A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MELAMI-BAYRAMI HAGIOGRAPHIES

ALİ ERKEN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MELAMI-BAYRAMI HAGIOGRAPHIES

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Ali Erken

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Thesis Abstract

Ali Erken, ''A Historical Analysis of Melami-Bayrami Hagiographies''

This study analyzes three Melâmî-Bayrâmî menâkıbnâmes (hagiographies) written between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Sarı Abdullah's *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* (c.1613), Lalizâde Abdülbâki's *Sergüzeşt* (c.1740) and Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme-i Bayramiyye* (c. 1750). The seventeenth century was a transformative period for the order in two senses. First, responding to the persecutions of the sixteenth century, Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs increasingly preferred to hide their Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliation and took refuge in other orders. Second, despite their earlier troubles and their newly increased secrecy, the order was able to spread into new social milieus and gain adherents among the ruling elites in İstanbul and the Balkan cities. This study argues that the dual transformation of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in this period marked its influence also on these hagiographies. Despite some differences between the contexts of the three texts, all three were written by the members of the Ottoman learned elite with ties to the ruling establishment, and all three represented an effort to project a considerably sanitized image of the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. This thesis explores this sanitized image by looking specifically at how the three texts represent Melâmî-Bayrâmî sainthood, the relationship between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and the other sufi orders and the persecution of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in the preceding decades.

Tez Özeti

Ali Erken, ''Melami-Bayrami Menakıbnamelerinin Tarihsel Bir Analizi''

Bu çalışma onyedinci ve onsekizinci yüzyıllarda yazılan üç Melâmî-Bayrâmî menâkıbnâmesini incelemektedir: Sarı Abdullah Efendi'nin *Semerâtül-Fuâd* (c.1613) Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi'nin *Sergüzeşt* (c.1740) ve Müstakimzâde'nin *Menâkıbnâme-i Bayramiyye* (c.1750). Onyedinci yüzyıl tarikat icin iki açıdan dönüşüm yüzyılıydı. Melâmî-Bayrâmî şeyhleri gittikçe daha fazla bir şekilde Melâmî-Bayrâmî kimliklerini saklamayı tercih ettiler ve diğer tarikatlar içinde yer aldılar. İkinci olarak, daha önce yaşadıkları sorunlara ve artan gizliliğe rağmen tarikat yeni sosyal tabakalara yayıldı ve İstanbul ile Balkan şehirlerinde yeni taraftarlar kazandı. Bu çalışma Melâmî-Bayrâmî tarikatının yaşadığı bu dönüşümün menâkıbnameler üzerinde etkisi olduğunu iddia etmektedir. İçeriklerindeki farklılıklara rağmen her üçü de Osmanlı eğitimli elitinin idari yapıyla bağlantısı olan üyeleri tarafından yazıldı ve sterilize edilmş bir Melâmî-Bayrâmî imajı çizme gayretini yansıttı. Asagidaki çalışma bu imajı üç metnin özelde Melâmî-Bayrâmîlikte azizlik kavramını, tarikatın diğer sufi tarikatlarla ilişkisini ve önceki yüzyıllarda meydana gelen devlet kovuşturmalarını nasıl yansıttığını ele alarak araştırmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was one of the prominent sufi orders in the Ottoman Empire. An offshoot of the Bayrâmî order, Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples embraced the ''idea of *melâmet*'', which encouraged concealing one's spiritual experience and drawing blame upon oneself, sometimes by explicitly displaying one's fault, to attain perfect sincerity. Unlike some other sufis, they did not withdraw from the world but remained involved in daily life. Some controversial aspects of their teachings like ecstatic utterances as well as rivalries with other sufis led to the persection of some Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in the sixteenth century. As a result of this, many Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples became afraid and began to hide their Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliation. While the persecutions continued sporadically during the seventeenth century, in this period Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching also appealed to a diverse audience including some members of the other sufi orders, the ulema class and the political elites. By the eighteenth century, the relations between the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and the Ottoman religious and political elites had become so altered that one Melâmî Bayrâmî served as *şeyhülislam* and another as the grand vizier.

This study analyzes how the Melâmî-Bayrâmî teachings and their history, especially their turbulent relations with members of the other sufi orders and the political authorities are discussed in three *Menâkıbnâmes* (hagiographies) that were written about the order between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd,* the earliest one among them, was written by Sarı Abdullah Efendi (d.1662), an Ottoman statesman and a Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple who lived in the first half of the

seventeenth century. *Sergüzeşt* is the second text, which was produced in the mid eighteenth century by Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi (d.1746). Like Sarı Abdullah Efendi, Lalizâde was among the prominent Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples of his time and a member of the ulema. The last text is Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme-i Melâmîyye,* which seems to have been written some fifteen years after Lalizâde's text. Differently from the first two writers, Müstakimzâde (d.1787) was attached to another sufi order, the Nakşibendî-Müceddidîye, but may also have had close relations with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs like some other members of his order.

The Study of hagiographical Texts as Historical Sources: An Overview of the Historigraphy

The study of hagiographical texts as historical sources goes back to the late nineteenth century. The positivist scholarship of the nineteenth century largely ignored hagiographic texts as unreliable sources and/or as examples of the credulity of the masses or the medieval mind. Within this framework, historiography was a type of narrative concerned exclusively with the realm of sensible reality divorced from ''the realm of the saints''.[1] This negative trend continued for many years, and hagiography became what historians ought to avoid well into the twentieth century. Hippolyte Delehaye's classic published in 1904, *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography* was the first attempt at scientific study of hagiographical texts. His work paved the way for puting hagiographical materials to use instead of dismissing them as pure fiction.[2]

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[1] Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994): p. 108; Mariam Mueller ''The Problem of Miracles and Methodology in Hagiography Research'', p.3.

[2] Miriam Mueller, ''Problem of Miracles and Methodology in Hagiography Research'', *Ibid*, pp. 3-5.

Various scholars have adjusted Delehaye's description of hagiography as a genre of study which aims primarily to engender, propagate and strengthen the cult of saints.[3] Later scholars such as Thomas Heffernan added to it the notion that hagiographies show models of behavior worthy of emulation, and clarified the relationship between hagiography and other forms of life writing.[4] The saint's life stories involve supernatural forces and constitute exemplary life models that shape, directly or indirectly, the personal experience of ordinary individuals. The reason why we can not equate hagiography with biography is primarily due to the distinctive information given, or omitted, in hagiographical texts. Hagiography does not deal with biographical details but with some dramatic actions in which a person of particular holiness is presented as a model.[5] In the hagiographical text one may not find details about the profession or personal contacts of a saint whereas one is likely to find an in-depth account of his spiritual experiences and guidance.

The recent literature on hagiographical corpus has shown that hagiographic texts are rich sources for historical analysis at the individual and social level, because the themes they include or the use they make of certain literary patterns are interrelated with existing social and political relations. The social and political function of hagiographical writing in has been studied in the last decades, a trend particularly initiated by the publication of Peter Brown's *The Cult of Saints* in 1981.[6] Whether

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[3] *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiograpy,* From the French of Père Hippolyte Delehaye, S.J., Bollandist, Trans. V. M. Crawford, 1907, [Reprinted 72, University of Notre Dame Press 1961, With an Introduction By Richard J. Schoeck], p. 3. Also see Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative", p. 96.

[4] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 6; Sharon K. Elkins, ''Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages'', *Speculum*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Apr., 1991), pp. 417-419.

[5] But maybe more than role model because these tales play a far more complex role than exemplary models. Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p.299; Sharon K.Elkins, ''Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographies in the Middle Ages'', p. 419.

[6] For an extended discussion of the secondary literature on hagiographical works see; Thomas Head, ''An Introductory Guide to Research in Medieval Hagiography'', http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/religion/hagiography/guide1.htm.

hagiographical texts received approbation by the audience essentially depends on the way in which they represent the normative values of their ages. Therefore, hagiographic texts help to understand the mentality of the society in which they were compiled.[7] The author had to meet the expectations of audience in order to convince them that a person was holy and worthy of veneration.[8]

The question of how to read hagiographical texts leads us to a broad methodological discussion. Current studies are widely based on literary criticism and hermeneutic, from different perspectives, of the available texts at hand. They help to decipher the construction of narratives and ideas and to contextualize them. Looking at hagiographic works from the perspective of sociology of knowledge helps us to see a precise type of social perception of the saint and second, because the production of hagiographies has persisted over so many centuries, to observe variations in the perception of sainthood and model of sanctity over extended periods of time.[9] Behind this approach is the view that the selection of available historical material reflects the consciousness of the present.[10] This view focuses on the function of hagiographic texts for the time in which they were produced, through redefinition of the past for present needs and the social context of their compilation.[11] On the other hand, this perspective might imply that divine revelations, extraordinary virtues, or mystical phenomenon do not exist.[12] A different, anti-relativistic, approach to hagiographical texts views it as a tool to instruct people looking at perfect truthfulness in deeds and thought, and as an

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[7] Thomas J. Hefferanan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages,* (Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 15-21.

[8] Sharon K.Elkins, ''Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographies in the Middle Ages'', p. 417.

[9] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*: Power and authority in Moroccan Sufism (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), p. 31.

[10] *Ibid*, p. 41, Also, Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London, 1978), pp. 51-80.

[11] Jawid. A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The Tabaqat Genre from al-Sülemi to Jami,* (Curzon Press, 2001). Also Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700.* (Chicago and London, 1982) They note that notices in hagiographical literature are latter-day expressions of ideal sainthood, not representation of real people, p. 13

[12] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, p. 41.

expression of spiritual reality.[13] To Cornell, reading hagiography should go beyond these extreme lines of seeing the saint as a spiritual trope or a fragment of narrative imagination, and find a middle ground between them.[14]

Within the Islamic context, sufi hagiographies emerged out of the biographies of religious men. The earlier Muslim biographical studies developed on the basis of hadith scholarship which had introduced strict rules in the evaluation of sources with its overambitious keenness in collecting the Prophet's sayings.[15] Sufi hagiographies were the offspring of this tradition, which initially involved the transmission of religious knowledge via the sayings of sufis. Yet, they gradually went further from being the records of sayings and turning into stories and deeds of the saints.[16] Moreover, these texts effectively contributed to the establishment of the relationship patterns between the saint and his disciples.[17] In the later periods, similar to the western hagiographic tradition, the sufi hagiographies centered on such particular themes as martyrs, conversion or the employment of sufis' supernatural powers.[18]

However, modern scholarship has only recently begun to make use of sufi hagiographical works as historiographical sources partly due to the differing perspectives mentioned above. Such scholars as Carl Ernst (1985, 2004) and Vincent Cornell (1998) have produced comprehensive studies investigating the function of sufi hagiographies in their specific historical, social and religious contexts. For instance, these studies have revealed that in sufi hagiographies martyrdom or marvel stories of a saint were employed as an evidence to show the saint's and its followers' superiority

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[13] *Ibid*, p.42; also see Frithjof Schuon, *Islam and the Perennial Philosophy*, (Trans. J. Peter Hobson, London: 1976).
[14] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, p. 43.
[15] Carl W.Ernst, *Eternal Garden*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).
[16] Carl W. Ernst, ''From Hagiography to Martryology: Conflicting Testimonies to a Sufi Marty of the Delhi Sultanate'', *History of Religions*, 24:4 (1985:May); p. 311.
[17] Jurgen Paul, ''Au Debut du Genre Hagiographie dans le Khorassan'' in *Saint Orientaux*, ed. Deniz Aigle, (Paris: de Boccard, 1995), p. 36.
[18] Carl W. Ernst, ''From Hagiography to Martryology'', pp. 308-27; Averil Cameron, ''How to Read Heresiology'', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 33:3, (2003), pp. 471-492.

over political or religious elites of the time. From another perspective, in Delooz's words, hagiographic texts are not necessarily related to politics but suscitated by the demands of common people as well.[19] Recent studies by Jawid Mujaddidi (2001) and Devin DeWeese (1994) have shown that, through instructive tales sufi hagiographical texts served to shape certain norms of behavior and to form solidarity among groups of people in different periods of time.

Even though hagiography provides a perspective missing from historiography; there are limitations to hagiographical study.[20] The writers of these texts tend to focus on clearly defined messages, to the interest of a particular individual or a particular group, and easily ignored other information they regarded irrelevant to this purpose. To enhance the message, unnoticed details are sometimes exaggerated whereas such major events as political turmoil may be left untouched.[21] Although the texts fail to provide relevant historical information, current literature, as noted, has demonstrated that they are shaped by the socio-political life and the worldview of the time.

The secondary literature on the Ottoman hagiographical literature is unfortunately poor. In comparison to the literature on Christian medieval hagiography the Ottoman hagiographical texts have been relatively little studied. Important exceptions would be the studies by Zeynep Sabuncu (1989), Thierry Zarcone and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (1992). Sabuncu discusses the early *Menâkıbnâmes* written mostly in Central Anatolia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as *Menâkıbü'l-Arifîn* (1358), *Menâkıb-ı Akşemseddin* and *Vilâyetnâme-i Hacım Sultan*.[22] Heavily furnished with supernatural manifestations and simple stories, these *Menâkıbnâmes* had less to do with the

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[19] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint,* p. 32; Pierre Delooz, *Sociologie et Canonisation*, (Liege, 1969), p. 429; Thomas Head, ''Hagiography'', http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/religion/hagiography/hagio.htm.
[20] Jurgen Paul, ''Hagiographical Literature'', Encylopedia Iranica.
[21] Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiograpy,* p. 4.
[22] For an extended discussion of these texts see Zeynep Sabuncu, ''Mevlevî, Bektaşî, Bayrâmî Tarikatlarine Bağlı Dört Evliyâ Menâkıbnâmesi Üzerine Bir İnceleme'' (Phd Thesis, Bogazici University, 1989).

biographical data of saints. They provide information about the early patterns and activities of mystic movements, mainly Kalenderiye and Bektaşîye, which had an impact on social life in this period.[23]

Zarcone notes that in the second half of the sixteenth century, the rise of biographical studies in Ottoman historiography and the expansion of sufi orders demonstrated its impact on hagiographical writing as well. This period witnessed the transformation of hagiography into a more biography-based model with the life stories of numerous sheikhs.[24] We may note that this model was influenced by the model employed by Arabic and Persian sufi biographies like Abu Abd al-Rahman Sulami's (d.1021) *Tabakatü'l-Sufiyye* and Molla Abdurrahman Cami's (d.1492) *Nefâhatü'l-Üns* written centuries earlier. The early production of other sufi biographies was primarily led by Halvetî sheikhs such as *Tezkiretü'l-Halvetîye* by Sünbüli sheikh Yusuf Sinan Efendi (d. 1579), Mehmet Hulvi Efendi's (d.1654) *Lâmezat-ı Hulviyye* and Sarı Abdullah Efendi's *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd*.[25] The Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts we shall discuss were largely shaped under this model of hagiographical writing.

The secondary literature on the history and teaching of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order is richer. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı (1931) has produced the most comprehensive study, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler*, ever done on the history of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and its teaching. Based on biographical and archival material and a wealth of manuscripts written on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching, his book draws significant conclusions as well as raising inspiring questions to be explored. In some of the studies he wrote on Mevlevîye and mysticism, Gölpınarlı dedicated a section to Melâmîye as well. Yet, some of his arguments, like the Turkish character of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and its

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[23] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler*, (Ankara: Türk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992), pp. 50-58.
[24] Thierry Zarcone, ''L'hagiographie dans le Monde Turc'' in *Saint Orientaux*, pp. 62-63.
[25] Thierry Zarcone, ''L'hagiographie dans le Monde Turc'', pp. 62-63.

close intimacy with the Mevlevî order are empirically dubious or represent a particular bias. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (1998) is the most important contributor to the literature on the struggle among political-religious elite and Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs with his comprehensive work *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler: 15-17.Yüzyıllar*. According to him, Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were under the strict persecution of the Ottoman state primarily due to their ecstatic sayings and the *mehdi* belief they propagated. However, some of his claims are not supported by the Melâmî Bayrâmî texts. Colin Imber's (1996) and Burhan Oğuz's (1998) short but rich articles bear instructive guide notes as well. These articles present a brief survey of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in the Ottoman Empire. Notably Colin Imber successfully reads the state-Melâmî-Bayrâmî conflict from the perspective of Ottoman law, its problems and implications.

Ali Bolat's (2003) study on the Melâmî order appears to be the most comprehensive one, both contextually and historically, in which he supplies a plenty of material on geographical expansion as well as on the values and important names of the order, including Melâmî-Bayrâmî representatives in the Ottoman Empire. The transcription of the texts provided by Ayşe Yücel (1988) in her thesis on Lalizâde's *Sergüzeşt* and the transcription of Müstakimzâde's *Risâle-i Bayrâmîyye* by Abdürrezzak Tek (2000) made it easy to detect the details of these texts. Similarly, other theses on the life stories and works of Sarı Abdullah, Lalizâde Abdülbâki and Müstakimzâde along with the colossal works of the history of sufism in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Necdet Yılmaz (2001) and Ramazan Muslu (2003) provide valuable information with an extensive references.

The Sources, Methods and Outline of This Study

The backbone of this study is the three Melâmî texts. Printed and manuscript versions of the sources can be found in Süleymaniye Library. I have used the printed version of *Sergüzeşt* and *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* published in 1871.[26] I have used a munuscript copy of Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* in Süleymaniye Library.[27] Besides, I have utilized master's theses which include Turkish transcription of *Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme*.[28] I have also found a simplified version of *Sergüzeşt* in Turkish by Tahir Hafızalioğlu, and of *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* by Yakub Necefzâde, which helped me to decipher some details more easily.[29]

Other primary sources employed in the study are Mehmed Nazmi Efendi's *Hediyyetü'l-İhvan* and Münir-i Belgradî's *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrabin*.[30] The edited and printed version of Hüseyin Vassaf's *Sefine-i Evliyâ* is another valuable source.[31] I used the Turkish translations of the biographical works of early sufis like Abu Abd al-Rahman Sulami's *Tabakatü'l-Sufiyye,* Qushayri's (d.1052) *Risâle,* Hujwiri's (d.1077) *Keşfü'l-Mahcub* and Molla Cami's *Nefâhatü'l-Üns*. Biographical dictionaries, the fundamental sources of personal information about Ottoman literates and sufis, were comparably easier to reach. In terms of biographical accounts I have profited from Atâyi's *Tekmiletü'l-Şakâik,* and Mehmet Tahir's *Osmanlı Müellifleri*.[32] The rich

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[26] *Semeratü'l-Fuad*, İstanbul, Matbaa-ı Amire,1288; *Sergüzeşt*, İstanbul: Matbaa-ı Amire, 1288.

[27] Süleymaniye Library, Nafiz Paşa 1164

[28] Ayşe Yücel, ''Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi'nin Menâkıb-ı Melâmîyye-i Bayrâmîyyesi (İnceleme-Metin)'' (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, 1988); Abdürrezzak Tek ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Sadeddin'in Risâle-i Melâmîye-i Bayrâmî Adlı Eserinin Metni ve Tahlili'', (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2000).

[29] *Sergüzeşt: Aşk ve Aşıklara Dair-Melâmî Büyükleri*, trans. Tarık Hafızalioğlu (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2001); *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd: Gönül Meyveleri*, trans. Yakub Kenan Necefzade, (Neşriyat Yurdu, 1967).

[30] Munir-i Belgradi, *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrabin ve Menâkıbu'l-Muttâkin*, Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2819; Muhammed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetu'l-İhvan*, Süleymaniye Library, H.Semsi Güneren 60

[31] Hüseyin Vassaf. *Sefine-i Evliyâ*. ed. Mehmet Akkuş-Ali Yılmaz, (İstanbul: Kitabevi 2006), Cilt II.

[32] Mehmet Tahir Bursalı, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, ed. Fikri Yavuz, İsmail Özer, (İstanbul: Meral Yayınları, 1971-75); Nevizâde Atayi, *Hadâiku'l-Hakâik fî Tekmiletü'l-Şakâik*, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan, (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989)

biographical material provided by the Ottoman biography writing made it possible to check and compare the information given in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts.

This thesis will be the first to study the three major Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies in a comparative way in their proper historical context. After the present introductory chapter, in specific, Chapter II gives a brief overview of the authors, their motivation and intention in writing these texts along with a brief revision of the general picture of hagiographical literature in the Ottoman Empire. The basic goal of this chapter is to determine if these texts are related to each other and how the authors make use of the relevant literature of the time. Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographical texts are neither original literary innovations nor peculiar to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. As noted, by the early seventeenth century products of huge biographical investment like Halvetî Hulvi Efendi's (d. 1653) *Lamezât-ı Hulviyye* and Halvetî Münir-i Belgradî's (d.1619-20) *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrabin ve Menâkıbü'l-Muttâkin* became available. The originality of Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, instead, came from the function and purpose they pursued. Melâmî-Bayrâmî *Menâkıbnâmes,* in addition to the task of reinforcing the inner solidity of the group members, defied challenges from the ulema class and political authority, and justified the acts of former Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and their commitment to the Sharia. That is to say, they had to deal with theology and politics at once.

In the third chapter, the thesis turns to the conception of *velî* (friends of God) in these three Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts. To the huge literature on the privileged people of religion, saints of Christianity and *evliyâ* of Islam, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts make an important contribution. In this endeavor, a typology of *velî* is constructed through information extracted from the lives of celebrated sufis and *evliyâ* of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. The chapter is mostly based on didactic chapters in *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd*

and *Sergüzeşt*. The chapter starts with the question of the legitimacy of sainthood in *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt,* then continues with the attachment of *velî* to the sacred law. It looks at the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*'s participation in social life and his relationship with the disciples, where we can find distinguishing patterns from some other sufi groups. Here, early patterns of Melâmî-Bayrâmî etiquette seem to survive to the extent that some Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* are artisans and small shopkeepers. This part of the study also looks at the spiritual potency of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, which is displayed as a subtle but powerful tool for impressing his disciples or overcoming enemies.

Since the study is based on Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, this section draws an idealized image. Yet, we should remember that the texts were addressed to Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples and probably intended to enhance their confidence in the leader of the group. The texts make a clear distinction between ''fake'' sufis, delinquent Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples and genuine ''friends of God''. Within this framework, accordingly, real experiences of Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* in social life are left untouched in the texts. The next two chapters of the thesis try to close this gap paying more attention to the details of stories given in the texts and with a careful reading of the relevant secondary literature. These chapters help us to see the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* as a man with human dispositions, a man who is part of personal disagreements or as pursuing individual goals.

The fourth chapter looks at the representation of the relationship among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and other sufi orders in the Empire. For this part, Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* provides plentiful information showing the networks established in different time periods. Yet, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts do not offer a comprehensive picture on the nature of this relationship. The writers of the texts give very limited information

especially as to which networks they are familiar with. The records indicate that prevalent orders like Halvetîye, Nakşibendîye, Mevlevîye had close contacts with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. This was however not always a friendly collaboration, as some clashes among notable sufi leaders occurred like the one between Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh İdris-i Muhtefî (d.1615) and Halvetî sheikh Abdülmecid Sivasî (d. 1639) at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The cause of tensions was mostly the belief that Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were not eligible to instruct people and that they were uttering ecstatic words (*şathiyyat)* incompatible with the established norms of religion.

The rapprochement between the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and other sufi groups such as Mevlevîye and Halvetîye was mostly due to the wide reception of İbn Arabi's *vahdet-i vücûd* doctrine among the Ottoman mystics. Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were strong adherents of this idea. *Menâkıbnâme* records that many Halvetî and Mevlevî dervishes were struck by the ''light of *vahdet*'' and attached to Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutbs*. Secondly, the impact of Halvetî and Nakşibendî teaching on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, appraised by Sarı Abdullah, should have reinforced this connection in the Ottoman context. From this perspective, *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* underscores the unity in the ideas and teaching that guides the path to the ''knowledge of God'' (*Marifetullah)*. The emphasis on the compatibility of different sufi orders, which lends significant implications, can be noticed in *Menâkıbnâme* as well.

