Ali Osman of Kemal Paşazade also known as Ibn Kemal who served as a Kadiasker during the years of 921/1516 – 924/1519 under the rule of Sultan Selim and a shaykh al-islam between 932/1525 and

347 Cemal Şener. Osmanlı Belgeleri’nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler. (İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2002). Şener also provided the original facsimile of the seventy-eight documents.
940 /1533 when Kanuni Sultan Suleyman was reigning,\(^{349}\) Selim-name of Idrisi Bitlisi,\(^{350}\) and the Tabakat of Mustafa Celebi Celalzade, an important Ottoman bureaucrat,\(^{351}\) will be analyzed. Additionally, some of the important travel records like Seyehatname of Evliya Çelebi will be cited as supportive documents.\(^{352}\) The fatwas (Islamic religious law) issued by Ibn Kemal (931/1525 – 940/1534) and afterwards reutilized by Ebussuud (951/1545 – 981/1574) will be cited to show how the religious discourse supported the Ottoman campaign with regard to the marginalization of the Kızılbaş group.\(^{353}\)

The confusion over Alevi religious identity is not only related to its historical, political, and theological development, but is also connected to its relation with the central

\(^{349}\) However, Kemal Paşazade (940/1534) has come to be known with his fatwas about the non-Sunni groups that live in the Ottoman surroundings. He was also along with Hoca Sadeddin (1007/1599) and Gelibolulu Mustafâ Ali (1008/1600) an outstanding Ottoman historian of the sixteenth century. He was assigned to write a book in Turkish on the history of the Ottoman by Bayazid II. This book was comprised of ten volumes. He presented the first eight volumes to Bayazid II and the last two books to Kanuni Sultan Suleyman. Each volume had been edited by different scholars. Volume VIII is important for this research due to its description of Shah Ismail and his actions. Kemal Paşazade. Teyârîh-i Al-i Osman. VIII. Deftar, edited by Ahmet Uğur, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997). In this work, the transcription of the original document has been provided between the pages of 231-279.

\(^{350}\) Selimnames are also significant part of Ottoman historiography. These historical materials are dealing with the era of Selim I. The Selimname of Ishak Çelebi covers the time from the end of Bayazid II to the era when Selim I. İbrahim Parmaksızıoğlu. Üsküplü Ishak Çelebi ve Selimnamesi. (İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1953); The Selimname written by Sucudi begins with the period of Selim I’s sultanate. Sucudi. Selimname. 2005. (Turkish/Ottoman); While the Selim-Şahname of Idrisi Bitlisi encompasses the entire era of Selim I. Şehîl-i Ş allocated was written in Persian by the request of Selim I. In this work, the letters of Shah Ismail to Selim I were also narrated. Idrisi Bitlisi. Selim Şah-name. Edited by Hicabi Kırlangıç, (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001).

\(^{351}\) Tabakat ul-Memalik ve Derecat ul-Mesâlik of Mustafa Çelebi Celalzade also appears to be one of the important historical documents that narrate the sultanate of Kanuni Sultan Suleyman. The book was published in facsimile by Petra Kappert. Geschichte Sultan Suleyman Kanunis von 1520 bis 1557. (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1981).

\(^{352}\) The Seyahatname (The Book of Travels) of Evliya Çelebi provides extensive information about entire regions of the Ottoman Empire. The original manuscript has been saved in the Museum of Topkapı Sarayî, Istanbul, no. 304, folio: 106b-217b; Evliya Çelebi. Seyahatname. I. Edited by Sinasi Tekin ve Günel Alpay Tekin with an introduction by Fahrî Iz, (Harward University, Office of the University Publisher, 1989-1993).

\(^{353}\) Ibn Kemal. Fetvâyi Kemal Paşazade der Hakk-i Kızılbaş. no. 3548, folio: 45a-b. For the fatwas of Ebussuud see, M. ErçürlÜ Düzdağ. Şeyhüislâm Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asr Türk Hayati. (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983). The tafsîr of Ebussuud is also quite popular. Şeyhüislâm Ebussuud Efendi. İrşad-i Aakli Selim ila Mezayay-ı Kitab-ı Kerim. (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 2006)
government. In the Ottoman records, the Kızılbaş had always been represented as a rebellious group that liaised with the Safavid in the political stance, while, to be explored below, rejecting the fundamental teaching of Sunni Islam. The notions like rafidi (rejectionists), mulhid (apostate), khawarij (seceders), zindiq (heretic), kafir (unbeliever), non-Sunnis, bandit, burglar, etc. are used describing the Kızılbaş, and thus played vital role in structuring perceptions about the Kızılbaş faith. Along with these terms, they are also defined as people who drink wine, who do not perform the Friday prayers, and who insult the Sunnis.354

The Ottoman official chronicles defined the Kızılbaş by the aforementioned words, and yet only the term rafidi has been seen specifically as a sign of Shi`ism. As far as this chapter is concerned, however, the term shia has literally never been referred to them in the discussion of the Kızılbaş belief. Rather the fatwas issued by Ibn Kemal, and afterward certified by Ebussuud, categorically distinguished Kızılbaş belief from Shi`ite Islam due to its distinctiveness in theology and rituals from mainstream Shi`ism. A fatwa acknowledged by the Ottoman officials even though explicitly states that the Kızılbaş are not Shi`ite, the current scholarship yet still regard the Kızılbaş as the Ottoman Shi`ites.355 Hence, I argue here that the binary classification of Islamic sect as Sunni and Shi`ite has compelled scholars to classify any religious groups as a branch of either of the two.

According to the perspective of the Ottoman officials, historians and the prestigious ulama (scholars who trained in Islam and Islamic law), two factors made the Kızılbaş

354 Refik, On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşılık; Savaş, XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik, 12.
undesirable: Firstly and most importantly, the Kızılbaş provided military support for the Shah of Persia within the Ottoman subject. Secondly, they performed a non-Sunni religious rite that was considered as a threat to the Sunni Islam. It is essential to highlight the fact that Kızılbaş played a central political and military role in the Ottoman-Safavid wars: the battle of Chaldiran in 919/1514 in which Shah Ismail was defeated by the Ottoman army ruled by Selim Sultan I (874/1470 – 926/1520). The war of 938/1532 – 962/1555 that ended with a mutual treaty, according to which, the Safavid under the rule of Shah Tahmasp I. (930/1524 – 983/1576) did take over the control of Tabriz/Persia, but lost Iraq to the Ottomans. Following the Ottoman-Safavid war of 1623 – 1639, in 1639, a peace treaty was signed that specified the borders of Iran and Iraq.

The Kızılbaş had been viewed as both a religious and a political threat to the Ottoman Empire. So this chapter after rigorously analyzing the archival documents argues that the Kızılbaş were not merely persecuted over doctrinal differences as claimed. Winter, in his work *The Shi`ites of Lebanon*, alleges, “The Kızılbaş and other heterodox groups began to be persecuted on the sole basis of their religious beliefs.”356 In order to make such a claim that the Kızılbaş were persecuted over religious disputes, it is essential to reveal the position of other non-Sunni or non-Muslims living within the Ottoman surroundings. Was the Ottoman administration hostile or tolerant to the other non-Sunni minority religious groups or non-Muslims?

Their political alliance with Iran was the fundamental reason behind the persecution. According to the official Ottoman registers, no one other than the Anatolian

partisans of Iran were referred to as Kızılbaş. As stated earlier, these people had been viewed not only as a defiant group, but also being regarded as a threat to the state. The term Kızılbaş had obviously been used to define the supporters of Shah Ismail and later on of Iran.\textsuperscript{357} Afterward the fatwas of Ibn Kemal and of Ebussuud, the mufti of Istanbul in 951/1545, had shaped the religious aspect of this fight. The fatwa states that ‘Killing of the Kızılbaş group is permissible in our religion. This is the supreme and divinest fight.’\textsuperscript{358}

As stated earlier the Kızılbaş, to our knowledge, had never been classified as Shi`a in the Ottoman archival resources. On the contrary, the ulama issued fatwas that distinguished the Kızılbaş belief from the mainstream Shi`ite Islam. Neither the Ottoman nor the Seljuk records talk about the presence of any particular Shi`ite group that live in Anatolia.\textsuperscript{359} However, the term rafidi has been used to classify different religious groups of people who live in Anatolia, both during the Seljuk and the Ottoman eras. Since the historical and theological development of Rafidism and Shi`ism have coincided, any group that had been defined as Rafidi were also labeled as Shi`ite. Rafidism and Shi`ism have been discussed as if they exactly reflect the same type of religious understanding. The Ottoman chronicles that have come to describe the Kızılbaş as Rafidi and the Kızılbaş has naturally referred as Shi`ite.\textsuperscript{360} By the early twentieth century, the scholarship that

\textsuperscript{358} Düzdağ, \textit{Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı}, no. 479, 109.
\textsuperscript{360} Winter, \textit{The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule}, 17; Imber, “The Persecution of Ottoman Shi’ites According to the Muhimme Defterleri, 1565-1585.”
analyzed the Alevis/Kızılbaş have used the term Shi`a in description of the Kızılbaş belief without getting into detail of the elements that qualify the Kızılbaş as Shi`ite\(^{361}\). However, some other scholars like Gölpınarlı — a Shi`ite academician — gave support to the view that the Kızılbaş are not Shi`ite. Gölpınarlı have come to this result due to the theological and doctrinal differences.

In the Ottoman records, the Kızılbaş are not the only group defined as Rafidi. For example, the religious views of the Qalandar, an ascetic dervish group are also characterized as Rafidi. It seems to me that the notion *rafidi* is very much a question of definition in the Ottoman archival records. It is of interest to research the connection of Rafidism with Shi`ism and to cover the usage of the term *rafidi* during the sixteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. The sixteenth century Ottoman records had never used the word Shi`a in description of the Kızılbaş religion even after Shah Ismail made Shi`ism the official religion of the state. Thereby this chapter tends to question how and why the Ottoman administrators, historians, and religious scholars used the term *rafidi* but not Shi`ite. Does Rafidism necessarily mean Shi`ism? Could they be interchangeable? Could Rafidism be replaced by Shi`ism? Did the Ottoman imply Shi`ism in the usage of the term *rafidi*? What was the term *rafidi* mean to the Ottoman administrators?

### 3.2. The Questions with regard to the Usage of the Term ‘*Rafidi*’

The post-Republic works on the Kızılbaş faith have referred to the Kızılbaş with

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\(^{361}\) See Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia*.\[2\]
the terms of ‘Alevi, Bektaşi, heterodoxy as opposed to orthodoxy, Shi`ite, and extreme Shi`ite.’ In the Ottoman official records, and historical and religious treatise, the Kızılbaş, as Anatolian supporters of the Safavid, along with the notion kızılbaş, the terms of rafidi (rejectionist) mulhid (apostate), khawarij (seceders), zindiq (heretic), kafir (unbeliever), and non-Sunnis are used in defining the religious status of the Kızılbaş. The term kızılbaş had begun to be used for the people who display pro-Safavid leaning from the time of Bayazid II. While the notion kızılbaş is used in the context of their ideological and political alliance with Safavid, mainly the term rafidi is used to demonstrate their non-Sunni religiosity. Due to the historical development of the term rafidi and its association of Shi`ism, the notion rafidi appears to be very much a question of definition in the Ottoman archival records of the sixteenth century. It is of great interest in the context of the present chapter to theorize and uncover the usage of the term rafidi and find out if the Ottoman records imply Shi`ism in describing the Kızılbaş rite as Rafidi.

The term rafida has been derived from the root of r-f-z that means to desert or leave. The notion rawafid has been used as plural of rafida. The history of the term rafidi goes beyond the existence of Kızılbaşism, and it has been used in reference to different groups of people in the history of Islam. The meaning that the term rafida carries each time slightly

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362 For an extensive analysis on the discussion of ‘heterodoxy-orthodoxy,’ see chapter 1.
364 According to a report of ambassador of Venice, Bayazid II used the term kızılbaş as ‘taife-i bagiyye-i kızılbaş hezzelehumullah’ (a tyrant kızılbaş group, May Allah weaken them). With this phrase he referred to the followers of Shah Ismail. M. Fahreddin Kirzioglu, Osmanlı’nın Kafkas Ellerini Fethi (1451-1590), (Ankara: 1979), 113-54.
differs from one another. The notion *rafida*, in terms of general meaning, used to refer to the lovers of *ahl al-bayr*. Aside from this, the earliest resources narrate two different stories with regard to the initial usage of the term. According to first one, the *rafida* was applied to the people who gave their support up for Zayd b. Ali during his revolt against the Umayyad dynasty in 122/740. A debate with regard to caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar has divided the supporters of Zayd into two groups. When his view of the first two caliphs asked, he said, “I am going to say nothing bad about them and I have heard nothing, but good words about them from my father.” Thereupon some of his supporters left him. Zayd said ‘*rafaztumuni* — you left me’. Then the people who left him were called as Rafidi. On the other side, the Shi‘ite resources narrate a different story with regard to the preliminary usage of the term *rafidi*. According to this, after the death of Muhammad Bakir, people divided into two groups in decision of the next Imam. Even though Mugire b. Saad (d. 50/670) claimed to be the Imam, many people supported the imamate of Jafar Sadiq. Mugire named the people who chose Jafar over Mugire as Rafidi.

Since the classical times, the scholars of Islam attempt to associate Rafidism with Shi‘ite Islam, particularly the Imami branch of Shi‘ism, as if these two terms can be used for one another due to the shared religious elements on the subject of Alid loyalty.

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Sometimes Rafidism has been explained as if it was a sub-branch of Shi‘ism and vice versa. However, not each group labelled as Rafidi can be described as Shi‘ite. The case of Zayd b. Ali raises a question about the probability of the classification of Rafidis as Shi‘ite. As stated earlier, the people who left Zayd b. Ali are called as Rafidi, however the followers of Zayd b. Ali are named Zaydi that appears to have been the one of the three major Shi‘ite groups — Zaydiyya, Ismailiyya and Imamiyya. On the other side, some scholars disassociated Rafidism from Shi‘ism, but linked it with the ghulat — extremist group.

In short, in the al-Milal wa al-Nihal (books on sectarianism) literature of Islam, the notion rafidi is used to refer to the group of people who were the supporters of Ali and his family over the first three caliphs and who regard them as usurper of Ali’s succession. Since the party of Shi‘ism has come to believe that the Prophet has appointed Ali as his successor, the loyalty to Ali and his family and accordingly the doctrine of imamate has become the dominant belief of Shi‘a. The books on Sectarianism, therefore, have approached both sects as if each of the two is a branch of one another. Discussion on the matter of whether Rafidism equally means Shi‘ism is not the intention of this work. Instead this research is interested in clarifying the usage of the term rafidi in description of the Kızılbaş faith in the sixteenth century Ottoman reports.

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371 al-Bağdadi and Fıglalı, Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar, 31.
372 al-Bağdadi and Fıglalı, Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar, 31; Gölpınarlı, Tarih Boyunca İslâm Mezhepleri ve Şiiilik.
373 Group of people who love Ali along with the first three caliphs have been named as Nasibi. For further information see, Ethem Ruhi Fıglalı. Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar Ansiklopedisi, (İstanbul 1987).
While the term *rafidi* is hardly mentioned in the Seljuk records, particularly the sixteenth century Ottoman chronicles refer to the non-Sunni groups as Rafidi — not only the Kızılbaş are defined as Rafidi. Non-Sunni minority religious groups like the Qalandar, better known as Işık, are also classified as Rafidi. The Qalandar and the Kızılbaş do not represent the same group of people. However, because of shared religious values like both factions drink alcoholic beverages and neglect daily prayer, each had been labeled as Rafidi. The ideological and political tie of the Kızılbaş with Safavid Iran distinguishes them from the Qalandar. Hence none of the *fermans* of the Muhimme registers view the Qalandar as a threat to the Ottoman integrity. In one particular *ferman* related to the Işık group, it states that ‘if Sari Saltik zawiya (a small Islamic monastery) is from the *ahli Sunnah* or not.’ This *ferman* shows that the Işıks are not necessarily entirely non-Sunni. The usage of the term *rafidi* for different religious groups shows that a Kızılbaş can be a Rafidi but not every Rafidi is a Kızılbaş. Therefore, here I argue that the term *rafidi* is not equivalent to the notion *kızılbaş*.

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374 The term *rafidi* appears in the *Rihla* of Ibn Battuta. The narratives states that, ‘the people of Sinop was suspicious about Ibn Battuta as being a Rafidi. To verify his religious leaning, they asked him to eat rabbit meat.’ (For detailed information see, Ibn Battuta, Defrémery, Sanguinetti, and Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Battuta*, volume 2, 468. The term *rafidi* is also often referred in the *Saltukname* written in the 15th century. Here it is stated that *ulama* issued a *fatwa* about the infidelity of the Nusayris and Rafidis. In Sari Saltuk, *Saltuk-naame*. Edited by Necati Demir and Mehmet Dursun Erdem, (Ankara: Destan Yayınları, 2007). 148; Rafidis had been viewed as infidel by the seventieth century Ottoman Empire. Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682) in his famous *Seyahatname* stated that ‘The people of Sahlan, however, are again those damned Rafidis (Shi’is) although they pretend to be Shafi’is (Sunnis).’ Çelebi. *Seyahatname*, 56. Çelebi travelled throughout the empire and the surrounding regions, delivered important information with regard to the religious belief and practice of the Shi’ites of Tabriz, the provincial capital of Safavid Persia. His work *Seyahatname* or ‘*Book of Travels*’ was divided into ten books. In each of those books, he presented an extensive description of the regions and surrounding regions of the Ottoman Empire.


3.3. The Assessment of the Persecution of the Kızılbaş in Terms of Religion and Politics

Even though the Ottoman-Safavid struggle played a central role in the persecution of the Kızılbaş, the persecution of the Kızılbaş has popularly been evaluated in terms of sectarian injustice. The fatwas issued by Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud that justify the arrest, exile, and persecution of the Kızılbaş, naturally raises the question of whether the Kızılbaş were penalized because they practiced a different type of Islam than the mainstream Sunnism. According to this view, the persecution of the Kızılbaş has polarized the Sunni belief from the Shi’a.\textsuperscript{379} To be able to understand the Ottomans obdurate stance towards the Kızılbaş, this work will deal with the following questions: What was the role of politics and religion on the persecution of the Kızılbaş? Did the Ottoman Empire adopt an attitude towards the Kızılbaş only because of religious differences? Why did the Ottoman Sultans require the support of the prestigious ulama for the fight with the Kızılbaş? Can this struggle merely be described as a sectarian fight? Was the Ottoman Empire intolerant to the other non-Sunni or non-Muslim minority groups? In any case our attempt in this work is not to justify the misdoing of the Ottoman Empire, but rather to question all the possible reasons behind the persecution of the Kızılbaş.

Islam was the dominant religion. The coexistence of people of different ethnicities — Turks, Kurds, Laz, Greeks, Arabs, Albanians, and the Bedouin; languages — Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, Albanian, and Serbian; and the religions —

\textsuperscript{379} Winter, \textit{The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule}, 14-15
Orthodox, Catholics, Armenians, and Jewish, — nevertheless all show how diverse was the Ottoman Empire in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion.\textsuperscript{380} The religious differences of the Christian and Jewish communities were recognized in that they were allowed to follow their own respective laws and codes in settling intercommunal matters.\textsuperscript{381} Muslims, however, were of the Sunni denomination of Islam. The Ottoman sultans had even been given the title “Caliph of Islam” after their conquest of the Mamluks in the 1500s and thus, they were the supreme authority of Sunni Islam. Different dervish orders that perform non-Sunni religious rite have existed within the Ottoman surroundings in different places and times. As long as these non-Sunni minority groups did not cause problems that targeted the Ottoman unity, they were generally tolerated. The revolt of Shaykh Bedreddin, a Muslim Sufi theologian, can be given as an example. He had influenced many Muslims and non-Muslims who lived in the Ottoman Empire. When he led an important rebellion against the Ottomans, he had become an essential threat to the Ottoman. Therefore, he was hanged immediately after he was captured.\textsuperscript{382}

\textbf{The Role of Religion}

With the exception of some individual rebellions like the Shaykh Bedreddin revolt, the Ottoman state had not faced substantial rebellious movements led by the non-Sunni minority groups until the era of Bayezid II (850/1447 – 917/1512). By the early sixteenth


\textsuperscript{381} Colin Imber. \textit{The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power}. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 216.