The final chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the representation of persecution in Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts. In this part we can observe blurring boundaries between the ''ideal'' and the ''facts''; contrasting arguments raised by the political authority and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. Therefore, it is important to examine how these accounts explain the accusations imputed on the order. I will identify the causes of conflict under three sub-headings; *Mehdi* belief in Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching, the secret group structure of the

order and the failure of some disciples to abide by the rules of sacred law. In this discussion, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts attempt to justify the code of conduct Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples have followed but concede that some problems have occurred due to their failure to abide by the Melâmî code of conduct. We may point that the didactic and apologetic purposes of the texts go hand in hand.

The second part makes it clear that Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, including *Menakibname*, attribute different causes than we identified to persecution. Instead of the above mentioned factors, the texts offer an alternative set of problems like personal jealousy and power struggle. Especially Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde hint at the idea of ''inevitable destination'' which would be faced by every good-willing virtuous man. This belief is strengthened through the examples juxtaposed in *Semerât* of old sufi martyrs like Mansur al-Hallaj (d.922), and Ayn-al-Qudat Hamadani (d.1131) who were executed due to extreme mystical comments (*şathiyyat*). The texts employ the motto of ''*şehit*'', one who is killed in the way of God, for those sufis killed by the political authority. By the way, an impressive description of martyrs importing them an image of ''innocence'' casts the line between ''evil'' and ''good''. The texts demonstrate that the legacy of suppressive policy towards the order has significantly influenced the Melâmî-Bayrâmî conception of the Ottoman state and its institutions

A Brief History of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî Order

Derived from the trilateral root ''*l-w-m*,'' the Arabic term *melâmet* can be loosely translated as the ''path of blame.'' More specifically, the path of melâmet entailed controlling the lower self (*nefs*) by undertaking a strict process of self-censure. In order

to attain a state of perfect sincerity, the practitioners of the path were urged to hide their good works and display their faults and shortcomings.[33]

Initially *melâmet*, the path of blame, emerged as a distinctive movement of Islamic mysticism in ninth-century Khorasan.[34] The early Melâmî teaching emerged essentially in reaction to the ascetic mystics, notably the Kerramis of this region, who employed distinguishing denominations, wearing particular clothes and applying distinctive practices as a separate group from society.[35] In contrast, Melâmîye provided an alternative mystical path which was strongly in favor of appearing like ordinary people in public while being steadfast in prayer and devotions in private.[36] Unlike Kerramis, Melâmî disciples did not propagate their mystical experience but saw it as a personal affair.[37]

A butcher Hamdun Qassar (d.884) and a forger Abu Hafs Haddad (d.883) are held by tradition to be the founders of the Melâmî path. The artisanal background of these men was not a coincidence. Indeed from an early point on Melâmî teachings seem to have merged with the ideals of *fütüvvet* (code of chivalry; the aggregation of distinctive virtues attached to young men such as generosity, honesty, benevolence and altruism, in its formative period) which were widely held by artisan circles and urban neighborhood

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[33] Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, (California: University of California Berkeley Press, 2007), p. 48. For the principles of the earlier Melâmî movement see Abdurrahman Sulami, *Risâletu'l-Melâmîye*, Trans. Ömer Rıza Doğrul, (İstanbul:İnkılap Kitabevi, 1950). Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 86; Ebu'l-Ala el-Afifi in 'İslam Düşüncesi Üzerine Makaleler', Trans. Ekrem Demirli, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 144.

[34] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040*, (New Delhi : Munshiram Manoharlali, 1992), p. 189.

[35] Jacqueline Chabbi, ''Remarques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan: IIIe/IXe Siecle- IVe-Xe Siecle'', *Studia Islamica*, No: 46 (1977), pp. 5-72; Ebu'l-Ala- el-Afifi in 'İslam Düşüncesi Üzerine Makaleler'

[36] Jacqueline Chabbi, ''Remarques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan'', pp. 5-72

[37] *Ibid,* ''Remarques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan'', pp. 55.

associations in the eastern Islamic lands.[38] In both codes it was considered important to support oneself through gainful occupation, especially through one of the artisanal crafts. The similarity of social areas in which the codes of *melâmet* and *fütüvvet* flourished must have encouraged the merging of these movements.

In the early years Melâmîye seems to have been a distinctive movement of Islamic piety that existed alongside the movement of sufism which had developed in Iraq.[39] With the diffusion of the Iraq-originated sufism to other regions in the tenth century, nevertheless, the codes of the Melâmî path were also absorbed into sufi thought.[40] At the same time, however, the word ''Melâmî'' started to be used as a pejorative term for those ''antinomian dervishes'' who failed to meet the fundamentals of the ''path of sufism''.[41] Some sufi accounts in the eleventh century criticized Melâmîs of showing disregard for the rules of the sacred law.[42] According to these accounts, the Melâmîs were intentionally violating the religious norms in order to draw public censure and to attain a state of perfect sincerity, but their violation of the religious norms was also gaining them a certain degree of popularity.[43] As Karamustafa notes, it is not entirely clear what link, if any, existed between the earlier Melâmîs of Khorasan who encouraged self-censure but remained loyal to the law and later Melâmîs who reportedly intended to draw public censure by openly violating the shariah.[44] What complicates the matter even more is that some other sufi commentators like Sulami who also wrote in the eleventh century do not mention this tension. Though available

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[38] Franz Taeschner 'Futuwwa' *EI²;* George Arnakis, Futuwwa traditions in the Ottoman Empire, Akshis, Bektashi Dervishes and Craftsmen, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Chicago, 1953, CII, pp. 232-235. Sülemi's *Risâletü'l Melâmîye* composed of forty five principles of Melâmîye, most of which are recorded in the *Risâletü'l-Fütüvvet* as well; Also see Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism,* p. 49
[39] For different categorization of the sufi groups in Horosan see Jacqueline Chabbi, ''Remarques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan''. She mainly divides them into three; Kerramis, Melâmîs and Sufis.
[40] Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism,* p. 62
[41] Ahmet Karamustafa, *Sufism,* p. 161
[42] *Ibid,* pp. 160163
[43] *Ibid,* pp. 162-164
[44] *Ibid,* p. 162.

sources do not provide sufficient evidence on the history or transformation, if any, of the idea of *Melâmet,* it is possible that some people behaved differently from the earlier representatives of Melâmîye who recommended adherence to the commands of the sacred law.[45]

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, the idea of *melâmet* found its strongest emphasis in the writings of the great mystic Muhyiddin İbn Arabi. One of the biggest contributors to the development of mystical terminology, İbn Arabi calls the Melâmî ''the person at the highest level of sainthood''. He points to another mark of this group, that they are ''invisible'' among people. When they are present in a meeting or public sphere like city bazaar or mosque, nobody pays attention to them. According to Ibn Arabî, the true Melâmî is the hidden, the pure and the trustworthy; those who are concealed among men are superior to others due to the introvert form of mystical experience.[46]

Partly because of the loose institutional character of Melâmî groups, it is not easy to follow the evolution of the movement of *melâmet* in terms of its followers and sub-groups after the sufi tarikats began to emerge.[47] As noted, the idea of *melâmet* diffused into different sufi groups. Bektaşî and Kalenderi groups were influenced by this doctrine and employed it in different forms as in the case of the Bektaşî emphasis on the ultimate purity of the inner self and Kalenderi dervishes' extreme behavior to incur blame.[48] Somewhat later, prominent sufi orders in the Ottoman Empire like Mevlevîye,

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[45] For the emergence of antinomian sufi groups and a brief explanation on *Harâbâtî* dervishes See Ahmet Karamaustafa, pp. 160-164.

[46] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of İbn Arabi,* Trans. Liadain Sharrard, (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 110-112.

[47] As may be observed, studies on the Melâmî teaching are open to speculative reasoning. For instance, Hamid Algar points to the proximity between early Nakşibendî and Melâmî teachings whereas Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı insistently marks the shared ground of Mevlevî and Melâmî teachings. Hamid Algar, ''İlk Dönem Nakşibendîliğindeki Melâmeti Unsurlar'' in *Nakşibendîlik*, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2007).

[48] Cavit Sunar, Melâmîlik ve Bektaşîlik, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları 125, Ankara: 1975); J.Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1971).

Halvetîye and Nakşibendîye embraced some prescriptions of the idea of *melâmet*. But the idea of melâmet made its greatest impact on a branch of the Bayrâmî order, known as the Melâmî-Bayrâmîye.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was an offshoot of the Bayrâmî order, which had been founded by Hacı Bayram-ı Velî, who was the halife of Somuncu Baba (d.1412) and who combined Nakşibendî and Halvetî teachings in his sufi doctrine. His successors Akşemseddin (d.1460) and Emir Sıkkini (d.1475) fell apart and each followed his own mystic path. Emir Sıkkini refused to wear the distinguishing paraphernalia of the Bayrâmî order, and his branch was named Melâmî-Bayrâmîye.[49] In the early years Melâmî-Bayrâmîs shunned practicing basic sufi rituals such as going into recluse (*halvet*), holding *zikr* sessions and even gathering in formal spaces like sufi lodges. They also favored supporting themselves through gainful occupation, such as trade or agriculture.

Emir Sıkkini's *halife* Pir Ali Aksarayî (d.1528) propagated the order in Central Anatolia. At this stage, the order seems to have drawn its following from among the artisans based in towns as well as farmers in villages. Hacı Bayram himself was earning his livelîhood by farming and most of his disciples were living in rural or semi-rural settings.[50] Starting in the early sixteenth century, however, the order also began to spread towards the west. Pir Aksarayî's successors went to western cities like Edirne, İstanbul and Sofia where they began propagating the order.

It was also around the same time that the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs began to encounter problems with the political authority. First, Pir Ali Aksarayî was persecuted by Sultan Süleyman I himself during his campaign to Iraq due to rumors that Pir Aksarayî

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[49] Details of this story will be a part of the following chapters.
[50] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), pp. 251-254

claimed to be the *mehdi* of his time. Then, in 1528, İsmail Maşuki (d.1528), Ali Aksarayî's son, the first Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh in İstanbul was executed on the charges of making antinominian statements, abrogating forms of worship incumbent on Muslims and saying ecstastic words.[51] This event became a cornerstone in Melâmî-Bayrâmî history. Another execution came in 1562, when the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Hamza Bâlî (d.1562), who spread the order in his homeland Bosnia, was trialed and found guilty of saying ecstastic words incompatible with the rules of sacred law. He was also accused of forming groups where the disciples exercised their own regulations independent of the control of the regional authority.[52]

There was in fact a larger context to the Ottoman persecution of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. The Ottoman political and religious elite had to cope with the Safavid-Shiite challenge in the sixteenth century and had therefore become much more adamant abount adhering to Sunni Islam. This tendency also resulted in an over sensitivity against some sufi movements like Halvetî-Gülşenîs and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. First, Melâmî-Bayrâmî order had a distinctive structure that made it difficult for the governing authority to control its activities. Second, in the sixteenth century some Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs made some controversial comments construed to indicate that they were claiming to be Mehdi of the time. Besides, the contentious behavior of Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples in terms of obeying the established religious code was opposed by the religious elite. For instance, Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and disciples were accused of uttering ectastic words that violated the norms of Shariah.[53] It seems that Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs prioritized ''the idea of unity'' (*tevhid*) and love in their teaching, particularly thanks to the profound impact of İbn Arabi on Melâmî-Bayrâmî curriculum. Though Ibn Arabî was a respected

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[51] Derin Terzioğlu, ''Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyazi Mısri, 1618-1694'' (Ph.d Thesis Harvard University Middle Eastern Studies, 1999), p. 367.
[52] *Ibid,* pp.292-296.
[53] *Ibid*, pp.266-279, DerinTerzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri,* p. 368.

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name among religious and governing elite of the empire, extreme interpretation of his teaching by sufis like the Halvetî Karabaş-ı Velî (d.1685) and some Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs sometimes caused reaction in these circles.[54]

The seventeenth century was a transformative period for the order. On the one hand, the social base of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order became transformed, as the order continued to spread in İstanbul and the Balkan cities. Increasingly, the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs attracted disciples from among the ruling elite like *Sadrazam* Halil Paşa (d.1630) and *Şeyhülislam* Ebu'l-Meyamin Mustafa (1603-4, 1606). On the other hand, because of the continuing accusations and persecutions, the order was forced to go underground and Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs increasingly hide their Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliations and took refuge in other orders such as Halvetîs. As a result of this tendency, communication among Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples loosened. We cannot trace the history of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order after the mid eighteenth century, because by that time the order had become more hidden and its followers gradually disappeared.

Interestingly, it was also during this period of transformation in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that adherents and or affiliates of the order began to write hagiographies devoted to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. It is the contention of this thesis that this dual transformation of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in this period also marked its influence on these hagiographies. To properly understand this influence, however, we must first establish who the authors of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies were, what kind of texts they authored, with what kinds of intentions and for what kinds of audience.

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[54] For the impact of İbn Arabi on the evolution of Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching in the Ottoman Empire, see Vicotoria Holbrook, ''Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melâmî Supra-Order (Part One)'', http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/Melâmî1.html.

CHAPTER II

THE TEXTS AND AUTHORS

This chapter introduces the three Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies and their authors. In each instance, first an overview of the life and career path of the author will be given with emphasis on the social, professional and religious networks to which he belonged. Then we shall take a closer look at the hagiographical study he wrote, considering the context, the audience, the structure of the text and the sources utilized therein as well as its relationship with the other texts.

<u>Sarı Abdullâh and Semerâtü'l-Fuâd</u>

Sarı Abdullah's father Seyyid Mehmed bin Abdullah had emigrated from North African lands to İstanbul and was the son of a local ruler, in North-Africa, and married to the daughter of *Rumeli Beylerbeyi* Mehmed Paşa (d. 1589), brother of *Sadrazam* (prime minister) Halil Paşa. Sarı Abdullah was born in İstanbul in 1583-4 as the son of this prestigious family.[55] His descendants and familial ties point to his close relationship with the Ottoman elite, which helped him to be familiar with palace affairs. He was under the supervision of his grand uncle Halil Paşa who arranged personal contacts for him.[56] It seems that Sarı Abdullah's early state career essentially depended on Halil Paşa's achievements in the bureaucratic system. Following a successful career in commanding the Ottoman navy, Halil Paşa was first appointed to *Sadrazam* rank in

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[55] Şeyhi, *Vekayiu'l-Fuzela* in *Şakâik-i Numaniyye ve Zeyilleri* by Abdülkadir Ozcan, (İstanbul: Cagrı Yayinlari, 1989), C III, 280; *Menâkıbnâme*, pp.94-95.

[56] Although he spent three and a half years in *Sadrazam* rank, Halil Paşa worked with under four consecutive Sultans; Ahmed I, Mustafa I, Osman II and Murad IV. He was an intriguing figure in terms of the state-tariqat relations. He was a disciple of sheikh Mahmud Hudayi and an alleged Hamzavî affliate as well as their protectors, because of which sheikh Mahmud Hudayi appreciated him. See Osmanzade Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, pp.520-1.

1616 by Ahmed I (r.1603-1617). His first mission was to restore Ottoman authority in the eastern lands where they competed with the Safavids. Sarı Abdullah served him as *divitdar* (correspondent), who arranged the meetings of the *vezir,* and accompanied Halil Paşa during this mission.[57] However, when they were back in İstanbul, Halil Paşa was dismissed by Sultan Mustafa (d. 1617-18), who had mental problems. It was presumably around this time that Halil Paşa and Sarı Abdullah were persecuted by the officers, and sought refuge in the lodge of Celvetî sheikh Mahmud Hüdâyî.[58]

We do not know what Sarı Abdullah was doing until Halil Paşa's second appointment to *Sadrazam* rank in 1626. Worsening financial conditions and instability in the state bodies was at peak with the deposition of Sultan Osman II (r.1618-1622), and continued during the early years of Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-1640). During this interval, he might have continued to serve as personal assistant to Halil Paşa. Nevertheless, Halil Paşa was dismissed again in 1628 and shortly after that died in 1630. Having lost his major patron, Sarı Abdullah seems to have temporarily detached himself from state affairs and began to stay in the Celvetî lodge in Üsküdar.[59] This interval lasted for seven years at the end of which he was appointed to *Reisülküttab kaymakamlığı* (deputy of the chief secretary).[60] It is not yet clear by which inspiration he returned back to state service or which statesman recalled his name for this important rank.

During his youth already Sarı Abdullah, thanks to his uncle, had engaged in conversation with important sufi sheikhs of the time including Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Hacı Ali Rumî, Sütçü Beşir Ağa as well as Celvetî sheikh Mahmut Hüdâyî. Among

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[57] The term was sometimes applied for those responsible with delivering petitions sent by, or to vezirs as well. Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih ve Deyimleri Sözlüğü,* (İstanbul: MEB Devlet Kitapları, 1971), Cilt II, p.434.
[58] *Menâkıbnâme*, p.117. In this case Halil Paşa went to Hudayi Efendi's lodge whereas Sarı Abdullah stayed at home for some time.
[59] *Ibid*, p.217; *Osmanlı Müllefleri,* pp.192-93.
[60] *Ibid*, p.217

them, Mahmud Hüdâyî as the most prestigious sufi sheikh of his time had a particularly close relations with several Ottoman Sultans and other high dignitaries in the early seventeenth century. Halil Paşa was a fervent disciple of him who provided financial assistance to his lodge. Actually Sarı Abdullah first became a disciple of Mahmud Hüdâyî, but remained in touch with Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Sütçü Beşir Ağa.[61] In Sarı Abdullah's era the tension between the state authorities and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, which had resulted in the execution of Melâmî-Bayrâmî leaders in the sixteenth century, was still alive. Nevertheless he managed to move to the upper ranks and had contacts in state bureaucracy. He also had good relations with disciples of Mevlevî, Celvetî and Nakşibendî orders.

Even though he did not hold the rank of a regular sheikh, Sarı Abdullah introduced into the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order people from the state bureaucracy including those from ulema hierarchy. For instance, his grandson Lali Mehmed Efendi (d.1707), kadı of Mecca and father of Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi, received his introductory training by Sarı Abdullah. Sarı Abdullah left the service in 1658, returned to *Asithane* (central sufi lodge) where he spent the last two years of his life before he died in 1660. He was a prolific writer who produced works in a variety of genres like poetry, bibliography and hagiography.[62]

Sarı Abdullah Efendi records that he started writing *Semerâtü'l Fuıad* in 1613 and completed it within a year.[63] We understand that Sarı Abdullah had a spiritual motivation to write this book, as he notes ''I started to write the book at the end of a meeting in Topkapı *Mevlevîhâne,* having been inspired from Mevlânâ's sprit and Hacı

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[61] Mehmet Tahir Bursalı, *Osmanlı Muellifleri,* pp.192-93.
[62] For a complete list of his works see Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, pp. 526-27. Some of his important texts include *Şerh-i Mesnevî, Cevheretü'l- Bidaye Dusturu'l-Inşa, Nasihatu'l-Mülük, Miratu'l-Asfiay, Meslekü'l-Uşşâk, Risâle fi Meratibi'l-Vücûd* and *Ricalu'l-Gayb.* For the contents of the books see: Necdet Yılmaz„ **Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf: Sufiler, Devlet ve Ulema XVII: Yüzyıl, (***İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, İstanbul, 2001),* pp. 350-2.
[63] *Semerât,* pp. 307-8.

Bayram's *sır*''.[64] Apart from that, he seems to have intended to improve the Melâmî-Bayrâmî's image in the eyes of the Ottoman learned circles and to guide others in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî path.

Like a number of earlier hagiographies written in Ottoman Turkish by adherents of the Halvetî order, Sarı Abdullah's text did not take the life story of a single sheikh but of numerous sheikhs, including those of Nakşibendîye and Halvetîye.[65] Yet, the scope of *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* extends the boundaries of a hagiographical texts[66]. Parts of the text resemble a sufi pamphlet. In the introductory section Sarı Abdullah divides his study into five chapters:

1-The prophethood of Adam and human being

2-True love and the polishing of the heart (*Kalbin cilalanması*),

3-Different mystical orders and their code of conduct,

4-The demanding path of God

5-Nakşibendîye, Bayrâmîye, Halvetîye, Mevlevîye, Ekberiye and Kadirîye orders.[67] Actually this chapter centers on the Bayrâmî sheikhs and their practices. He only gives brief information on the Nakşibendîye and Halvetîye and then largely explains the Bayrâmîye. In fact he also explains the basic codes of Melâmî-Bayrâmîye in the previous sections.

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[64] *Semerât,* pp. 307-8. Semih Ceyhan, ''İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî Şerhi'', (Doktora Tezi, Uludağ Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Bursa, 2005). In this study Ceylan discusses *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd*. He notes that Sarı Abdullah Efendi's basic purpose in writing the book was to show the unity among sufi orders. In this parallel, Sarı Abdullah links Nakşibendîye to İmam Ali as well. Similarly, he singles out common points among Halvetîye, Bayrâmîye, Nakşibendîye, Mevlevîye and other sufi orders with an intention to point out that the path of the knowledge of God stand on an unified ground; pp. 135-136; For relevant pages in *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd*, pp. 134-142.

[65] Thierry Zarcone notes that by the eighteenth century hagiographical works in the Ottoman Empire transformed from single life stories to multiple life stories. ''L'hagiographie dans le Monde Turc'', pp . 62-63; *Semeratü'l-Fuâd,* p. 97.

[66] Marcia K.Hermansen, 'Biography and Hagiography' in The Encylopedia of Islam and the Muslim World, Richard Martin ed. 219-221.

[67] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı argues that he found similarities between Hakiki Efendi's *Irşadname* and *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* in terms of themes and quotations. To him, *Irşadname* was the earliest example of its genre where we could find some discussions taken over by Sarı Abdullah. As far as Gölpınarlı's findings considered, *Irşadnâme* was the foundational text for Sarı Abdullah's study. Yet, Sarı Abdullah never mentions this text in *Semeratü'l-Fuâd.*.Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler*, 211-12

Similar to a number of early sufi hagiographies *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* seems to have been written to establish an expanded sphere of acceptability for the sufis.[68] First, it gives the life stories the most prominent men of religion from the first caliph Abu Bekr (d. 634) to the great scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, İmam-ı Azam (d 767). The narratives of the fist four caliphs' narratives help to sustain the connection of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order with the legitimate religious authorities.[69] Secondly, there is an obvious apologetic tone throughout the texts. Sarı Abdullah repeatedly asserts that sufis were exposed to ''false accusations'', and argues that the ''essential'' teaching of sufism could guide people to perfection. As Sarı Abdullah tries to defend the righteousness of sufism, he warns the reader to be careful about judging sufi sheikhs and not to call them heretics; for these people are the ''real friends of God''.[70] Within this mission the text tries to establish the link with the earlier saints as well in a similar way to what early sufi hagiographies such as Sulami's *Tezkire* and Cami's *Nefâhatü'l-Üns* had intended. Within this purpose, he makes reference to various early sufi hagiographies and mystical poems mentioning such fundamental sufi texts as *Tabakatü'l-Sufiyye* of Sulami (1021)*, Keşfü'l-Mahcub* of Hujwiri (d.1077) and *Nefâhatü'l-Üns* of Abdurrahman Cami (d.1492).

The inclusion of such respected sufis as Maruf Kerhi (d 815), Abu Yazid Bistami (d. 874) and Junayd Baghdadî (d 909) in *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* sets up an esoterical and intellectual linkage between these names and Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. This is a pattern converging with the earlier sufi hagiographies where Abu Yazid Bistami and Junayd Baghdadî were shown to be the superior names representing chief links in sufi genealogies. Their sayings or narratives were employed to define principal sufi

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[68] Jawid. A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The tabaqat genre from al-Sulemi to Jami,* (Curzon Press, 2001), p.122 and conclusion chapter.
[69] For instance, caliph Ömer urges Muslims: ''*The hearth of those in touch with God will be with Him*''. It signifies the importance of hearth and hidden (batın) attachment of an individual to God.
[70] *Semerât,* p. 63.

practices such as ecstasy, sobriety, and praying.[71] Therefore, *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* seems to play a part to find a shared ground and agreement between orthodox Islam and sufism. In Sarı Abdullah's era, Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples formed friendly relations with some legitimate men of religion among the ulema and sufi sheikhs. Sarı Abdullah probably aimed to reinforce this connection as he discussed many other topics that would appeal to men who had a say on religion.

In addition, *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* entails instructive and explanatory chapters with the purpose of training new Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. Besides, it provides an informative section for those people who knew less about the the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. He frequently states ''my advice to the disciple is''… or ''a disciple should know that''. Relying on these phrases, we may speculate that the audience of the book was sufis at large, and notably Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. Besides, it presents a broad content furnished with dense mystical poems, for readers who were probably from the elite groups immersed in Ottoman high culture. Persian and Arabic references scattered in the discussions made it impossible for less educated people to understand the messages he delivered. It should be considered that Sarı Abdullah might have had an intention to explain his order to other people, particularly from the state elite, who were skeptical towards Melâmî-Bayrâmîs due to the infamous reputation of the order as a result of the troublesome events in the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the inclusion of sections on the other sufi orders where he clearly defined the types of other sufi orders and their code of conduct also reinforces the possibility that Sarı Abdullah had an intention to promote his order to other sufis.[72]

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[71] With their strong emphasis on Prophet's *Sunnet* and the Sharia, Abu Yazid and Junayd were able to provide a strong legitimizing base for sufis, Jawid A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The tabaqat genre from al-Sulemi to Jami,* Particularly see the first chapter ''Sulami's Tabaqat al-Sufiyya''.
[72] *Semerât,* See the discussion on the terms*: pp. 51-56. He defines ''Talib is two types and tarik is two types as well: Servant to God, and God to servant, which are differing experiences''.

How widely was the *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* read at the time? While Sarı Abdullah had a wide network among sufi circles and state elites, *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* was an early product of his, having been written before its author became more popular with his commentary on Mevlânâ's *Mesnevî*. Hence it is not clear if *Semeretü'l-Fuâd* was a widely read text during its author's life time. Today we have around twenty copies of *Semeratü'l-Fuâd,* mostly made in the late nineteenth century, but five of them were made in the following fifty years of his death, indicating that his book reached a wide audience later in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[73]

Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi and Sergüzeşt

Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi records that he was sixty-six years old, when he completed the *Sergüzeşt*, which means that he was born around 1679. His father Lali Mehmed Efendi, the son of the daughter of Sarı Abdullah Efendi and İbrahim Efendi was a high ranking member of the ulema, appointed as kadı of Mecca and *kadıasker* (chief judge) of İstanbul successively.[74] There is no record indicating that Mehmed Efendi was a Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh; however, it seems that he was a leading Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple well acquainted with the members and history of the order. Lalizâde frequently talks about how his father narrated stories about Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ*; and notes that his father guided him to Melâmî-Bayrâmî evliyâ of the time and taught him

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[73] For the six copies made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Süleymaniye Library, Hacı Mahmud 2472, Halet Efendi 233, Mihrişah Sultan 1712, Velîyüddin 1663 and Velîyüddin 1662. For the other copies made in the late nineteenth century also see Süleymaniye Library, Millet Library and Nuruosmaniye Library

[74] Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri* I-III, Matbaa-i Amire (1333), v.I, p.159; *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 136.

fundamental codes of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order.[75] Similarly, he received instruction from his father whom he calls ''*âlim-i râbbâni, âmil-i hakkâni* and my guide *mürşid*''.

Abdülbâki Efendi was trained in the sharia and the *tarikat* at a young age and read Mevlânâ Celaleddin's *Mesnevî* and *Divan-ı Ibn Farız*.[76] By the age of twenty eight he had finished Davud-u Kayseri's (d.1350) commentary on İbn Arabi *(Şerh-i Fusüs)*, *Şerh-i Miftâhü'l-Gayb* of Molla Fenari (d.1431), *Futuhat-ı Mekkiye* and *Miftâhü'l-Gayb* by İbn Arabi, *Tefsir-i Futuhat* and *Fatiha Tefsiri* of Sadreddin Konevi (d 1274), who are of Ibn Arabî's leading students. Abdülbâki Efendi relates that these books helped him to find the truth and opened his eyes with the ''love of God.''[77] This reading heavily centered on the school of Ibn Arabî is in tie with the very profound impact of İbn Arabi on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî training curriculum.[78]

As we noted, in the eighteenth century Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples increasingly appear among the religious elite of the Empire. Lalizâde also was a member of the ulema. As the son of the high ranking member of the ulema, he entered *medrese* and completed his education around the 1700s. He started state service as a *müderris* in Katib Mustafa Efendi Medresesi, but was discharged in 1706.[79] The records indicate that few years later he became the head tutor of *Sadrazam* Şehid Ali Paşa (served between 1713 and 1716), the son in law of Ahmed III and himself a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* (axis mundi, the highest ranking saint of the time). In the past the replaced Paşmakçızâde Ali Efendi (d 1712), who became *şeyhülislam* (chief authority in religion) between 1703-1707 and 1710-1713. This connection must have given Lalizâde direct access to the affairs of the state; he accompanied *Sadrazam* Ali Paşa during his

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[75] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 134-35.
[76] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 155.
[77] *Ibid*, pp. 155-156.
[78] See Mustafa Tahralı '' A general Outline of the Influence of Ibn 'Arabi on the Ottoman Intellectual Life'' in *http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/ottomanera.html*; Michel Chodkiewicz, "İbn Arabî'nin Öğretisinin Osmanlı Dünyasında Karşılanışı'' in *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler* Ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2005), pp. 89-111.
[79] Şeyhi, p. 628.

More campaign in 1714.[80] He accompanied Ali Paşa on the Varadin campaign as well but the result was disastrous for his master and Lalizâde. It seems that his relation with Ali Paşa had already been under criticism, at least in *Nusretnâme* Fındıklılı Mehmet describes Lalizâde as an ''astrologist *(müneccim)* who was responsible for the defeat in Egedin Campaign''.[81] In the wake of the Ottoman defeat to Austrians at Varadin in 1716, where Ali Paşa was killed, Lalizâde's appointment as kadı of Jerusalem was abandoned and he was exiled to the Aegan island of Lemnos.[82]

While Lalizâde Abdülbâki was in Mecca due to his father's office, he met his father's sheikh Ahmed Yekdest Curyanî (d 1707), *halife* (legitimate successor) of Nakşibendî-Müceddidî sheikh Muhammed Masum (d.1668).[83] The link descended from İmam-ı Rabbani Sirhindi (d 1624), the founder of the Müceddidî branch of the Nakşibendîye order. His second meeting was with Murad-ı Buhârî (d.1720), another *halife* of İmam Muhammed Masum in Damascus. When Murad-ı Buhârî came to İstanbul in 1708 Lalizâde became attached to him.[84]. The rise of Müceddidî Nakşibendîs in the Ottoman lands found its peak with Murad-ı Buhârî's frequent visits to the capital city. During his service in İstanbul, Murad-ı Buhârî became a powerful and popular sheikh among the state elite; he even asked for official pardon for Lalizâde who was in exile and demanded if he could come to Bursa where Murad-ı Buhârî gave

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[80] Throughout this period, he continued to serve as *müderris* in the *medreses* of Cafer Çelebi and Hoca Hayreddin in İstanbul.

[81] Silâhdar Fındıklılı Mehmet Ağa, *Nusretnâme*, sadeleştiren İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1962-1969), Cilt II, Fasikul II, p. 342, 349, 356.

[82] In *Nusretnâme* it is recorded: ''*Lalizâde adlı dinsiz imansız düzenbaz müneccimin işareti üzerine tug-ı humayun çıkartılarak dukala ve senler arasında babussadeye dikildi*''… ''*Serdarpaşaya gelince otağında Lalizâde denilen lanetleme müneccim karşısında elinde usturlab uygun saatin bekledi. Mendebur Muneccim paşayı tutmuş daha saati var efendim diyerek onun kesin kararlar almasını enegellemekteydi*'' pp.342-9, 356. Furthermore, in this account Şehid Ali Paşa is described as a man who does not dare to shed blood. It adds that Lalizâde Efendi misguided Ali Paşa by false predictions during the war.

[83] *Menâkıbnâme*, p.131.

[84] *Ibid*, pp.134-5. For a letter written by Murad-ı Buhârî to Lalizâde Abdülbâki see Mehmed Ismet Garibullah, *Mektubat-ı Murad-ı Buhârî*, Beyazıt Library, Velîyuddin, 1780-1/2, pp.52-53; *Semerât*, see Nakşibendîye and Halvetîye chapters.The intensifying relationship between Nakşibendî-Müceddidîs and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs is the topic of the next chapters, but it may be apt to add that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was familiar with Nakşibendî teaching thanks to Hacı Bayram Velî's Nakşibendî affiliation

speeches. Having been backed by another respected sufi sheikh, Lalizâde Abdülbâki secured a well protected network of relations notably during the early years of his state career. Işın indicates that Lalizâde had intimate relations with the governing elite of the *Sadrazam* Ibrahim Paşa and enjoyed their patronage.[85] Eventually, he reached the highest point of his career when he became kadı of İstanbul between 1736 and 1737.[86] Actually this venture was very similar to that of his father Lali Efendi who had held the same posts.

During a successful state career he also authored works in a wide range of fields from theological treatises and poems to hagiographical accounts.[87]After he left his official duties in 1740 and until his death in 1746, Lalizâde spent his life in the Eyup district of İstanbul, where he engaged in conversation (*sohbet*) meetings with his brethren. It was probably during this period that he completed *Sergüzeşt*.[88]

When Lalizâde set out to write his *Sergüzeşt,* he was of course very well aware of the earlier hagiographical account written by his grandfather Sarı Abdullah. It seems that he wrote his own account as a more concise version of the *Semerat*. In fact, at the beginning or end of each chapter of his account, Lalizâde often says ''you can find a

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[85] Ekrem Işın, 'Melâmî-Bayrâmîler', *Dünden bugüne İstanbul ansiklopedisi,* (Ankara: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı**,** Kültür Bakanlığı, 1993-1995), Cilt V, pp. 384-85. Nihat Azamat, 'Lalizâde Abdülbâki', *DIA.* Thanks to *sadrazam* İbrahim Paşa's (r.1718-1730) absolute control over high state officers like *Kadıasker* (chief military judge), *Beylerbeyi* (commander in chief) *and Defterdar* (finance minister), stability in the high administrative body was restored in contrast to the devastating instability witnessed during the early eighteenth century. Münir Aktepe, *Patrona İsyanı (1730),* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1958), p.10.
[86] Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800),* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), p. 24.
[87] Some prominent works of him: *Gıda-yı Ruh, Mebde ve Mead, Mecmu İbrahim Gülşeni'nin Tercüme-i Hali, Risâley-i Muradiye Tercümesi, Zeyl-i Meslekü'l-Uşşâk, Tercüme-i İnsan-ı Kâmil* (written by Abdulkerim Cili), *Tercüme-i Kimya-ı Saadet, Tercüme-i Nemud ve Bud* (written by Mahmud Celaleddin Cerhi), *Muhtasar-ı Silsiletü'l Arifin* (written by Muhabbed Burhan, disciple of Ubeydullah Ahrar). For a complete list of his works see: Ramazan Muslu, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf (18. Yüzyıl), (*İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), pp. 523-5.
[88] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler*, (İstanbul: Gri Yayınları, 1992), pp. 153-54.

detailed discussion of this in *Semerât.''* He also frequently refers to *Şerhü'l Mesnevî* and *Meslekü'l Uşşâk* also by Sarı Abdullah.[89]

At the outset Lalizâde states that his goal is to show how people had mistreated the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and to define what Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had intended to do. Accordingly he devotes the first part of the text to the life stories of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs but adds to them a long mystical instruction in the second part. The chapters in *Sergüzeşt* are predominantly composed of didactic themes like the sufi code of conduct, how to eat meals, and ways of expressing gratitude towards God. It covers a more comprehensive discussion in depth and breadth compared to Sarı Abdullah. The didactic tone continues with explanatory chapters evolving around topics like the human body and soul, the concept of sainthood, the essence of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî way, love and ecstasy. For these reasons, the *Sergüzeşt* can also be regarded as a text that intended to establish normative boundaries for the teachings and practical conduct of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order.

Lalizâde Abdülbâki was at an older age when he wrote *Sergüzeşt* and was probably more wedded with his Melâmî-Bayrâmî identity than Sarı Abdullah Efendi who produced *Semerât* around his thirties. He sets forth:

This body has passed the sixty-year line and begun to approach seventy; it has reached sixty-six, which corresponds to Allah's name in the ebced count; and with the herald of the prophetic hadith, 'the majority of my ummah will live between sixty and seventy years', the signal to be reunited with Allah has appeared. So I wanted to write down some of the manifestations of divine perfection and lights of beauty that I have seen in the mirror of this world with divine inspiration. For this I chose the best way and told the pleasures of the Melâmî-Bayrâmîye and Nakşibendîye, and left a souvenir/relic and called it the Sergüzeşt.[90]

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[89] Nevertheless, as mentioned, Gölpınarlı puts that these quotations already existed in Hakiki's *Irşadname* to the extent that some phrases are exactly same. Currently we are unable to make further comment but Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde's silence over *Irşadname* is striking, and needs further research.

[90] *Sergüzeşt*, pp. 157-58. ''*Bu beden kalıbından müddeti bu şehadet aleminde altmış yılı geçip yetmişe döndü, lafza-i celal olan Allah isminin ebced adedine altmış altıya erişti ümmetimin çoğunun ömrü altmış yetmiş arasıdır hadisinin müjdesi ve Allah'a kavuşma işareti geldi. Bu alem aynasında gördüğüm ilahi kemalatı ve cemal nurlarından birkaç mesele ve ilahi ilim yazayım dedim. En selametli yol olan Melâmî-Bayrâmîye Bayrâmîye Nakşibendîye zevklerini anlatayım, adını Sergüzeşt koyayım da yadigar olsun istedim''*

The passage indicates that he wrote the book as a conscious Melâmî-Bayrâmî, convinced that it was a necessity to explain his order to the misinformed people. However, we cannot be sure as to his reason for choosing that time to write it. At the period he was writing *Sergüzeşt,* the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had turned so secretive to the extent that even Lalizâde did not know the leader of his community.[91] There might have been a relative decline in terms of inner-order communication which had been occasionally poor due to political suppression. That is why the book had an important function in explaining the principles to the disciples.

Secondly, Lalizâde's position was under suspicion particularly among his disciples, who were in search of a new *kutb* after Şehit Ali Paşa.[92] Lalizâde however notes that he himself was ailing spiritually because of this failure to find the real leader of his community.[93] In the text, he gives the impression that he was not the right man to take over this mission. It seems that Lalizâde was very much concerned with clarifying speculations evolving around his personality while he was writing it. Related with that, a distinguishing as well as paradoxical aspect of *Sergüzeşt* is Lalizâde's willingness to give personal information concerning his spiritual situation and the social conditions he was living in. This invention was probably a result of Lalizâde's desire to give an answer in the face of the rumors regarding his *kutbiyyet*. However, similar to Sarı Abdullah, he remained discreet in presenting personal dialogues with sufi masters of his time to the extent that no information about Lalizâde's spiritual training is available. We may think that Lalizâde did not see a need to talk about his own experience in detail but he dared to quote Sarı Abdullah's mystical experience with his sheikh. The point here is that Sarı Abdullah himself did not include these tales in his own account. Therefore, it can be argued that Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples had a reserve about writing

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[91] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 61.
[92] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler,* p. 166.
[93] *Sergüzeşt,* pp. 60-62.

down their personal experiences, which is probably an implication of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî code of conduct.

Apart from these, Lalizâde openly states that *Sergüzeşt* was written for the purpose of refuting the false accusations targeting at Melâmî-Bayrâmî and telling the truth about Melâmî-Bayrâmîs:

> [I wrote this] as a piece of advice and lesson so that people know the dervishes known as the Hamzavîs among the public, and their eyes are opened out so they can really see what the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs are. There is no secret for someone with eyes, the sun cannot be plastered with clay, and the smart one does not believe everything he hears.[94]

It seems that Lalizâde shared a similar concern with the earlier representatives of this genre, and dealt with the demonstration of the legitimacy of Melâmî-Bayrâmî.[95] Yet, it had been seventy years since the last Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh was executed and at the time *Sergüzeşt* was written Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were no longer under persecution. However, these phrases indicate that there was an ongoing suppression against Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples, probably among educated men who could have access to *Sergüzeşt*. This is presumably why Lalizâde, as a member of the ulema class as well, needed to address them. The apologetic tone of the book is very clear even though it does not refer back to the controversial issues. Its defense does not extend to elaborate the contested domains; instead it tends to restore a true image of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî by establishing normative boundaries; and these lines are well in accordance with the rules of the Sharia. Lalizâde employs many verses from the Quran and Prophet's sayings. At this point, the similarity between Sarı Abdullah and him in terms of the quoted verses points to the fact that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs successfully preserved a

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[94] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 16.
[95] Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden*, 8; Also see the same author: *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, Suny Series in Islam, (Albany: State University of New York Press 1984), esp Part three

legitimate base on which the order was built.[96] It also points to the fact that the transformation of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order that had begun in the early seventeenth century sustained its pace in the course of time.

Similar to what Sarı Abdullah had accomplished in *Semerât*, Lalizâde Abdülbâki tries to establish a connection with the former sufi sheikhs. Yet, in contrast to *Semerât*, *Sergüzeşt* does not refer to pre-Ottoman sufis. Early saints of Islam including four caliphs are not mentioned in the text; there is not even a reference to İmam Ali, who is fervently praised in *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd*. It is probably due to the concise nature of *Sergüzeşt* which has an exclusive focus on Melâmî-Bayrâmî codes and Melâmî-Bayrâmî sufis.

Finally, in the phrase already quoted above Lalizâde says ''I want to narrate Bayrâmîye and Nakşibendîye pleasures, which are the most proper ways'' but he never elaborates on the Nakşibendî *zevks* later in the text. Like *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd Sergüzeşt* do not deal with fundamental rituals of the mystical tradition. A Nakşibendî or Halvetî disciple can find nothing about their orders though Sarı Abdullah Efendi remained close to Halvetî order and Lalizâde Abdülbâki had a strong Nakşibendî training.

As noted, Lalizâde mostly capitalized on Sarı Abdullah's poems and added a couple of verses by himself. He starts his *Sergüzeşt* with a passage from Sarı Abdullah's *Meslekü'l Uşşâk* and concludes with another chapter from the same book.[97] Other than this widely used genre he employed another source, namely letters that were excessively used by Müstakimzâde in his *Menâkıbnâme* too. He quotes a long passage

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[96] Prophet's saying that ''one cannot be believer if s/h does not love me more than his child, mother and everybody else'' and ''my friends are under my cloak'' are frequently quoted in Melâmî-Bayrâmî mystical texts. Actually, Lalizâde Abdülbâki's discussion of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî way is not compatible with the pessimist nature of Melâmî teaching; to el-Afifi, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine is strongly based on ''what should not be done'' or ''what should be avoided''. The text apparently presents a different framework made up with the positive instructions concerning how to pray, sheikh-disciple relations and the conception of sainthood.
[97] For Lalizâde's *zeyl* to *Meslekü'l-Uşşâk* see: Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, C.I, p.102, 109; Bağdatlı İsmail Paşa, *Hediyyetü'l-Arifîin,* Cop. Muallim Kilisli Rıfat Bilge ve İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, (İstanbul: MEB, 1951), Cilt I, p.497.

from Şehid Beşir Ağa's letter to his disciples. It seems that letters were being used by Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs like Pir Ali Aksarayî (d. 1528) and Hüseyin Lamekani (d.1625) in order to instruct their disciples.[98]

In *Sergüzeşt* there is scarce use of Ottoman chronicles and biographical accounts. Lalizâde only once hints that he read a passage from *Şakâik-i Numaniyye* about one of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs, but never refers to it again. Lalizâde also very rarely gives the date of particular events or the era during which these events occurred or provides supplementary information about the social and political environment. Other than that, he had a certain advantage compared to Sarı Abdullah Efendi firstly thanks to the stories he heard from his father and, secondly, his having been in conversation with Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliates more frequently than Sarı Abdullah.[99].

It seems that the text's primary target was to reach Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples who were suffering from the loosening connection in the order. Furthermore, Lalizâde must have intended to explain the order to the state elite and the ulema of which he was a member. He wrote the text at an older age and probably had a chance to present it to his environment. Like *Semeratü'l-Fuâd*, more than twenty copies of *Sergüzeşt,* mostly printed in the late nineteenth century, are available today. We know of at least six copies were made of the *Sergüzeşt* within fifty years after the death of Lalizâde. One of these copies was made by Müstakimzâde.[100] It can be understood that Lalizâde's text became a popular text during the mid eighteenth century, which proves that the agenda of the text appealed to the audience living the late eighteenth century as well.

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[98] Letters had been a means of communication among the early sufis first developed by Junayd Baghdadî who employed indirect means of transmission in his letters, furnished with mystical terminology, which made it difficult to understand for those who did not know the inner meaning of the texts. Unlike these mystically dense texts Sütçü Beşir's letter was a simple and easily understandable to outsiders.

[99] He wrote the book at an older age. He frequently says: ''..as my father explained'' though he transmits some stories whose sources are not known and says: ''..as far as it is being told''

[100] For the copies made in the eighteenth century see Süleymaniye Library Hacı Mahmud 2471, Hacı Mahmud 2481, Hacı Mahmud 2562, Halet Efendi 794, Ali Emiri 1052, Pertev Paşa 636. For other copies see Süleymaniye Library, Mevlânâ Müzesi Library, Topkapı Sarayı Library and Millet Library

Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadettin and Menâkıbnâme

Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin was born in İstanbul around 1719 as the son of a member of the ulema, *kadı* Müstakim Mehmed Efendi.[101] Thanks to his father's connection in the ulema class, he was able to get a sound education from several high ranking ulema including *Şeyhülislam* Hayatizade Mustafa Feyzi Efendi (d. 1746) and Abdülgani Nablusî (d. 1731).[102] Nablusî, a prolific writer in Islamic sciences, was one of the celebrated sufis of the time and a commentator on İbn Arabi. Actually Müstakimzâde's father was not as distinguished a member of the ulema class as Lalizâde's father but Müstakimzâde decided to take his chance in order to get a rank in the *medrese* as he sounds that ''Dignified child follows his ancestor's path''.[103] Nevertheless, he was unsuccessful in his search for a teaching post.[104]

Müstakimzâde presents an intellectual profile different from the previous two hagiographers. He had to carry out his intellectual pursuit through more informal channels.[105] Like an increasing number of educated young men who could not find a position in either the civil bureaucracy or in the religious establishment.[106] However, it

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[101] Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, p.84.

[102] Ahmet Yılmaz, ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin'', *DIA*; Also see Ibnülemin's introduction on the life story of Müstakimzâde in *Tuhfe-i Hattatin*, Müstakimzâde Süleyman Sadeddin Efendi, 1787, Naşir: İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Encümeni, 1928), p. 7; Ramazan Muslu, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf,* p. 255.

[103] Ahmet Yılmaz, ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mecelletü'l-Nisabi'', (Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara: 1991), pp. 7-11. Müstakimzâde says that *''el veled'ul-hurr yatedi bi abaihi'l-gurr muktezasınca ser pençe-i cehl-i mürekketpten tahlis-i giriban-ı nefs-i natıka ve şikence-i çenkal-ı tab-ı na mühezzebden te'bid-i damen-i azimet-i sadıka kasdıyla''*. His grandfather Mehmed Mustakim was *kadı* of Damascus and Edirne; his father Mehmed Emin was muderris in *Yeni Medrese* of Sadrıazam Hasan Paşa as well. Also see: Ibnu'l-Emin, p. 6.

[104] For a short narrative of Müstakimzâde's experience about this exam and eventual failure see Ibnu'l-Emin, pp. 11-13; Ahmet Yılmaz, ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mecelletü'l-Nisabi'', pp. 21-24. It seemed that Müstakimzâde was overly disappointed as he did not reenter the examination when his former teacher Yusufzade Abdullah Efendi came to the post and invited him to take another chance.

[105] Peter Burke, *Bilginin Toplumsal Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları), pp. 24-26.