\textsuperscript{382} Refik, \textit{On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşılık}, 3.
century, the Safavid dynasty pursued a powerful attraction over many Anatolian Muslims, mainly the Kızılbaş. Following the guidance of their shah, the members of the Kızılbaş groups fomented a series of rebellions that threaten the unity of the Ottoman Empire. By the time of Yavuz Sultan Selim (917/1512 – 926/1520), the Safavids and their Anatolian adherents had become a real danger to the Ottoman integrity. Yavuz therefore went to war with the Safavid. With the Battle of Chaldiran happened in 919/1514, Yavuz cleared this treat away from the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The Chaldiran triumph, however, while a huge success for the Ottoman, did not stop the expansion and rebellions of the Kızılbaş in Anatolia. According to the fermans of the Muhimme registers, during the rule of Kanuni Sultan Suleyman (916/1520 – 973/1566), a number of Kızılbaş that lived as subjects of the Sultan had been captured, arrested, exiled, and killed. The Ottoman policy makers felt the need for the support of the elite religious scholars on the persecution of the Kızılbaş. The common people were hesitant in fighting with the Kızılbaş. This was because their religious identity as Muslims — they worship Allah and praise Muhammad — was a subject of concern. A number of famous fatwas therefore, were provided by Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud to legitimize the fight with the Kızılbaş by claiming that they were not genuine Muslims.

According to those fatwas, which sharpened the religious angle of the fight, the

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383 Imber, “Ebu’s-su’ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition,” 5.
Kızılbaş had clearly displayed the marks of heresy. They are accused of insulting the *sharia* and the people of *sharia* by ignoring the daily prayers and by drinking wine, even though it was not permissible in Islam. They were also denounced because of their practice of cursing the first three caliphs, and non-recognition of *ijtihad* (judicial opinion) of the *mujtahid* imams (a qualified person to evaluate the Islamic law). Rather than following the law of *sharia* as stated by Ibn Kemal, they follow the sayings of Shah Ismail and thus for them, whatever the shah allows is *halal* and what he forbids is *haram*. The Kızılbaş for all of these aforementioned reasons are represented as heretic, infidel and apostate. The country they live in is *darulharb* to the Muslims and what they slaughter is carrion. They will be punished as like they are *murtadd* (apostate). The fight with the Kızılbaş is therefore portrayed as a fight with a true enemy of Islam. A famous *fatwa* states that ‘fighting with the Kızılbaş is regarded to be the greatest *ghaza* and the people who join this fight are considered to be both *ghazis* and martyrs. This shows that according to the Ottoman *ulama*, killing the Kızılbaş is the same of killing the non-Muslim due to the fact that the act of *ghaza* has been transferred to the heretics.

The Safavids also propagated the notion of *ghaza* to justify warfare against their powerful opponent. According to this propaganda, ‘killing Sunni Muslim is as the same as killing infidels.’ The Kızılbaş were deeply influenced by the Safavid policy that opposed the Sunni Ottoman Empire. As a result, they were involved in a number of civic uprisings.

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that caused the death of many Sunni Muslims. With regard to Shah Ismail’s doings, Idrisi Bitlisi notes that:

Shah Ismail and his adherents kill a believer for no reason. They dispose him of his property. The property and women of a killed man is halal according to the religion of Shah. In his judgment, adultery, and sodomy is mubah (permissible). He claims to be from the lineage of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad and claimed to be the Imam. He is neither in the religion of Muhammad nor Isa (Jesus); he murders the ulama as if it was an obligation for him; he allowed alcoholic drink and wine in his land; he legitimized what was forbidden by God; he established his own sharia while ignoring the religion of Islam; and he attempted to be God like Namrud.392 A group of tyrants ignorantly glorified him. Shah Ismail says that I will take the world by force. Who would dare to fight with me? There is no one as brave and smart as I am. I would take the world from south to the west. I would conquer the land and the seas by way of peace and war. I already conquered the entire of Iran with my sword. I had threatened the Sultan of the Turks… I have followers and disciples from Anatolia and Syria and they pay homage to me because of my ancestors. They all plume themselves on their profanity and wrong doings, all of which caused them to oppose to the divine judgment. 393

The Ottoman sultans invoked the backing of the religious scholars to build a counter polemic.394 And thus, the ulama delivered fatwas that tend to convince the common people on the heresy and profanity of the Kızılbaş. As a matter of fact, however, religious difference played a crucial role in the persecution of the Kızılbaş. I argue that the allegiance of the Kızılbaş with Iran was the actual reason behind the persecution. And thus, religion had politically been applied as state propaganda to ferment the adherents. Every kind of

392 The King Namrud, as pointed out in the Qur’an, not only denied the existence of God but himself claimed to be God. “Have you not thought about the man who disputed with Abraham about this Lord, because God had given him power to rule? When Abraham said, ‘It is my Lord who gives life and death,’ he said, ‘I too give life and death.’ So Abraham said, ‘God brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west.’ The disbeliever was dumbfounded: God does not guide who do evil.” The Qur’an: 2/258.
393 Bitlisi, Selim Şah-name, 131-136.
archival documents, even the *fatwas*, support this view.

**The Role of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict on the Persecution of the Kızılbaş**

Religious dissociation of the Kızılbaş from Sunni Islam was not the only or foremost concern of the Ottoman in targeting them. The *fatwas* that parallel the rest of the Ottoman records in their accusation of the Kızılbaş and that issued from the same type of socio-political background is that of Ottoman policy developed against the Safavid interfere in the Ottoman domains. According to which, the persecution of the Kızılbaş had its root directly or inherently in the liaison of the Kızılbaş with the Safavid. Therefore it is likely to claim that the Ottoman – Safavi political controversy had naturally and profoundly shaped the Ottoman policy of the Kızılbaş.

One particular *fatwa* states that “the Ottomans remains firm in its combat with the Kızılbaş as a result of their revolts against the sultan of Islam and they are nonbeliever.”

The *fermans* of the Muhimme registers also emphasize the problem of the Kızılbaş as they had given their alliance to the Safavid Iran. According to a *ferman*, a Kızılbaş who asked to join the Ottoman army so as to go to Iran, said that whoever draws a sword to Shah is not a Muslim.

Another one notes that “the Kızılbaş collect money along with their wives’ jewelry, and send them to Iran.” The Kızılbaş are not only accused of being partisans of Iran, but they were also alleged as “being hostile to the Ottoman State.” Almost every Ottoman document narrating the persecution of the Kızılbaş makes a mention of their

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395 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı, (fatwa no 479), 109.
396 Savaş, XVI. *Asırda Anadolu da Alevilik*, 216.
political tie with the Safavids. Due to military and political association of the Kızılbaş with Iran, the Kızılbaş had been displayed as an enemy at home. In this regard, Idrisi Bitlisi, a sixteenth century Ottoman historian, states that,

> It is for the best to sweep evilness away. For the safety of the Ottoman State, the smart step is initially to see the enemy at home. The army of Kızılbaş is huge and settled in Anatolia. The Kızılbaş army was consisted of the sons and members of some mystic groups. Numerous clerks are assigned by the Ottoman Sultan to record the members of the Kızılbaş army. The registry of the members of the group has exceeded over forty thousand people. Whoever turns his face away from the *haqq* (the divine truth), he will be killed with the political sword. It is indispensable for the Sultan to cut down the wicked herbs from the garden of religion to restore the social system.\(^\text{399}\)

The hostilities between Iran and the Ottoman Empire escalated by the time of 1502 when Shah Ismail defeated an Ak-Koyunlu army and proclaimed himself ‘Shah of Iran.’ Neither the *Chaldiran* war (919/1514) nor other battles between the Ottomans and the Safavids solved the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. The attempt of the Ottomans to prevent the Safavid from maximizing their followers in the Ottoman surroundings by closing the frontier with Iran and deporting the Kızılbaş groups from Anatolia to the Balkans did not succeed. As a matter of fact, after the death of Yavuz Sultan Selim, the propaganda of the Safavids continued through the hand of the Kızılbaş in Anatolia. There appeared to have been a series of rebellions led by the Kızılbaş *khalifas* (*khalif* is a common word used to define the Kızılbaş scholars trained in Islam in Persia)\(^\text{400}\) in Anatolia. Shah Kulu 916/1511 and the *Celali* revolts are the most well known rebellions actualized under the leadership of the Kızılbaş.\(^\text{401}\) Especially under the sultanate of Kanuni Sultan Sulayman (926/1520 –

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\(^{399}\) Bitlisi, *Selim Şah-name*, 131-136.

\(^{400}\) For further information on the usage of the notion *khalifa*, see chapter 2.

973/1566), a number of Kızılbaş revolts had occurred. In 928/1552, when Kanuni Sultan Sulayman was in Hungary, the Safavid army took advantage of the absence of the Sultan’s in Anatolia and raided a number of places where his subjects lived, including Van, Ercis, and Adilcevaz. The members of the Ottoman army were executed. Some local Turkish tribes supported the Safavid army. Therefore, since then the Kızılbaş were perceived as a prominent enemy of the Ottomans.402 Such narrations have been used as motives behind the Ottoman invasion of the Shah’s belongings.

When there was a suggestion of someone being a Kızılbaş, an Ottoman spy was designated to investigate and reveal if that person was actually in contact with Persia.403 If he was in any way connected to Iran, then he was to be arrested, exiled, or executed — through accusation of other crimes like robber and way layer — even if there appeared no actual proof of him committing such crime.404 There also appear records of the Kızılbaş as being burglar and way layer. A ferman indicates how people were frightened of the Kızılbaş as in Van and Erciş, they left their properties and goats after they heard that the Kızılbaş were coming.405 According to the Ottoman records, the Kızılbaş pay homage to the Shah of Persia and lead revolts in support of the Safavid. Given that, the Ottoman authority perceived the Kızılbaş as a threat to their integrity. Furthermore, if a person or a group is in contact with Persia, then as a matter of course he is labeled as Kızılbaş. Relying on the aforementioned narratives, while criticizing the view of that ‘the Kızılbaş were

403 The term kızılbaş has only been used for the Anatolian supporters of the Safavid Empire.
405 Şener. Osmanlı Belgeleri’nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler, folio: 2261, 55.
persecuted on the sole basis of their religious beliefs." I argue that the Kızılbaş were persecuted due to their military and political ties with Persia. And thus religion had been appealed as motives to manipulate the common people in convincing them on the necessity of the persecution of the Kızılbaş.

In contrast with all of those official records that demonstrate Anatolian Kızılbaş’ military support for the Safavid Iran, Walter Posch asserts that although the Anatolian Kızılbaş, acknowledged the Shahs of Iran as spiritual guides, they did not provide military support for the Safavids. He actually differentiates the Kızılbaş of Iran from the Kızılbaş of Anatolia. According to his view, the Kızılbaş of Iran did serve as military task for the Safavids. However, there appears no sufficient document proving his point nor do I find any other scholar agreeing with this view.

Relying on the Ottoman official records, current scholars have come to believe that Kızılbaş persecution ended around the end of 1580 regardless of the fact that the Safavid-Ottoman wars had continued intermittently until about 1639 with the treaty of Qasr-i Shirin. The Kızılbaş’s military, political and religious separation from the Safavids of Iran has been demonstrated by Krysztina Kehl-Bodrogi as one of the essential reasons

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407 The book is written to explain the fight over the leadership of the Safavid order between Alqas Mirza, the second son of Shah Ismail, and Shah Tahmasb, the other son of Ismail and the half-brother of Mirza. It gives particular attention to the Kızılbaş group, their historical development, ideological formation, interaction with the Safavids, etc. See Walter Posch. *Osmanisch-safavidische Beziehungen 1545-1550: Der Fall Alkâs Mîrzâ.* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2013)
behind the Ottoman’s decision about ending the persecution of the Kızılbaş. According to her, such separation had begun by the late sixteenth century. In contrast, the information provided by Simēon of Poland on his Travel Accounts indicates Kızılbaş’s ongoing support for the Safavids until the early seventeenth century. In one particular passage, he states that he was afraid to visit Surb Karapet Monastery [an Armenian Apostolic monastery in Muş] because of a possible Kızılbaş attack: “The plain of Mush [Muş Province] were destroyed by the [Kızılbaş], [and] its people taken into captivity. That is why I was afraid to go to that region.”\(^{409}\) When he eventually visited the Monastery, he was told by the vardapet [a name given to the archimandrite of the Armenian Apostolic Church] that the church was terrible ruined and destroyed by the Kızılbaş: “What can I do, my son? I have recently renovated and restored the monastery. It was in terrible ruin and empty, for the Kızılbaş burned it every year and destroyed it. It is now that two years that we live in peace.”\(^{410}\) Simēon’s travel account shows that the Kızılbaş supported the Safavids even after 1580s. At this point, the question of why did the Ottoman’s persecution of the Kızılbaş end around 1580s remains unanswered.

\(^{409}\) Simēon’s travel accounts are important in terms of providing essential information about the Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, Jewish, and Muslim communities living in the early seventeenth century Ottoman Empire. See Dpir Lehats’i Simēon and George A. Bournoutian. *The travel accounts of Simēon of Poland.* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2007), 66-67.

\(^{410}\) Simēon and Bournoutian, *The travel accounts of Simēon of Poland*, 176-177.
3.4. The Struggle between the Haqq and the Batil: Re-situating the

Ottoman’s Self-identification

The Ottoman officials and historians had represented the Ottoman-Safavid fight as a struggle of *haqq* (the divine truth/right, which is Islam) with *batil* (wrong, which is man-made dogmas of corrupted religions). By the sixteenth century, the Ottoman sultans were given the title Caliph — successor to the Prophet Muhammad. They were also represented as the true defender of Islam, the sultan of *mucahideen,* and the custodians of the Holy Cities. As opposed to this, the Safavid and thereby the Kızılbaş had been declared as deviant, infidel, heretic, and tyrant. Reciprocally, the Shahs of Persia claimed to be the true renewer of Islam and religious bias being made on the behalf of the Ottoman practice of Sunni Islam. On each side of this, the policy makers played ‘the religion card’ to sustain the support of their adherents.

Due to Ottomans’ practice of Sunnism and the Safavid’s adaptation of Shi’ite Islam as the official religion of Iran, this fight might actually be seen or represented as the beginning of constant struggle of Sunnism with Shi’ism. Relying on the Ottoman archival documents, I argue that in the eyes of the Ottoman administrators and scholars, the struggle with Iran was continued to protect Sunni Islam from the propaganda of deviant sects. For the Ottomans, in terms of religion, this fight was actualized between the

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411 Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica,* XIX, 1987, pp. 7-27
412 *Mujahideen* is the plural from of *mujahid* that means the champions of Islam.
413 Bitlis. *Selim Şah-name,* 169-172.
415 Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade tarihi,* 332-3; Refik, *Rafizilik,* Istanbul 1932, s. 5
defender and debaser of Sunni Islam — between the Sunnis and non-Sunnis.

According to some scholarship, the Safavid deliberately chose Shi`ism as opposed to Sunnism, to attract the attention of the non-Sunni minorities of the Ottoman Empire. The Kızılbaş due to the practice of Alid loyalty and particularly their support of the Safavid Empire, have been regarded as Shi`ite. However, there is no sign of representation of the Kızılbaş group as Shi`ite by the Ottoman in the archival documentary material that I have researched for this chapter. Alid loyalty on the other hand, had not been viewed as Shi`ism. While Alid loyalty could be observed in the different groups of Sufi denomination like Bektaşi respected by the Ottoman state, the expression of Alid loyalty is quite common practice even within the Sunni district of today’s Turkey. Therefore, this chapter attempts to retheorize the concept of non-Sunni elements, doing so on the basis of Ottoman records, according to which, being non-Sunni does not necessarily mean being Shi`ite as it is used to be now.

3.5. The Resituating the Religious Orientation of the Kızılbaş

Declared in the Religious Treatise

There appear to have been a number of treatises written by the sixteenth century Ottoman salaried scholars on the condemnation and refutation of non-Sunni sects, particularly Rafidis, Kızılbaş, and Shi`ite. The Kızılbaş had been labeled as Rafidi on many occasions, however, I do not happen to find any particular information in the official Ottoman chronicles on the classification of the Anatolian Kızılbaş as Shi`ite. In this part, I

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particularly aim to survey and highlight of the expression of the Kızılbaş belief in the Ottoman religious treatises, with special attention to two particular scholars: the works and fatwas of Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud. The Ottoman ulama of the sixteenth century played an important role together with the sultans themselves in the administration of the Islamic law. Ibn Kemal (873/1469 – 940/1534) and Ebussuud (895/1490 – 981/1574) appear to have been the most outstanding religious leaders of the sixteenth century. Both well-trained scholars, they have been accorded enormous prestige as the Mufti of Istanbul, which by the end of the sixteenth century had been accounted as the highest office in the learned profession.419 The Mufti of Istanbul also came to be known with the title of the shaykh al-Islam. While the Ottoman legal system with regard to the public issues was built on secular law (better known as kanun) in private matters the sharia law was performed.420 The office of the Mufti of Istanbul helped to reorganize the Ottoman jurisprudence and the decision made by the Muftis were respected as well as acknowledged as authoritative. The execution of Shaykh Ismail Masuki (945/1538) can be given here as an example of the power of the Mufti of Istanbul in the implementation the sharia law. Ma’ suki and his twelve followers were executed after the fatwa issued by Ibn Kemal. 421

419 The Mufti of Istanbul did not share a parallel role with the judge in the Imperial Council, as their thoughts can only be regarded as authorities if the sultan certifies them. Hence, the sultan was the only person whom they needed to consult and get approval. For the office of the Mufti of Istanbul about its role in politic of the sixteenth century Ottoman realm, see, Nikki R. Keddie. Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500. (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1972).
420 Colin Imber. “How Islamic was Ottoman Law?.” Islam papers, compiled by Seyfi Kenan, (77-90), 90.
421 Masuki was influencing people with his sermons of which he claims that ‘when Sufis reach to a certain level, they are no longer responsible from practicing the religious rites.’ Ibn Kemal was appointed to investigate him. He was executed with the fatwa of Ibn Kemal. Reşat Öngören. “Şeriat’in Kestiği Parmak; Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devrinde İdam Edilen Tarikat Şeyhleri,” İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi 1/1, (1996), 123-140; Ocak, Osmanlı Toplumunda Zindiklar ve Mulhidler 15.-17. Yüzyıllar, 274-290.
The fatwas and pamphlets of Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud were extremely important on the justification of the persecution of the Kızılbaş. Therefore, each of their particular writings attributed to Shi`ism and Kızılbaşism, if pursued more extensively and in depth, would help us to clarify the true religious identity of Kızılbaşism in the eyes of the Ottoman. I have come to believe that the statements of Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud are the most essential material to investigate the extent to which, if it ever was, Kızılbaşism was considered as a form of Shi’ism. Did the Ottoman persecution of the Kızılbaş have any affect on the Sunni-Shi’ite discourses? Are the views of forenamed religious scholars of Kızılbaş belief subject to sectarian concern in terms of Sunnism and Shi’ism? Did the Ottoman actually view the Kızılbaş as Shi’ite?