[106] This model of scholarship was a new emerging trend in Europe as well, notably during the seventeenth century exemplified by such prominent men of knowledge as German philosopher and mathematician Leibniz

seems that this model of scholarship could not find enough financial support as Müstakimzâde was known to be a poor man, who could make a living copying manuscripts. It is also claimed that he was afforded 50 *kuruş* per month (*maişet*) by the state during his later ages.[107] As a distinguished biographer of his time, later he was offered some positions in the bureaucracy but did not accept and remained an independent scholar.[108]

Another distinguishing characteristic of Müstakimzâde was his loose connection with the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. In *Menâkıbnâme* he indicates no relationship between himself and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples of the time other than Lalizâde Abdülbâki.[109]. It is also likely that he was not a follower of Melâmî-Bayrâmî principles because in *Menâkıbnâme*, the only text he wrote on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, he gives no particular evidence of his attachment to this order.

Müstakimzâde was instead the follower of Mehmed Emin Tokadî (d. 1745), who was a celebrated Nakşibendî-Müceddidî sheikh in İstanbul in the early eighteenth century. He did not hold a regular post in Nakşibendî lodges but was admonished by his sheikh to translate the fundamental text of the Nakşibendî-Müceddidî order, namely, *Mektubat* of İmam-ı Rabbani.[110] This important task ascribed to him shows that

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(d.1716) or French philosopher Diderot (d 1784) who did not have formal affiliation with the state institutions.

[107] Ahmet Yılmaz, ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin''; Ibnu'l-Emin, p. 13. To Mehmed Süreyya it was an *arpalık* of a kaza in Bolu. For *Arpalık* see: Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri Sözlüğü, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983) c. I, p. 84. For an interesting discussion on his income see Ahmet Yılmaz ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mecelletü'l-Nisabi'', pp. 37-40.

[108] Ibnu'l-Emin, p. 13. As noted above, Müstakimzâde was offered a position in *ruus* ledger but refused. For his later years also see Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, (İstanbul: Sabah, Cild IV, 1972), p.238 and Ahmet Yılmaz ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin Hayatı, Eserleri ve Mecelletü'l-Nisabı'', p.26.

[109] We may argue that Müstakimzâde had a particular interest in him. One of the longest biographies in the book is devoted to Sarı Abdullah whereas the section on Lalizâde is not as detailed as that of Sarı Abdullah, which gives the impression that he did not have close relationship with Lalizâde. Müstakimzâde states he once saw Abdülbâki Efendi at the age of seven. However, it can also be pointed out that Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi might have influenced Müstakimzâde since they belonged to the same (Nakşibendî-Müceddidî) sufi order.

[110] He later became Mehmed Emin Tokadî's halife.

Müstakimzâde was a qualified disciple of his sheikh and well acquainted with Nakşibendî teaching.

He produced more than a hundred books and pamphlets; and was especially prolific as a biographer producing such works as *Tuhfetü'l-Hattatin,* (Gift of Calligraphers) where he collected the Ottoman calligraphers and *Mecelletü'l-Nisab* (Collection of the Callings) where he explained the epithets of significant men in the history of Islam. While his hagiographic works covered ulema and sufis of various orders, the Melâmî-Bayrâmîye was the only sufi order to which he wrote an entire biographical work. The changing face of social groups would have welcomed the kind of studies undertaken by him; probably that was why he did not deal with political history that would have found buyers among the state ruling elite including the Sultan. The rise of a new class, who enjoyed new tastes formed largely by the transforming urban and financial patterns, stimulated the reading of new literary productions other than those written by the ulema class.[111]

The records give no specific date for Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıb-ı Bayrâmîyye.* However, it seems that there was not a long interval between this text and Lalizâde's *Sergüzeşt* because Müstakimzâde died just forty years after *Sergüzeşt* was written. *Menâkıbnâme* is composed of four sections; in the first part he gives a brief list of *Silsile-i Bayrâmîye* and in the second part a list of the Celvetîye sheikhs. The third part deals with Akşemseddin and his successors. In the final section he lists Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and disciples until his time, where he includes around eighty names.[112] Thus Mustakimzade's study represents a different case in terms of its content where the norms of Melâmî-Bayrâmîye are not discussed. The major part of *Menâkıbnâme* weighs

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[111] Nelly Hana, ''Shaping a culture of the Middle Class'' in *In praise of Books a Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, (Syracuse,N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003), pp. 113-115.
[112] Abdürrezzak Tek, ''Müstakimzâde Süleyman Sadeddin`in Risâle-i Melâmîye-i Bayrâmîye adlı eserinin Metni ve Tahlili'', Uludağ Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2000, pp. 36-42.

on the stories of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs; the other three chapters are quite precise and limited in length. His interest did not only lay with the life stories of Melâmî *kutbs* but also with their successors and those who were inspired by them.[113] In the beginning he states that he writes this text ''to list the successors (*halife)* of Hacı Bayram-ı Velî''. This implies that he intended to compile primarily a biographical work, and an informative text. Accordingly, he lends few comments on the events, or individuals, included in *Menâkıbnâme*. Besides, Müstakimzâde does not talk about who he is and gives no supplementary information about his own identity.[114] That is why it is hard to trace what he thinks about basic Melâmî-Bayrâmî practices or to decipher his personal relationship with the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples of the time.

Müstakimzâde's unlike Lalizâde or Sarı Abdullah Efendi seems to have no intention of explaining the essence of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî brotherhood to people who misunderstand them. At least, Müstakimzâde does not explicitly comment on the controversial practices of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. The text, therefore, includes few didactic themes or explanatory chapters about Melâmî-Bayrâmî code of conduct. A concern shared by Lalizâde and Sarı Abdullah, that of providing legitimacy for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî brotherhood, was probably less pertinent to Müstakimzâde's study. He did not feel the need to include pre-Ottoman Melâmî saints or to link the Ottoman Melâmî-Bayrâmîs with other legitimate sufis of the past like Junayd Baghdadî or Abu Yazid Bistami. Secondly, Müstakimzâde did not resort to explicit remarks and eulogical phrases to promote the order. Once narrating the tale between Akşemseddin (d.1460)

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[113] Celebrated Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs like Ahmed Edirnevî (d.1592), Yakub Helvai (d.1588), Hüseyin Lamekani (d.1624), Oglan Şeyh İbrahim Efendi (d. 1655) and Sunullah Gaybî (d. 1676) were given place in Menâkıbnâme. However it is not clear as to which criteria he applied to have compiled these names.
[114] Only once he notes that he was a Nakşibendî follower; *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 135-6.

and Ömer Sıkkını (d.1475) he says ''Lalizâde narrates the story in order to exalt (tervic) his order'', and seeks another account of this story.[115]

We know that Müstakimzâde was a Nakşibendî disciple. He might therefore be expected to have invoked controversial themes in Melâmî-Bayrâmî history or preferably quoted other available sources. But he relied on Melâmî-Bayrâmî sources and ignored those controversial issues that would raise question marks in people's mind. Besides, the text could have been read by a non-sufi audience or the disciples of other sufi orders as well because, unlike the other authors, he did not explain Melâmî code of conduct in depth. It is unlikely to guess to what extent his text was read by Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples but we may assume he did not write *Menâkıbnâme* solely for Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples.

It is clear that Müstakimzâde's use of biographies is more systematic compared to Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde, primarily thanks to the availability of *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt*. He frequently refers to these books and in some cases makes lengthy quotations. Secondly, he is more willing to cite biographical texts like the accounts of Atayî's *Zeyl-i Şakâik* and Hulvi's *Lamezât-ı Hulviyye* that seem to have been helpful sources for Müstakimzâde in collecting new names other than those juxtaposed by Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde. Relying on Müstakimzâde's own comments, it may be speculated that his interest in biographical writing led him to take from every source at his disposal carrying the risk of being less diligent than Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde. Such expressions as ''I have found it in Atayî'' ''I have checked Kefevî' or ''I could not find any more sources'' give the impression that he put a considerable effort to finding relevant names and detailed stories. As noted, what he achieved in

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[115] *Menâkıbnâme*, p. 4. The phrase is: ''*Lalizâde Abdullah efendi o tarikden olduğuna binaen kendi tarikini tervic icin Sergüzeşt ismiyle malum risâlesinde dercu irad edub aslı yokdur suretinde kizbi muhsen_ olmak üzere mecalisi adidede birbirlerine naklu rivayet ettiklerine bu fakir müşmeizzül hatir olub…aslını tefahhüs eylerken.*''

Menâkıbnâme was to reach further accounts about the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutbs*. For instance, he compiled long quotations about Ahmed Sarban and İdris Muhtefî, about whom Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde designed shorter sections. Yet, contrary to the high number of sufis from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, leading Melâmîs of the eighteenth century form a relatively smaller set. In a similar vein with Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde Abdülbâki, he gives less relevant data about his contemporaries. To conclude, the enrichment of biographical accounts might have helped Müstakimzâde but we must also point to his personal curiosity and will to reach variety of sources. Passionately, he even visited the tombs of some sheikhs to find relevant information.

The use of sources by Müstakimzâde shows that Ottoman hagiographical writing got to rely on domestic works in the field. Sarı Abdullah's study, for instance, used no major source from the Ottoman literature. Müstakimzâde's study, in contrast, was a composure of *Zeyl-i Şakâik* of Atayî, *Lamezât-ı Hulviyye*, *Semerâtü'l Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt*. The Ottoman literature had managed to make up self-sufficient works in a different model of hagiographical writing within a hundred year, proving that its intellectual tradition was receptive as well as capable of producing original texts based on its own sources.

The use of letters and poems as complementary literary genres was not unique to Müstakimzâde. However, he advanced in employing letters, as a number of private letters by Mahmud Hüdâyî, Ahmed Edirnevî and Sütçü Beşir Ağa are included in his text. It was probably more difficult to find such personal accounts for an outsider to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order but Müstakimzâde successfully made use of them. It might be due to the fact that Müstakimzâde sometimes had the chance of being among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. As a man who is closer to sufi networks, this was not beyond possibility. On the other hand, the employment of oral sources seemed to be less relevant for him. His

advantage, to a certain degree, was to listen to first hand oral sources about his contemporaries.[116]

In the end, Müstakimzâde, in comparison to Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde, produced a more straightforward descriptive account. His *Menâkıbnâme* presents a different portrait with its strong biographical emphasis and limited discussions of mystical instructions. Yet we cannot be precise about the manacles he had to face in terms of compiling and publishing this information. Therefore, it would be better to put it simply that he was eager to present the knowledge he had at his disposal to the reader. And that was why Müstakimzâde's performance in hagiographical collection primarily relied on literary accounts. He had a comparative advantage of having access to more sources that helped him a lot in compilation of *Menâkıbnâme* given the fact that it would be almost impossible to undertake this project in the absence of the vast biographical literature, including *Semerâtü'l Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt,* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Today we have fewer extant of Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme,* no more than five*,* compared to *Semeratü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt*. The cause of this scarcity is not clear as we look at Lalizâde's text which was written in almost the same period and numerously copied. We should also note that Müstakimzâde was a prolific writer who had many other texts copied in high numbers. His *Menâkıbnâme* might have been seen as a less noticeable work of him or the possibility that some copies were lost should be seriously considered.

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[116] From comparative perspective, whereas Lalizâde and notably Müstakimzâde had a chance to rely on oral sources with fewer intermediaries, the abundant contemporary oral sourcces of Sarı Abdullah would have made liitle contribution to his study because he included a lot of suris who had lived hundreds of years before him.

Conclusion

The texts I have discussed were the products of the social and intellectual atmosphere of the Empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts might be considered as preliminary attempts to defend an order against accusations, a motivation similar to the previous endeavor of early literature written with the intention of demonstrating that sufism was fundamentally linked with the established norms of religion.[117] The legitimacy and authority of the sufi sheikhs were enhanced by the veneration of the former great mystics who had a firm attachment to Prophet's *sünnet* (code of conduct).[118] It may also be argued that our texts, in particular *Semerâtü'l Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt*, intended to build a Melâmî-Bayrâmî identity in response to the critics they had to face. Actually that was not Müstakimzâde's motivation; but coming from a Nakşibendî background and being acquainted with sufi networks he produced a hagiographic text with valuable information in favor of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. All these texts must have helped Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to be a less suspicious group for laymen. In other words, they all seem to have promoted the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in one way or another.

Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde, and partly Müstakimzâde, were of a similar social and cultural background, which shaped the perspective they looked at and wrote the history of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. The kind of social and cultural capital they acquired resembled to each other. Born in the ulema class they received a sound background in religious sciences and became respectable scholars of the time, though Müstakimzâde could not continue his career. They were all İstanbulite, spent most of their times in the capital city of the Empire. Novelties in social life or new trends intellectual life found base in İstanbul but the city was mostly subordinated to politics. A limitation of this

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[117] Arthur John Arberry, *Sufism,* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1956), p. 74.

[118] Jawid A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism*, see the conclusion chapter

İstanbul-centered life, on the other hand, was that the writers must have had limited access to what was going on in the provinces, including central Anatolia, the old center of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and the Balkans, another important center since at least during the late sixteenth century.

The content of hagiographical text differs according to the reader they address.[119] Doctrinal and didactic themes in *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt* were instructive for sufi disciples in their spiritual experience. The use of poems furnished with dense mystical vocabulary as well seems to help them to express their complicated mystical training.[120] It made possible a pleasant integration of hagiographical accounts and other literary genres.

As Mannheim puts, intellectual production cannot be understood as long as its social origins are obscured and, secondly, an individual can think about what other men have thought before him.[121] In this chapter I have tried to look at the question of the unprecedented enterprise made by these authors in writing the history of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. Confining the analysis to a subjective social world evolving around just only *Melâmî-Bayrâmî* subjects therefore fails to provide the answer; instead, a prospective explanation lies in keeping an objective vision of the whole social intellectual reality in the Empire.

In the next chapter, we will look at the conception of *velî* (friend of God) in Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographical texts. Construction of this image is linked with the above mentioned features of sufi biographical literature. We will find that the message-

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[119] Jawid. A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism,* p. 179.
[120] It had been a shared practice in mystical writing, see Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden,* pp. 9-10; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p.109, 130.
[121] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia ; An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, Trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils**.** (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), p. 2-3.

oriented chapters of *Semerât*, *Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme* serve the purpose of hagiographical writing *par excellence*.

CHAPTER III

THE REPRESENTATION OF SAINTHOOD IN MELÂMÎ-BAYRÂMÎ TEXTS

As I have made clear in the first chapter, *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd, Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme* include a variety of religious mystical themes. A particularly central theme in all three texts is the legitimacy of *evliyâ* (God's friends) and manifestation of *velâyet* (state of friendship).[122] In this chapter, I will attempt to look at the conception of *velî* through Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographical accounts, and especially the *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt*. Due to its content, Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* is less pertinent to this theme. I will be concerned with the theoretical construction in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *Menâkıbnâmes* and will not try to answer whether Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* have actually followed the normative boundaries discussed in these texts.

A great deal of ink has been spent on privileged people of religion, saints in Christianity and *evliyâ* in Islam.[123] Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts make an important contribution to this domain by constructing a typology of *velî* through plenty of examples extracted from the lives of the celebrated *evliyâ* of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. The difference from the *evliyâ* of other sufi orders is actually not striking. However, there are salient characteristics peculiar to Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ*.

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[122] For an extended discussion of the term '*velâyet*', its usage and differing meanings see Vincent Cornell's *Realm of the Saint*, notably pp.7-21.

[123] For a comparative analysis of Christian saints and Muslim sheikhs see Bryan Turner's 'saint and sheikh' in *Weber and Islam: a critical study*, (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974). Similarly, Cornell makes a brief comparison between the two groups in his introductory chapter.
Implications and the meaning of *Velî* in sufi literature may differ. In this section, I will use a strict definition of *velî*, who is given distinguished privileges. From this perspective, it converges to the 'kutb' (axis mundi) in Sufism. Nevertheless, the idea of 'kutb' has its own implications and requires a deep theosophical discussion. Therefore, I will preferably use the former.

The analysis will start with the question of the legitimacy of sainthood in Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts, and continue with their attachment to the sacred law (the Sharia). The remaining discussion will cover the *velî* in social life and his relationship with the disciples. In the end, the spiritual potency of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî saint will be analyzed with reference to *kerâmet* (marvel) stories and supernatural motives manifested in the chapters.

The Construction of Sainthood

Before going into the characteristics of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, we need to investigate the ground on which Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts were based. Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographical literature's emphasis on the legitimacy and acceptability of the *evliyâ* is obvious. Actually it reveals a similar tendency with the general sufi literature defending that Prophet was the last human who had possessed ''prophethood'' (*nübüvvet*) and ''sainthood'' (*velâyet)* together.[124] *Nübüvvet* is believed to have ended with his death whereas ''*velâyet''* continued after him and *evliyâ,* who possess friendship with God differing from ordinary people as a privileged group under protection of Him, are the heirs of Prophet.[125] Sarı Abdullah makes it clear that the *velî* is ascribed responsibility for governing the spiritual affairs of the cosmic universe while the Prophet's cousin and son in-law Ali is venerated as the leader (İmam) due to his commanding spiritual position to the extent that all *evliyâ* have to be linked with him.[126] In this way, a chain of transmission is made up from the beginning to the latest link by which *evliyâ*

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[124] *Semerât*, 27; Muhyiddin İbn Arabi, *Fusüsu'l-Hikem*, Trans. Nuri Gençosman, (İstanbul: MEB Şark İslam Klasikleri 1990), pp. 43-46.

[125] *Semerât*, 22; Bernd Radtke, 'Weli', *El².* There was a considerable effort by earlier mystics to define the *velâyet*; Tirmizi and Tusteri as well as biographical writers like Cami and Hucviri built up systematic discussions on the relationship between *valayet* and sufism.

[126] *Semerât*, pp. 98-99.

legitimize their connection to Prophet.[127] Sarı Abdullah continues the discussion with a stronger tone in the introductory part of *Semerât:* ''even after they left this world and went to the other, they left their knowledge about the unity of Allah, the provisions and secrets of the Sharia, and the lights of sainthood. This was true yesterday, and is true now. It will be true until the Day of Judgment, too.'' He even strengthens his position quoting Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumî: ''there is a saint in every epoch. And this will continue until the Day of Judgment.''[128] In a similar vein with Sarı Abdullah, Lalizâde says ''Velî is the one who is honored with Prophet's legacy''[129]. As can be clearly figured in these words, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî conception of sainthood is quite straightforward and grounded on a strong intellectual base.

Semerâtü'l-Fuâd and Sergüzeşt do not deal with messianic claims or complicated classifications of spiritual hierarchies, unlike sufi pamphlets dedicated to explain the technical terminology of mysticism. The idea on which they put stronger emphasis is the inevitability and certainty of the existence of privileged individuals among Muslim people. They frequently give the message that one should not dismiss or disregard a *velî* even if s/he may hear something critical, or an imputation of heresy, about him.[130] The presence of fake *evliyâ*, whom these sources fervently denounce, should not change one's perception of the spiritual status (*makam)* of ''*velâyet*''. For, *velî* is of a higher status given by God and is somewhat unknowable to ordinary people. As Sarı Abdullah puts in *Meslekü'l-Uşşâk*:

> ''The saint, whose post and secret is the sublime heavens,
> His manners Rabbani's breed, his gift is enchantment and shiver''[131]

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[127] Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden*, p. 12.
[128] *Semerât*, p. 6 ''Piş behr devri velî kaimest,
                Tâ kıyâmet az mayiş dâimest.''
[129] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 102.
[130] *Serguzeşt*, p. 107.
[131] *Ibid ,* p. 143 ''Velî arş-ı muallâdır makâmı, sırrı hod esna
                Hisali Halk-Rabbâni atası vecdü hâlettir''. (In the text it is written as ''makâm-ı sırrı'')

The path to Melâmî-Bayrâmî sainthood starts with a necessary qualification; ''*istidât*'' (aptitude). Lalizâde Abdülbâki, in his introductory section clearly states that ''who has the aptitude for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and deserves it, cannot be the disciple of every guide (*mürşid*). He is protected by God.''[132] By this phrase we understand that Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* should possesses some natural dispositions. Lalizâde believes that he himself could become a Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple because he had this aptitude. On the other hand, it can easily be inferred that those who do not have ''*istidat*'' by no chances be admitted to the order.

So we may ask the question; ''aptitude'' for what? There is no clear answer in the texts. Yet the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, at first, is required to get rid of his selfhood and to replace it with ''love of God'' (*muhabbetullah*). For, selfhood hinders him from comprehending the feeling of non-existence, a prerequisite for realizing God's omnipotency and the human being's inferiority in front of Him. Technical knowledge and the practical necessities of mystical experience are of secondary importance; and become insignificant if this requirement could not be met. The message finds its expression in *Meslekü'l Uşşâk*

> ''Detach yourself from existence, come into non-existence,
> So the guide offers you a cup from the wine of love''[133]

The diffusion of Mevlânâ's teaching, notably his emphasis on the idea of *muhabbetullah*, in Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine can be clearly identified in this couplet.[134] This love cancels out other worldly loves, and even otherworldly ambitions. No other

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[132] *Ibid*, p. 4, *'Melâmî-Bayrâmî tarikatına istidatlı olan ve buna hak kazanmış olan, her mürşide mürid olmaz ve her velînin her kâmilin dairesine girmez, Hak tarafından mahfuzdur'*
[133] *Ibid*, p. 164, ''Varlığından saf olup yokluğa gel yokluğa gel
　　　　　　Tâ muhabbet bâdesinden suna mürşid bir dolu.''
[134] For a comprehensive discussion of the theme of 'Love' in Mevlânâ's texts see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love, The Spiritual Teachings of Rumî*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

kind of love can partake in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*'s heart filled with love of God. That is why the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* should not be even dreaming of a pleasant status in heaven.[135] He is the one who could, and should, overlook all these lesser gifts and avoid becoming infatuated with something other than God in order to reach the ultimate end, *muhabbetullah,* in its best form thanks to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî path.[136] Melâmî-Bayrâmîs believe that the *velî* is representative of the Muhammedan spirit ''*Ruh-ı Muhammedi*'' and therefore should love the Prophet more than he loves his self and family.[137] It would be a bridge for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* in his endeavor to be filled with the love of God. To make it more explicit Lalizâde quotes the Quranic verse ''O prophet, we have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, as well as a warner, inviting to God, in accordance with His will, and a guiding beacon (33:45-46).''[138] The Prophet's instruction and help to his flock would continue through *evliyâ,* which means that people might have a chance to benefit from this connection if they recognize his real representatives.[139]

> ''Muhammad is the shining sun of the love of the Eternal
> The saint is his mirror and, the moon of love.''[140]

Since any kind of inclination to worldly interest would hinder one from facing the essence of the manifestation of God (*zât-ı tecellî*) it is actually a very tough adventure, which can be completed only by few. It is pointed out that this individual is an exceptional man, who has a heart reserved solely for true representatives of *Rûh-i*

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[135] In *Meslekü'l Uşşâk* of Sarı Abdullah attached at the end of *Sergüzeşt*
[136] 'Melâmî-Bayrâmî path is the most beautiful path for those who are searching for the path of love; love of God (*Hubb-i İlahi*) is the highest ranks of all.' *Sergüzeşt*, 4, for a similar discussion see *Semerât,* pp. 20-22.
[137] See footnote 72 in Chapter I; *Sergüzeşt,* p. 2.
[138] *Sergüzeşt* p. 3.
[139] *Semerât*, p. 6.
[140] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 143, ''Muhammed aftâb-ı nûr-ı hubb-ı la yezâldir
              Anın mirâtı olmuştur velî, mâh-ı muhabettir.''

Muhammedî, the real heir of Prophet. Again Sarı Abdullah employs a couplet in *Meslekü'l Uşşâk*:

‘‘Every spiritual post, in order to reach this level, must be purified from the love of the world; will you have a heart that reflects the Truth, A heart that very few people have, who inherit the Muhammedan sainthood''.[141]

This *makam* cannot be claimed on one's own effort but given by God. Lalizâde makes it clear that it is not easy to find the true friends of God because there are some people who claim sainthood even though they actually do not qualify.