3.6. The View of Ibn Kemal on the Kızılbaş Faith

The treatises of Ibn Kemal are quite popular on the condemnation of non-Sunni religious groups. Ibn Kemal wrote a treatise on the ‘ikfari Shi’a (declaration of the Shi’is as unbeliever) that was actually dedicated to denouncing Shah Ismail and his followers. Ibn Kemal also wrote two other treatises on the matter of deviant sects; one of them is titled as Risale fi beyan-i firak-i dalle (A pamphlet on the description of the heretical sects) and the other one is named Risale fi tasnif-i firak-i dalle (A pamphlet on the list of the

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422 Ibn Kemal, Risale fi ikfari Sia, folio: 31a-31b; Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı.

423 Ibn Kemal, Risale fi ikfari Sia; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Pertev Paşa Bölümü, no. 621, (folio: 31a-b); For the original script of this pamphlet see, Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların Işıği Altında Yavuz Sultan Selim’in Iran Seferi,” 77-78. For the Turkish translation see, Halil Ibrahim Bulut, “Osmanlı-Safevi Mücadelesinde Ulemanın Rolü: Kemal Paşazade Örneği,” Dini Arastirmalar 7/21, (179-195), 188-190.

heretical sects).\textsuperscript{425} He also wrote a treatise on the condemnation of Rafidism, \textit{Risale fi tefşiri’r-Ravafiz}.\textsuperscript{426} A number of historiographical works also provide similar condemnation and refutation of those non-Sunni sects.\textsuperscript{427} Additionally, the official state records like the \textit{fermans} from the Muhimme registers parallel the other available sources in description of the Islamic denominations apart from Sunni Islam.\textsuperscript{428} And finally, the \textit{fatwas} condemns the rest of the non-Sunni forms issued by the trained \textit{ulama} formed relying on the same type of scholastic background, which to some extent had its roots directly in the diplomatic issues.\textsuperscript{429}

Ibn Kemal, in 932/1525 during the reign of Sulayman I, was promoted to the \textit{shaykh al-Islam}, supreme judge of the Muslim clergy in Istanbul through becoming the Mufti of Istanbul. Ibn Kemal issued \textit{fatwas} and wrote a number of pamphlets with the intention of protecting the Sunni Islam from the external Sufistic tendencies. According to him, the sects of Islam are divided two main groups, which are the \textit{ahli Sunnah}, and \textit{ahli bid`ah} (invention of a new thing outside of Islamic rules/innovator).\textsuperscript{430} In his \textit{risales} (pamphlets), he aims to distinguish the teaching of the \textit{ahli Sunnah} from influence of the rest of the sects.\textsuperscript{431} His treatise on the declaration of Shah Ismail and his followers as unbelievers, in

\begin{small}
\textsuperscript{427} Bitlisi, \textit{Selim Şah-name}.
\textsuperscript{428} Refik, \textit{On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik; Savaş, XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik}.
\textsuperscript{429} Düzdağ, \textit{Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı}.

\textsuperscript{430} He refers to a well-known hadith according to which the people of Islam will be divided into seventy-three sects. Tirmizi, \textit{Iman} 18, Ibn Mace, \textit{Fiten} 17, Ebu Davud, \textit{Sunnet} 1. Ibn Kemal divides the \textit{ahli bid’ah} into six major groups as Khawarij, Rafidi, Qadarite, Jabarite (Cebriyye), and Mürcie. Each of those six groups are, according to Ibn Kemal, consisted of twelve factions. Ibn Kemal. \textit{Risale fi beyani firaki-Islamiyyin}. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli Bölüm, no. 3711, folio: 115a-b.
\textsuperscript{431} Ibn Kemal, \textit{Risale fi beyani firaki-Islamiyyin}, folio: 115a-b
\end{small}
this regard the condemnation of Shi`ism, appears to have been the most important work on
the anti-Shi`ite discourse of the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. 432

In the *risale*, Ibn Kemal states that,

There appear a number of signs of the presence of a Shi`ite group in the
regions of Muslims. According to a rumor, they have captured so many
Sunni cities and have disclosed their superstitious dogmas on them. They
do not recognize the caliphate of Imam Ebu Bakr, Imam Umar, and Imam
Uthman. They instead curse them. They preferred to follow the path of their
leader whom they call Shah Ismail instead of complying with the sects of
the *mujtahid* imams — an individual who is qualified to exercise judicial
opinion in the evaluation of Islamic law. Thus and so, they insult the sharia
and the people of sharia. They claim that following the path of Shah is easy
and infinitely beneficial. 433

Ibn Kemal, in his *risale* (pamphlet) of *Fetva-i Kemal Paşazade der Hakk-ı Kızılbaş*
(The *fatwas* of Kemal Paşazade concerning the Kızılbaş)434 regards the followers of Shah
Ismail as being heretical with reference to the ‘red headgear,’ which is used symbolically
as a sign of being a Kızılbaş. For them, what Shah allows is *halal* (lawful/permitted) and
what he forbids is *haram* (un-lawful). For example, they regard drinking wine as halal due
to the allowance of the shah. In this case, we cannot doubt about their infidelity and
apostasy. The country they live in is *darulharb* (abode of war) to the Muslims. Marriage
of a Sunni man/woman with their man/women is void. It is certain that each of their kids
is a bastard. The animals that they slaughtered are unclean. Whoever wears ‘the read
headgear’ peculiar to them, he can be imprinted as heretic. That is because this headgear is

Bölümü, no. 3548, folio: 45a-46b. Those *fatwas* issued in this *risale* also reported by Ebussuud.
the sign of infidelity and impiety. They are going to be judged similar to apostates. If their cities are captured, then their wives, cities, and children are halal (permitted) to Muslims, and it is wajib (obligatory) to kill their men with the exception of that they become Muslim. If they become a Muslim, then they will not be punished. However, if their profanity becomes clear, then they immediately must be killed. Whoever leaves a Muslim country and chooses their superstitious religion, and goes to their country, then the Muslim judge legally can rule his death. His property will be shared, and his wife can marry someone else. Jihad against them becomes a religious duty for the entire Muslims.  

Ibn Kemal, in this risale, used the term ‘Shia’ pertaining to Shah Ismail and his followers’ creed. However, interestingly enough, he neither criticized any particular theological element of Shi`ism, such as the Imamate doctrine, which was at the center of Shi`ite belief system. Nor does he regard Shah Ismail’s religious leaning as an Islamic sect, but he judges it to be apostate. Additionally, Ibn Kemal does not use the term Shia for the purpose of labeling the beliefs of Shah Ismail and his followers. He merely narrates a rumor of ‘the presence of a Shi`ite faction in the Muslim lands.’ I therefore claim that a single usage of the term Shia is itself not enough to assert whether Ibn Kemal actually labels the faith of the followers of Shah Ismail as Shia. Another important point that I want to emphasize is the reference to ‘the red headgear.’ He did not refer to the tribal followers of Shah Ismail specifically as ‘Kızılbaş.’ It might possibly be because by that time, the notion Kızılbaş was not a popular phrase in the representation of the Anatolian followers of Shah Ismail.

435 Ibn Kemal, Fetva-i Kemal Paşazade der Hakk-i Kızılbaş, folio: 45a-b.
3.7. The Fatwas of Ebussuud

In 951/1545, during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, Ebussuud ascended to the office of Mufti of Istanbul. It was the time when the conflict with the Safavids had reached its peak. He issued a number of fatwas in support of the Ottoman policy. Those fatwas have been regarded as the most important resources that provided theological reasoning on the necessity of punishment of the Kızılbaş. A famous fatwa states that ‘the killing of the Kızılbaş group is permissible (halal) in compliance with our religion. People who kill them become ghazis and the killed ones become martyrs.’ The fatwas were primarily provided with the motives of dissolving public hesitation concerning the persecution of the Kızılbaş. According to the records, some people were concerned in terms of religious status of the Kızılbaş as ‘they believe in Allah and recognize Muhammad as the latest prophet.’ The fatwas therefore justified the killing of the Kızılbaş in support of the Ottoman Empire. The following fatwa also shows that the fatwas of Ebussuud were dedicated to dissipate the public concern of the killing of the Kızılbaş.

The fatwa was concerned about authorizing the killing of the Kızılbaş due to the fact that the leader of the Kızılbaş traced his descent from Ali, and through him to Muhammad. Ebussuud states that:

No one needs to be concerned about the legitimacy of the killing of the Kızılbaş. The wicked act of Kızılbaş is itself enough to prove that they are not related to the lineage of the pure prophet Muhammad. Besides when Junaid, father of Shah Ismail, appeared, he forced the sayyids that live around the tomb of Imam Ali ar-Ridha ibn Musa al-Kadhim and other sayyids to show that his bloodline is coming from them. He killed the ones who did not accept his will. Some sayyids resigned themselves to his will to

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436 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı, (fatwa no. 479), 109.
protect their lives. However, they attributed his lineage to an infertile sayyid. Therefore, some scholars would find out this fact. Moreover, even if it is true that he is a sayyid, when he is an infidel so he is no different from the rest of the heretics. Only the ones who follow the rite of sharia and protect its certain rules can be from the prophet’s descendants. For example, Kanan was the son of Noah, but he deviated. When the prophet Noah prays for his escape from the flood, God said that, ‘he could not be counted from your family… Kanan was like any other unbelievers punished and suffocated. If coming from the descendant of a prophet was sufficient to be saved, then the whole infidels could be saved only because they all come from the lineage of the prophet Adam. 437

The above-mentioned fatwa shows how religion had been used as a channel to justify the persecution of the Kızılbaş, and how the elite ulama served as an upholder of the political stability of the Ottoman Empire. In terms of religious concern, it assures people that there is no need to concern about killing of the Kızılbaş. As it is understood, common people were worried to fight against a group who claimed to be sayyid. In response to this assertion, Ebussuud states that they are not of the Prophet Muhammad bloodline. Junaid, unlike his ancestor, defrauded about his lineage, and by force, procured a document showing a genealogy of his sayyid-hood. As a matter of fact, the information given by Ebussuud about Junaid claiming noble lineage descents from the Prophet Muhammad is actually clarified by the historical records as I analyzed in Chapter I. According to these, Junaid’s descent goes back to a certain Kurd from Sinjar, Firuz Shah. Ebussuud then proceed saying that even if it is true that ‘he is a sayyid,’ why does it matter since he is an unbeliever (dinsiz)? According to the fatwa, the blood tie is irrelevant when the person is not a true Muslim, a firm supporter of Islamic rule.

Through giving an example concerning Noah’s son, Ebussuud emphasizes a fact

437 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvalari Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı, (fatwa no. 480), 109-110.
that no one would saved only because of the blood-tie. The Qur’an assures that the family of Noah will be saved from the flood: “We blessed Noah with the same favor; remember that he had invoked Us before those Prophets; we heard his prayer and delivered him and the people of his house from the great calamity and help him against those who had treated our revelations as false.”\textsuperscript{438} It further states that his descendants will be the only survivors: “Noah had certainly called Us, and (We are) the best of responders. And We saved him and his family from the great affliction. And We made his descendants those remaining (on the earth). And left for him (favorable mention) among later generations. Peace upon Noah among the worlds.”\textsuperscript{439} Besides that the Qur’an mentions of Kanan, the son of Noah, as the only family member of Noah who could not be saved due to his disbelief of Noah’s message: “As the ark was moving on with them amid waves like mountains, Noah cried out to his son, who was at a distance, ‘My son! Embark with us and be not with the unbelievers.’ He answered, ‘I am going to climb up a mountain that will protect me from waters. Noah said, ‘Today there is nothing to protect from Allah’s judgment except that He himself should take pity on anyone.’ In the meantime a wave came between them and he was among the drowned.”\textsuperscript{440} Ebussuud further states that if descent from a prophetic lineage is enough to be saved, then we all nothing to worry about since Adam is the first human being and the first prophet.

Due to the alliance of the Kızılbaş with the Safavid and the practice of Alid loyalty, some scholars are convinced that the Kızılbaş who live within the Ottoman domains were

\textsuperscript{438} The Qur’an, 21/76. 
\textsuperscript{439} The Qur’an, 37/75-79. 
\textsuperscript{440} The Qur’an 11/42-43.
Shi’ite. However, the terms rafidi (rejectionist), mulhid (apostate), khawarij (sedecer), kafir (unbeliever), ahli bid’ah (innovator) are used to define the religious form of the Kızılbaş, I do not happen to find any statement in the Ottoman chronicles that precisely classify the Kızılbaş as Shi’ite. Rather a well-known fatwa of Ebussuud categorically separates the Kızılbaş belief system from Shi’ism due to doctrinal and theological reasons. In his work Persecution of Ottoman Shi’ites, Colin Imber actually makes a reference to Ebussuud’s distinction of the Kızılbaş belief from Shia as he states that, Ebussuud’s distinction between the Shi’a and the Kızılbaş would be academic and, in any case, it is virtually impossible to distinguish the various strands of Ottoman Shi’ism.

The statement of Ebussuud might actually be not sufficient to situate the Kızılbaş as either Shi’ite or non-Shi’ite. However, it definitely demonstrates that the Kızılbaş were not considered to be Shi’ite in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities.

To the question of that ‘Kızılbaş group claim that they are Shi’ite, and they declare the statement of faith ‘Lailaha illa Allah — there is no God but God.’ Then, what is the reason of approaching them in a harsh way.’ Ebussuud responds that:

The Kızılbaş are not of the Shi’ite denomination of Islam. They also do not belong to the any sect of the 73 sects described in the prophetic tradition according to which, the ummah of Muhammad will be divided into 73 paths,
and all with the exception of *ahlī sunnah* will go hell.\(^{446}\) However, they generated a heretical and irreligious new *madhhāb* (sect/belief/creed) by adopting a piece of misdoing and defeatism from each of those *madhhāb*. Their poor behavior has increased day by day. Through looking at their persistent wrongdoings, in terms of *sharia*, our judgment would be: Those ill-natured underestimate the noble Quran, holy *sharia*, and the religion of Islam. They swear upon religious books and burn them. They offend the true religious scholars because of their poor knowledge of religion and prostrate to their deviant and traitor leader, Shah Ismail, through replacing him with God. They regard the entire forbidden by the strong verses as lawful. Besides, they are infidel in that they curse Abu Bakr and Umar. Even though there appear to be a number of almighty verses about the virtue of Aisha, the beloved wife of Muhammad, they malign her. They therefore refute the Quran and thus they are infidel. With their accusation to Aisha, they dishonor Muhammad and with this way they revile him. That is why the entire Kızılbaş with their old and young, their places and works must be exterminated. Whoever suspects of their fidelity, also becomes an infidel. According to Imam Adham Abu Hanifa\(^{447}\) and Imam Sufyan Thawri\(^{448}\) Kızılbaş would be free from persecution (death) if they completely repent and return to Islam. However, according to Imam Malik, Imam Shaf‘i, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Imam Layth b. Saad, Imam Ishak bin Rahuya, and other religious scholars, their repentance cannot be accepted. They must be beheaded under any circumstances. According to Imam Abu Hanifa, they will support the group of which they share belief with. Such judgment is known. With regard to the Kızılbaş troops, there is only one judgment according to which they must be killed in any case. However, the Kızılbaş in the villages and cities who live an unerring life and who are purified from the Kızılbaş characteristics and acts, as long as they are saying the truth, they must be free from the treatment (massacre) applied to the others. Killing of the Kızılbaş is way more important than killing of other infidels. For example, even though there were a number of heretics around the neighborhood of Madina, and Syria was not captured yet, instead of handling those heretics and going after Syria, Abu Bakr preferred to attack the apostates who bound themselves to the liar, Musaylima. The event of *khawārij* during the caliphate of Ali is the same. Their malignment is

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\(^{446}\) For the Arabic version of the *hadith*, see, Ibn Hanbal. *Musnad*. Volume 2/6, (Cairo: Mathba‘a al-Maymaniyya, 1313/1869), 332.

\(^{447}\) Imam Adham Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767) is the founder of the Hanafi School of mainstream Sunni jurisprudence.

\(^{448}\) Imam Sufyan Thawri (d. 161/777), a *muhaddith* (*hadith* narrator), who even narrated *hadith* from Jafar Sadiq. The *hadith* of Jafar Sadiq were primarily cited and recognized by the Shi‘ite scholars. Kulaynī (d. 329/941), a Shiite scholar, jurist and *muhaddith*, collected the *hadiths* of Jafar Sadiq in his famous work *al-Kafi*, which has become one of the essential *hadith* collection of Twelver Shi‘ism. Muhammad ibn Yaqub al-Kulaynī. *Kitab al-Kafi*. Edited by Muhammad Jafar Shamssuddin, (Beirut: 1993). However, some Sunni *muhaddith* also recorded from Jafar Sadiq. Sufyan Thawri, according to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, is one of them. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani. *Taqrib at-Tahdhib*. Edited by Muhammad Avvame. (Syria: Dar-ur-Rashid, 1986), 1/385-386.
wicked. To erase their malignancy from the world, it is necessary to make an effort and do whatever is needed.

Revisiting the famous fatwa of Ebussuud about the Kızılbaş religious creed shows that the fight of the Ottomans against the Kızılbaş must not be characterized as struggles between Sunnism and Shi’ism. As highlighted in the aforementioned fatwa, the Kızılbaş are not categorized as Shi’ite. The popular hadith about the division of the Islamic sects into 73 fractions has been cited here, and claimed that the Kızılbaş is not even one of those sects. Given that it is likely to say that, according to Ebussuud, the Kızılbaş are not even a sect of Islam. Rather than following a path of Islam, the Kızılbaş formed a different type of belief through embracing a piece of rite from each of the 72 sects (madhhab). They followed not the Qur’an, and the Islamic law on practicing religion, but Shah Ismail as if he was the god to them. Due to their ignorance of the Qur’anic rules and condemnation of the first three caliphs and Aisha, they, stated in the fatwa, must be viewed as infidel.

And then the names of Imam Adham Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767), a famous Sunni theologian and jurist, is the first of the four famous imams of the ahli Sunnah and the founder of the Hanafi School of mainstream Sunni jurisprudence, and Imam Sufyan Thawri (d. 161/777), a muhaddith (hadith narrator), theologian, and a jurist, are referred in pertaining Islamic decree on the punishment of the infidels. While to them, if the infidels (in this case, the Kızılbaş) swear off their bad habits and wrongdoings, they will be free of punishment. Contrary to this decree, Imam Malik (d. 179/795), hadith traditionist, one of the four great imams, and founder of the Maliki school (one of the four Sunni Islamic

449 Ibn Hanbal, Musnad, Volume 2/6, 332.
Schools), Imam Shafiʿi (d. 205/820), jurist and theologian, and the founder of the Shafiʿi School, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241/ 855), theologian and the founder of Hanbali School, Imam Layth b. Saad (d. 94/791), one of the great imams of jurisprudence, Imam Ishak bin Rahuya (d. 238/853), jurist, hadith traditionist and theologian, state that the repentance of infidels cannot be accepted. After giving two opposite views the ulama on the persecution of the Kızılbaş in case of their penitence, Ebussuud concludes that the Kızılbaş army must be viewed differently from the common people of the Kızılbaş tribes. There can be no excuse for the persecution of the troops; however, the Kızılbaş who were not involved in any political and military act against the Ottoman State would be free of punishment. This statement is quite important to illustrate the Ottoman policy on the persecution of the Kızılbaş. The fatwa, from the beginning until now, was all about the religious nature of the Kızılbaş. But with this particular phrase, the emphasized was turned to the central concern behind the persecution of the Kızılbaş, according to which, the Kızılbaş might be a powerful treat to the Ottoman unity due to their political and military allegiance to the Safavids.