Those who claim this right are mostly spiteful,
Very rarely are they with no grudge and tearful[142]

Looking at the above mentioned selected phrases, we can deduce that *velâyet* is a privileged but exceptional status. The Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, thanks to his aptitude, has the merit of grasping this rank but according to sufi doctrine there are more than one *velî* living at the same time, and they are classified within a spiritual hierarchy. İbn Arabi had articulated this discussion in a very systematic way on the ground el-Hucviri and Kettani had built up and developed the idea of *kutb* (axis mundi), who heads spiritual hierarchy receiving the ultimate favor of divine grace.[143]At that point, emphatic tone in Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts about the centrality of *kutb* image is evident. However, it seems that *kutb* means Melâmî-Bayrâmî leader of the time rather than the leader of all *evliyâ*. At least, the texts do not explicitly argue that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* has the highest *makam* among the others. Still particular stories imply that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is granted superiority over his contemporaries. For instance, it is

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[141] *Semerât,* pp. 22-3.
[142] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 165 , ‘‘İddiayı hak edenler pür garazdır ekseri
Az bulunur arasında bî garaz yüzü sulu.''
[143] Frederick De Jong, 'Kutb', *El²*; Muhyiddin İbn Arabi, *Futuhatu'l-Mekkiyye.* Trans*.* Ekrem Demirli, Litera Yayıncılık, 2006, Cilt I, pp. 433-467*;* Michel Chodkiewicz in ‘‘İbn Arabî'nin Öğretisinin Osmanlı Dünyasında Karşılanışı''claims that the idea of *kutb* in Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching claims worldly authority whereas İbn Arabi's definition does not require it. A comprehensive discussion about the issue shall come in Chapter IV

recorded that the Ottoman Sultan Murad I (r. 1361-1389) asked Emir Sultan (d. 1430), one of the most respectable sheikhs of the time in Bursa, to give a sermon in the opening ceremony for Ulu Camii, the biggest mosque at that time, yet Emir Sultan invited Somuncu Baba with the excuse that he was more qualified (had the authority) to do it.[144] At this point we may say that the image of ''divinely selected and superior'' *velî* is more obvious in *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt* whereas Müstakimzâde pays less attention to this idea. It is probably due to the fact that Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde were more wedded with Melâmî-Bayrâmî tradition than him.

The spiritual authority of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is a privilege afforded by God. However, one should not try to claim this *makam* because it can only be acquired by some individuals thanks to some pre-determined dispositions, and Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts give the impression that the *makam* of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* may be higher than other *evliyâ* as well. Now, we will look at how they perform religious obligation in order to preserve this favored status.

The Pious *Velî*

As I have discussed in the introductory chapter, sufis were frequently accused of breaking the Sharia codes and affiliating with heretical movements. Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were particularly vulnerable to similar charges of heresy as we shall discuss in subsequent chapters. Yet, all three of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts analyzed here actually underline that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* prescribed strict obedience to the Sharia. In this parallel Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts quote some letters by the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* Sultan Beşir and Ahmed Sarban to their disciples, which strongly encourage obedience to the Sharia rules. Sultan Beşir states that ''I ask you to follow the path of sacred law (sharia) in speech and practice. Never; never, say something in opposition to sacred law. Sharia,

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[144] *Semerât*, pp. 235-236*; Sergüzeşt,* p. 14.

Sharia, again Sharia''[145] and Ahmed Sarban, in similar vein, writes to his *halife* Hüsameddin Ankaravî ''don't leave out of sight those with divine love, If you say they are rare, then Sharia, Sharia, and Sharia.''[146]

This righteous tone is not confined to the letter, and didactic chapters which put great weight on the importance of the Sharia are also included. The *velî* cannot flout or dismiss the rules of religious law even if he moves up in spiritual rank. Similarly, state of ecstasy or intoxication would be worthless and contemptible, if the *velî* does not abide by the requirements of the Sharia. He cannot enjoy the fruits of his efforts if the rules of sacred law are violated.[147] In other words, he is obliged to behave in certain forms and to keep practicing religious duties.

A major critique directed at the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs was their reluctance to perform religious duties.[148] Nevertheless, the texts present us a different picture from the one that the existing literature has proposed. In addition to the stringent conduct of religious prayers, supererogatory prayers (*nevâfil)* are also encouraged. The texts emphasize that they bring rewards; as they perform more prayers, it is easier for them to acquire higher spiritual status.

> ''There are many secrets in worship, taste them and witness,
> O remiss, do not think them of custom or tradition
> What is the point with supererogatory worship, as knowledge increases
> If you know, it's only a means for appearance''.*[149]*

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[145] *Sergüzeşt,*p 51. *Efal ve akvalden şer'i şerif üzere hareket eylemenezi isterim. Zinhar hezar zinhar hilaf şeri' şerif kendi zumünüz ile söz söylemeniyiz, Şeriat, şeriat yine şeriat*
[146] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 27.
[147] Sarı Abdullah stresses the inseparability of the sharia and tariqat. See *Semerât,* pp. 65-71.
[148] Abdülmecid Sivasî, *Dürer-i Akaid*, Süleymaniye Library, Mihrişah Sultan 300, pp. 34-35; *Sergüzeşt*, p. 40.
[149] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 141, 146, ''Ibadette nice sır var, anı zevk meşhud eyle
            Sakın sanma sen ey gafil, heman resmle âdettir
            Nevâfilde nedir mâna, ziyâd oldukça irfanı
            Bilip kurb-ı ferâizde, zuhûr-ı fi'le alettir.'' (There is a ''vezin'' problem in these verses)

In addition to the message on the Sharia, Lalizâde delivers a chapter arguing that a *velî* could make mistakes and commit sins. The disciple should not observe these mistakes but only be concerned with his own defects if he thinks something is going wrong.[150] Furthermore, searching for a sinless *velî* would be a futile effort. For, the only person who could remain innocent was Prophet as he was protected with *Ismet*, a prerogative afforded to Prophets by God to protect them from committing sin.

Moreover, it seems that the *velî* may utter unpardonable words in a state of ecstasy. These words may be so dangerous that once when Junayd Bahgdadi says unpardonable words in a state of ecstasy and his fellows warn him about that, he replies ''kill me if I do it again''.[151] Indeed Lalizâde and Sarı Abdullah affirm that *şathiyyat*, ecstatic sayings which might be shocking in content, may turn out to be a severe violation of religious axioms if wicked and foolish people try to imitate them.[152] However, since each conduct of a *velî* should formally include a motivation which would drive him to God, *velî*'s penalties are conceived as a means of his rapprochement to God if he feels regret and becomes more enthusiastically submissive to Him.[153] As opposed to those pretenders, he is aware of the penalty and pleads God's mercy to forgive him. Therefore, his real state of friendship to God should not be evaluated on the basis of sayings he uttered in a state of intoxication or ectasy but when he comes back to a state of sobriety.[154]

In this discussion, it should be recalled that the practice of ''*melâmet*'' – incurring blame on oneself- is prevalent among Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes, and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* sometimes performed controversial behaviors in order to provoke

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[150] *Ibid.* p. 108.
[151] *Semerât,* p. 63.
[152] For an extended discussion of the earlier debates and its forms see Ernst's *Words of Ecstasy,* pp. 9-51. And also see footnote 62 in Chapter III of this thesis.
[153] *Sergüzeş,* pp. 107.
[154] Ernst notes that when legal jurists were faced with the problem, they tended to ascribe these words to intoxication, because it helped them to relate the case with madness, *Ibid,* p. 49.

criticize criticism or to be scorned by people. According to Schimmel, Melâmîs deliberately tried to draw the contempt of the world upon themselves by committing unlawful actions[155]. As the origin of the word ''*levm*'' means ''to blame'' in Arabic, the order refers back to the Quranic verses ''-I (God) swear by the reproachful soul'' (75:2) and ''they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer'' (5:54).[156] Melâmî-Bayrâmîs interpret the phrase to mean that they should embrace unrelenting criticism against one's own behavior in order to eradicate selfhood. Moreover, it saves them from falling into hypocrisy while they are fulfilling religious bearings. This tendency became more apparent following İsmail Maşuki's death on as Lalizâde puts ''Being scolded and denigrated by people became a new cloak and cap of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order''.[157] Thus, Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine provides a safe gate for provocative implementations against religious law in public;[158] and a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, as noted, might be expected to follow this line whenever he needs to tame his self, like what happens in the Hamza Bâlî tale. As the story is recorded: Hamza Bâlî boasts saying that ''regarding the pleasures of flesh, I eat chicken soup every day'' and his friends assume that Hamza Bâlî has left ascetic rigor *(riyâzet)* Nevertheless, Lalizâde explains that Hamza Bâlî actually wanted to say that he was eating soup from a chicken's feeding cup[159]

While Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts provide a legitimate ground for Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* who might perform controversial behaviors or utter ecstatic sayings, the stories never display a *velî* committing sin. In accordance with the intention of

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[155] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam*, p. 86.
[156] Ebu'l-Ala Afifi, *Islam Düşüncesi Üzerine Makaleler*, p.139.
[157] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 30.
[158] *Ibid*, p. 141.
[159] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 35, *Menâkıbnâme,* pp.78-79. The original phrase is 'tenperverlikte hergün tavuk çorbası yerim' In this story, we observe that Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple engages in different sufi training which is not mentioned in the texts. *Riyâzet,* as shall be explained later*,* is a method of mystical education held by Halvetîs at large.

hagiographical texts, an implicit image of perfection is displayed. The most impressive part of this construction is that Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is exclusively differentiated from fake *evliyâ* (saints), who are vehemently criticized. It was actually a function of sufi literature to provide guidelines for distinguishing genuine sufis from fakes.[160] We may say that especially Lalizâde Abdülbâki and Sarı Abdullah denigrate people who fail to comprehend the ultimate meaning, or the essence and requirements, of ''*velâyet*'' (sainthood). It seems that the unlawful behaviors of these people in turn provoked reaction against Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ*, as it can be best summarized by these verses:

> ''Yes, there are the *Harâbâtî* Melâmîs among saints
> But don't think they are permissive of blameworthy innovation''[161]

With these phrases a clear distinction between the ''real'' and the ''fake'' is put forward. This distinction put forward in *Sergüzeşt* and *Semerât* displays itself in another account of the time, *Hediyetü'l-İhvan* of Mehmet Nazmi Efendi, Halvetî sheikh and biographer, where the author differentiates Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliates. For him, even though real friends of God can be found among them, there were some heretics, though not identified in name and title, attaching themselves to the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. This dual approach is less salient in Müstakimzâde's text, in whose time the label of ''Hamzavî'' was probably less popular.[162]

Velî in the Community: Vocation and Disciples

Up to this point, we have encountered the idealized image of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* as a privileged man distinct from ordinary people. In this part, it will be worth looking at the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*'s code of conduct in daily life to which he never feels alien.

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[160] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, p. 360.
[161] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 141, ''Belî vardır velîlerde Harâbâtî Melâmî-Bayrâmîler
    Velî sanma sen anları mubâhi ehl-i bidattir''
[162] For an extended discussion of the term ''Hamzavî'' see the third and fourth chapters.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is represented as engaging in trade and commerce. The founding father of the order Somuncu Baba was a baker who made his own business independent of his sacred task. This disposition basically signifies a between the early Melâmî movement in Khorasan which drew inspriration from the tradition of *fütüvvet*

Sarı Abdullah explains in *Semerât:* ''The tongue then should be concerned with this world while also mentioning Allah's names. Some however, don't work, and call it austerity. These follow Satan. For, the most miserable and the most pitiful are lazy vagabonds.[163] '' These sentences draw the line between lazy ascetics and real friends of God who make their own money. In this connection, the path exemplified by Somuncu Baba continued with Hacı Bayram who had a small cultivated land where he could grow crops and vegetables.[164] Similarly, Hacı Kabâyi worked in the *Bedesten*, a bazaar where manufactured luxury goods were sold, and İdris-i Muhtefî was a very respectable tailor.[165] A barber shop in İstanbul was the meeting place of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs, where Sultan Beşir was talking with Melâmî-Bayrâmî *muhibban* and eventually met İdris-i Muhtefî.[166]Again, we may point out the parallels with the early the Melâmî order which had been essentially an urban movement that included small shopkeepers and middle scale traders working in the Bazaar of Nishabur[167].

Still not all Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* were financially independent individuals who received no payment from the state. Some Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* served the state like İsmail Maşuki who was a preacher. Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* gives a more in-depth picture of the social base of the order since it covers a greater number of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and some significant disciples among whom we can detect

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[163] *Semerât,* p. 82.
[164] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 17.
[165] *Ibid,* p. 49-50*; Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 80-81.
[166] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 51-54.
[167] Jacqueline Chabbi, ''Remaques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan: IIIe/IXe Siecle- IVe-Xe Siecle'', p. 52. Its founder Hamdun Qassar was a butcher, similar to other important Melâmî figures like Ebu Hafs Haddad, who was a forger.

regular sheikhs in sufi lodges like Yakub Helvai, an earlier representative of the order in İstanbul who served in the Helvai lodge, and Hüseyin Lamekani, who held a post in the Şah Sultan lodge.[168] As noted in the first chapter, Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutbs* Paşmakçızâde Ali Efendi and Şehit Ali Paşa were among the leading statesmen of the time. Criticizing ascetic sufis, who preached withdrawal from people and social life, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts load that perfection in God's friendship lies in recalling God while you are in crowd. In that regard Sarı Abdullah notes in *Semerât* that all prophets had a vocation and one should never be a sponger.[169] In other words the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*, whatever his source of income was, had to participate in public life as an active subject.

The *velî* would be closer to God tackling by the difficulties of daily life and by putting complete trust in God *(tevekkül)* and surrending himself to Him[170]. This finds its expression in the phrases quoted by Sarı Abdullah: *There is no better profit than trust in Allah. There is no better action than resigning oneself in the hands of the Lord.*[171] It is an endeavor to find God through painful experiences, which prescribes a different path compared to other spiritual techniques like *halvet* (seclusion). To them, *halvet* does not means to remain alone in a single room but to be able to remain in touch with God even when you plunge into the masses; ' 'The real seclusion is when they purify their tongue. By secluding from existence, this is the real secrecy''[172]

In this line, we face a spiritually privileged man, who would experience the sorrows and pleasures of daily life and thus have a chance to observe changes in his environment including those in political life, offering new solutions or reasoning about

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[168] Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, p. 489.
[169] *Semerât,* p. 81.
[170] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 117.
[171] *Semerât*, p. 80.
[172] *Ibid*, p. 133.

the problems his disciples suffered. Probably, like many other saints, he was seen above all as a teacher that was his function.[173] This dimension of *velî* drives us to the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs' pursuit for worldly power, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

While Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching encouraged being present in the different segments of society, it precluded distinguishing marks stamped on *evliyâ*. Celebrity and popular appeal were considered incompatible with the doctrine of *melâmet* and to undermine the *velî*'s spiritual acquisitions. Ahmed el-Edirnevî, the halife of Pir Ali Aksarayî, in one of his letters quoted by Müstakimzâde admonishes to avoid celebrity, a wicked deed for the followers of Melâmî-Bayrâmî path. Likewise, when el- Qassar is asked ''Should I leave my vocation?' he replies 'Keep your work and gain your own bread, I prefer your name Abdullah the barber to the name Abdullah el-arif''[174] It was an intransigent opposition against distinguishing denominations, which found its support in Prophet's saying, a very frequently repeated phrase in Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts ''*Evliyâi tahte kabai"*(My friends are under my cloak (*cübbe*), Nobody knows them but me). And Sarı Abdullah strengthens this conception in *Meslekü'l-Uşşâk*:

> ''Melâmî-Bayrâmîs are those that are not known by appearance
> Neither by crest nor cloak, neither shawl, nor cloth''[175]

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* faces a narrow but somewhat paradoxical line, on the one hand he cannot be secluded from society, on the other hand he is expected to keep his secrecy and remain indistinguishable. The long reigning Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* İdrisi Muhtefî, for instance, had multiple identities, Ali Efendi and İdris Efendi, to use

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[173] Philip Rousseau, ''Ascetics as Mediators and as Teachers', in *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown''* Ed. James Howard-Johnston and Paul Antony Hayward, paperback edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 54.
[174] Jacqueline Chabbi, ''Remaques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan: IIIe/IXe Siecle- IVe-Xe Siecle'', p. 57.
[175] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 141, 'Melâmî-Bayrâmî ânlara derler, bilinmeye o suretle
        Ne tac ile ridasından ne şal ile ne kisvettir'

interchangeably in everyday life and in his spiritual and religious life. This invention was indeed a product of both practical requirements and exceptionally complicated doctrinal obligations compelling.

Velî vs. Disciple

Now let us turn to investigate the *velî*'s life within his inner circle, and notably his relation with his disciples. The cooperation between the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* and a novice begins with an intriguing phase, and probably the most painful. The disciple is required to find a *velî*, namely *mürşid-i kâmil* (perfect guide*)* who would instruct him in his spiritual journey. However, it is not an easy process as the disciple waits for the *velî* to get in touch with him, which may take several years; Lalizâde for instance complains that he has been waiting for 37 years to be invited by his guide (*mürşid).*[176]

In sufi teachings the *velî* is usually the one to find his disciple. Melâmî-Bayrâmîs display a strict attachment to the principle and are primarily concerned with the disciples' ''aptitude''.[177] Here we may recall Weber pointing to the community's function as a selection body for separating the qualified from the unqualified, where selective admission also has the significance of legitimating personal qualifications.[178] Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutbs* Ahmed Sarban and Sultan Beşir, similarly, were particularly selected by *kutbs* of the time while Ahmet Sarban was serving in the Sultan's army and Sultan Beşir was serving in the Ottoman palace. That is to say, *velî* has the commanding role for finding new novices, eligible for the order. By this way the novice would submit to the spiritual power of his *mürşid*, who could select him among thousands of people.

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[176]*Sergüzeşt*, pp. 60-62.
[177] Lalizâde delivers a chapter on '*istidâtlı mümin*' where he gives advice to Melâmî-Bayrâmî novice in his path to reach '*hakikat*'. *Sergüzeşt*, p. 73.
[178] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*: *An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Ed. by Guenther Roth, Claus Wittich; Trans. Ephraim Fischoff, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), Chapter on Political and Hierocratic Domination, pp. 1204-5.

To Sarı Abdullah, *velî* is both ''Hidden but in front of your eyes''.[179] The phrase is actually a reminder of the question of the *velî*'s reputation in society. From a different angle, it may be argued that a *velî*'s interaction with Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples is also very limited. Followers of the order face difficulty in finding their leader, as Lalizâde Abdülbâki complains about this problem, which disappoints him deeply. In the same parallel, some Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* like Hacı Kabâyi and Mehmed Haşim were relatively unknown names whom only a few of the disciples might have met.[180] A more striking example of the loose communication was Sarı Abdullah Efendi's search for his *mürşid* after İdris-i Muhtefî's death where he faced trouble in finding who the succeeding *kutb* was and could meet him somewhat late, even though Sarı Abdullah was a prominent disciple of the former sheikh İdris-i Muhtefî.[181]

On the other hand, this meeting ceremony was not always complicated. Sarı Abdullah Efendi and Lalizâde were lucky enough to see the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* when they were younger than twelve, which implies that Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* might have been known even to a child. Besides, Sultan Beşir and İsmail Maşuki became celebrated *evliyâ* to the extent that İsmail Maşuki gave speeches in imperial mosques.[182] They were presumably known to be famous sufi sheikhs of the time. Even though the theory suggests that a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* should keep his mystery even at the expense of confusing the disciples seeking to find him, growing public appeal probably may have made it impossible to hide one's identity like what İdris-i Muhtefî experienced during his *kutbiyyet*.[183]

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[179] *Semerât*, p. 6.
[180] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 49, 56; *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 161.
[181] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 117.
[182] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 64*; Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 19-20.
[183] Lalizâde records in *Sergüzeşt* that ''He could not escape from slanders despite his attempt to conceal the real identity'', p. 46.

At this point, it would be worth looking at the function of dreams in terms of Melâmî-Bayrâmî saints' initial communication with their disciples. The sufi doctrine relies on the evidence that Prophet remained in touch with God during six months in the early years of his prophethood through dreams of divine inspiration *(rüya-ı sâdıka)*, which are claimed to be one of the forty six features of prophethood[184]. In the sufi tradition, for example among the Halvetîs, a novice who is enthusiastic to enter the mystical path, as a first step, is expected to see a *mürşid* in his dream or asked to conduct *istihâre,* asking for divine assistance via dream, to test if he is really eligible for the mystical brotherhood he wants to attach to. Contrary to this inclination, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts give very few examples which display a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *mürşid* inviting new disciple or encouraging newcomers to *istihâre.* As an exception, Lalizâde once states that he was able to know *kutb* of the time thanks to his dream but does not give a detailed description of it.[185] Employment of dreams seemed to be less frequent for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*; Hamza Bâlî for instance was criticized by other sufi sheikhs for having denounced the legitimacy of dream as a source of knowledge.[186] A chapter in Sunullah Gaybî's *Sohbetnâme,* in which he compiled his sheikh İbrahim Efendi's (*Oğlanlar Şeyhi*) speeches explains that dream interpretation was applied by Halvetîs whereas Bayrâmîs did not prefer it.[187] Given the fact that İbrahim Efendi and Sunullah Gaybî had an Halvetî affiliation along with their Melâmî-Bayrâmî identity, this discussion is indicative of the diverging patterns between Melâmî-Bayrâmîye and Halvetîye. In the end, the ground on which the deviant attitude of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs is based cannot be identified through current records.

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[184] İbn Arabi, *Fusüsu'l-Hikem*, p. 97.

[185] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 64.

[186] Cemal Kafadar, ''Mütereddit Bir Mutasavvıf: Üsküp'lü Asiye Hatun'un Rüya Defteri'', *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllığı,* (1992), p. 180.

[187] Sunullah Gaybî, *Sohbetnâme*, Süleymaniye Library, Mihrşah Sultan 246; Ibahim Efendi notes: Rüya-yu enfüse tevil Halvetîyenindir, tarik-i Bayrâmîde teviü tâbir yokdur, afakidir… and continues: Kendi hakikatine nâil, sırr-ı vahdete nâsil olanlar rüyaya itibar etmez. Also see Abdurrahman Doğan, Kütahyalı Sunullah Gaybî: Hayatı, Fikirleri, Eserleri (İstanbul: Önde Yayıncılık, 2001).

Having discussed the initial contact with the *velî* and his disciple, we may look at how the *velî* instructs his students throughout the path to Melâmî-Bayrâmî sainthood. A celebrated analogy of sufi literature employed in Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts ''As if a dead in front of the funeral officer'' (Gassalin onunde meyyit olmalı) signifies that the disciple should be completely obedient before *velî*. If the novice makes a mistake or does not exert enough effort to complete his spiritual education, it is a consequence of his incapacity rather than the *velî*'s failure. For, at the end of this collaboration, if the novice fulfills what he is obliged to do, there is no alternative destination other than ultimate intimacy with God.[188] He should take advantage of his *mürşid* who will give the most suitable commands, which may vary according to the personal inclinations of the student. In that scheme, advancement of the prospective Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* in his mystical adventure depends on the *mürşid'*s supervision and strategy.[189] Actually Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts give nothing more or less than what mainstream sufi doctrine installs regarding the principles of this relationship. However, they do release a little information about the mechanical and provisional applications of the training. In that regard, *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt* form a strong theoretical ground for this practice meanwhile Müstakimzâde pays less attention to it.

In *Sergüzeşt* Lalizâde affirms that ''to look at the hearts of those demanding love of God is a custom of Melâmî-Bayrâmî evliyâ''.[190] Here we are faced with the most appealing practice with which the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is assigned. It seems that this application, generally, was being carried out by the leading disciples of the *velî* but sometimes he took it upon himself. Once it is explained in Sarı Abdullah's admission to the order where he had a conversation with Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples charged by İdris-

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[188] *Sergüzeşt*, pp. 103, 130-1.
[189] *Semerât,* pp. 83-5.
[190] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 66.

i Muhtefî to look at novices' heart; he was told to purge his heart of everything but God.[191] At the end of this mystical experience Sarı Abdullah experienced a state of ecstasy which he never experienced later in his life.