At the end of the fatwa, the Kızılbaş are considered to be more dangerous than the rest of the infidels. In this juncture, the Kızılbaş was equated with the apostates who followed the path of Musaylimah al-Kadhab (the liar) instead of Muhammad the Prophet, and the khawarij, a group of people who ceased their support for Ali due to the

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450 Musaylimah al-Kadhab was a man who claimed that he shared prophet hood with Muhammad during the lifetime of Muhammad. Musaylimah was killed during the Ridda wars that were directed to apostasy in the Arabian Peninsula during the caliphate of Abu Bakr.
decision of arbitration.\footnote{When Ali and Mu’awiyah was fighting over the position of the caliphate, a process of arbitration had been suggested to end the hostilities. However, some supporters of Ali believed that arbitration is a sin due to the following verse: ‘The judgment is Allah’s alone, He relates the truth and He is the best of deciders. (Qur’an: 6:57). They therefore left Ali through accusing him of sin and disbelief. They afterwards had been called as khawarij. Halm, Shi’ism, 10-11.}

However, the Ottoman chronicles abstained from labeling the Kızılbaş belief as Shia, with the works of the early twentieth century, the confusions over the Kızılbaş belief has somehow linked the Kızılbaş with Shi’ism. Some scholarship used the term Shia along with the notions of heterodoxy, supporters of ahl al-bayt, rafidi, ocak-centered groups, Alevi-Bektaşi, and extreme Shi’ite in description of Kızılbaş/Alevi belief.\footnote{Köprülü, Islam in Anatolia; Mélikoff, Uyur Idik Uyardılar.} Those scholars referred the term Shi’ite as opposed to Sunnism without explain the differences and similarities may have been between the Kızılbaş belief and Shia. While for the Ottoman Empire, it was the Sunni Islam versus the non-Sunni denominations, today it has been viewed as Sunnism up against Shi’ism. It therefore has become an inevitable result to account each of all non-Sunni forms of Islam as Shi’ite.

Unlike some other scholars, Gölpınarlı, as a Shi’ite academician, does not regard Alevis/Kızılbaş as Shi’ite due to theological differences. Firstly, this is because that Alevis do not recognize the fundamental beliefs of Twelver Shi’ism. Secondly, the religious leaning of Alevis rather corresponds with batini ideas.\footnote{Gölpınarlı, Tarih Boyunca İslam Mezhepleri ve Şiilik, 87-91; Gölpınarlı. Türkiye’de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar, 272. I found four different currents associated with the notion Alevi: batini, the extreme Shia or ghuluww, Bektaşi, and Turkish shamanism. For this information, see Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. Tasavvuf. (İstanbul: Milenyum, 2000), 130-132.} He, further, states that people who embraced the batini elements like reincarnation/tanassukh, metempsychosis (divinity of Ali), and anthropomorphism (ascribing human characteristics to non-human) are not
genuine Muslims.\textsuperscript{454} He even criticizes the claim that Alevi are Jafari Shi`ite through suggesting that how can a group be labeled as Jafari without knowing the fundamental doctrines of the Jafari law. Under the part of Shi`ite sects, Gölpınarlı did not mention Alevism along with Zaydiyye and Ismailiyeye.\textsuperscript{455} However, Alevism is not a branch of Shi`ism, according to Gölpınarlı, Alevism along with Bektaşism and Rafidism began to display pro-Shi`ite sentiments. While some adopted Shi`ism and worked hard to in the spread of it, some were colored with batini ideas. \textsuperscript{456} Batinism claims that religious rituals are irrelevant when you master the esoteric knowledge of it. Gölpınarlı defines batinism as extreme belief regarding prophets and imams, believing that God will manifest in human being, denying after life, instead embrace the belief of reincarnation, interpreting the religious rituals as they exists to organize the universe.\textsuperscript{457} Rather they embraced batini teaching under the control of the dedes. With the influence of the dedes, they over exaggerate the fondness of ahl al-bayt.\textsuperscript{458} Gölpınarlı further states that people who embraced the batini teaching are not genuine Muslims.\textsuperscript{459}

\textbf{3.8. Conclusion}

The central theme of this chapter is to explore the Kızılbaş belief in greater detail as concerned in the Ottoman official documents with a particular interested paid to the sayings of the official religious scholars: Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud. It mainly underscores

\textsuperscript{454} Gölpınarlı, \textit{Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar}, 125.
\textsuperscript{455} Gölpınarlı, \textit{Şiilik}, 1997, 87-91
\textsuperscript{456} Gölpınarlı, \textit{Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar}, 1997, 94.
\textsuperscript{458} Gölpınarlı, \textit{Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar}, 1997, 272.
\textsuperscript{459} Gölpınarlı, \textit{Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar}, 1997, 125
the religious terms like *kafir* (unbeliever), *zindiq* (heretic), *mulhid* (apostate), *khawarij* (seceder), *rafidi* (rejectionist), etc., that used to describe and beyond that to discredit the Kızılbaş belief. Through an extensive analyze of the primary official [the Muhimme registers], historical [*Tevarihi Ali Osman* of Kemal Paşazade, the history of Aşıkpaşazade and *Selim-name* of Idrisi Bitlisi], and religious resources [the *fatwas* of the *ulama*], the chapter has been devoted to trace a sign of Shi`ism being used in description of the Kızılbaş creed.

While engaged in discussion of the usage of the term *rafidi* for different groups of people at different time periods, I have come to realize that a particular group that demonstrated a disparity might face to be called as Rafidi. This implies that the term *rafidi* is actually used in purpose of denouncing the opponent. After an exhaustive analysis of the Ottoman records, this section claims that the Ottoman labeled the Kızılbaş as Rafidi to emphasize their non-Sunni characteristic. This does not, in fact, imply Shi`ism. However, today the phrase of non-Sunni, as a matter of course, evokes Shi`ism as if there can only be two sectarian groups in Islam.

Hence, the Ottoman state’s very equivocal stance towards non-Sunni groups must be understood as it was. I argue that by the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire, the term *rafidi* did not necessarily mean Shi`ism. In terms of the usage of the word *rafidi* in the Ottoman records, it can be said that any particular religious group that not only practiced Islam outside of the Sunni norms, but, in due course, posed any kind of treat to the Ottoman integrity is automatically labeled as *rafidi*. In the classical Islamic perception, the notion
rafidi has been used to refer to any religious branch of Shi`ite. Therefore, the current scholarship did not hesitate to classify the Kızıldaş as Shi`ite. However, as discussed in this chapter, the notion rafidi in narrated in the Ottoman documents is a very much a question of definition. Besides that, the reaction of Ebussuud, in his famous fatwas, to the labeling of the Kızıldaş as Shi`ite entails a critique of linking the Kızıldaş with Shi`ite Islam. This chapter therefore aimed to offer a different angle in resituating the Alevi/Kızıldaş belief within the sectarian discourses through arguing that the Ottoman sources do not confirm the idea that Kızıldaş are equivalent of Shi`ism.

Chapter 4

Reforming of the Bektaşi and Alevi Rites through their Interaction with One Another

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I study two inter-related religious groups, the Alevis/Kızılbaş and the Bektaşis, which from the first half of the sixteenth century played a central role in the Ottoman Empire’s socio-political domain. As a Sufi order, the Bektaşi movement attracted the attention of the rural Oghuz population. From the early sixteenth until the late nineteenth century they played a crucial role in the social and political life of the Turkmen tribes in the Ottoman regions of Anatolia and Rumelia. To date, however, there are only a few recently published Alevi documents that make mention of the historical interaction of a number of Alevi dedes with some certain Bektaşi dervishes. In the course of its doctrinal and theological development, Bektaşism has in modern times become closely associated with Alevi Islam.
The scholars of Islam from the early twentieth century have often been tempted to view the Alevi/Kızılbaş and the Bektaşi as if they were genetically related. Hence, much of the recent scholarship of Alevism and Bektaşism has come to use the phrase of ‘Alevi-Bektaşi’ in the sense of a sub-joined group. Even in Alevi-Bektaşi literature, the historical development of these two entities was wrongfully interchanged; for example, the historical growth and development of the Alevi/Kızılbaş has been narrated as if it were for the Bektaşi.\(^{461}\) With the popular saying of Köprülü, ‘Alevis are the village Bektaşi,’ the two entities began to be viewed as the same thing, according to which they both originated from the same ground — the Baba’i movement.\(^{462}\) This approach has been supported with the works of Irene Mélikoff as she further states that they were of the same origin, but were divided into two groups after the early fifteenth century.\(^{463}\)

Much of the current scholarship — while upholding the assertion that these two entities grew from the same root — does not clarify, however, how and when such an association started. Neither does it stipulate how long such an association lasted, nor when it ended, nor when it began again. At this juncture, two things seem to be in conflict. Firstly, not only did Bektaşism play a crucial role in the social life of the Turkmen tribes of the Ottoman subject, but also the Bektaşis were closely connected with the Ottoman military system. This connection, which came through the Janissaries, continued until the suppression of the Janissaries in 1826. Further, while the Ottomans were favored by the

\(^{461}\) For an example, see Baki Öz. \textit{Kurtuluş Savaşında Alevi-Bektaşiler.} (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1990), 23; Besim Atalay. \textit{Bektaşilik ve Edebiyat.} (İstanbul: Matbaayı Amire, 1930). The original text was written in Ottoman in 1924. Besim Atalay served as a deputy of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi [TBMM]).

\(^{462}\) Baba’i movement occurred with the rebellion of Baba Ishaq in 637/1240 against the Seljuk sultanate.

moral and social support of the Bektaşı order, the Bektaşi were always respected and protected by the Ottoman sultans and had no religio-political arguments with either of them until 1826 when the order was temporarily dissolved. Unlike the Bektaşi, the Kızılbaş could never find a legitimate space under the rule of the Ottomans because of their support of the Safavids. Secondly, while the Bektaşi like other dervish groups have not been tolerated by the Republic since 1923 (their religious places were closed and leaders were imprisoned), the Republic of Turkey has always perceived the Alevi as allies in their quest to establish a secular and nationalist state. Given that these two groups have been differently perceived by both the Ottoman and the Turkish states, if they were of one origin, then why did they not support each other in this conflict with the state? And why did the Ottoman state not take a firm stand with the Bektaşi during its fight against the Kızılbaş? Bearing these questions in mind, I argue that claiming that these two movements were of the same origin leaves substantial historical loopholes. Therefore, this chapter seeks to explore and retheorize the historical development of the possible attachment of the Kızılbaş with the Bektaşi. Ultimately, it illustrates that from the time of their emergence until the early seventeenth century, the two movements were poles apart.

This chapter further aims to interrogate the role of the Kızılbaş-Bektaşi alliance in its formation to the Alevi faith through studying the following questions. How did the

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464 As stated by Cemal Kafadar, the Republic of Turkey ended the existing dervish lodges in Turkey, however, this did not stop them from maintaining their presence. Like many other Sufi brotherhoods, the Bektaşi were able to sustain their activities. As explained by Suraiya Faroqhi, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Bektaşi order with the influence of some influential people of the Palace and the state administration, was able to regain its power and activeness. See Cemal Kafadar, “The new visibility of Sufism in Turkish Studies and Cultural Life,” (307-322) in The Dervish lodge: architecture, art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey by Raymond Lifchez (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Suraiya Faroqhi, “The Bektashis a report on Current Research,” (9-28) in Bektächiyya, 1995.
Kızılbaş- Bektaşi interaction affect the social, political and religious adventure of the Kızılbaş over the course of its transformation to the Alevi belief? In what ways did the Kızılbaş- Bektaşi association influence each other’s discourse and standing within the sectarian conjecture of Islam?

With the Alevi-Bektaşi association, Hacı Bektaş, the patron saint of the Bektaşi order, became a leading charismatic figure for the Alevi community. Hacı Bektaş has been acknowledged as important as Ali. Recognition of him helped the Alevi community to establish their independence from Safavid influence. Due to the integration of Alevism with Bektaşism, Alevism came to be perceived as a Sufi order, which according to Sunni-inclined Turkish scholars is closer to Sunni than to Shia Islam. This perception, however, is despite the presence within Alevism of Alid loyalty and non-established Sunni-based law. Further, the adoption of Hacı Bektaş as a spiritual guide along with Ali fostered a nationalist approach. However Ali is an Islamic figure, he is, for the Turkish nationalist, still an Arab. But on the other side, Hacı Bektaş had been represented as a Turkish figure.

Due to the pro-Alid elements adopted by the Bektaşi order through its interaction with the Alevis/Kızılbaş, an opposite view was propagated according to which the Bektaşi order were secretly Shi’ite. However, reverence for Ali was also quite common in most of the religious groups that define themselves as Sunni. The Bektaşi, however, due to their

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467 See Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes.
reverence for Ali, *ahl al-bayr*, and the lament for the martyrs of the Karbala cult, came to be regarded as Shi’ite. According to this view, the alignment of Bektaşism with Alevism has proven the Shi’ite inclination of the Bektaşi Order. It is probable to say that with the alliance of these two groups, those elements recognized as Shi’ite by the latter scholarship would have been crystallized within the Bektaşiis. However, in what circumstance did the Ottoman state support and favour the Bektaşi order when it claimed to be Shi’ite. At this point, it is essential to determine the historical process of those Shi’ite patterns that dwell within the Bektaşi belief. Additionally, this work aims to reveal the place of the imamate doctrine within Alevism, which is the central doctrine of Shi’ism. This research claims that both Alevism and Bektaşism have mutually benefitted from their association with one another. While the Alevis in the eyes of Sunnis, have gained acceptance in their own right as members of an Islamic school of law, the Bektaşi have pursued their presence and possessions under two different, but rough circumstances; namely, after the closure of the Bektaşi lodges in 1826 and later in the early times of the Republic of Turkey.

4.2. Historical, Political and Religious Development of the Bektaşi 

Order

*From Hacı Bektaş to Bahım Sultan*

To date, the historical process of the Bektaşi tradition — from the lifetime of Hacı Bektaş, the *mursid* (someone who gives right guidance) and patron saint of the Bektaşiis, until the presence in the sixteenth century of Bahım Sultan, the second patron saint — has not been fairly covered. This is primarily because of the lack of sources concerning the
early history of Hacı Bektaş. Besides that, the information provided by the earliest historiography on Hacı Bektaş and the Bektaşi tradition are heroic and legendary. As with a number of other mystic groups, Bektaşi sources attribute miracles to Hacı Bektaş and define him as a charismatic powerful leader who can perform miracles. Several historical materials written almost one or two centuries after the death of Hacı Bektaş address his historical and legendary personality. The work Garibname written by Aşık Paşa around the thirteenth century, Esrar-i Hurufname of Aşık Paşazade who composed around the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and Menakibu’l-Arifin of Eflaki by the fourteenth century, and Menakibu’l Kudsiyye by Elvan Çelebi (d. after 760/1359) are all of crucial importance in terms of delivering information on the religious personality of Hacı Bektaş.

The most detailed information on the life, beliefs and methods of Hacı Bektaş can be found in the Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş. He was believed to have been born in Nisabur, a city of Khorasan in the thirteenth century. The date of 668/1270 is accepted as the date of Hacı Bektaş’s death at the age of 63 years, but this is not definitive. According to the Manaqib of Eflaki, Hacı Bektaş was contemporary with Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (603/1207 – 671/1273). He fled from the Mongol invasion and came to Anatolia with his brother called Mentes and visited several cities including Sivas, Amasya, Kirsehir, Kayseri and settled in Suluca Karahoyuk, a village of Kırşehir. In Suluca Karahöyük,

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469 Bektaş Veli and Duran, Velayetname.
he was welcomed in the house of a woman named Kadıncık Ana.\textsuperscript{472} It has come to be believed that the house of Kadıncık Ana had become the first \textit{tekke} (dervish lodge) where Hacı Bektaş preached and raised followers.\textsuperscript{473} According to Aşık Paşazade’s account, Hacı Bektaş was joined to the group of ‘\textit{baciyan-i rum}’ (women’s saints in Anatolia), which was one of the four separate Sufi groups active in Anatolia. The other three are: \textit{gaziyan-i rum}, \textit{ahiyen-i rum} and \textit{abdalan-i rum}. Through the group of \textit{baciyan-i rum}, he met Kadıncık Ana. He further states that Hacı Bektaş adopted Kadıncık Ana as a daughter, and revealed his secrets and prophecy (\textit{keramet}) to her.\textsuperscript{474} He died there and was buried in the city of Hacı Bektaş, the city named after him. Hence, by the fourteenth century, the earliest structure of the Bektaşi teaching was already in place, having begun to be developed right after the death of Hacı Bektaş by a certain Abdal Musa with the help of Kadıncık Ana.\textsuperscript{475}

With the institutionalization of the Bektaşi doctrine, Hacı Bektaş has become the most celebrated of all dervishes.\textsuperscript{476} Not only the personality of Hacı Bektaş, but also his philosophy and teaching has come to be recognized and appreciated even before his death. Therefore, instead of the sixteenth century, the era of Hacı Bektaş and the whole time after his death must be introduced as the starting point for the development of this particular Sufi order.

\textsuperscript{472} Öztürk, \textit{Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi}, 307. \textit{Tevarihi-i Al-i Osman} was first published by Ali Beg in Istanbul, 1332 (1914), then by Friedrich Giese in Leipzig in 1929, and finally edited by Nihal Atsiz in Istanbul in 1949.

\textsuperscript{473} Mikail Bayram. \textit{Fatma Bacı ve Baciyan-i Rum: Anadolu Bacıları Teşkilatı}. (İstanbul: NKM, 2008), 35-36.


\textsuperscript{475} Mélikoff, “Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and Its Consequences,” 2; Ocak, \textit{Türkiye’de tarihin saptırılması sürecinde Türk sufiliğine bakışlar}, 20.

\textsuperscript{476} Mélikoff, \textit{Hacı Bektaş}, 87.
Aşikpaşazade, in his well-known historical account of *Tevarih Al-i Osman*, talks about the presence of a Sufi group in the late fifteenth century with the name of Bektaşi. He uses the term Bektaşi for a particular group that attribute themselves to Hacı Bektaş. Relying on the information provided by Aşikpaşazade, Köprülü came to believe that the Bektaşi order was founded with its religious ceremonies and rules by the fifteenth century. The *Divan* of Sadik Abdal also mentions of a Sufi group with the name of Bektaşi by the fifteenth century. According to him, this Sufi group was formed in the dervish lodge of Kızıldeli. Balım Sultan was also trained in the Kızıldeli lodge. Vahidi in his *Manaqib* (written in 929/1522) also provides information on the Bektaşi dervishes of the early sixteenth century. According to his writing, the Bektaşi dervishes like a number of other deviant dervish groups including Qalandars, Haydaris, Abdals of Rum, Jamis, and Shams-i Tabrizis were active social dervish groups in the Ottoman lands. Unlike the other dervishes, the Bektaşi dervishes became even more influential after the sixteenth century.

Although the Bektaşi order was named after Hacı Bektaş, he was not the founder of the order, but it was rather molded in the sixteenth century by Balım Sultan. In 1502, Balım Sultan (d. 922/1516) was asked to institutionalize the Bektaşi order by the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Bayazid II (885/1481 – 917/1512). According to the tradition, Balım

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479 For detailed information on the role of the Kızıldeli lodge in the formation of the Bektaşi Order, see the article of Rıza Yıldırım, Rıza Yıldırım. “Muhabbetten Tarikata: Bektaşi tarikat’ın oluşum sürecinde Kızıldeli’nin rolü,” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Araştırma Dergisi* 53, (2010), 153-190.
481 For further information see, Karamustafa, God's *Unruly Friends*, 83.
Sultan came into the Kızıldeli lodge in which he systematized the Bektaşi rituals and decrees. That is why he is regarded as the real founder and the second patron saint of the order. While a number of mystic dervishes mentioned in Vahidi’s work slowly went out of existence, the Bektaşi dervishes of the fifteenth century retained their entity. Not only this, but they progressed even further to become the primary dervish group existing in the Ottoman realm. The Ottoman support has been listed as the leading reason behind the success of the tariqa. The order was granted territories from the newly conquered areas and was advocated to establish their own dervish lodges (zawiye) in Anatolia and the Balkans. Those zawiyes served as a central place for Islamic teaching.

The Ottoman-Bektaşi alliance was mutually beneficial for both sides. As stated earlier, with the backing of the Ottoman state, the order expanded its teaching and rituals all around the Ottoman territories. Through the service of the Bektaşi tekkes — a type of Islam indigenized by the Ottoman government — they reached out to the people of different religious tendencies in the newly conquered places. At this point, Mélikoff even suggested that the Ottomans blessed the order with the objective of keeping the rafidi thoughts within the boundaries of the Ottoman central belief. Those Sufi religious groups of different strands would have been in the sights of the Ottoman. Rıza Yıldırım parallel to Mélikoff states that it was aimed to control the various social-religious groups and to

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483 Irène Mélikoff. *Tarihi ve Kültürel Boyutlarıyla Türkiye'de Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler*. (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 1999), 20-21; It is also suggested that Abdal Musa, claimed to perform and teach the Hacı Bektaş teaching, played a particular role in the conquest of the Balkans and Trace. In return, he and his followers were rewarded from the conquered territories for their effort and commemorated as gazis. They were allowed to build their own religious lodges. See, Ömer Lütfi Barkan. “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir ışık ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler I: İstilâ devirlerinin kolonizatör Türk dervişleri ve zaviyeleri,” *Vakıflar Dergisi* 5, (1942), 279–386.
prevent them from affiliating themselves with the Kızılbaş movement.\textsuperscript{485} On the other side, it has been claimed that the Ottoman coopted the Bektaşi lodges to Islamize the Christian children of the conquered Byzantine territories.\textsuperscript{486}

As far as it is known, the Bektaşis were one of several deviant dervish groups that actively engaged in the social and religious spheres of the Ottoman Dynasty during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Aside from those deviant dervish groups which had not yet turned into a Sufi order, by the late fifteenth century there were, however, the Sunni colored Sufi brotherhood, such as the Mevlevis. While the Mevlevis were recognized by the Ottoman administration, the Mevlevis had likewise always supported the state’s political and social stand. There appeared no sign of their anti-state stance. At this point, I ask how and why did the Ottoman choose the Bektaşis over the other deviant dervish groups? Instead of turning its full attention to the Mevlevis, which was an already institutionalized Sufi order why did the Ottoman spend its energy and money to fund a socially deviant dervish group which had not yet systematized its teaching and rites?

According to aforementioned claim, the Ottoman state supported the Bektaşis to keep the different views of several dervish groups in line with the Ottoman’s central belief. While the Bektaşis interacted with the Turkmen babas, even claiming to be the continuum of the Babai order, the Mevlevis never thought of the Turkmen babas as an ally, but rather as rivals.\textsuperscript{487} Our first suggestion is that the Ottoman aim was to control the ascetic dervish

\textsuperscript{486} The view has been initially suggested by Louis Massinon and then adopted by a number of other scholars. Winter, The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{487} Köprülü, “Bektaşılığın Menşeleri,”
groups, the Bektaşi being a better option than the Mevlevis. Secondly, I have come to believe that the Bektaşis’ recognized association with the Janissary corps would likely be influential on the Ottoman decision of promoting Bektaşi lodges.

4.3. The Possible Link of the Bektaşi with Other Dervish Groups

Overall it has been believed that the Bektaşi order has been formed in harmony (contact) with other dervish groups due to its shared messianic and apocalyptic thoughts and conceptual, terminological and geographical resemblance. Their path and interpretation of religious views, however, differentiate. With regard to their origin or which mystic groups were influential in the formation of the Bektaşi order, the scholars propose different views. The well-received thought is that the Bektaşi order is the continuum of the Babai movement.\textsuperscript{488} Elvan Çelebi (760/1359), the son of Aşık Ali Paşa (732/1332) and the grandson of Baba Ilyas (637/1240), in his \textit{Manaqib} acknowledges Hacı Bektaş as a disciple of Baba Ilyas who did not join the Babai rebellion.\textsuperscript{489}

\textsuperscript{488} The historical record defines Hacı Bektaş as a disciple of Baba Ilyas, however, they do not relate him with the Babai rebellion. See Aşık Paşazade. \textit{Tevarih-i Al-i Osman}, 1949, 195; Elvan Çelebi, İsmail E. Erünsal and A. Yaşar Ocak. \textit{Menakibu’l Kudsiyye fi Menasibi’l Unisyye: Baba Ilyas-i Horasâni ve sülâlesinin menkabevi tarihi}. (İstanbul, 1984).
\textsuperscript{489} Çelebi, Erünsal, and Ocak. \textit{Menakibu’l Kudsiyye fi Menasibi’l Unisyye}, 1984, 268-269.
Not only the Babais, but as stated by Köprülü, the teaching of the Akhis and Abdals were also blended in the Bektaşı thought. Then Köprülü also mentions the batini elements — local beliefs performed in Iran and Anatolia, Christianity, the philoposophical and mystic thoughts, and Indian, Chinese and Turkish customs — also as influential motives in the shaping of the order. On the other side, Mélikoff proposes a list of other dervish groups like Topraks, Işıks and Qalandar, and Hurufis as engaged in forming the Bektaşı order. Even though it is not definitive as to which dervish group was precisely responsible for the formation of the Bektaşı order, as suggested by Karamustafa, the Bektaşı order was the organized and institutionalized form of a number of mystical

490 Akhis (also known as Futuwwah) is another group that was ascribed to the Bektaşis. Akhis carried an important mission in the second half of the thirteenth and first of the fourteenth century of Asia Minor/Kucuk Asya. According to scholars Akhis by the early fifteenth century began to be called as Bektaşis and traced their origin back to Hacı Bektaş. Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, 239; M. Fatik Köksal. “Ayn, Erkan ve Adap Benzerlikleri Açısından Ahilik-Bektâşilik Münasebetleri,” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bekâaş Veli Araştırmaları Dergisi* 55, (1989), 59-70; Hacı Bektaş was also claimed to have a personal relationship with the akhis. The saying of Ahı Evran is an important metaphor showing such link, ‘Hacı Bektaş is the shayk of the person who embraces me as a shayk.’ Hilmi Ziya Ülken. *Anadolu’ nun Dini ve Sosyal Tarihi*. Prepared by Ahmet Taşğın, (Ankara: 2003), 49.
491 Köprülü, “Bektaşılığın Menşeleri.”
492 Köprülü, “Bektaşılığın Menşeleri.”
494 Bektaşısm has been criticized especially on account of their acceptance of Hurufi doctrines. See, Ishak Efendi. *Kaşifü’l-esrar*. The book was attributed to criticize Cavidan written by Fazl Hurufi and criticized the Bektaşı thought due to a possible attribution to Hurufi ideology. According to recent scholarship, Hurufi philosophy was adopted by the Bektaşı order with the influence of Nesimi, a disciple of Fazlallah, who settled in Anatolia, and was spread out in Balkans by Rafii (d. after 1418), a disciple of Nasimi. Today the Bektaşı organization respects and reveres him, and recognizes him as one of prominent Bektaşı scholars; however, it has not historically been proven if Nesim was in contact with the Bektaşı groups. Irène Mélikoff: “Les Fondements de l’Alevisme”, in her *Sur les traces du soufisme türce. Recherches sur l’Islam populaire en Anatolie*, (İstanbul: ISIS Press, 1992), 11-28. This article translated into Turkish as *Uyur İddik Uyardilar: Alevilik-bektâşılık Araştırmaları*. John Birge compares the structure of the Bektaşı faith to the Hurufi movement. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, 61. For the Hurufi influence on Bektaşı order, also see Hamid Algar. “The Hurufi Influence on Bektashism,” (39-53) in *Bektachiyya: études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* by Alexandre Popović. (İstanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1995).
anarchist movements and some ‘heretic’ sects (like Hurufi) that existed by the early sixteenth century as it did undertake the patrimony/legacy of their teaching.495

Further, the Bektaşi order was also associated with the Yesevi tariqa as Hacı Bektaş was represented as a disciple of Ahmad Yesevi (485/1093 – 561/1166). Even to Velayatname, Hacı Bektaş came to Anatolia with the request of his shaykh, Ahmad Yesevi.496 This view was denied by Köprüli as he indicated that Hacı Bektaş and Ahmad Yesevi were not historically related. They neither lived in the same time period nor lived in the same area.497 Due to their shared futures, as both orders use Turkish in performing their religious rites instead of Arabic or Persian, scholars including Mélikoff keep relating the Bektaşi order with the Yesevi one and even states that Hacı Bektaş had sustained the role of Ahmad Yesevi in Anatolia.498

On the other side, relying on a number of recently emergent Alevi documents that have been meticulously preserved by the Alevi dede families, Karakaya-Stump sparks a new discussion with regard to the origin of the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief, according to which, Alevi belief was born from the Iraqi-born Vefa’i order, not from the Yesevi tariqa as claimed. Accordingly, Vefa’i order was one of the primary precipitating influence, if not

497 Köprüli, Early Mystics in Turkish Literature, 102-104. Early Mystic is the modern work that provides the most comprehensive study on Ahmad Yesevi.
the main one that spawned Alevism/Kızılbaşism from the late fifteenth to the early sixteenth century.499

4.4. Janissary-Bektaşi Association

The Bektaşi’s distinctive authority over the Janissary army could be listed as the primary reason of the expeditious progress of the order within the Ottoman regions. According to tradition, the Janissary corps, paid soldiers of which constituted the principal branch of the army in the Ottoman state,500 were educated spiritually by Bektaşi dedes and babas.501 They paid allegiance to Hacı Bektaş and recognized him as their patron saint. The era of Murat I has been officially recognized for the establishment of the Janissary army502, but when and how Janissaries-Bektaşism interaction began is still a controversial and undefined subject.503

It is claimed that Hacı Bektaş met with Osman I (655/1258 – 726/1326), and he prayed for the Janissaries’ success.504 He was also claimed to be a close friend and a

503 What kind of relationship had they had? Was any money transferred to Bektaşi lodges from the incomes of foundations established by Janissaries? If so what was its potential? This discussion is beyond the scope of our study. For a detailed information on this subject, see, Metin Ziya Köşe. “Yeniçeri Ocağının Bektaşileşme Süreci ve Yeniçeri-Bektaşi İlişkileri.” Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi 49, (2009), 195-207.
consular of Sultan Orhan Gazi,\textsuperscript{505} however, it is a fact that he died long before the birth of Orhan Gazi (679/1281 – 761/1360). According to the account of Aşık Paşaçade, Hacı Bektaş was never engaged in a conversation with any of the Ottoman sultans.\textsuperscript{506} As stated by Aşık Paşaçade, the Hacı Bektaş cult gained recognition through the mediation of Abdal Musa, as he was in interaction with the Janissary army during the conquest of Bursa.\textsuperscript{507}

Even though the interaction of the Bektaşı order with the Janissary corps was officially recognized from 1591 onwards\textsuperscript{508}, historical records show that even before then there had appeared a constant relationship between the two. The fact that some Janissary \textit{ocaks} (the Janissary organizations named as \textit{ocak}) were called by phrases like ‘\textit{ocaki Bektassiyyan},’ ‘\textit{taifei Bektasiyyan},’ ‘\textit{gruhu Bektasiyyan},’ and etc.,\textsuperscript{509} offers sufficient proof to illustrate a possible connection between the Janissary army and the Bektaşı order. The Janissary army was abolished by Mahmut II in 1826. The army was not in favor of the sultan’s reforms and resisted training by saying that it is the infidel invention.\textsuperscript{510} The firm attitude of the army was judged as a threat to the central government. Thus the Janissary army was disbanded in 1826 and numerous soldiers were executed. The abolishment of the Janissary army was also declared as ‘\textit{vakai hayriyye}’ (propitious event).\textsuperscript{511} The case of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{505} According to the records, when Orhan decided to establish a new army in 1339 he called Hacı Bektaş to Bursa to join the ceremony of the establishment of the new army and Hacı Bektaş did pray for the army. Lucy M. J. Garne. \textit{The Dervishes of Turkey.} (London: The Octagon Press, 1990), 18.
  \item \textsuperscript{506} “Ve ılla bu Hacı Bektas, Ali Osman neslinde kimseyle musahabet etmedi; ol sebeben anmadum.” Öztürk, \textit{Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi}, 2013, 307. Aşık Paşaçade further refutes the saying of the headgear of the Janissaries was modeled based on that of Hacı Bektaş. The Question: “Ya bu Bekaşiler esdaları kim: Bu yениçerinin başındaki tac Bektaşilerededir derler. The respond: Vallahı yalandır. Öztürk, \textit{Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi}, 2013, 308.
  \item \textsuperscript{507} Öztürk, \textit{Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi}, 2013, 307.
  \item \textsuperscript{508} Goodwin, \textit{Yeniçeriler}, 157.
  \item \textsuperscript{509} Uzunçarşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilatından Kapıkulu Ocakları}, 150.
  \item \textsuperscript{510} “Talim gavur icadıdır, Müslümanaya yakışmaz...” Ali Resad. \textit{Asr-i Hazır Tarihi.} (İstanbul: 1926), 620.
\end{itemize}
impoundment of the Bektaşı lodges right after the disbanding of the Janissary army in 1826 further indicates the link between the two groups.

Shortly after disbanding the Janissary army, Mahmut II issued a *ferman* (decree) that banned the Bektaşı order. This was because of the order’s traditional and religious link with the Janissaries. Many Bektaşı lodges were destroyed and the control of the unruined ones left to the Naksibendi *shaykhs*. Moreover, a huge number of Bektaşis were deported and numerous Bektaşı dervishes were executed. A report given in the Muhimme registers, written by a Sadrazam (grand vizier) to Divanı Humayun (supreme court), states that the possessions of the Bektaşı lodges in Üsküdar/Istanbul with all of its properties including foundational centrals, lands, infield and garden, were given to the state.\(^{512}\) It was not merely the Bektaşı tie with the Janissaries that was reported for the prohibition of the order,\(^{513}\) but rather the distortion of their beliefs that were presented as cause for chastening. In the historical records, the Bektaşis were broadly criticized on account of their disobedience and non-performance of Islamic duties and were even being defined as infidel.\(^{514}\) Depending upon the Ottoman official record’s representation of the early nineteenth century Bektaşı belief, I argue that the final form of the doctrine, teaching, and even rites of the Bektaşı order was not shaped entirely by the sixteenth century. Rather, the religious elements of the order evolved from the presence of Hacı Bektaş onwards until the

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\(^{512}\) Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri’nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler*, 155.

\(^{513}\) Esad Efendi in his famous work of *Üss-i Zafer* mentions of the Bektaşı link to the Janissaries and its importance on the restrain of the Bektaşı Order. “Bektaşı guruhi Yeniçeri taifesine isticad ile o misillü tekyeler ve zevayinin isimlerini tahrif ve kendilerine nisbet ile zabet ve hasilati vakfi nefislerine hasr ve fisk u fucur ile ekı u bel ve bazı mahallerde dahi halki idalılar için muceddeden tekyeler ihdas ve birer fasid vakfiyey tertibiyle ihtira’l evkaf iderek sirran ve alenne envai senate cesaret etmekte olduklar…” Esad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 1830, 215.

late nineteenth century relying on the sultan’s approach to the order\textsuperscript{515} and its discovery of other religious tendencies.

**The Bektaşı Struggle for Furthering Their Existence from 1826 Onwards**

As highlighted earlier, the Bektaşı belief has never died out or passed away from the stage of history neither after the ban in 1826 nor with the shutting down of the dervish lodges in 1925. The Bektaşı *tariqa* managed to survive in hiding and in defiance of the stance of the central authority of the Ottoman dynasty and the Republic of Turkey. I argue here that this period of secret existence must be counted as an important era that enabled the order to establish its final form. The era of Mahmut II has to be distinguished from the era of the following sultans: Abdülmecid I (1254/1839 – 1277/1861), Abdülaziz (1277/1861 – 1292/1876) and Abdülhamid II (1292/1876 – 1326/1909). That is mainly because each of these sultans illustrated a different approach to the Bektaşis; however, the ban over the order had not been constitutionally removed under their rule. Hence the Bektaşis kept their presence either with the help of some high state officials or with the tolerance of the reigning sultan.

In contrast to the era of Murat II, the era of Abdülmecid is known as tolerant to different types of the dervish lodges and religious tendencies. Within this time period, like a number of other Sufi groups and religious sects, such as the Druze and the Yazidis, the

\textsuperscript{515} The approach of the Sultans of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, as they are; Mahmud II, Abdülmecid I (1839-1861), Abdülaziz (1861-1876) and Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), to the Bektaşis differ from one another. Unavoidably the Bektaşi adventure under the rule of those Sultans show an alteration.
Bektaşis did not re-establish their closed lodges, but to some extent gained strength.\textsuperscript{516} By the time of Abdulaziz, tolerance to the Bektaşis has become transparently visible. During this time, the Bektaşi order was sufficiently tolerated to operate their public service. The tolerant attitude has been tied to the sultan who claimed to be sympathetic to the order.\textsuperscript{517} And finally, by the early twentieth century, under the rule of the İttihat and Terakki (1909 – 1918), the Turkish government became interested in researching the Anatolian Sufi orders, particularly the Bektaşis and Alevis. This was the beginning of the process of new political and administrative attempts. Talat Paşa, the leader of the party, said in the parliament, “however, we rule the government, we lack in our knowledge of Anatolians. We must know the people.” That is why the different beliefs, \textit{tariqas} and tribes must be investigated. And Baha Said Bey was assigned to research the Kızılbaş and Bektaşi groups.\textsuperscript{518} From 1900s onwards, the Bektaşis and the Alevis have begun to be viewed as if they were of the same origin. The historical link of the Bektaşi-Alevi alliance will further be investigated in the following section.

\textbf{4.5. The Religious Resemblance: the Alevi/Kızılbaş and the Bektaşi}

The Alevi/Kızılbaş community resembles the Bektaşi community with its non-traditional practice of Islam. Neither of these groups pay any attention to the external forms


\textsuperscript{517} Çift, “1826 Sonrasında Bektaşılık,” 249-268.

\textsuperscript{518} Sait Bey and Birdoğ, \textit{İttihat-Terakki’nin Alevilik-Bektaşılık Araştırması}, 1994. Bursa\l{s} Mehmet Tahir and Hasan Fehmi Hoca were in charge to research \textit{ahis}, and Esat Uras Bey was assigned to seek the beliefs of Armenian.
of religion nor do they strive to be recognized as a branch of either Sunni or Shi’ite. Most of recent scholarship attempted to associate them with Shi’ite Islam due to the alleged Shi’ite elements like the veneration of Ali and the Twelve Imams. By contrast, the Bektashi order has been perceived as Sufi of mainstream Sunni Islam. Further, to some scholars, Alevism and Bektaşısm symbolize a Turkish form of Islam that is close to Sunnism, but is definitely not Shi’ite.

Due to identical character of their religious rites, it has been claimed that Alevism and Bektaşısm have the same origin.\textsuperscript{519} Some of the following scholarships have criticized the suggested view. This approach has become the one that is most perceived within the Alevi-Bektaşı literature. Some scholars even neglected to distinguish the historical and theological development of the two and refer to the phrase ‘Alevi-Bektaşı’ as if it represents a single group of people.\textsuperscript{520} This chapter intends to separate the Alevi/Kızılbaş communities from the Bektasıs by recognizing the presence of separate Bektashi groups, such as the Babagan Bektasıs, Çelebi Alevi/Bektaşı,\textsuperscript{521} and the Nakşi Bektasıs.\textsuperscript{522} It is of interest to note the fact that Alevi and Bektasi history has developed through the influence of different political, social and religious paradigms. Nevertheless, both groups exhibit similar religious doings with some exceptional differences. Further, it is essential to state

\begin{footnotes}
\item[521] It has been suggested that the Kızılbaş community begun to interact with the Bektasıs through the mediation of the Çelebi Bektasıs. See Hulya Küçük. \textit{Kurtuluş Savaşında Bektasılar}. (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınları 2003), 152.
\end{footnotes}
a number of shared religious characters who were involved in both groups because of the Alevi/Kızılbaş link to the Bektaşi dervishes.