It seems that this ritual was reserved only for a few novices who deserved to receive spiritual education by the *velî*. In some circumstances, particularly in the case of increasing political surveillance the *velî* applies it only for succeeding *halife* or, as noted, may appoint some competent disciples to undertake the mission.[192] It can be said that formal training basically requires a continous struggle to annihilate selfhood and come intoxicated with the love of God. Other major apparatuses of sufi teaching such as *zikr, sema*, eating and sleeping less, and *evrads* are not applied in this training program. Therefore the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* has apparently less to do with mystical rituals compared to his counterparts which might give him a free hand to participate in social life more actively.

Turning back to the relationship between *velî* and his community; *sohbet* (conversation) meetings, one to one or with many participants, appear to be the most convenient opportunity to forge a spiritual bridge between the *velî* and his disciple. It might be performed between two people, like the conversation between Nureddin Sünbüli Efendi, Halvetî sheikh in the mid eighteenth century and Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple Hüseyin Dede in his room.[193] In a different format, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples gather around the *velî* to listen to him. At the end of this conversation and a state of collective concentration during which each participant can only think about God's unity and omnipotency, they are filled with the love of God as some of them experience a state of ecstasy. For instance, Hamuddidin Aksarayî goes to Iranian lands

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[191] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 44.
[192] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 97-8*; Sergüzeşt,* p. 44, 49.
[193] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 145.

to meet sheikh Alaeddin Erdebili (d ?), and participates in his conversation at the end of which he finds himself intoxicated.[194] Similarly, as noted before Sunullah Gaybî collected notes from İbrahim Efendi's speeches where he talked about, among others, ''unity of God'' and ''love of God''[195]. In *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt* the norms and rules of the conversation ceremony are carefully given. We find that in *sohbet* meetings Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples read collectively Holy verses and Prophet's sayings while ''worldly conversation'' (*dunya kelami)* were avoided. It is noticeable that a slow performance of *zikr* was allowed. *Sohbet* meetings had the function of solidifying the intimacy among inner circle Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliates and of strengthening the identity of brotherhood.[196] Participants had to be eligible to attend the meeting; even a single individual who did not fit the group could disturb the atmosphere. In parallel with this image, Sarı Abdullah once narrates a story of an undisciplined disciple who violates the rule of sharia before coming to the *sohbet* meeting and eventually disturbed the concentration of others.[197] This pattern actually displays resemblance with the general typology of sects that employ the power of excommunication against those who are persistently disobedient and unbelieving.[198]

Other than that, the *velî*'s supervision of his community could sometimes go beyond spiritual assistance. Though not a commonly shared practice by Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ*, it is seen that he applied the Sharia law when a disciple committed a sin. Sultan Beşir is known to have implemented punishment for some crimes like

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[194] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 11.
[195] Bilal Kemikli. ''Sunullah Gaybî Divanı İnceleme-Metin'', (Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1998). Sunullah Gaybî completed the book in six years (1649-1655), pp.49-50. He starts the text '…tâlim-i tarikat-ı vahdet ve esnây-ı ülfet sohbetde bahr-ı ehâdiyetten vahdetiyyete ihrac buyurdukları kelâm-ı dürer bârî…'. Sunullah Gaybî *Sohbetnâme*, p. 2.
[196] *Sergüzeşt,* pp. 115-6.
[197] *Semerât,* pp. 71-2.
[198] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 1204-5.

aspersion, lying or drinking with a motivation to maintain the discipline among his disciples and call them to repentance.[199]

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî saint can effectively handle the problems of each disciple who needs him regardless of spatial and temporal inconveniences.[200] An earlier example of this practice was the relationship between Prophet and Uways el-Qarni, who remained in direct contact with Prophet though he lived in Yemen. Melâmî-Bayrâmîs appreciate this practice; Sarı Abdullah dedicates a chapter in *Semerât* to Uways-el Qarni and approves the *uveysi* method of instruction. Other major sufi orders, notably the Halvetîs were known to educate those disciples living in distant regions or women affiliates who had no means of communication with them.[201] As noted above, it reminds us of a common practice in sufi tradition, instruction through dreams. However, it can be said that direct connection between *velî* and disciple is a more preferred practice among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs than *uveysi* method; closer students spend at least a required amount of time with him. It is therefore somewhat unclear how capable they were of handling every disciple's problems independent of spatial and temporal boundaries while dreams and the *uveysi* method of instruction were rarely employed.

In response to the question mentioned above, it can be considered that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî novices, notably distinguished disciples to whom the *velî* paid particular attention, were probably few compared to other mystical lines, an eventual consequence of selective acceptance to the order. This might have been an advantage for setting up a closer relationship between the *velî* and his disciples; as he probably had closer scrutiny on their education. As a part of this process, sending *hulefa* to distant regions, a prevalent practice among sufi orders, was employed less, even though it was

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[199] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 112; *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 161.
[200] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 131; *Semerât,* p. 86.
[201] For a discrete example of that practice see Cemal Kafadar's ''Mütereddit Bir Mutasavvıf: Üsküp'lü Asiye Hatun'un Rüya Defteri.''

not totally dismissed. The only exception seems to be İsmail Maşuki and Ahmed Edirnevî who were sent to western lands of the Empire by their sheikh, Ali er-Rumî.[202]

The connection between the *velî* and his disciple is quite private and does not indicate if any of the disciples would be worthy enough to succeed him. Nevertheless we may note very few cases of conflictual succession or competing *hulefa* as all Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts unanimously mention the same succession link, contrary to the fact that sufi literature pays considerable attention to the alleged debates over *halife* hierarchy.[203] Even though Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* are, as far as described in the texts, reticent to give clues regarding possible surrogates, the disciples recognize the new *velî* by a consensus. It is not clear by which sources they were able to agree on the same name.

We are not given clear evidence as to the criteria applied to decide who would replace the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*. The texts only record ''the passing of the axis mundi …'' At that point, it can fairly be argued that family ties did not play a decisive role in this selection. The only exception was İsmail Maşuki's reception of the rank succeeding his father. Conversely in the first chapter we saw that kinship was significantly influential in forming mystical attachment to a sufi order.[204] Nevertheless, the transmission of the status (*makam)* of ''*velâyet*'' proceeds according to different standards of spiritual hierarchy which requires a legitimate succession from Prophet. Actually there is little information as to how Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* set up and sustained this spiritual connection. Whether they had a link with dead saints or received some instructions in the realm of dreams is unexplained in the texts. We notice that they were not frequently visiting the tombs of former Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs or other

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[202] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, pp. 279-81.
[203] See footnote 73 in the first chapter
[204] Sarı Abdullah Efendi, Lali Mehmed Efendi and Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi were all from the same family.

great saints buried in İstanbul like Prophet's friend Abu Ayüb el-Ansari (d.671)**.** Müstakimzâde once records that Lalizâde's father visited his former sheikh's tomb once a year. Indeed**,** the texts make few references to tomb visits and dreams where the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* might have consulted the former *evliyâ* to appoint their new successor.

In that regard, we may question if the newly elected the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* carries the charisma of his predecessor simply possesses required spiritual qualification.[205] It seems that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* had spiritual authority somehow independently, as the texts do not install any image which relates two or more *evliyâ* to each other. On the other hand, it is quite apparent that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* was perceived by his disciples as one of the rings in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî mystical chain, that is and will remain immune to evil and wickedness. In addition, we may figure out a number of shared features among Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ*. For instance, formal training in religious sciences was not a strong prerequisite for Melâmî-Bayrâmî sainthood. Even a brilliant career in the ulema class means nothing for the evaluation of the disciple's competency for this ''*makam*''. As noted previously, most of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* were craftsmen or from inferior ranks of the state service which did not require a strong educational background. *Semerât, Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme* are all in consensus that illiteracy is not an obstacle in this path, suggesting that education is of secondary concern for them as Sultan Beşir, Hamza Bâlî and İdris-i Muhtefî were ''illiterate'' (*ümmi*) men.

Another criterion to be considered is gender and age, which seem to be constant variables at this process. Our texts never talk about women *velî*. Similarly, again with the exception of İsmail Maşuki who reaches the *makam* at the age of 19, the Melâmî-

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[205] *Eternal Garden*, p. 17. Ernst argues that some sufis receive this charisma regardless of their spiritual qualification.

Bayrâmî *velî* does not claim his rank when young. For example, Bünyamin Ayâşi was very old and could serve very little as he died shortly after the succession. In *Sergüzeşt*, Lalizâde warns that *makam-ı velâyet* is a heavy burden and those teenagers may have trouble if they undertake it at early age. According to him, Oğlan Şeyh acquired this *makam* at a young age but ''he could not endure the burden of this stage (*makam*), it is the custom of God (*âdetullâh)*''[206]

As Weber argues, religious orders mostly depend on personal charisma.[207] We observe that the responsibilities of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* and conversely the obligations of the disciples to him are precisely articulated throughout the chapters furnished with short anecdotes and didactic quotations. At the end a code of mutual interaction among them can be construed. Now it will be worth looking at another phenomenon which is very functional in sustaining this relationship, namely the spiritual power of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* and its manifestation.

<div align="center">Supernatural Motifs and Spiritual Power in Sainthood</div>

While defining Melâmî followers in his *Fusüsü'l-Hikem*, İbn Arabi claims that a Melâmî never makes use of exceptional powers.[208] Visible marvel (*kerâmet*) is a sign of imperfection as it appeals to ordinary men and weakens the progress of the Melâmî self to reach God.[209] According to the Akbarian classification of sufi disciples, the Melâmî secures the highest form of Sufism thanks to his/her introvert form of mystical experience.

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[206] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 29, 'Vakt-i şebabda nâil-i kutbiyyet olan mahbub ve meczub emr-i hilâfet kaydına tahammül edemez. Adetullah bunun üzerine cârîdir'.
[207] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, p. 1207.
[208] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of İbn Arabi*, pp. 110-112. Chodkiewicz summarizes İbn Arabi's comments as such: ''these words conceal immense knowledge according to which true sufism consists of the five prayers and the expectation of death. The way of perfection ends paradoxically in pure and simple conformity with the law.''
[209] *Ibid,* pp. 110-2.

It seems that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs excitedly adopted this attitude. An unfavorable stance towards *kerâmet* is articulated most strongly in Lalizâde's *Sergüzeşt*. He once states that: ''Prophets are obliged to manifest supernatural behavior in order to repulse non-Muslims but the *velî* is not permitted to demonstrate his/her spiritual power but instead is obliged to hide it. Those of them who are eager to show marvels are not greeted''. But he adds: ''however, whenever it becomes necessary by divine command to show supernatural motives, they can do it. It is called *şâz*. Do not become among those deviants who reject *kerâmet*''[210] Even though he affirms the legitimacy of *kerâmet*; he strongly criticizes if somebody employs it recklessly. In the same vein, in the passages from *Meslekü'l-Uşşâk* of Sarı Abdullah, which is attached to the epilogue of his *Sergüzeşt* by Lalizâde, a couple of verses vehemently denounce the demonstration of extraordinary powers:

''Some want to demonstrate extraordinary powers, at night and day
And to show it to other people so that he could be famous
Some want to be the guide of these people
Employing his supranatural powers and displaying extraordinary behaviour'''[211]

Even though he compiled several critical stanzas in *Meslekü'l Uşşâk* against spiritual displays, Sarı Abdullah rarely touches on this discussion in *Semerât*, admitting the validity and legitimacy of *kerâmet*. He has a chapter embellished with the miracles of Prophet, and accordingly approves of those *evliyâ* who may show signs of their extraordinary power.[212] But he seems to share the same stance with Lalizâde arguing for discrediting the indecent manifestation of spiritual experiences. To Melâmî-Bayrâmîs it is not a requirement for claiming intimacy with God: One of the stories

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[210] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 119.
[211] *Ibid,* p. 166. ''Kimisi keşf-I kerâmet tâlibi, subh ile şâm
    Pes kerâmet satmak ile, yani ola bir ulu
    Kimi mürşid olmak ister işbu âlem halkına
    Tâ ki cezbe ya kerâmet birle ola arkalu''
[212] *Semerât*, pp. 85-6.

Lalizâde and Sarı Abdullah Efendi jointly quoted is that of Abu Hafs Haddad (d. 883), who was an important Melâmî sheikh in the ninth century; he disdained those sufis who demonstrated extraordinary power.[213] When he was told: Someone walks over the sea (water) he replies: So do ducks and geese. They told again: Someone flies on the air; he replied: So do kites and mosquitoes. And when they asked: Someone instantly goes from a city to another one (*tayy-i mekan)*. He replied: So does Satan. And added; do not credit these things.

Mystical literature in Sufism had an abundant collection of supernatural behaviors of which Abdurrahman Cami made a collection in his *Nefâhatü'l-Üns*[214] Among them, we may recall most frequently repeated images like the fertility miracles of barren women or finding food unexpectedly whenever and wherever someone demands it fervently. Contrary to the generosity of hagiographical accounts in this area, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts present a different picture. Abülbaki Gölpınarlı, quite rightly, takes it as a differentiating feature of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs from the other mystical orders.[215] However, supernatural motives are entirely absent from the *Sergüzeşt, Semerât* and *Menâkıbnâme*. Each of these texts devotes a long chapter to Dede Ömer (d. 1475), the first successor of Hacı Bayram-ı Velî; his *Menâkıb* however is filled with supernatural manifestations. When Akşemseddin (d. 1460), one of the leading *hulefâ* of Hacı Bayram, challenged his right to bear Hacı Bayram's cloak and crown, Dede Ömer stepped into a fire forward where he came out uninjured but his cloak and crown burnt away.[216] Apart from this example, as a general remark, it may be said that supernatural motives in Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts clustered around two main motives; to know

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[213] Ali Bolat, *Bir Tasavvuf Okulu Olarak Melâmetilik,* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), p. 177.

[214] Abdurrahman Cami, *Nefâhatü'l-Üns*, trans. Abdülkadir Akçiçek, (İstanbul: Sağlam Kitabevi, 1981), pp. 134-37; Also see Yaşar Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992), pp. 72-96.

[215] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler,* pp. 194-200

[216] *Sergüzeşt* p. 22; *Menâkıbnâme* p. 6; *Semerât,* p. 242.

something unknowable by ordinary individuals and to show impressive behaviors in order to counter adversaries. According to Cornell, this was a way of manifesting one's closeness to God and one's uniqueness at that.[217]

In all three texts, Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* employ their superior spiritual ability as a last measure when they face a problem. If they had no other means to defend themselves or to explain their cause, it was legitimate to employ impressive tools. Hacı Bayram, for instance, knew that somebody poisoned his meal and took his guard or, similarly, Pir Ali Aksarayî threw a glance towards those people who slandered him; and one of them died while the other one vomited[218]. These images actually converge with the conversion of nonbelievers who saw the extraordinary power of these Muslim saints.[219]

As noted, giving information about future developments or unknowable past events is another manifestation of the spiritual authority of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*. A *velî* could be in direct connection with God, prophets or earlier saints in his dream, which enabled him to receive divine inspiration as well as to acquire secret and qualified information.[220] However, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts do not mention any of the links as a source of knowledge. The examples displayed in the texts are relatively short and simple like Seyyit Haşim's prediction that Lali Efendi's expected child would be a boy, who is Lalizâde Abdülbâki Efendi; or İsmail Maşuki, before having been executed, foretelling the name of the seaside village where his corpse would be found. In a different manner, Sultan Beşir deciphers his disciple's failure in fulfilling his command

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[217] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, p. 76.
[218] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 25.
[219] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 209.
[220] For instance, in the article that underscores the importance of dream in sufi culture Jonathan Katz discusses increasing presence of Prophet in the dreams of North African sufis, how they employed this experience in their records, and its function to enhance velî's charisma among his disciples. Jonathan Katz, ''Visionary Experience, Autobiography and Sainthood in North African Islam'', *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* I (1992), pp. 85-111.

though he could not observe him.[221] These examples were appealing to the inner circle, either giving good news or removing the hesitancy of the disciples. Regarding the esoteric function of marvels, it may be argued that a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* was not supposed to impress people and build upon public reputation.[222]

Semerât, Sergüzeşt and *Menâkıbnâme* share the same approach in dealing with the issue. Therefore, we may be sure that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* resisted practicing supernatural behavior if it served nothing but to bolster self-pride, however they did not hesitate to demonstrate their extraordinary abilities whenever they thought it was necessary. These manifestations were few in number and in terms of the motives employed. In some cases when the extraordinary behavior of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* became more frequent, he got in trouble with the authorities like what Hamza Bâlî faced in Bosnia.[223]

Whether these aforementioned motives were so popular at the time the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* were alive is not clear. As Delooz points out, saints are somehow real individuals who reside in the social imaginary, and witnesses to the holy person's behavior selectively record his actions according to their shared experiences, faith, and religious doctrines.[224] However, it is clear that the personal spiritual connection of Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple with his sheikh was of great importance in Melâmî-Bayrâmî tradition. It can be observed that Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples were attentive towards supernatural behavior having carefully recorded even the smallest details where the spiritual power of the sheikh shined, which indicates that disciples need to see *kerâmet* motives to boost their confidence in their sheikh's spiritual authority. In this parallel, it

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[221] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 58-9.
[222] Vincent Cornell discusses the linkage between miracle images and social power relations, *Realm of the Saint*, pp. 110-120.
[223] Sarı Abdullah notes: 'Ziyâde meczub ve mustağrak olmakla amm ve hasdan karini sohbetleri olanlar dahi bi ihtiyar müncezib olub bazı halât-ı acibesi istidraca haml olunup nice isnad olunmakla maktul olmuşdur', *Semerât*, p. 257.
[224] Vincent Cornell, *Realm of the Saint,* p. 32.

can be argued that the image of the saint is continually being remodeled according to the expectations of the saint's audience.[225] As Weber suggests, a sufi sheikh's charisma stems from his supernatural or exceptional power of divine origin and its impact on his followers.[226]

Other than that,the spiritual command of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* is displayed through softer images. Müstakimzâde records that Lalizâde Abdülbâki saw Sütçü Beşir Ağa at the age of three but could clearly remember his face. Besides, we may recall here the concept of ''*ferâset*'' that implies a sheikh's ability to understand what people think and influence them with his speech or external appearance[227]. When Süleyman I talked with Pir Aksarayî, for example, he could easily be convinced that Pir Aksarayî was a holy man or similarly, Sarı Abdullah lost consciousnesses when he saw İdris-i Muhtefî in the mosque.[228]

Another implicit representation of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*'s spiritual potency is his impact on the social and political atmosphere of his time. This conception is more salient in *Sergüzeşt* and *Semerât* where the *velî* is displayed as having the capacity to restore and renovate worsening social life, full of bribery, corruption, heresy, false sufis and atrocity among people. The regions where a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* performs his duty prosper in wealth, its rulers become honest and fair, and plenty of sheikhs preside over these lands.[229] Convergently, the *velî* cannot be a part of moral corruption which is incompatible with his divine mission. Lalizâde exemplifies it with his life recording that he has been searching for a *velî* of his time but probably will not able to find him since

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[225] *Ibid*, p. 32.

[226] Max Weber *On Charisma and institution building*, Edited and with an introduction by S.N.Eisenstadt, (Chicago: University of Chicago University Press, 1968), pp. 48-9.

[227] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam*, p. 205.

[228] *Sergüzeşt,* pp. 47-48*; Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 95-96

[229] *Sergüzeşt*, pp. 7, 61-3.

society has been going down and a *velî* was unlikely to be living in this environment.[230]

Sarı Abdullah, in a similar vein, relates the failure of the Cyprus siege in 1571 to Bünyamin Ayâşi's having been held under custody in a castle of Kütahya.[231] As a more striking example, Somuncu Baba first brought the ''*makam-ı velâyet*'' from Iran to Anatolia in the early fourteenth century and this date coincides with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, about which Lalizâde says ''thus the Ottoman Empire grew and prospered''[232] That is to say, the Ottoman expansion and failures are related to the spiritual support of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs, which implies that their spiritual command is the strongest cause that could turn everything upside down.

In the end we may conclude that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* had some distinguished merits but was not exclusively different from the masters of other sufi orders. However, the idea that he is selected and the ultimate receiver of divine grace seem to have a stronger emphasis in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî tradition. Despite his extraordinary personality, and intention to live among people as an ordinary individual like a tailor or tradesman he might have been unknown to Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. Attachment to religious law and daily prescriptions of its codes was an indispensable part of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî*'s mission. As far as supernatural manifestations are concerned, he did not seem in need of displaying spiritual abilities but in some cases dared to show how powerful he was if it was needed. *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt* have a shared image of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî,* with some small nuances*,* and give an idealized picture. We should keep in mind that this theoretical construction may not fit real life. Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* gives a lot of examples from daily experiences but his text does not include images contradicting the theory. In the next chapter, we

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[230] *Ibid*, pp. 63-4.
[231] *Semerât*, p. 246. On the other hand, Gölpınarlı and Ocak finds out discrepancy between the date of Bünyamin Ayâşi's death and and the Rodos siege. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler,* p. 43; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidiler*, pp. 268-70.
[232] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 13.

will look at the networks of Melâmî-Bayrâmî *evliyâ* with other sufi sheikhs and have a chance to see the traces of these features ascribed to him. The discussion however is likely to present some intriguing points compared to this idealized construction.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MELÂMÎ-BAYRÂMÎS AND OTHER SUFI ORDERS

In this chapter, I will look at the connection between Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and other sufi orders, about which the Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies present a manifold picture of friendship and hostility. Some accounts indicate that the disciples of prevalent orders within the Ottoman Empire like the Halvetîye, Nakşibendîye, Mevlevîye, cooperated with the the disciples of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order whereas the relationship between the orders sometimes soured that clashes among sufi sheikhs incited hatred among the disciples against each other.

In the sufi tradition, members of different orders lived together and were not isolated from each other in society. The social interaction sometimes caused mutual doctrinal influences.[233] However, it did not always require a strong collaboration. The prescription of a particular sufi order may converge with another one which allows disciples to perform similar rituals in different lodges. Yet, the social base to which a sufi order appeals may necessarily diverge. For instance, Nakşibendîye was held among the ulema whereas Melâmî-Bayrâmîye found support among urban craftsmen. The diversity of affiliates presented a wide range of spectrum for sufi orders and

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[233] For instance; Nakşibendîye and Yeseviye orders had shared the similar principles in the early years. Although they were different sufi orders, it was sometimes so difficult to distinguish them from each other that the same people claimed membership in both of them; Hamid Algar, *Nakşibendîlik*, (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2007), pp. 16-18.

interconnection among them would be essentially useful. On the other hand, wherever a sufi order's sphere of influence or required teaching clashes another one, an unfriendly confrontation became inevitable.

The texts we have at our disposal will help to decipher the Melâmî-Bayrâmî conception of other sufi orders. This chapter, therefore, will look at the representation of other sufi groups in Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts. The motivations of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs behind forming friendly, or unfriendly, relations with the major tarikats will be analyzed in detail as long as the records provide the necessary material. As noted, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs is not disposed to exalt all mystical paths to reach God. This critical tone sometimes rises to the surface. They look down upon and denigrate some established practices of other prevalent orders. Yet, Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies mostly display a peaceful picture.

The texts also help us to see the contradictions between the idealized Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî* and the realities of everyday life. Melâmî *evliyâ* might have had personal deficiencies or committed mistakes. That is possibly why some of them come under fire from other sufi sheikhs. Besides, we may ask why Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples needed to attach to other sufi orders notwithstanding their belief that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî path was the highest one. In Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, it is possible to find an explanation for all these debates and controversies. However, this chapter also tries to demonstrate the dilemma of Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, particularly that of *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* in that they present differing views on this relationship.

Unlike in the previous chapter, Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* will be a major source of information in this chapter. Partly because of the richness of the literature at his disposal and partly due to his motivation in writing *Menâkıbnâme*, regarding social networks and personal friendships Müstakimzâde provides a wide pool of people from

different sufi orders. Accordingly, those stories included or excluded by *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* will allow us to make a comparison between the texts.

Tension: Melâmî-Bayrâmîs vs. the Others

At first it might be proper to look at the conflicts among Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and their counterparts. The tension can be read from two different angles; one the one hand certain sufi groups criticized the Melâmî-Bayrâmî code of conduct and gave support to the persecution of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs led by the state authorities. On the other hand, Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies were upset with the practices of some mystics and usually called these mystics ''fake'' sufis, who were not competent to appreciate the essence of being friends of God. While Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts reflect the latter perspective, the writings of other sufi sheikhs and subtle phrases in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts indicate an ardent opposition against them by some sufi sheikhs.

Following the chronological order of events, it is proper to start with the early fifteenth century, during which the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was established on the instruction of Somuncu Baba and Hacı Bayram. Sufi orders in the Empire had been building networks of disciples across the Ottoman lands, and they had probably intended to capitalize on cordial relations with the state as well as other sufi orders. One of the rare disputes that occurred in this relatively comfortable atmosphere stemmed from a disagreement among Hacı Bayram's leading disciples, Akşemseddin and Dede Ömer. During this tension, Akşemseddin and Dede Ömer could not agree on who would succeed Hacı Bayram's post. Dede Ömer deemed divine attraction (*cezbe-i ilahi)* through conversation meetings around sheikh *(sohbet)* a better way to attain an intimate knowledge of God. Even though personal disparity between the two successors seemed to be resolved later, their followers perpetuated this strife as Lalizâde records that ''some people display hatred and hostility towards Emir Sikkini and still accuse and

slander those people in his path'' (Bir sınıf Emir Sikkini'ye bu'z ve 'adavat uzere ila'l-ân ol tarikde olan fukaraya envây-ı tohmet…ve buhtan söylerler).[234] This information, however, does not exist in *Semerât* which transmits a similar version of the story with that of *Menâkıbnâme*. Akşemseddin was sent to İstanbul by Hacı Bayram and his branch, the Şemsîyye, in time found support among state elites; Ebussud Efendi's father Muhyiddin Mehmed Efendi (d 1545), for instance, was a member of the Şemsîyye.[235] Based on current records, whether a latent tension survived between the orders is not certain.

The relatively peaceful situation began to change by the late fifteenth century. Melâmî-Bayrâmî order found itself at the centre of the state-sufi order clashes that became more frequent compared to the fifteenth century. They were primarily the accused of violationing the Sharia. Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts do not mention any involvement of other sheikhs in this debate whereas the dispute over the protection of the established religious norms challenged Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. The execution of Hamza Bâlî seemed to mark a new era for Melâmî-Bayrâmîs with respect to their perception by the other mystical orders. During Hamza Bâlî's persecution trials, firstly, some sufi sheikhs stood against and criticized him.[236] Vassaf in his *Sefinetü'l-Evliyâ* notes that Nureddin Efendi (d.?), Halvetî sheikh in Bosnia, helped the authorities to capture Hamza Bâlî.[237] Lalizâde, likewise, records that when sufi sheikhs of Bosnia were asked their opinion about Hamza Bâlî, they called him an ''illiterate and who did not have authority for dealing with the disciples''.[238] The meaning of illiteracy (*ümmilik*) is not clearly defined, and whether it means a lack of formal medrese

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[234] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 23.
[235] It is argued that his Şemsiyye identity had an impact on Ebussud Efendi's boldness against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs
[236] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 39.
[237] Hüseyin Vassaf,*Sefîne-i Evliyâ,*Cilt II, pp. 503-4. The identity of Nureddin Efendi will be questioned later in the chapter.
[238] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 39.

education or something else is not well articulated.[239] This indictment interestingly reappeared during Sütçü Beşir Ağa's execution; Lalizâde notes that some sufi sheikhs accused him of ''illiteracy''.[240] However we do not have a detailed report about the incidence or identities of these sufi sheikhs. What could be inferred from Lalizâde's short reference is that Sütçü Beşir Ağa suffered from the same scenario his predecessors did. Secondly, despite Lalizâde's silence over the names of those sheikhs who stood up against Hamza Bâlî, relying on Vassaf's record we may assume that Halvetîs in Bosnia did not back him in this trial.

The Halvetî order had originated around the fifteenth century in Azerbaijan and, in a short time, found a considerable following in the Ottoman lands with its numerous sub-branches. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Halvetîye was the foremost sufi order in terms of the number of official lodges and, very likely, of adherents in Antolia and the Balkans. Their interpretation of Prophet's *Sünnet* might have varied, according to innovations of particular sheikhs or braches from region to region.[241] In this scale, Halvetî dervishes undertook the defense of religious orthodoxy in the Balkans during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. As Clayer marks the 'sunnitizing' task of Halvetîs across the region, sheikh Nureddinzade (d.1574), *halife* of Sofyalı Bâlî Efendi (d. 1553), appeared to be one of the most zealous carriers of this flag.[242] He was not only intolerant against Hamzavîs but also fought with Gülşenîs, Halvetî sub-order founded by İbrahim Gülşenî (d.1533), and Simavîs, adherents of the

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[239] The term 'ümmi' may be used to define people with a relatively low level of education rather than unalphabet per se.
[240] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 54.
[241] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, p. 5; B.G.Martin, A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Derwishes in *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* ed. Nikke R. Keddie, (Berkeley: University of Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 285-87.
[242] He is one of the masters of the celebrated Celveti sheikh Mahmud Hudayi.

controversial sufi and scholar Bedreddin Simavî (d.1420).[243] From this reaction, it may be inferred that Melâmî-Bayrâmî penetration into the Balkans lands, primarily led by Hamza Bâlî, was not welcomed by prevalent Halvetî dervishes who had already secured the support of the Ottoman state thanks to their ultimate mission of spreading orthodox religion.

In the second stage of Hamza Bâlî's trial, sheikhs of İstanbul accused him of coming up short in completing the required sufi training. Lalizâde records this accusation as ''some sheikhs told that he could not go beyond the fourth name (dördüncü esmada kaldı)''.[244] It is not clear what was meant by this phrase. However sheikh Mahmud Hüdâyî in his short treatise about the training of Halvetî and Celvetî orders points that the authority of instruction can be given after the seventh name *(esma)*, the total being twelve names.[245]

Even though we do not know the complicated training stages of a sufi order in detail, it is understood that Hamza Bâlî was considered by some to be unqualified to be a *mürşid*. As noted before, Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies conceded that Hamza Bâlî was an exceptional man, who was somewhat uncontrollable and showed extraordinary behaviors. It is likely that other sufi sheikhs took that as a sign of incapacity, and judged that Hamza Bâlî was incompetent. These sheikhs also added that Hamza Bâlî belonged to the ''path of İsmail Maşuki'', who was killed because of his unorthodox comments.[246]

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[243] Münir-i Belgradi, *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrabin ve Menakibu'l-Muttakin*, Süleymaniye Ktp, Nafiz Paşa 1164; pp. 112-4. Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques etat et societe: Les Halvetîs dans l'aire Balkanique de la fin du XVe siecle a nos jours,* ed. Ulrich Haarmann. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994*, Chapter II: *Les Dervishes de la Sunnitisation et de la Conquette: Les Halvetîs dans les provinces Roumeliotes au XVI-XVII Siecles.*
[244] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 39.
[245] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 75-76
[246]*Sergüzeşt*, p. 39-41

On these three cases, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts give a less detailed account. For instance, even Müstakimzâde does not mention those sheikhs who had helped the Ottoman authorities to capture Hamza Bâlî. Similarly, they do not mention those sheikhs who had backed the religious elite against İsmail Maşuki's comments. As far as Sarı Abdullah's attitude is concerned, we may reasonably argue that at the time *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* was written the legacy of these event might have been still alive.

Not surprisingly criticisms against Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs evolved into doctrinal attacks in the early seventeenth century. In the capital city, Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* İdris-i Muhtefî was in trouble with the celebrated Halvetî sheikh Abdulmecid Sivasî Efendi (d.1639), who later became the leading defender of his order in the face of Kadızâdeli attacks, and Ömer Efendi (d.1624-5), who had been formerly the master of Kadızâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1635), the first leader of the Kadızâdeli movement which has marked the seventeenth century Ottoman social intellectual life. Müstakimzâde records that Abdulmecid Sivasî and Ömer Efendi accused İdris-i Muhtefî of heresy (*zındıka ve ilhad*) and demanded the entral authority to execute him.[247] These two sheikhs were told that a sufi sheikh in İstanbul, whose name was İdris, was propagating heretical ideas. Relying on this information, Ömer Efendi, though he personally did not meet him, claimed that İdris-i Muhtefî was gathering impious people *(ehl-i hevâ)* around him. Similarly, Sivasî Efendi employed accusations of the state authority against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs such as rejecting basic worship of religion and commitment to *Hurufi* beliefs.[248] During this tension, a striking dialogue

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[247] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 82-83; Also see Muhammed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetu'l-İhvan*, Süleymaniye Library, H.Semsi Güneren 60. Nazmi Efendi points that Sivasî Efendi's aim in his struggle was to protect the sharia and religion, pp. 175-8.
[248] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, p. 238; Sivasî Efendi expounds on heretics ''Hamzeviler ve Hurufiler ibadetler kendilerine zor geldiklerinden kendilerini günahdan kurtarmak için, kulluktan haz etmedikleri için, taat yükünden halas olmak için, helal ve haramdan halas olmak için, namazı farklı yorumlarlar, ayeti kerimeyi farklı yorumlarlar, zahirinden yorumlarlar, bunların tabileri ve onlara ses çıkarmayanlar cümlesi kafir olur, onlara rıza verenler de kafir olur…Bunlar Cavidan kitabı okuyorlar, ve taşrada kesret bulup

between Ömer Efendi and İdris-i Muhtefî took place; İdris-i Muhtefî had multiple identities as Ali Bey and Sheikh İdris, and Ömer Efendi was a friend of Ali Bey whereas he did not know who Sheikh İdris was. He complained to Ali Bey about the misdoings of sheikh İdris, but was surprised when Ali Bey confessed that he was actually Sheikh İdris. Ömer Efendi had appreciated Ali Bey as a very pious, reliable man and thus begged pardon for his misbehavior against him. It was the time when rumors about ''Hamzavîs'' were at peak and probably the distinctions, if any, between Melâmî-Bayrâmî and Hamzavî were blurred. We cannot be sure that all Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples identified themselves as Hamzavî. This record gives the impression that the problem lay in the secrecy of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and the resulting misinformation about them. It also underscores Melâmî-Bayrâmî sensitivity about religious laws and repudiates any allegation which describes the disciples as sinful people in disagreement with the established religion.

This debate, however, seemed to continue with Sivasî Efendi. Müstakimzâde and Lalizâde record that İdris-i Muhtefî delivered a petition to *Sadrazam* Halil Paşa to send Sivasî Efendi into exile. He was complaining of Sivasî's bitter words against his order and personality. Once a petition was sent to Halil Paşa, Sivasî Efendi's sympathizers blocked it. Thanks to his affiliate Sarı Abdullah, personal assistant of Halil Paşa, the paper was delivered to *sadrazam* and he made the decision to exile Sivasî Efendi to Bursa.[249] It seems tempting to witness a sheikh of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, which had been depreciated by the state authority during the sixteenth century,

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Hamzayı katl ettiler diye Osmanoğulları döndü diye laf yayıyorlar. Allah Osmanoğullarını o şeytana karşı korusun, Hamzavîyye inkarı tevhid ediyor, tevhid bir hayrettir ona irişilmez derler''. Through these phrases he expands his criticism towards those people favoring Hamzevis. His attitude towards Mahmud Hudâyi who was known to be Hamzavî protector, however, did not seem hostile. Also in this discussion he distinguishes Hamzevis from Ibahis. *Dürer-i Akaid*, Süleymaniye Library, Mihrişah Sultan 300, pp. 34-35.
[249] *Sergüzeşt,* pp. 48-49*; Menâkıbnâme*, p. 96. When this event was transmitted to İdris-i Muhtefî he praised Sarı Abdullah. However, other accounts including Halvetî records do not mention this story. See Cengiz Gündoğdu, Abdülmecid Sivasî, ''Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri'', (Doktora Tezi, Atatürk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi: 1997), p. 82.

managed to defend himself against one of the leading sheikhs of the strongest order in the Empire at that time. Contrary to this account, however, it is noted that the Ottoman government issued an order of arrest for İdris-i Muhtefî due to his heretical saying. These records are enough to suggest that there were a good amount of politics involved in the debate and it is reasonable to claim that personal affiliations induced the favor, or disfavor, of the state officers towards sufi sheikhs.

Secondly, *Sergüzeşt* omits the first case and gives a detailed account about the latter whereas *Menâkıbnâme* transmits a longer version of both. Sarı Abdullah, interestingly, does not mention these stories despite his personal involvement during the tension. It is possible to think that in *Semerât* Sarı Abdullah Efendi did not want to reignite a personal disagreement between the two sheikhs and to arouse hatred between the disciples of Sivasîye and Bayrâmîye. Yet, the inclusion of Sivasî Efendi in *Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme* may seem paradoxical given the fact that the relations between Halvetîs and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs improved following this event, as shall be discussed in this chapter. In particular, Lalizâde dares to quote Halal Paşa's claim that ''Sivasî Efendi is an agitator''; and he refers this story to Sarı Abdullah Efendi. However, Sarı Abdullah Efendi had a close relationship with the succeeding Halvetîs, even with Sivasî Efendi's successor Abdulehad Nuri Efendi (d.1651). It is not clear if Lalizâde wanted to exaggerate this event, like what he may have claimed to have done for the Emir Sıkkini – Akşemseddin case, given the fact that, as noted, no Halvetî texts record Sivasî Efendi's exile. Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* is the only source to check it but in this case he transmits the same story with Lalizâde.

While the above mentioned stories reflect the tension among sufi sheikhs from a micro level, a broader picture of the Ottoman intellectual world in the seventeenth century presents us more complicated questions. In fact, reading this confrontation as a

''Halvetî-Melâmî-Bayrâmî struggle'' is a fallacy which fails to explain the frequent collaboration between the orders. Were Halvetîs really ardent defenders of orthodoxy, and persecutors of those heterodox groups? The answer should be given after having a look at the intellectual disputes of the seventeenth century. The Halvetî order first had to cope with the Kadızâdeli aggression against starting in the third decade of the seventeenth century. Kadızâde Mehmed (d. 1635), a charismatic preacher educated in Balıkesir and inspired by Birgivî Mehmed Efendi's (d. 1572) writings, launched an attack, together with a group of preachers in İstanbul, against innovations (*bidat*) in religion and directed his criticism mostly on sufi orders.[250] Kadızâde Mehmed's bold defiance towards innovations in religion went beyond a narrow intellectual debate over the source of knowledge in Islam, and they bacame embroiled in social issues including sufi practices like *devran, sema* or tomb visits. Having been the most widespread sufi order of the time and having had a teaching favorable to highly contested rituals of sufism, Halvetîs became a major target of the Kadızâdelis. In this conflict, transgression of the sacred law was at the top of the agenda. Abdülmecid Sivasî had to defend his cause against those who were accusing him in a similar vein with his reaction against İdris-i Muhtefî. However, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs interestingly remained unwounded during this struggle although Kadızâdelis showed no tolerance towards *vahdet-i vücûd* doctrine.[251] Besides, divine attraction (*cezbe)* and ecstatic utterance could have stirred up Kadızâdeli reaction. Instead, they found a relatively comfortable milieu to spread their doctrine, when Sultan Beşir, Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* of the time, was very successful in establishing strong networks with important persons. Yet, Terzioğlu notes that a possible Kadızâdeli involvement in his execution coincided with the ascension of Vani Efendi, representative of the third stage in this movement, but ascribes it to the

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[250] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, pp. 196-203.
[251] Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, p. 255. Yet Terzioğlu points that even ardent defenders of the Sharia had an open door for *vahdet-i vücûd* doctrine, p. 243.

power struggle over social base they shared rather than to ideological impetus.[252] In addition to these, as shall be discussed, some perplexing connections between Halvetî and Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs during this era present multiple faces of Halvetî- Melâmî-Bayrâmî relationship which was presumably influenced by Kadızâdeli pressure on both of them.

Before going into the friendly networks they established, we should recall an essential character of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs that they were captious people, reactive against any kind of exaggeration of rituals or the contamination of purity which would deflect the real purpose of the path of sufism. Early Melâmî teaching also corroborated that, as the Melâmî movement grew in reaction to Karramis of Horosan, a very early sufi group favoring ascetism and distinguishing marks.[253] Nevertheless during the Ottoman period Melâmî-Bayrâmîs seem to have mitigated this critical tone but did not totally abandon it. In the next part, we will look at how Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies evaluate the codes of other mystical orders with which they had been in disagreement, at least in theory. While doing this, it shall be possible to show the common ground on which sufi disciples of different orders collaborated with each other.

Diffusion of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs into Sufi orders

It seems that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs established friendly ties with the major mystical groups in the Empire by the early seventeenth century. The most intensive relationship in this era was that with the Celvetî sheikh Mahmud Hüdâyî. Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples found a considerable backing by the leading sufi sheikh of the time, who was gracious to those mystics in trouble with the state authority. Mahmud Hüdâyî was the *kutb* of the Celvetî order, founded by sheikh Mehmed Muhiddin Üftade (d. 1580) as a sub-branch

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[252] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri,* pp. 240-1.
[253] Jacqueline Chabbi, Remarques sur le Development Historique des Mouvements Ascetiques et Mystiques au Khurasan: IIIe/IXe Siecle- IVe-Xe Siecle, pp. 54-57.

of the Halvetî order.[254] He stayed in İstanbul, where he built up his own lodge, and became one of the respected spiritual figures of the time. Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617), Osman II (r. 1618-1622) and Murad IV (r. 1622-1640) were all courteous to him; as Sultan Ahmed invited him to the opening sermon of Sultanahmet mosque, Sultan Murat was girded with the dynastic sword by Mahmud Hüdâyî.[255] His sphere of influence in the Ottoman Palace was something that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were searching for in case of hatred they would face from the state. As noted, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had witnessed the brutal face of persecution carried out against them during the sixteenth century. In this atmosphere, it was clear that one of the motivations Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples had in mind was to find a shelter in order to hide from the escalating oppression on the order. In other words Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples would have eagerly welcomed those sufi sheikhs who were tolerant of them.[256]

We encounter two familiar names in the Celvetî silsile listed by Müstakimzâde, that of Somuncu Baba and Hacı Bayram-ı Velî. It reveals that rapprochement of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs with sheikh Mahmud Hüdâyî relied on another reasonable ground as well. Actually the Celvetî order and Bayrâmî-Melâmîye had the same spiritual chain constructed by Somuncu Baba and Hacı Bayram.[257] Within this angle, we may also consider doctrinal convergences between Celvetîs and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs; as the Celvetî order, in a different form than Halvetîs, postulated that one could reach God remaining in social life (ihtilat). They put the affirmation of the 'unity' (tevhid) of God at the centre of mystical training and exalted the search for unity inside plurality (kesret).[258]

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[254] One of the masters of sheikh Mahmud Huıdayi was Halvetî sheikh Nureddinzade. It was not less striking to see extremely different attitudes by sheikh Mahmud Hudayi and Nureddinzade towards Melâmî-Hamzavîs.
[255] Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, p. 591; also see: Hasan Kâmil Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyi ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı*, (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1984), p. 68.
[256] Bilal Kemikli quotes Hüseyin Vassaf where he explains that Sarı Abdullah Efendi, İbrahim Efendi and Halil Paşa stayed in Hudai lodge having disguised their identities. *Sunullah Gaybî Divanı*, p. 28
[257] Hasan Kâmil Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdâyi ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı*, p. 156.
[258] *Ibid*, p. 150.

This line of mystical training resembled the Melâmî-Bayrâmî principle of behaving like an average man of society, and Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples naturally felt comfortable among Celvetî disciples.

The Celvetî-Melâmî-Bayrâmî rapprochement can be best detected in Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* whereas *Sergüzeşt* and interestingly *Semerât* provide no further information. Given the fact that Sarı Abdullah was very close to Mahmud Hüdâyî, his silence over displaying the Celvetî-Melâmî link is perplexing.

Based on Müstakimzâde's records on the connection between Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples and Mahmud Hüdâyî, it is also impossible to detect if any Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* had a personal contact with Mahmud Hüdâyî, and, if any, what the nature of this relationship was. A significant question at this point: by which impetus did Mahmud Hüdâyî agree to supervise the disciples of this controversial order, which would bring no good to him and probably produce plenty of problems?[259] As I explained in the first chapter, he opened his lodge to Halil Paşa when the latter was being persecuted by the state authorities, and helped him to obtain official pardon. This courtesy shows that Mahmud Hüdâyî's support was more than making short visits to Melâmî-Bayrâmî meetings or establishing personal friendship. It was a deep and intensive collaboration which stretched to the Bayrâmîs outside the capital as well. He was sending and receiving letters from Münir-i Belgradî (?) (d.1619-20), celebrated sufi sheikh and an *alim* in the Balkans of both Halvetî and Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliation. In one of these letters he discusses the technical terms and training path of the Celvetî order, where he defines himself as both Celvetî and Halvetî, but makes no comment regarding his attitude towards Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. It is very likely that Mahmud Hüdâyî appreciated

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[259] Aziz Mahmud Hudayi defended Halil Paşa and some Hamzavîyye disciples from the attacks of ignorant demons (*cehele-i zaleme)*; Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, p. 521.

the genuine disciples of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, whom he saw not as heretics but as real friends of God.[260]

Having demonstrated the cordial relationship between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and Celvetîs, it is now opt to look at Halvetî hospitality towards Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. In this turn the connection was relatively complicated compared to the Celvetî case; as it has been discussed above there were Halvetî sheikhs in conflict with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. Halvetîs hold ascetic practices like recluse *(halvet)* abstinence and fasting *(oruc)* as the primary ways of purifying the human self *(nefs)*. Together with them, repetition of the names of God *(zikr)* is applied to pass the levels of mystical training.[261] However, the difference with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in spiritual education was not necessarily divisive. Even before the first confrontation between Abdülmecid Sivasî and İdris-i Muhtefî, a warm collaboration had been maintained between the *halife* of the prominent Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Gazanfer Dede (d. 1566), and Seyyid Osman (d.1594) who felt anxious in the face of accusations directed against him, eventually needed to align himself with another sheikh and the Halvetî sheikh Nureddinzade (d.1574), whose sheikh Bâlî Efendi was commentator of *Fusüsü'l-Hikem* of İbn Arabi.[262] Unlike his father Nureddin Efendi, an alleged antagonist of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in Bosnia, Nureddinzade was a Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizer, who had ''tasted love of God''.[263]

Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had found a fertile field in the Balkans and even Hamza Bâlî's execution did not hamper their activity. İdris-i Muhtefî was known to make

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[260] *Ibid,* p. 521.

[261] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, pp. 70-1; Süleyman Uludağ, 'Halvetîye', *DIA*.

[262] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 58; Michel Chodkiewicz, "İbn Arabî'nin Öğretisinin Osmanlı Dünyasında Karşılanışı'', pp. 89-111.

[263] Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, pp. 503-4. See discussion of him about Nureddinzade in the footnote. Nureddinzade appears to be a controversial figure. Gölpınarlı and Vassaf call him the friend of Hamzevis but, as shall be discussed, Münir-i Belgradi records that he helped the authorities to catch Hazma Bâlî. Relying on current records, we cannot detect if they record the same person.

frequent visits to Sofia and Edirne; Sütçü Beşir Ağa similarly was of Albanian origin though he lived in İstanbul and his townsmen from Albania were visiting him.[264] Firm opposition of some Halvetî dervishes in the region did not bring about total rejection of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizers. Halvetîs and Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to some extent intermingled with each other. Clayer points out that the Halvetî dervishes in these lands were disposed to absorb heretical elements; and it was very likely to result in interception with Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes.[265] This heterogeneous belief structure, it seems, caused Halvetî dervishes to display differing attitudes toward Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. A very striking example was the divergence between Nureddin Efendi and his son Nureddinzâde; the former was against and the latter was in favor of the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs.

Münir-i Belgradî was an intriguing name who had dual affiliations, an expressively Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizer but a Halvetî sheikh in the Balkans.[266] Interestingly, he sent a letter to Hüseyin Lamekani where he criticized *sema* and *devran* and proposed to suspend these ceremonies in İstanbul, which makes it even more complicated to understand his interpretation of Melâmî-Bayrâmî and Halvetî teachings. In the same account of Müstakimzâde, a letter by Pir Ahmed Edirnevî sent to his disciple Mehmed Edirnevî is quoted, where he admonishes Mehmed Edirnevî not to overindulge in *sema*. However, he urges him not to deny or confuse it with fake performances displayed to people (here Ahmed Edirnevî uses the term ''play'' (*lu'b*), because, for Pir Ahmed Edirnevî, *sema* is a legitimate means of attaining real knowledge of God *(marifet)*. In the same vein, Hüseyin Lamekani defines *sema* and

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[264] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 54.