The Shared Religious Characters

Attribution to Hacı Bektaş as a spiritual guide is one of the most proposed indicators of commonalities between the Alevis and the Bektaşis. The earliest Bektaşi sources refer to Hacı Bektaş. There is no sign of Hacı Bektaş in the earliest written texts of Shaykh Safi Buyruks, dated 1608 and 1612. The name of Hacı Bektaş, however, does appear in a few places in the later made Imam Jafar Buyruk, dated 1292/1875. In one passage, Hacı Bektaş appears along with Jesus, Salman al-Farsi, and Uwais al-Qarani. In a different part, Hacı Bektaş was listed right after Allah, Muhammad, and Ali: ‘Allah, Muhammad, Ali, Hacı Bektaş say hu (hu is used to refer to God in Sufism) to the truth!’ Here his position has become as important as Ali. The name of Hacı Bektaş does not appear in the ijazetnames and hilafetnames of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and also in the well-respected books of the Alevi/Kızılbaş community like the Divan of Hatai.

Pro-Alid sayings and Shi‘ite patterns like the concept of the Shi‘ite triad of (Allah, Muhammad, and Ali), the glorification of Ali, ahl al-bayr, the doctrine of Imamate, and the matter of the fourteen infallibles are all indicative of the doctrinal affinities that exist between the Bektaşi and the Alevis. However, while the Alevi/Kızılbaş community

523 Bozkurt, Buyruk, 68; Aytekin, Buyruk, 113-114.
524 Bozkurt, Buyruk, 85; Aytekin, Buyruk, 199-200.
acknowledged those Shi`ite currents from the beginning of their origin, they are not observable within the Bektaşi collections until the late seventeenth century. The use of the Turkish language, rather than Arabic and Persian in practicing their rituals and in the composed texture of their traditions is listed as a fundamental resemblance. There is also a resemblance in the practice of using symbolic liquor (wine), the *sema* (spiritual dance), fast in *Muharram*, and similar service at *Nawruz* (old Turkish-Persian New Year celebration). The well-know *cem* ritual is also performed by both the Alevis and the Bektaşi. Additionally, the doctrine of ‘*dört kapı*’ (four gates) — *sharia, tariqa, ma`rifa* and *hakiqa* — and ‘*kırk makam*’ (forty positions) are expressed in the *Makalat* attributed to Hacı Bektaş, and are almost identical with the ones explained in the *Buyruks* of Alevi literature. It seems that the notions of dört kapı and kırk makam are adopted by the *Buyruks* with the influence of the *Makalat*. It is also essential to know that the tradition of *cem*, belief of *dört kapı* and *kırk makam* are also the shared future of a number of Sunni-colored Sufi orders.

The Elements that Distance the Alevis/Kızılbaş from the Bektaşis

The fundamental difference between the Alevis and the Bektaşi is that while for the Alevis, only those whose genealogy can be traced back to the Prophet Muhammad can

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526 The process of the involvement of the Shi`ite elements into the Bektaşi belief will further be explained in the following sections.
528 It is run by a *mursit*, or *baba* or a *dede*. There are twelve duties. For the detail of those duties see, Mêlikoff, *Hacı Bektaş*, 1998, 263.
lead the community as a *dede*, the Bektaşis have no such limitation. The head of the ‘*dedelik* institution’ can merely be the son of a *dede*. When a *dede* dies, naturally his son becomes the *dede*. As with the bloodline system for the *dedelik* institution, the bloodline is also essential for the people: only a person being born from an Alevi family can be an Alevi. Unlike the Alevis, the Bektaşis have no such norm. The Bektaşis prefer to use the term *baba* to refer to their spiritual guide of the dervish lodge. Further, *baba* was not required to be a *sayyid*. Any qualified shaykh can be the *baba*. Each position and rank within the order is being done through election. 532 Further, anyone who wills to be Bektaşi and embraces the Bektaşi belief can become a Bektaşi. Anyone can become a Bektaşi but not an Alevi. The doctrine of ‘*musahip*’ (companion)533 is one of the important rites of the Alevis, however, it does not appear in the Bektaşi tradition. Although the *cem* ceremony was the shared rite of both groups, there are some differences in its performance. For example, only married couples can participate in the Alevi cem ceremonies. On the other hand, the Bektaşi have a tradition of ‘*mucerred*’ (single/unmarried dervish)534 in which only the single dervishes can participate in the ritual. Last but not least, for the practice of religious rites, the Alevis use the phrase ‘*meydan evi*’ for their gathering place, while the Bektaşis use the term ‘*dergah*.’535

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533 In chapter 3, the rite of *musahip* has been explained in detail.
4.6. When and How did the Alevi-Bektaşi Association Begin?

Bearing the historical records of the fifteenth and sixteenth century in mind, this section suggests that the Alevis and Bektaşıs were not historically related. Even though the two groups existed as separate movements and developed for a certain time in their own circle, the religious tenets of both factions are stunningly alike. Therefore, the scholars of Alevism and Bektaşism are hesitant to estimate the exact date of when the two groups first encountered one another. The available sources of the sixteenth century on the Bektaşi and Alevi belief do not relate them. On one side, the Kızılbaş was officially recognized as a religious and militant group by the Ottoman state during its fight with the Safavid dynasty. Due to their support of the Safavid dynasty, they were subjected to persecution. The central government not only accused them of being a threat to the integrity of the state, but also defamed them as an enemy to Islam. The official records of the Muhimme Registers and the religious documents provided similar information to justify the persecution of the Kızılbaş.

On the other side, the official administrative records of the sixteenth century have no accusation on the political, social or religious stance of the Bektaşıs, but the fermans of the nineteenth century mention the Bektaşi belief as marred. It has come to be believed by historians that the support of the Ottoman government enabled Balım Sultan to institutionalize the Bektaşi order and that their religious doctrine, teaching, philosophy and

536 For the fatwas of Ebussuud, see Düzdağ. Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatt. I have studied this subject in chapter 4. The official records – Muhimme Registers – and the religious documents provided similar information to justify the persecution of the Kızılbaş.
537 Şener, Osmanlı Belgeleri’nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler, 155-157-163.
method were not systematized until then. The work of Suraiya Faroqhi in which he studied the geographical distribution of the Kızılbaş groups — particularly the ones mentioned in the Muhimme registers and the existing Bektaşis of the sixteenth century — illustrates that the geographical expansion of the both sides are interrelated.\textsuperscript{538} Hence it is unlikely to relate the Bektaşis of the sixteenth century with the Alevis of that era in terms of historical, political and religious circumstances, unlike now when there appear new documents suggesting the opposite. Recently published books have come to declare a possible individual interaction between the two groups relying on newly discovered Alevi sources.\textsuperscript{539}

\textbf{The Undocumented Sixteenth Century Alleged Link of the Bektaşis to the Alevis/Kızılbaş}

Karakaya-Stump appears to be the first scholar to talk about the possible sixteenth century relationship between the Anatolian Kızılbaş and the Bektaşi lodges located in Iraq. In a number of different articles, she claims the presence of an institutionalized relationship between the Kızılbaş community and the Bektaşi dervishes beginning from the late sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{540} Cited from Karakaya-Stump’s article, “that from the second half of the sixteenth century onward, the Alevi/Kızılbaş communities of Anatolia maintained a close and by all appearance rather institutionazed, relationship with a distinct network of

\textsuperscript{538} Suraiya Faroqhi. \textit{Anadoluda Bektashilik}. Translated by Nasuz Barin. (Istanbul: Simurg, 2003), 79.
\textsuperscript{539} At this point, the study of Karakaya-Stump becomes more of an issue as she claims an established institutionalized relationship between the Kızılbaş of Anatolia and the Bektaşi of Iraq.
Bektaşi convents in Iraq centered around the convent in Karbala.⁵⁴¹ In a different article, Karakaya-Stump states that, “Alevi documents originating from Iraq expose the presence of fairly institutionalized relations between the Alevi dedes and a group of Bektaşi convents in Iraq.”⁵⁴² She points out that she has come to this conclusion depending on newly discovered Alevi documents originating in the sixteenth century, possibly in the Bektaşi lodges in Iraq like ziyaretnames, hilafetnames and the ones indicating their pedigree that connect them with the Prophet Muhammad. She mentions the availability of recently discovered Alevi documents that originated in the sixteenth century showing an institutionalized relationship between the two communities. However, she only cites a single document — an ijazetname, dated 996/1588, formed in Karbala convent, the leading Bektaşi convent in Iraq — on behalf of a certain Dede Yusuf from the Dede Kargın ocak. The transliterated version of the original form of the ijazetname was given in the work of Alemdar Yalçın and Uzman Hacı Yılmaz titled Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile Ilgili Yeni Belgeler.⁵⁴³

The ijazetname states that a person named Dede Yusuf living in a village of Malatya (Bimare köyü) visited a number of sacred cites and tombs of Imam Ali, Imam Husayn, Imam Kadhim, Sahibi Zaman and a number of other saints in Iraq. He was trained in the lodge of Imam Huseyin. Karakaya-Stump uses this particular record to prove her argument, according to which, by the late sixteenth century there was an unknown institutionalized

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⁵⁴² Karakaya-Stump, “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families,” 277-278.
⁵⁴³ Alemdar Yalçın and Uzman Hacı Yılmaz. “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” 71. The article in total, mentions of 30 original documents composed for the Dede Kargın Ocak, the oldest one was composed in 1496 and the latest was composed in 1914.
relationship between the Anatolian Kızılbaş and the Bektaşi lodges in Iraq. With reference to the *ijazetname* formed in 996/1588, Karakaya-Stump argues that the association of the Dede Kargin ocak (naturally the Kızılbaş community) and the Bektaşis of Iraq commenced by that time. The *ijazetname*, claimed Karakaya-Stump, was formed in the name of Dede Kargin ocak in the Karbala convent which to Karakaya-Stump is the Bektaşi lodge of Karbala. 544 However, as far as I am concerned there appears no sign of a Bektaşi link with regard to the scope of the *ijazetname*. Neither does it refer to Hacı Bektaş nor to any particular Bektaşi dervishes. It also does not make any mention of the Karbala lodge’s link to the Bektaşis. 545 The name of Hacı Bektaş, however, rigorously shows up a *ferman* composed in 1227/1813 and in an *ijazetname* written in 1232/1817. Relying on these documents, we can certainly speak of a precisely institutionalized relationship between the Dede Kargin *ocaks* and the Bektaşi community by the first half of the nineteenth century. 546

To my understanding, Karakaya-Stump relates the *ijazetname* to the Bektaşis due to the information given about the subject of ‘*sofra* and *çerağ*’ (table/meal and lamp/light) 547 The document states that in the Imam Husayin shrine, ‘*sofra* and *çerağ*’ were presented to Dede Yusuf by the *shaykh* of the Karbala convent. 548 And it is known that the Bektaşi dervishes have served as *çerağıci* (guide) for the Imam Husayin shrine after the Karbala convent acquired a Bektaşi identity. Additionally, the fact that many of the Shi‘i convents in Iraq — in which numerous Alevi documents were composed — had later on acquired a

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547 Çerağ means bougie, light, glory… and the dervish who lights a candle or a bougie is called as çerağıci.
548 Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargin Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” 42-43, record: 25
Bektaşı identity, leads Karakaya-Stump to propose that the relationship between the both sides started by the sixteenth century. The view suggested by Köprülü might also lead Karakaya-Stump to believe that the Karbala convent of the sixteenth century was ruled by the Bektaşı dervishes. According to which the Karbala convent had begun to be operated by the Abdals of Rum by the late sixteenth century, and the Abdals of Rum are known for their affiliation to the Bektaşı order. Through the influence of the Abdals of Rum, the Bektaşı dervishes had gained importance in the convent. However, it is not definitive yet when and how the convents of the sixteenth century located in Karbala and Nejaf were visited by the Alevi dedes to verify the authenticity of their sayyid-hood (a direct descendant of Muhammad) and to confirm their ocak status, or how they acquired a Bektaşı identity. According to Faroqhi, by the sixteenth century, there were a number of dervish lodges operating in Iraq, including Abdal Musa, Abdal Ata, Koyun Baba and Sayyid Gazi, but none of them are explicitly identified as Bektaşı. By the late fifteenth and sixteenth century, there appears to have been only a few recognized Bektaşı lodges constituted in Anatolia. The well-known are the ‘pir evi’ in Hacı Bektaş and a zawiye named as ‘Hacı Bektaş’ in Aksaray, and the Hacı Bektaş lodge in Akşehir.

In addition to all the information given so far, it is of interest to this research to question the possible link of the Kızılbaş group of the sixteenth century to the Dede Kargın Ocak. Even though the Dede Kargın Ocak has been recognized as one of the essential Alevi Ocaks, thought there are common elements in their religious stance, a number of current

549 Karakaya-Stump, “Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families,” 277-278.
551 Faroqhi, Anadolu da Bektaşılık, 2003, 46
documents of the Dede Kargın Ocak led me to believe that the historical relationship between the Kızılbaş community to the Dede Kargın Ocak requires more indepth study.

First of all, two available documents of the Dede Kargın Ocak dated 901/1496 and 951/1545, unlike the Alevi documents of that particular time period, show equal respect to the first four caliphs. Each of the caliphs was mentioned by name. While the first four caliphs are respected and glorified in these documents, there is also respect to the Twelve Imams. The reference to the four rightly guided caliphs omitted in the documents from date of 962/1555. On the contrary, the first three caliphs are not respectfully recognized in the Kızılbaş records of the sixteenth century, as I discussed in chapter two. Further, as analyzed in chapter 3, the Kızılbaş community had been acutely criticized by the official religious ulama of the Ottoman state due to their accusation on behalf of the first three caliphs. Due to their religious tendencies and political tie with the Safavids, they were exposed to a firm persecution which continued into the 1580’s.

Secondly, some other documents of Dede Kargın Ocak demonstrate that the Dede Kargın Ocak and the Ottoman government have had a mutual relationship. While the Dede Kargın Ocak respected the state’s authority, the government provided protection for them. An undated ferman written by a representative of the Kargın tribe to the sultan of the Ottomans — while glorifying the Ottoman government — asks permission to go to their real motherland. Additionally, several fermans prepared on behalf of the members of the

554 A detailed analysis of these two documents is given in chapter 2.
Dede Kargın Ocak aimed to confirm their sayyid-hood to free them from the Ottoman taxation. The earliest known ferman goes back to the 1051/1641, the most recent one dated 1229/1814. All of those fermans show that the government did grant the members of Dede Kargın Ocak’s sayyid-hood and they became free from paying tax to the state. It is clear in these documents that the Ottoman dynasty recognized the sayyid-hood of the members of Dede Kargın Ocak and provided them a means of protection from burden of paying tax. Unlike the members of the Dede Kargın Ocak, the sayyid-hood of the Kızılbaş community was disowned by the sixteenth century religious scholars of the Ottoman state.

Karakaya-Stump also wrote an article in which she provides a new document in the form of a letter composed by a certain Seyit Baki, who is said to have come from the lineage of Hacı Bektaş. The letter was to be sent to Seyyid Yusuf, who was introduced as the ‘son of Hakk Dede Kargın’ (Hakk Dede Kargın oğlu). In the letter Sayyid Baki informs Sayyid Yusuf about the conquest of Baghdad by Shah Abbas in 1033/1624. Given this information, Karakaya-Stump assumes that the letter was written in a Bektaşi lodge located in Baghdad, rather than by Seyit Baki’s tie with the Bektaşi. There is no other sign or indication that the letter was written in a Bektaşi lodge in Iraq. The most striking part of the letter is that here Seyit Baki appears to be a firm supporter of Shah of Iran as he praises the Shah on his conquest of Baghdad. He also states his wish for the shah to move to

556 Five different fermans dated in different time periods, 1641, 1654, 1664, 1718, 1814 are published in for these fermans see, Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” 54-63.
558 This letter was preserved by Galip Dedekargınoğlu, a member of Dede Kargın ocak. Today Dede Kargin Ocak is regarded to be one of the Alevi ocaks. The earliest information on behalf of Dede Kargin was presented in the Menakib of Elvan Çelebi. According to this, Dede Kargin was likely fled from the Mongol attack and settled in Anatolia. Across time, he had become quite popular and the number of his disciples had dramatically increased. Çelebi, Menakib, 1984.
Anatolia, according to which, the letter does not only show a link between the Dede Kargın ocak and a certain Bektaşı dervish, but also illustrates Bektaşı loyalty to the Safavid Shah. The letter leaves a huge loophole in terms of the political and religious stance of the Bektaşi operating in Iraq. First of all, Seyit Baki only appears in this letter. Rather than knowing that he relates himself to the genealogy of Hacı Bektaş, there is no indication showing any spiritual link to the Bektaşi of Anatolia. Further, it is not yet definitive if the dervish lodge, possibly located in Baghdad where the letter was written, had acquired a Bektaşi identity by the early seventeenth century. As far as we know, the Bektaşi lodges in Iraq only began to be identified as Bektaşi after the annihilation of the Safavids, which did not happen before the eighteenth century. The Seyahatname of Evlisya Çelebi provides information on the seventeenth century Bektaşi lodges in Iraq.\footnote{Evliya Çelebi. Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: (Bagdad, Basra, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Isfahan, Malatya, Mardin, Musul, Tebriz, Van), Volume 4, compiled by Seyit Ali Karaman and Yücel Dağlı. (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010).} We do not, however, encounter any negative view of them. As a firm supporter of the Sunni Islam and the Ottoman government he, throughout the book, always mentions anti-Sunni or anti-Ottoman views in an unfavorable way. If the Bektaşi lodges of the seventeenth century in Iraq were supporters of the Safavids and practiced Islam different than the Sunnis, would he have mentioned it?\footnote{Bektaşi order, according to Algar, was also influential on some marginal sects and groups in Iran. The group of Ahli hakk view Hacı Bektaş as incarnated version of Sultan Sahak. The similarity of some ritual performance like Cem servise and doctrinal resemblance of religious rank as seriat, hakikat, marifet and tarikat show these two groups were influenced from one another. Hamid Algar. “Bektaşi ve İran: Temaslar ve Bağlantılar.” published in Tarihi ve Kültürel boyutlarıyla Türkiyede Aleviler, Bektaşiler, Nusayriler. (İstanbul: Ensar Nesriyat, 1999), 136-139.}
4.7. From the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century: From an Individual Link to an Institutionalized One

How and why had a Sufi order, recognized and advocated by the Ottoman state, have come into contact with a blackened mystic group which was identified as a definitive enemy to the Ottomans? How did such a relationship affect their political position up against the Ottomans? How did both sides benefit from such a link?

Overall, historians studying the Bektaşi and the Alevi/Kızılbaş are in agreement with the view proposed by Mélikoff that the Ottoman state supported the systematization of the Bektaşi order; it did so with the particular intention of assimilating the rafidi thought and preventing the existing dervish groups from joining the Kızılbaş. If the Ottoman government tended to coopt the different mystic groups as claimed within the Ottoman central religious view, why would the Kızılbaş not be in the forefront? While the Ottomans regarded the Kızılbaş as a religious and political threat, we do not encounter any particular dispute practiced by the Bektaşi against the Kızılbaş. Instead there appears some individual connection between the two groups as early as the seventeenth century. Given that I argue that the Ottoman state did not merely promote the Bektaşi philosophy to sweep over the Kızılbaş community, but rather tended to coordinate the anomalous groups, including the Kızılbaş, by integrating them with a formally supported Sufi order — the Bektaşi. According to this, the establishing of personal or formal relationships with the other mystic groups was entirely consistent with the nature of the Bektaşi order.

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What was the motive of the Kızılbaş in interacting with the Bektaşis? One possible reason would be that they were tired of persecution. And thus being close to a Sufi order that was the ally of the Ottoman would free them from the enmity of the Ottoman dynasty. Secondly, and more importantly, it would be because of the Safavid’s unstable stance to the Kızılbaş after the recognition of Imami Shi’ism as the official religion of Iran. The Safavid ulama tended to control the religious philosophy of the Kızılbaş after the recognition of Imami Shi’ism. Hence the Kızılbaş would have been in search of a different harborage where they could find more freedom for their own belief system. Due to the common religious elements shared between the Kızılbaş and the Bektaşis, the Bektaşis would have met the expectation of the Kızılbaş. It needs to be clarified that that the Bektaşı link to the Kızılbaş, however, began as early as the seventeenth century and it was not institutionalized earlier than the late eighteenth century. The evanescence of the Safavid dynasty fastens the relationship between the two factions.

The sayings of Krysztina Kehl-Bodrogi also prove my point, according to which, the separation of the Kızılbaş from the Safavid Empire paved the way for the Kızılbaş - Bektaşi association. Unlike what I above claimed, she states that the Kızılbaş- Bektaşi link had begun by the late sixteenth century.⁵⁶² Due to the lack of documents proving the Kızılbaş- Bektaşi relationship of the late sixteenth century, it seems unlikely to prove her argument. Additionally, as I cited from travel accounts of Simēon of Poland in chapter three, the Kızılbaş continued militarily supporting the Safavid order until the early seventeenth century.⁵⁶³ This information also demonstrates that a certain separation

⁵⁶³ Simēon and Bournoutian, The travel accounts of Simēon of Poland, 66-67, 176-177.
between the Anatolian Kızılbaş and the Safavid order did not actualize until the early seventeenth century.

Since then, the Kızılbaş community has turned its face from the Safavid Shahs to Hacı Bektas. The majority of the Alevi ijazetnames written after that included a genealogy connecting the Alevi dedes to Hacı Bektas. Hence from the eighteenth century onwards, the Kızılbaş began to appeal to the Hacı Bektas convent in Kırşehir to ratify their sayyid-hood and thus to acquire an accreditation for their dede status. The Hacı Bektas convent in Kırşehir has become the focal point for the Bektasis and the Alevis, and the rest of the Bektashi lodges originating in the Ottoman reigns, were subjected with this one. When a new shaykh was about to be assigned to a tekke or a zawiya, he would only be assigned with the permission of the shaykh of the Hacı Bektas convent and the Ottoman sultans. The eighteenth century Alevi documents indicate that Alevi dedes applied to the Hacı Bektas convent for an accereditation to confirm their ocak status and their sayyid-hood genealogy. The association of the Kızılbaş-Bektasis seems to be beneficial for the Kızılbaş community. The advantage of the link for the Bektasi side showed up especially in 1826 with the abolishment of the Bektasi convents. While the majority of the Bektashi lodges were closed down, the Nakşi shaykhs, who were known for their loyalty to the Ottoman state, were assigned to the available ones. With that the government aimed to control the functioning of the ongoing Bektashi lodges. By that time, it is likely to claim that the Bektashi link to the Kızılbaş enabled them to keep their presence in secret. The Kızılbaş community

survived the Ottoman persecution of the sixteenth century and sustained their existence in secret and in despite of their unallowable religious views.

The distinguishing feature of the Alevi documents composed in the Hacı Bektaş convent when compared with the ones formed in the Sufi convents in Iraq is that the genealogy of the Alevi dedes have begun to be traced back to Hacı Bektaş. The oldest available ijazetname in which the chain of initiation was taken back to Hacı Bektaş was dated 1763.\(^{566}\) There is also a number of other ijazetnames from the nineteenth century that frankly express a Bektaşi identity. Similar expression with regard to connecting the genealogy to Hacı Bektaş also becomes quite definitive in the documents of the Dede Kargın Ocak. For example, an ijazetname composed in 1817 begins with similar expression with the rest of the ijazetnames as they all praise Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, and the Twelve Imams, but then it distinctly gives a special place to Hacı Bektaş. In this particular ijazetname, Hacı Bektaş was respected and glorified. Hacı Bektaş was presented as the most almighty person of his era and the sultan of tariqa’s almighties.\(^{567}\) This ijazetname explicitly illustrates the presence of notably institutionalized relationship between the Dede Kargın Ocak and the Bektaşi.

By the eighteenth century, the Bektaşiis were known by two separate branches: the Çelebis, which mainly expanded in Anatolia, and the Babagans, which were popularized in the Balkans. The political and religious stance of these two branches had begun to break up slowly with the involvement of the Kızılbaş belief within the Çelebis. By early twentieth

\(^{566}\) Yıldırım refers to the ijazetnames dated 1763-1803, 1816, 1819, 1855, and 1870 without including neither the facsimile nor the transliterated version of the document. Yıldırım. “Bektaşi kime derler?,” 39.

\(^{567}\) Yalçın and Yılmaz, “Kargın Ocaklı Boyu ile ilgili yeni belgeler,” 45-49.
In the late 13th/19th century, there appeared a fairly obvious power struggle between the Çelebi and Babagan branches of the Bektaşi order. In 1327/1911, Feyzullah Baba, who represented the Babagan branch, wrote a letter to the sultan in which he offered his loyalty to the Ottoman sovereignty while at the same time he accused Çelebi Cemalleddin Efendi, the leading figure of the Çelebis, of meddling with their business. By contrast with this, the Çelebis accused the Babagans for favoring the Albanians.\(^568\) Besides that, the Ottoman government of the late nineteenth century was involved in a fight for power between the Ittihat and Terakki party — the party that ruled the government (1909–1918) — and the sultan. The Babagan and Çelebi Bektaşi even favoured different sides. The Çelebi Bektaşi by the early twentieth century established a good relationship with the sultan. Thereafter the Babagans were in good terms with the Ittihat and Terakki party.

This power struggle united the Kızılbaş with the Çelebis; the Babagans, however, kept their distance from the Kızılbaş community. The Çelebi Bektaşi beliefs, however, were combined into a mixture of Kızılbaş and Bektaşi tenets. The Alevi Bektaşi literature composed under the authority of the Ittihat and Terakki party at this time, demonstrates that there was a sense in which the Alevis and the Bektaşi were regarded as the same

group of people. The phrase ‘Alevi-Bektaşı’ or ‘Bektaşı-Alevi’ also began to be used to define the Alevi and Bektaşı groups. The history of Alevis has been given in a number of books as if it was that of the Bektaşis. This is still a common mistake in numerous recently written books. Further, numerous Bektaşi convents like the main lodge in Hacı Bektaş, the lodges of Sahkulu located in Üsküdar/Istanbul, and the Abdal Musa lodge in Elmali/Antalya were all begun by Alevi dedes.

The Babagan Bektaşis were uncomfortable with the connection of the Çelebi Bektaşis with the Alevis/Kızılbaş. They were explicitly careful to distance themselves from the Alevi/Kızılbaş community. Although common religious elements were shared by both Babagan and Çelebi Bektaşis, due to the Kızılbaş attachment to the Çelebis, the Çelebi Bektaşis began to emphasize the importance of the lineage of the dede, which had to go back to the Prophet Muhammad. On the contrary the Babagan Bektaşis, instead of overrating the genealogical chain focused on spiritual enlightenment.

In 1925 the Republic of Turkey decided to close down the entire dervish lodges and zawiyas. It is likely to claim that by that time the Bektaşi link to the Alevi community was...

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569 The İttihat and Terakki party assigned some scholars to investigate the Anatolian Sufi orders particularly the Bektaşis and Alevis. This was the beginning of the process of new political and administrative attempts. Talat Paşa, the leader of the party, said in the parliament, ‘however, we rule the government, we lack in our knowledge of Anatolians. We must know the people.’ That is why the different beliefs, tariqas and tribes must be investigated. And Baha Said Bey was assigned to research the Kızılbaş and Bektaşi groups. (Baha Said Bey researched from 1914 to 1915, however, his researches were published in 1926–7 in Türk Yurdu. Bursali Mehmet Tahir and Hasan Fehmi Hoca were in charge to research ahis, and Esat Uras Bey was assigned to seek the beliefs of Armenian.) Sait Bey and Birdoğ, İttihat-Terakki’nin, 1994; Ahmet Cahit Haksever. “Osmanlı’nın son döneminde islahat ve tariktarlar: Bektaşilik ve Nakşibendilik örneği.” Ekev Akademi Dergisi, 13/38, (2009), (39-60), 49.


571 From an interview done by Hülya Küçük. Küçük, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Bektaşlık,” 79.
highly rewarding for the Bektaşis. That is mainly because the Alevis assumed responsibility in the War of Independence and also because the Alevi dedes called on their people to support Atatürk.\textsuperscript{572} Even Mustafa Kemal talks positively with regard to the support of the Alevi dedes.\textsuperscript{573} Along with the Alevi dedes, there also appear to have been a number of Alevi-Çelebi Bektaşı dedes who welcomed Mustafa Kemal.\textsuperscript{574} Irrespective of their support, however, the Çelebi Bektaşı lodges were also locked with other lodges. Nevertheless, almost 14 Bektaşi lodges continued to operate in secret and the Bektaşi leaders were allowed to reside in their lodges. They managed to sustain their rituals in secret.\textsuperscript{575}

4.8. Sectarian Discussion: the Representation of the Bektaşı as Shi`ite

The attachment of Bektaşısm to Alevism/Kızılbaş has created a sophisticated discussion with regard to the sectarian description of the two groups. The time when Shi`ite elements were adopted by the Bektaşi dervishes has not been determined. The historians of the early twentieth century are in agreement with the view that the Bektaşi tradition was molded with the Shi`ite structure through their interaction with the Alevi/Kızılbaş community.\textsuperscript{576}

\textsuperscript{572} Bal, “Cumhuriyet, Mustafa Kemal ve Alevi-Bektaşiler,” 55-83.
\textsuperscript{575} Küçük, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Bektaşılık,” 76.
\textsuperscript{576} This view first proposed by Köprülu, according to which the Shi`ite (batini belief was introduced to the Bektaşis through the intermediacy of the Kızılbaş/Alevis. Mélikoff also provided information parallel to the Köprülu`ı`s claim. Mélikoff, “Le probleme Kızılbash,”
On the one side, the Alevi/Kızılbaş community has begun to be defined as closer to Sunni than to Shi`ite Islam despite the presence of Alid loyalty and non-established Sunni-based law. Particularly, in the eyes of the Sunni-based scholarship, the Alevi/Kızılbaş acquired a Sunni identity through their integration with a Sunni colored brotherhood. This same scholarship has also believed that with the interaction of the Alevi to the Bektaşi, the Kızılbaş/Alevi were introduced to the Sunni based Islamic law and that they deliberately head toward practicing the sharia law as defined by the Sunni mainstream. There would be some individual examples of Alevi who assimilated within the mainstream Sunni Muslims. The whole picture of the Alevi community, however, demonstrates that they neither fully embraced Shi`i Islam nor attempted to get closer to Sunni Islam. Therefore, this dissertation argues that the Bektaşi alliance of the Alevi/Kızılbaş initially enabled them to overcome the firm influence of Imami Shi`ism. Secondly, it empowered them to maintain themselves as a distinct entity apart from both Sunni and Shi`ite Islam.

On the other hand, a number of Shi`i patterns in the Bektaşi ijazetnames and hilafetnames gradually expanded within the primary Bektaşi sources. Due to the recognized Shi`i components, several current scholars have come to relate the Bektaşi tradition to the Sh`ii Islam. The Bektaşi have even begun to be described as a Sufi Shi`ite tariqa. John Birge’s conclusion partly describes the perspective of that scholarship,

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579 Babayan mentions of a power struggle between the Kızılbaş and the Safavid and the struggle of the Safavid shah to control the Kızılbaş loyalty and naturally religiosity. For further detailed information see Babayan, “The Safavid Synthesis.” 140-147.
according to which, the pro-Alid causes are sufficient enough to label a group as Shi`ite. When Birge visited Turkey in 1913, he was surprised to see that all these Sufi groups honor Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and blame Yazid for the murder of Husayn. However, he knew from the books that Turkey was dominantly a Sunni populated country. Due to the prevalence of the ritual of mourning the death of Hasan and Husayn, particularly within the dervish brotherhood, he had come to believe that ‘the Turkish people though outwardly Sunni were, under cover of their dervish brotherhoods, partially Shi`ite, at least in their tendencies, and certainly mystical rather than orthodox.’

As far as it is known, Ali, from the nineteenth century onwards, has become the most celebrated figure in the Bektaşi ijazetnames, erkannames and catechism books. Along with pro-Alid sentiment, several elements like the Twelve Imams, the martyrs of Karbala, the fourteen pure innocents, and the seventeen (kemerbest) who are recognized as being within the scope of the Shi`i Islam, also become quite obvious in the Bektaşi resources. Additionally, the Shi`ite terminology including ‘tawalla’ — loving the ones who refers to Ali and the ahl al-bayt, and ‘tabarra’ — the hatred for the people who do not love Ali and the ahl al-bayt, have both become unalienable items in the Bektaşi literature. However, in a number of places the term ‘tabarra’ was defined as to abstain from the forbidden ones, and the word ‘tawalla’ was explained as to abide within the orders of Allah. Further, the expressions like ‘I believe in Jafar Sadiq’s sect’ (Mezhebim Imam Jafar Sadiq) or ‘my sect

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582 Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, 140.
is the true Jafari’ (Mezhebim Hakk Caferidir) are somehow mentioned in the Erkannames.\(^{583}\) However, it is of great interest in the context of this section to highlight the fact that the application of Jafari law is quite superficial. A number of essential subjects of the Jafari law, which set it apart from the Sunni, are not even mentioned in the Erkannames. Absence of the allowance of the ‘muta marriage,’ the combining of the daily prayers can be given here as an example. It is also essential to state that with the exception of those aforementioned elements, there appears no other common element shared by the Bektaşis and the Shi`is.

4.9. From the Era of Hacı Bektaş to the Nineteenth Century: the Involvement of the Shi’ite Patterns in the Bektaşi Tradition

Almost each and all of the historical materials describing the religious tendencies of Hacı Bektaş lack in narrating his sectarian stance. They neither categorically dogmatize him as a Sunni dervish, nor in any way relate him with Shi’i Islam. At this point, the Garibname of Aşık Paşa\(^{584}\), Esrar-i Hurufname of Aşık Paşazade, Menakibu’l-Arifin of Eflaki, Menakibu’l Kudsiyye by Elvan Çelebi, and the most famous books attributed to Hacı Bektaş — the Makalat and the Velayetname — will be applied here to observe how his philosophy, method and belief of Islam must be understood in conjunction with the sectarian fraction.\(^{585}\)

\(^{584}\) Aşık Paşa, Garibanme, 2000, Volume 4. According to Köprülü, As a Sunni scholar, Aşık Paşa wrote Garibname to distinguish the Sunni ideology from the non-sunnis.
\(^{585}\) Hacı Bektaş and Duran, Velayetname.
Eflaki, an outstanding scholar of the fourteenth century, and Aşık Paşazade, an important Ottoman historian of the fifteenth century, define Hacı Bektaş as a non-practicing mystic saint. Eflaki describes him as a mystic saint who devoted himself to ‘divine knowledge, according to his writing, but dismissive of religious law of Islam.’ Aşık Paşazade is comparatively supportive of Eflaki’s description of Hacı Bektaş. According to which, Hacı Bektaş was narrated as a mystic saint who did not devote himself to follow the prescribed religious verdicts of Islam. Beyond that Aşık Paşazade in his famous history, an important Ottoman chronicle, accuses Hacı Bektaş as being ‘a lunatic who is incapable to run a Sufi order.’

Unlike Eflaki and Aşık Paşazade, Makalat and Velayetname, the two fundamental books attributed to Hacı Bektaş rather list sharia (Islamic law) as one of the four major doors together with the three other doors of tariqa, maʿrifa, and hakiqa. All of these four doors include ten separate maqams. So that the prescribed laws of Islam particularly the five pillars of Islam (the testimony of faith, daily prayers, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage to Mecca) are given in the sharia section of the Makalat as essential to the worship of the devout. Those five pillars of Islam are listed as the third maqam (position) of sharia. Further, the Qur’an is cited here to demonstrate the importance and necessity of them. Likewise the Velayetname describes Hacı Bektaş as a practicing Muslim saint.

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586 It was first published by Ali Beg in Istanbul, 1332 (1914), then by Friedrich Giese in Leipzig in 1929, and finally edited by Nihal Atsiz in Istanbul in 1949.
590 Hacı Bektaş, Coşan and Özbay, Makalat, 1996, 11.
591 Hacı Bektaş and Duran, Velayetname, 2007, 81/7b.
The Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi (1019/1611 – 1092/1682) also provided similar information on Hacı Bektaş’ religious stance. According to which, Hacı Bektaş was a pious Muslim dervish who devoted himself to worship all the time — through day and night. He prays and fasts and engaged in ascetism and piousness.\footnote{Çelebi, Karaman and Dağlı, \textit{Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi}, 2010, Volume 4, 42-43.}

Neither of these books labels Hacı Bektaş as Shi`ite, nor does there appear any sign of Shi`ite influence on him. The name of Ali, however, was mentioned in a few places in the \textit{Makalat}. Nevertheless, Hacı Bektaş cannot be related to Shi`i Islam for the overall reason that Ali does not have a predominant place more than the other three caliphs; the four rightly caliphs have been respected equally. Only in one place was Ali mentioned separately. According to this narrative, Ali was asked if he sees the deity that he worships. His responds by saying that, ‘I would not worship if I do not see.’\footnote{Hacı Bektaş, Côşan and Özbay, \textit{Makalat}, 1996, 38.} The name of Jafar Sadiq was also repeated in a number of occasions in terms of narrating some particular sayings from him. The reference to Jafar Sadiq is common future of many other Sunni-based books.\footnote{Hacı Bektaş, Côşan and Özbay, \textit{Makalat}, 1996, 44.}

Unlike the \textit{Makalat}, the pro-Alid stance has become quite visible in the \textit{Velayetname}. In the \textit{Velayetname}, the genealogy of Hacı Bektaş goes back to the Prophet Muhammad through the sons of Ali Musa Ridha. It states that ‘with all due respect it is certain that Hacı Bektaş al-Khorosani is a \textit{sayyid} and a [of] real descent from the Prophet Muhammad.’\footnote{Hacı Bektaş, Côşan and Özbay, \textit{Makalat}, 1996, 61-62/2b.} In several occasions, Ali was mentioned apart from the three caliphs.
According to one particular section, Hacı Bektaş states that Muhammad and Ali came to him to inform him of the knowledge of *zahir* and *batin*. In another section, Hacı Bektaş states that ‘I am the lion of the Lord of the Worlds, the descendant of Muhammad and the essence of authority, the secret of Ali — the *Amir al-Muminin*. Further it states that a *cardigan* (*dervish’s coat*) of Jafar Sadiq was carried to Hacı Bektaş thorough a number of other dervishes like Bayazid Bestami.

The aforementioned information related to the Hacı Bektaş and Bektaşi belief controverts the claim that the Ottoman State funded the Bektaşi lodges and promoted the Bektaşi philosophy despite their Shi’ite character as progressing from the fourteenth century onwards. The statement quoted by Winter demonstrates this assertion, ‘In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Ottoman dynasty supported numerous Bektaşi lodges (*zawiya*) throughout Anatolia and the Balkans by establishing Islamic religious foundations (*vakif*) in their favour, despite the controversial and unmistakeably Shi’ite character of some of the order’s rituals and cult.’ Each and all of these above named resources were composed either by the late thirteenth or fourteenth century with the exception of *Velayetname*. The oldest recognized manuscript of the *Velayetname*, dated 1034/1624, was located in the library of Hacı Bektaş Veli Müzesi. The manuscript shows that the Bektaşi

tradition welcomed the pro-Shi’ite elements by the seventeenth century. However, those elements were not regarded as Shi’ite.

Likewise the famous Seyehatname of Evliya Çelebi (1019/1611 – 1092/1682) traces the genealogy of Hacı Bektaş to the Prophet Muhammad. According to which, Hacı Bektaş was denominated as Seyyid Muhammad Hacı Bektaş al-Khorosani; he was the son of Seyyid Ibrahim Mukarram, son of Ali Musa Ridha, son of Imam Kadhim, son of Jafar Sadiq, son of Muhammad Baqir, son of Zayn al-Abidin, son of Husayn, the son of Ali Murtada. Additionally, in a number of places, the Twelve Imams are acknowledged. A particular passage narrates that ‘the elements of poverty are brought to the world by Gabriel [Gabriel] through the order of Muhammad and was given to Imam Ali, from him to Imam Husayin, to Imam Zayn al-Abidin, to Ibrahim Mukarram, Ebu Muslim Merv, to Imam Muhammad Baqir, to his son Imam Jafar, to Imam Musa Kadhim, to the Sultan of Khorasan, Ali b. Musa Ridha, to Ahmed Yesevi (the pir of Turkistan) and then to Hacı Bektaş Veli.’ The sections on Iran and Iraq of the Seyahatname shows that as a genuine defender of Sunni Islam and the Ottoman state, Evliya Çelebi was highly furious when he

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600 Çelebi, Karaman and Dağlı, Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, 2010, Volume 4, 44.
encountered any kind of non-Sunni propaganda. However, though Çelebi relates Hacı Bektaş to the Twelve Imams, he never talks of him in an unfavourable tone. Neither does he accuse the Bektaşi lodges as non-Sunni nor Shi`ite practices. In this and many other books, the attribution of Hacı Bektaş to the Prophet Muhammad through the recognition of the Imams is not an indicator of Shi`ite influence, but rather it merely illustrates the importance of sayyid-hood, which is viewed as a privileged position by the majority of Sufi brotherhood.

The book tittled, Nur’l Hüda Limen-Ihteda, by the seventeenth century scholar, Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi (d. 1047/1635), meanwhile supports the previous argument that Shi`ite patterns were evident in the Bektaşi tradition by the early seventeenth century. His approach to the Bektaşi order differs from the aforesaid scholars. Unlike the former scholars, he discusses the Bektaşi belief as one of the impaired Sufi groups. He does so for the reason that the Bektaşis are disobedient in that they disregard the order on the prohibited aspects.

It seems that the Shi`ite currents adopted by the Bektaşis by the early seventeenth century and throughout time, has become the most essential subjects of their belief system.

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602 Evliya Çelebi reflects his emotions about the non-Sunni propaganda during his visit of Tehran. With regard to his visit of Kahriz, he states that “... because all the inhabitants are Shi`is and caluph-cursrs. This was the first time in Persia that I heard them__God forbid__ cursing the Caliph Umar. I nearly went out of my mind. But I was weak and tired, not yet in a position to do anything about it. Otherwise I could easly have killed that accursed curser...” If he has ever witnessed of the Bektaşi living in Iran and Iraq and practicing non-Sunni motives, would not he mentioned of it. Evliya Çelebi. An Ottoman traveller: selections from the Book of travels of Evliya Çelebi. Translation and commentary by Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim. (London: Eland, 2010). 56.

603 According to Karakaşzade Ömer Efendi, the name of Muhammad, Ali, Hasan and Husayn are written in the four sides of the headgear of the Bektaşi. Ömer Efendi. Nur’l Hüda.

604 The rest of those corrupted Sufi movements are given as Abdals, Kalandars, Haydaris, Hurufis, Camis, Semsis, Mevlevis, and Ethemis.
The text of Vahidi Menakib-i Hvoca-i Cihan ve Netice-i Can composed in the early sixteenth century appears to have been a fundamental text that sustains our argument. It provides firsthand substantial information on the philosophy, method, belief and social life of the Bektaşis of the early sixteenth century. As in the other historical resources written before the seventeenth century, in this book there also appears no clue of Shi’ite influence on the early institutionalization era of the Bektaşi order. According to Vahidis’ account, the names of Muhammad, Ali, Hasan and Husayn were written in the four separate sides of the Bektaşi headgear to praise the Prophet and his ahl al-bayt. Exclusive of such particular usage, there appears no sign of Shi’ite influence. Neither is there any mention of the veneration of Ali, the Twelve Imams and the fourteen innocents pertaining to the Bektaşi belief. Nor does it refer to the other Shi’ite colored rites, such as the concept of the Allah-Muhammed-Ali triad that was later on adopted by the Bektaşi.

From the seventeenth century onwards, in a number of ijazetnames and hilafetnames (that is, exclusively the ones composed on the eighteenth and nineteenth century as stated in the previous section of this chapter), Hacı Bektaş has mostly been connected with the Twelve Imams. Further, the nineteenth century Ottoman official records demonstrate that the Bektaşis even began to disregard the importance of the four rightly guided caliphs. The Ottoman administration of the early nineteenth century under the sultanate of Mahmut II broadcasted a ferman (decree) on the prohibition of the Bektaşi

lodges on the ground of religious concern. Narrated on the *ferman*, the Bektaşis were exposed to investigation by other dervishes, scholars, or imams. Under the circumstance of their disobedience of Islamic law, they were subject to deportation or execution. The famous work called *Üss-i Zafer*, composed by Esad Efendi, an official Ottoman scholar (1203/1789 – 1264/1848), is an essential firsthand written material on the subject of narrating the unenviable religious elements that got involved in the Bektaşî philosophy. Particularly in this book, he talks about the abolishment of the Janissary army and dissolution of the Bektaşî order. The book is also important due to it delivers a significant section of the *ferman* of Murat II on the disrupted religious tendencies of the Bektaşî order. In the *ferman*, the Bektaşis were defined as non-performing of Islamic law (*sharia*) neglecting daily prayer. The Bektaşis were also criticized due to their insult of the four rightly guided caliphs. Thus they were regarded as heretics. They are also blamed for leading their followers to the path of heresy.

The Mevlevis, Naksibendis, Halvetis, Sadis and Qadiris are recognized as firm followers of the *ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah* (adherents of the Sunni Islam). Although, the *ferman* neither lists the Bektaşis as one of the Sunni dervish groups, nor views them as real followers of Hacı Bektaş, it accuses them of unfairly seizing control of many of the *tekkes* and *zawiyas* which were not their own properties; also for spending the incomes of the foundations for their own benefit through leaning on

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608 Esad Efendi. *Üss-i Zafer*. (İstanbul: Süleyman Efendi Matbaası, 1830). (Ottoman).
their alliance with the Janissary army. They are also criticized for establishing new dervish lodges to corrupt the people of the regions. Likewise the faction of Alevi and the Rafidi groups occupied some on-board terrains and established foundations to benefit themselves. While the *ferman* does not relate the Bektaşis with the Alevi or Rafidis, it indicates that all of those three groups have illegally captured the management of some *tekkes* and used them for their own benefit. The Bektaşis, however, are not labeled as Shi`ite. If the Bektaşis were of the Shi`i Islam, then would not Esad Efendi dispose.

### 4.10. Conclusion

Would the Bektaşis be identified as Shi`ite relying on the adaptation of those Shi`ite terminologies? To have a possible answer to this question, it needs to be known that reverence for Ali was quite common in most of the religious groups that define themselves as Sunni. For example, the akhis, the members of *futuwwa* order that carried an important mission in the second half of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century in Asia Minor, was recognized as a Sunni organization that refers to Ali. They even further relate their origin to Ali as they say, ‘*la fata illa Ali*’—’there is no hero but Ali.’ It has further been argued that the emphasis of the *ahl al-bayt* must not be taken as a sign of Shi`ism. This is because of the fact that similar expressions are visible in the chain of

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611 “*Bir müddetten beru Bektasi guruhu Yeniçeri taifesine istinad ile o misillü tekyeler ve zevayanın isimlerini tahrif ve kendilerine nisbet ile zabt ve hasîlatı vakfi nefislerine hasr ve fisk u fucur ile...*” Esad Efendi. *Üss-i Zafer*, 216.

612 “*Ve kezalik bu guruhi alevi ve revafiz birer takrib arazi-I muriyeyi zabt ve birer zaviye itihaz ve vakfiyeler tertib ile menafını kendilerine hasr ile...*” Esad Efendi. *Üss-i Zafer*, 216. This phrase shows that the term of Alevis has been recognized by the Ottoman authority by the early 19th century.

ratification of the Sufi group that relate themselves with Sunni Islam. Most Sufi dervishes identified as Sunni have respect for Ali. In the meanwhile, they also demonize Yazid as the Bektaşı do, but this does not decidedly mean that they identify themselves as Shi`ite. The patterns of glorification of Ali, Hasan, Husayn, Ahli al-Bayt and remembrance of the martyrs of Karbala in pain are within the essential subjects of the poems of Yunus Emre. Despite those somewhat Shi`ite elements, Yunus Emre has been the most celebrated and respected figure in the Sunni faction of Turkey. He has even believed to have been a Sunni mystic. Given that, it is precise to say that the Bektaşi movement as a part of Sufism played a crucial role in the social and political life of the Turkmen tribes in Anatolia. It is also likely that the Bektaşi movement in its later period tended to Shi`ite religion more than to the Sunni one. However, it is extremely unlikely to claim that this movement adopted or propagated Shi`ism. Therefore, I argue that unless the Bektaşis define themselves as Shi`ite, those Shi`ite elements must not be taken as a sign of Shi`ism. Further, the second and equally important motive of this chapter is to demonstrate that with the influence of the Bektaşı order, the Alevi belief has freed itself from the Imami hegemony of Iran and found a latitudinarian space for its self-directed belief structure. Given this fact, this chapter claims that the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief found its final form after the penetration of Bektaşı philosophy and not before that, as claimed.

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614 Teber and Gökalp, “Bir Bektaşı İlmihali,” 86.
615 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı. Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf. (İstanbul: İnkilap Kitabevi, 2008).
Conclusion: Self-Identification: Alevi View of Alevism

The presentation of Professor Carl Ernst on teaching Shi`ism delivered in the ‘Rethinking Islamic Studies Workshop’ in the AAR (American Academy of Religion) conference in November 21, 2014 made me curious to know more about Alevism and its relation to Shi`ism. Ernst, while talking about how to prepare a substantial syllabus on Shi`ism, specified Alevism as one of the branches of Shi`ism. The roundtable discussion that took place right after the presentation enabled me to express my questions and concerns with regard to Ernst’s labeling of Alevism as Shi`ite. As someone who had grown up in an Alevi neighborhood, and who as a graduate student had briefly studied the Alevis, and who had written a short account of their belief, I was hesitant to regard the Alevis as Shi`a. Born out of a personal concern, this dissertation became a professional quest to understand Alevi religion in terms of sectarian norms. The more I read and analyzed the current researches on Alevism, the more puzzling it became as to why most of the modern scholarship that label Alevis as Shi`a lacks in clarifying and constructing the theological and judicial norms needed to sufficiently characterize the Alevis as Shi`ite. It was because of this that I decided to delve into probing the Alevi belief from the point of sectarian discourse. In this regard, the question of why and how Alevis can/cannot be labeled as either Sunni or Shi`ite shed light on my research.

In this concluding part of the dissertation, after summarizing the main argument and discussion of each chapter, I intend to highlight the subjects needed for future research. Chapter one focuses on the modern scholarships that differ in their view of Alevi belief in regard to their religion and ethnicity and also in their cultural and social groupings. I argue here that some of the current researches on Alevism could not have stayed out of the
ideological framework as scholars imposed their own ideological viewpoint on Alevi belief. As such there have appeared a good number of different discourses that define Alevi belief. Astonishingly, none of them have categorically decoded Alevism as a separate religious entity existing outside of Sunni and Shi‘ite norms. Therefore, this chapter aimed to make an extensive research on Alevi belief, first by presenting the diversity of views on Alevism, then by questioning Alevism’s so-called links to Shi‘ism. This chapter investigates the existence of Shi‘ite currents from both historical and conceptual standpoints and asks what they meant to the local Anatolian of the sixteenth century.

A set of substantial questions placed at the center of this dissertation led and motivated me to interrogate the Buyruk texts, which are the primary resources for the Alevi religion. What Shi‘ite elements do they contain that pave the way for the conviction that Alevism is a branch of Shi‘ism? How are they applied in Alevism as opposed to Shi‘ism? Is the presence of Shi‘ite elements sufficient to label Alevis as Shi‘ite? In order to answer those questions properly, this chapter has not only explored the so-called Shi‘ite elements like the notion of the Alevi ‘trinity’ (Allah, Muhammad, and Ali), the glorification of Ali, the ahl al-bayt (the Family of Muhammad’s House), the doctrine of the Imamate, the matter of the Fourteen Infallibles, but has also revealed the fact that some of the fundamental Shi‘ite base doctrines are not acknowledged in the Buyruks, including the ‘isma belief (infallibility of prophets), the concept of khalifa (Caliphate), and the notion of the ghayba (occultation) of the Twelfth Imam. This chapter then pays particular attention to the matter that the religious requirements of sharia are not applicable in the Buyruk texts similar to the Shi‘ite belief. To have a valid and solid result, I have compared and contrasted three different but interrelated Buyruk texts in a way that has not been undertaken before. I
concluded this chapter by providing an English translation of the two prominent sections of the *Buyruks* as they are rich and profound in regard to dealing with the Shi`ite elements — *İmamların Övgüsü* (The Praise of the Imams)\(^{616}\) and *Şia Mezhebi* (The Shi`ite Sect).\(^{617}\)

Chapter three mainly focuses on the representation of the Alevis/Kızılbaş by their foremost political opponent, the Ottoman Empire. By using the archival records of the sixteenth century Ottoman administrations, including historical and religious documents composed by the Ottoman elite scholars, this chapter aims to reflect the Kızılbaş’s religious orientation in terms of how it was perceived by the Ottoman policy makers. In doing so I came to realize that researches on Alevism have been reluctant to deal with this matter. Regardless of the evident statement delivered through the *fatwa* of Ebussuud, according to which, ‘The Kızılbaş are not of the Shi`ite denomination of Islam,’\(^{618}\) some of the modern studies still continue to define the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief as Shi`a. While this statement is not sufficient to regard or disregard Alevis as Shi`a, it does show, however, that neither the Ottoman policy makers nor the elite scholars classified the Alevis as Shi`ite. That being said, if the Alevis were of Shi`ite belief, then the question of how and why the Ottoman administrators did not welcome this reality, but rather introduced their view of Alevism as a distinctly separate entity from Shi`ite Islam, drove the central argument and discussion of this chapter.

The majority of the official websites of the Alevi foundations and associations

\(^{616}\) Aytekin, *Buyruk*, 90-91; Bozkurt, *Buyruk*, 121-123.
\(^{618}\) M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ. *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı.* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983), (fatwa no. 481), 110-111.
active today in Turkey use the name of ‘Alevi-Bektaşi.’ These two have come to be viewed as inseparable, as if they were of the same origin. While explaining the historical link as to how and why these two separate entities came to be conjoined with one another, the primary goal of this chapter is to give a clear understanding of how these two religious groups played an ambiguous role in each other’s process of formation when the political environment had gotten tense. This chapter also sought to show the function and motives of the Bektaşi order in the transformation of their belief from Kızılbaşism to Alevism.

**Suggestions for the Future Research**

The discrimination of people due to their religion and belief is a human rights violation. The Alevis are exposed to discrimination on account of their distinctive beliefs, practices, and rites. The Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (religious affairs administration), however, funded by the taxation of the Turkish citizens, including the Alevis, only renders service to the majority Sunni Muslims. The Alevi kids are subjected to assimilation into Sunnism through the mandatory religious courses taught in the public schools. Further, through the following two aspects, the Alevis are systematically exposed to assimilation: The Cemevis (the places of worship) are still not officially recognized as religious places by the Turkish state. Also, a number of mosques have been established in the Alevi towns regardless of what the Alevi community wants and desires for themselves.

The aforementioned statement has been issued by the Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Vakfı on their official website. While it emphasizes the distinctive side of their religious belief, the statement primarily reflects the concern of the Alevi communities as they have justifiably worried about their right to worship as they wish and in a place where they choose to be. In other words, the Alevis want to enjoy the same Turkish citizenship rights

619 For the Website of the Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Vakfı, see [http://www.hacibektasvakfi.web.tr](http://www.hacibektasvakfi.web.tr)
in regard to their religion as the Sunni majority. A different announcement on the same website highlights one of the fundamental matters that concerns the Alevi communities: namely, that they are not pleased with the identification of Alevi belief by the state representatives. “Attempts at defining Alevi belief have to be left to the Alevis.”

When the official websites of a number of Alevi unions, organizations, associations, and foundations are viewed carefully, it becomes obvious that the majority of Alevi communities, while regarding themselves as Muslims, do not see themselves as part of one of the Sunni or Shi’ite denominations. In this concluding chapter, I will go over some of the statements on Alevi belief given in those websites through which I hope to offer the reader an insight into the distinguishing features of Alevi Islam from their own viewpoint and bring to light suggestions for future research. In my inquiry on the Alevi organization, I will limit my research to the following organizations: Alevi İslam İnanç Hizmetleri Başkanlığı, Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu, Alevi Bektaşı Federasyonu, Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu, Cem Vakfı, Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli Vakfı, Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı, Anadolu Bilim Kültür ve Cem Vakfı, Anadolu Kültürünü Koruma ve Araştırma Vakfı (AKKAV), Anadolu Erenleri

Kültür Vakfı, Ehli Beyt İnanç-Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı, Şahkulu Sultan Dergahı (Serçeşme Hacı Bektaş Veli ve Hünkâr Dergahı), Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Derneği, and Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği.

Due to the determined time period of this research, which has focused on the formation of the Alevi/Kızılbaş belief from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, an ethnographic research on those organizations is beyond the limits of this dissertation. I have come to believe that a future ethnographic research with the representatives and followers of those organizations, unions, foundations and associations can offer the reader extensive insight into their rich and complex belief system. The Alevis must not, however, be associated with either Sunnism or Shi’ism, but has to be viewed as a separate entity (existing within the Islamic circle) on its own rights.

The reason I approach the Alevi belief as separate denomination within the Islamic circle is that almost each and all of those Alevi organizations regard Alevis as Muslim. The Union of Alevi Associations (Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu) can be given here as an example as they emphasize the importance of Alevi belief within the progress of Islam in Anatolia. “Alevism as both a belief and a philosophical system has played a particular role in the development of the belief and cultural life of Turks. Alevism is not a separate religion apart from Islam. It is born within the Islamic circle. The way that the Turkish tribes

understood and practiced Islam peculiar to their cultural assents created Alevism.”635 Alevi İslam İnanç Hizmetleri Başkanlığı, Cem Vakfı and Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu also emphasize the importance of viewing Alevism as part of Islam. “The motive of Cem Vakfı is not to teach Alevi-Islam in Turkey but to expand its message and make it recognized around the world.”636

While the Alevi organizations are ambitious to be recognized as part of Islam, they are uncomfortable with being linked to Sunnism. Also, they make no statement whatsoever that associates Alevism with Shi’ism. Further, I have realized that instead of the names of the Twelve Imams, it is the names of Hacı Bektaşi Veli, Ahmet Yesevi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Mevlana, Yunus Emre that are respectively acknowledged as their spiritual leaders. I would like to end this concluding section with my primary question: Alevi communities center Ali at the heart of their religious belief and insist on defining themselves as a part of Islam without associating themselves with Sunnism and Shi´ism. Why is it then that regardless of how Alevis see themselves, that some of the existing scholarship keep labeling Alevism as Shi´ite?

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