[265] Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques Etat et Societe:Les Halvetîs dans l'aire Balkanique de la fin du XVe siecle a nos jours,* Chapter II.

[266] Nathalie Clayer, L'Oeil d'un Savant de Belgrad in Melâmî-Bayrâmîs-Bayrâmîs: *Etudes sur Trois Mouvements Mystiques Musulmans*, reuines par Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic et Thierry Zarcone, (İstanbul: Les Editions ISIS, 1998), pp. 173-5.

devran as legitimate practices of sufism and compatible with the Sharia. Lamekani refers to Aise, wife of Prophet who watched dancing (charming) performance with permission from Prophet. Like Ali Aksarayî, he addresses that there are lots of people who feel the ''taste of love of God'' thanks to *sema* ceremonies. He also adds, quite importantly, ''we do not have to criticize what the others are doing but should rather be occupied with our own problems''.[267] Reviewing the discussion, it should be kept in mind that Müstakimzâde himself had a treatise in favor of *sema* and was known to be one of the rare Nakşibendî disciples to defend it.[268] It is likely that he selectively made use of those records that agreed with his standpoint.

Actually in the *Semerât* of Sarı Abdullah we see that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order related itself to the Halvetî order and claimed that Bayrâmîye was a combination of Halvetîye along with Nakşibendîye. However, Sarı Abdullah Efendi does not include Halvetî sheikhs of the time in his text. *Semerât* makes it clear that Halvetîye and Melâmî-Bayrâmîye were close sufi orders but gives relatively few examples to solidify its argument. Even though Melâmî-Bayrâmîs required different mystical training and resented some sufi rituals held by Halvetîs at large, it was possible to encounter Halvetî sheikhs with Melâmî-Bayrâmî inclinations like Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim Efendi (d. 1655), *halife* of Hüseyin Lamekani, Bezcizade Muhiddin Muhyi Efendi (d. 1611)[269] and Hakikizade Efendi (d. 1627), who was one of the prolific writers of Melâmî-Bayrâmî literature. Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim Efendi, for instance, produced plenty of works including a paramount manuscript of sufi literature *Kaside-i Dil-i Dânâ,* which is

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[267] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 69-74.
[268] Halil İbrahim Şimşek, ''İki Nakşibendî Müceddidînin Deveran Savunması –Mehmed Emin-i Tokadî ve Müstakimzâde Süleyman Saadeddin Örneği'', *Tasavvuf,* Sayı 10, (Ocak-Haziran 2003).
[269] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 85-86. Bezcizade Muhiddin Muhyi Efendi was a disciple of İdris-i Muhtefî. He acquired early education in Konya, where he became affliated with Halvetîye as well, and made regular trips to the capital city. He was just invited to the sheikh post of a newly built lodge in Fatih but died shortly after he took over the mission. Necdet Yılmaz points to confusing information about his disciples and connection to Bayrâmîye, Necdet Yılmaz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf: Sufîler, Devlet ve Ulema,17.Yüzyıl. (*İstanbul: Osmanlı Arastırmaları Vakfı, 2001), p. 313.

replete with poems on the knowledge of knowing and finding God *(ilm-i ledün)*. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı points to his saying ''neither from Halvetîs nor from Celvetîs, neither we are Kadirî nor Mevlevî; we are from vahdeti from people of love'' (Ne Halvetîleriz ne Celvetî, ne Kadirîyiz ne Mevlevî, belki erbab-ı muhabbetten olan vahdetiyiz*)* and argues that, while posing as a Halvetî sheikh, İbrahim Efendi was actually attached to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine.[270] It is understood that İbrahim Efendi was struck by *vahdet-i vücûd* teaching; the firm commitment of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to this doctrine presumably impressed him a lot.[271]

In *Sergüzeşt*, no information is given on the Halvetî order and these names. Yet, Sarı Abdullah demonstrates that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was close to the Halvetî order; besides he personally met Sunullah Gaybî and İbrahim Efendi. Why did he not mention these names or cite references from their works is probably due to the fact that he did not know them while writing the text. As for *Menâkıbnâme,* Müstakimzâde's intention to list all Melâmî-Bayrâmî *halifes* might have led him to take these sheikhs into account. Finally, both Sarı Abdullah and Müstakimzâde pay less attention to the differing principles and mostly ignore the divergences in practical rituals. Besides, they try to point out commonalities such as İmam Ali's being the highest link or the importance of love in Melâmî-Bayrâmîye and Halvetîye. This tendency might be seen more clearly in the next discussion on the Mevlevî order as well.

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[270] Muhammed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetu'l-İhvan,* p. 177. İbrahim Efendi seemed to preserve his Halvetî attachment until later ages. In a conversation with Sarı Abdullah Efendi and Abdulehad Nuri Efendi he admits that Abdulehad Nuri is the *kutb* of his time. This concession reveals that he does not recognize Sütçü Beşir Ağa as the kutb of the time. His disciple Sunullah Gaybî could be said to had a similar concern and was attached to Bezcizade Efendi. İbrahim Efendi told him not to leave his ancestors path, namely the Halvetî order to which Sunullah Efendi's father belonged to. Sunullah Gaybî, *Sohbetnâme*, Süleymaniye Library Mihrişah Sultan 246, pp. 3-4. For a discussion of the Halvetî link of Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes see Bilal Kemikli, ''Sunullah Gaybî Divanı İnceleme-Metin'', pp. 23-25.
[271] Gölpınarlı meticulously deciphers the codes of *vahdet-i vücûd* in his *Kaside-i Dil-i Dana*, and points to the frankness of İbrahim Efendi's tone in expression of contested remarks when there was a strong suppression on the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler*, p. 106.

Another Halvetî sheikh who was in close connection with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs was Nureddin Sünbüli (d. 1743), sheikh of Kocamustafapaşa Asithanesi, the most prestigious Halvetî lodge of the time. At this point, we should recall a small detail from the adventures of Sarı Abdullah and Halil Paşa. Sarı Abdullah notes that when he was being persecuted, he was supervised by the sheikh of Kocamustafa Paşa and received official pardon thanks to his intermediacy.[272] It seems that the sheikhs of Sünbüli branch of the Halvetî order had long been friendly towards Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes.[273] In that parallel, Müstakimzâde delivers a number of anecdotes where Nureddin Sünbüli participates in Melâmî-Bayrâmî meetings and greets Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. His father sheikh Alaeddin Efendi (d. 1680), while he was in service, confirmed this connection with the words that ''formal mystical training and remembering God's name has departed from this lodge, but the light of love has replaced them''.[274] Müstakimzâde notes that Nureddin Efendi, when he replaced his father, conducted Halvetî rituals ''in appearance'' (*zâhirde*) while he was attached to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî etiquette ''in secret'' (*bâtında*).[275] A disciple of Sultan Beşir Ağa, Hüseyin Dede, a persistent participant in the Kocamustafapaşa Lodge and a very close fellow of Nureddin Efendi, was the central figure in this friendship. He seemed to be the one who instructed Nureddin Efendi according to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî codes.[276] The intimacy of Nureddin Sünbüli with the Melâmî-Bayrâmî followers continued in his later years. He carried out the funeral ceremony of major the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Habeşizade and appeared to be in contact with the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutbs* of the time

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[272] *Menâkıbnâme,* p.117.
[273] Ocak notes that the founder of the order, Yusuf Sünbül Sinan Efendi criticized a poet of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh (most likely Osman Haşim Efendi), p. 268 footnote.
[274] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 143-44. ''*Bu tekyeden seyru suluk ve esma gitdi, gayri, ışk u mahabbet dadandı*''
[275] *Ibid*, pp. 143-144.
[276] *Ibid,* pp. 145-146.

like Halil Ağa.[277] His gracious attitude towards them leads us to assume that Lalizâde Abdülbâki met him and engaged in conversation as well. On the other hand, it was a fact that Halvetîs lost their distinguished position in the Empire compared to previous centuries and Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizers were relatively at ease vis-à-vis past troubles with the state. It is therefore reasonable to add that temporary concerns of Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples alone would fail to provide a fledged explanation of the rapprochement towards Halvetîs.

What seems obvious is that Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes' interpretation of ''the love of God'' and *vahdet-i vücûd* doctrine allured Halvetî sheikhs. Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* transmits a picture of this rapprochement relying on life stories of Halvetî sheikhs mentioned above. *Semerât* and *Sergüzeşt*, too, as noted, display the impact of *vahdet-i vücûd* in Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching but its relation to the Halvetî order is not discussed. What we learn from another sufi biography, *Hediyetü'l-İhvan* of Nazmi Efendi (d.1700), sheikh in the lodge of Yavaşça Mehmed Ağa in İstanbul and the disciple of Abdülmecid Sivasî and Abdulehad Nuri, is that even sheikh Abdulmecid Sivasî who criticized the Hamzavîs appreciated Abdullah Bosnevi Efendi, Melâmî-Bayrâmî commentator of *Fusüsü'l-Hikem*.[278] Abdulmecid Sivasî welcomed Abdullah Efendi when he translated Sivasî Efendi's *Kaside-i Abdülmecid Sivasî* into Turkish.[279] Likewise, Nazmi Efendi transmits the account where Sarı Abdullah Efendi appears in the same scene with the leading Halvetî-Sivasîs such as Abdulehad Nuri (d. 1651), successor of Sivasî Efendi. Nazmi Efendi affirms that there were a number of Hamzavîs (İdrisî) who truly had ''knowledge of God'' and Sarı Abdullah Efendi was apparently

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[277] *Ibid,* pp. 166-169.
[278] Muhammed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetu'l-İhvan,* p. 176.
[279] *Ibid,*176; Cengiz Gündoğdu, Abdülmecid Sivasî, ''Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri'', p. 211.

one of them.[280] In another instance Abdulehad Nuri, Sarı Abdullah Efendi and curiously *Oğlanlar Şeyhi* İbrahim Efendi gather in a house, which is a marker of the appeasing tension between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and Sivasîs at peak in the early seventeenth century. It also encourages us to question whether Sütçü Beşir and Abdulehad Nuri, successors of two opponents, were meeting as well. If the Kadızâdeli attacks on the Sivasîs made them shift their initial standpoint against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs is worth looking at, meanwhile the presence of İbrahim Efendi in that meeting hints at the eager reception of *vahdet-i vücûd* by Halvetî-Sivasîs. A relative détente by the mid seventeenth century must have been instrumental for Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to prepare against the rising selefi trends in the Empire, but they seemed to fall short as Sütçü Beşir Ağa was executed almost within a decade after Abdulehad Nuri and İbrahim Efendi were deceased.

In parallel with that, a very similar relationship can be traced for the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and Mevlevîs. Founded by the celebrated mystic Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumî (d. 1273) in the thirteenth century Anatolia, Mevlevî order regards '*tevhid*' and '*cezbe*' as the most suitable way to attain intimacy with God. They do not employ other sufi instructions like *zikr* and intensive practice of religious, even supererogatory, duties. In this line, they essentially converge with Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching. Besides, Gölpınarlı notes that Mevlevîs aimed to differentiate themselves from other sufi movements, a very similar attitude with Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. They do not call themselves ''sufi''; instead sufis, to Mevlevîs, are those people who linger in *berzah* (in-between). In other words, Mevlevîs believe that they grasp the essence of the path while the others turn around it.[281] This proximity displays itsef through written records of the orders. The intellectual impact of Mevlevî doctrine on Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples becomes noticeable in Lalizâde's curriculum composed of *Mesnevî* and its commentaries. It

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[280] Muhammed Nazmi Efendi, *Hediyyetu'l-İhvan,* p. 177.
[281] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, pp. 185-187.

seems that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs highly welcomed Mevlânâ's mystical teaching and his reception of love and it exceptionally permeated into Melâmî-Bayrâmî writings, which bear the imprint of İbn Arabi's teaching as well. For instance, seventeenth century poet Cevri Efendi (d.1655), a Mevlevî disciple but spiritually educated by Sarı Abdullah, edited Mevlânâ Celaleddin's *Mesnevî* and Abdullah Bosnevi's *Şerh-i Fusûs*.[282]

Apart from intellectual interaction, we have relatively less material regarding the Melâmî-Bayrâmî Mevlevî relationship in Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts. In *Semerât* Sarı Abdullah neither covers Mevlevî sheikhs nor talks about its history and rituals. When he wrote the book we understand that he was on good terms with Mevlevî mystics among whom he felt himself comfortable. Why he paid less attention to this order through the chapters is a subtle point to be explored. Compared to *Semerât*, we could find more information about the Mevlevî community in Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme*. However, he does not record any Mevlevî sheikh in dual affiliation with Melâmî-Bayrâmîye. Instead, proximity between the two orders seems to have been stronger among the disciples. In theory, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs should have been less sympathetic to Mevlevî ceremonies embellished with whirling dervishes with distinguished costumes. Nevertheless, as noted, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had to be more tolerant towards ritualistic ceremonies held by sufi groups. Even though Gölpınarlı argues that neither Mevlevî dervishes visited other lodges nor the others visited their spaces, it can be understood that Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes were frequently visiting Mevlevî lodges and Mevlevî affiliates were in contact with Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizers.[283] Sarı Abdullah Efendi appears to be the most salient Melâmî-Bayrâmî figure strolling with Mevlevî disciples

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[282] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 124-25.
[283] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, p. 187.

thanks to the personal connections he established.[284] In the first chapter it was already noted that he started writing *Semerât* after an inspiration he received from Mevlânâ in a meeting gathered at Galata *Mevlevîhanesi*. He seemed to be a close follower of İsmail Ankaravî (d. 1631) sheikh of Galata *Mevlevîhanesi* and one of the leading commentators of *Mesnevî* in the Ottoman lands.[285] İsmail Ankaravî's study on *Mesnevî* presumably led Sarı Abdullah Efendi to become comprehensively acquainted with the text. Having acquired his reputation of *Şârih-i Mesnevî* with his commentary on *Mesnevî*, he did employ plenty of stanzas by Mevlânâ in *Semerât*. Similar to Cevri Çelebi, Mevlvî sheikh Neşati Dede (d. 1674), experienced the taste of love thanks to Sarı Abdullah Efendi's instruction.[286]

From a different perspective, the reports of Rycaut hint that some Mevlevî disciples were violating the rules of religion; and were somewhat less willing to fulfill the requirements of the sacred law.[287] He makes similar comments on Sütçü Beşir Ağa's disciples as well. In parallel with this argument, Sarı Abdullah took over the funeral affairs of Cevri Çelebi after his death because his neighbors thought of him as a ''man of *fesad*'' and did not participate in the funeral ceremonies.[288] It seems that religiously suspected behavior was quite prevalent among Mevlevîs and certain Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples saw no trouble in wandering with them. Unlike their friends, Mevlevî dervishes were not under surveillance. Instead, although they had some problems in the formative years around the fifteenth century, the Mevlevî order was

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[284] He remarks that he was ''Aslen Bayrâmî, tarikatçe Celveti, terbiyece Mevlevî''. See Necdet Yılmaz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf*, p. 349.

[285] *Semerât*, p. 307; İsmail Ankaravî was also known to be an ardent defender of '*sema*' in face of Kadızâdeli attacks. Necdet Yılmaz, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf*, p.263. For an extensive discussion of his struggle against Kadızâdelis see Semih Ceyhan, ''İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî Şerhi'', pp. 113-131.

[286] *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 117-118. Cevri Efendi was a disciple of İsmail Ankaravî as well. It shows that during the early seventeenth century a social group including Bayrâmî disciples and artistists emerged around Galata Mevlevîhanesi.

[287] Sir Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, (London: Printed for John Starkey and Henry Brome, 1972.) p. 139.

[288] *Menâkıbnâme*, p. 125.

popular among the Ottoman elites after the early seventeenth century.[289] They had some conflict with the official authority, notably during the Kadızâdeli aggression, but mystic ceremonies with chanting and charming went on in their lodges. Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes presumably felt a sense of security which they needed and tried to take advantage of the Mevlevîs' sphere of influence. This relationship was still tangible into the mid eighteenth century, and Müstakimzâde records friendly visits among respected Melâmî-Bayrâmî and Mevlevî sheikhs, Halil Aga and sheikh of Galata Mevlevîhanesi.[290] In this regard, Müstakimzâde's short account could also guide us for the further search in terms of the relationship between them in the later eighteenth century as well.

Sarı Abdullah and Müstakimzâde again display the same attitude towards another sufi order. What might be considered as incompatible with Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching in Mevlevî rituals is not mentioned. Instead, Sarı Abdullah seeks to demonstrate the unity among sufi orders in terms of the spiritual link to which they were attached.[291] For this purpose, Müstakimzâde's records on Mevlevî- Melâmî-Bayrâmî friendship offers convincing evidences.

In the final section we will look at the Melâmî-Bayrâmî-Nakşibendî relationship, which started to intensify notably in the closing years of the seventeenth century. As it was briefly noted in the first chapter, Hacı Bayram-ı Velî had a Nakşibendî chain as well and gave Nakşibendî tone to his order. This connection was apparently not enhanced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as there was seemingly no Nakşibendî sheikh to supervise Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes or vice versa. The causes of

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[289] In the early years of Mevlevî order, a group of dervishes, notably Şemsis had showed intimate relationship with Alevi-Bektasi groups in Anatolia, which had put them at conflict with the state authority. For the evolution of Mevlevîye into a more orthodox line see Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, p. 270.

[290] *Ibid,* p. 169.

[291] Semih Ceylan, ''İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî Şerhi'', pp. 135-136.

this long lasting mutual indifference are still not clear and deserve further research. Yet, pre-established proximity seemed to remerge when the father of Lalizâde Abdülbâki, Lali Mehmed Efendi became affiliated with the Nakşibendî-Müceddidî sheikh Murad-ı Bukhari in the late seventeenth century; and Lalizâde continued this relationship when sheikh Murad arrived in İstanbul in 1708.[292] The following century was marked by a cordial relationship between the Nakşibendî-Müceddidî branch and Melâmî-Bayrâmîye. From a more general perspective, Hamid Algar in his telling discussion on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî elements in the early Nakşibendîye tradition diligently lists the converging principles between the two orders, which encourage us to assume that there was nothing confounding, or astounding, about this rapprochement witnessed in the Ottoman lands. Before going into the substantial advantages the orders might have enjoyed through this collaboration, it would be better to pay attention to the common ground on which sheikhs of the two orders had been training their disciples**.**

The Nakşibendî order is based on the eleven principles, formulated by its founding fathers Yusuf Hamedanî (d. 1140), Abulhalik Gücdevanî (d. 1220) and Bahâeddin Nakşibend (d. 1389).[293]Among these articles, *Halvet-der Encümen*, which means to be with God in the crowd, appears to be one of the distinguishing marks from the other sufi movements. Bahâeddin Nakşibend states that '…our way is based on halvet der encümen..'.[294], which also encourages trade and business to earn livelîhood, refusing to live on charity. In that mission, the Nakşibendî disciple was responsible for helping poor or weak people in poverty. Another similar concern in Nakşibendî

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[292] *Menâkıbnâme;* p. 135
[293] Huş der-dem (awareness in the breath, awareness in the moment), Sefer-der-vatan (watch your step), nazar-ber kadem (the journey home), halvet der-encümen (solitude in the crowd), yadkerd (remembrance), bazgeşt (returning, going back), nigahdaşt (attentiveness), yaddaşt (continued remembrance, Perpetual invocation) and Bahaeddin Nakşibend adds three principles vukuf-ı zamani (Awareness of one's state of mind), vukuf-ı adedi (awareness of number) vukuf-ı kalbi (awareness of the heart) For a brief explanation of the terms see:Abdülhakim Arvasi, *Tasavvuf Bahçeleri*, (İstanbul: Büyükdoğu Yayınları, 1983), pp. 93-99.
[294] Ali Bolat, *Bir Tasavvuf Okulu Olarak Melâmetilik*, p. 379.

tradition and Melâmî-Bayrâmîye was their reluctance to perform the rituals in sufi lodges. Nakşi ceremonies were quite simple and austere compared to the Halvetî *devran* or the whirling of Mevlevîs, and did not incite public attention. Instead, hidden *zikr* and *sohbet* meeting, open to ordinary men as well, unlike Melâmî-Bayrâmî conversations, had central importance as perpetuated rituals.

In addition, Nakşibendî sheikhs in the Ottoman Empire had successfully adopted İbn Arabi's teaching into the literature. Originally it was Molla Cami who had made a significant contribution to İbn Arabi's literature, though in Persian, with his commentary on *Nakş al-Husus*. Yet his real impact came from the poems replete with *vahdet-i vücûd* doctrine, which became widespread in Ottoman lands. Early in the second half of the fifteenth century, Cami was visited in Herat by Molla Abdullah Ilahi (d.896/1491), disciple of the foremost Nakşibendî sheikh Ubeydullah Ahrar and the earliest representative of Nakşibendîye in the Ottoman lands. Algar points out that Molla Ilahi was presumably acquinted with the ideas of İbn Arabi thanks to Cami. Algar again argues that the impact of İbn Arabi and his teachings on the writings of Ilahi justifies the conclusion that he propagated the concepts of İbn Arabi, notably *vahdet-i vücûd,* among the Ottomans. His famous commentary in Arabic on the *Vâridat* of Şeyh Bedreddin (d.823/1420) was filled with references to the *Fusüs* and to the *Futuhatü'l-Mekkiyye,* and the poems of Mevlânâ as well.[295] Similarly Emir Buhârî (d. 1516), halife of Molla Ilahi and who traveled with him from Transoxiana to Anatolia, discusses the Nakşibendî path and teachings of Ibn 'Arabi in his brief treatises.[296] This strong impact of İbn Arabi no doubt prepared a comfortable ground for a possible Nakşibendî-Bayrâmî rapprochement. Furthermore, İmam-ı Rabbani developed a modest

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[295] Hamid Algar, Reflections of Ibn 'Arabi in Early Naqshbandî Tradition, http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/naqshibandi.html.
[296] Hamid Algar, "Bokârî, Amîr Ahmad," *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* IV, p. 329.

interpretation of this doctrine and proposed *Vahdet-i Şühûd* (…), which would be more acceptable even among *selefi* minded groups. His followers eventually established friendly ties even with the extreme commentators of İbn Arabi.

On the other hand, we may argue that this relationship was not a perfect partnership. Melâmî-Bayrâmî and Nakşibendî paths include very contrasting axioms. Nakşibendîye with its strict attachment to the sharia rules never tolerates any deviation and strongly denigrates code of conducts incompatible with Prophet's *sunnet*. Event though we have figured out that the same effort was made by Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts; it was also clear that some Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples hardly showed the same sensitivity in daily life. Nakşi disciples restrained from controversial behaviors tolerated by Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in purpose of defying ''selfhood'' and ''self-praise''. Besides, it was less likely to encounter a Nakşibendî disciple in a state of ecstasy. Ecstatic sayings (*şathiyyat*) were a result of intoxication which left the disciple uncontrollable, a deviant behaviour according to Nakşibendî teaching.[297]

Even though differing practices were on the agenda, the intellectual ground of Nakşibendî-Melâmî connection was after all sound and historically deep. Hacı Bayram-ı Velî merged Nakşi doctrine with Melâmî-Bayrâmî inclinations, and actually Sarı Abdullah's *Semerât* reveals that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had already been familiar with Nakşibendî teaching and principles. At that point we should note that Sarı Abdullah's personal emphasis on the Nakşibendî order deserves further exploration since he had no attachment to this order, and besides it was not as widespread as Halvetîye or

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[297] *Şathiyyat* sayings of some mystics, sometimes, were not tolerated even by respectable sufi sheikhs. In the case of Mansur al-Hallaj, celebrated mystic of the time of Abu Bakr Şibli (d.945) approved his verdict having considered it an urge to preserve the boundaries of the Sharia. Similarly, foremost sufi master Abdul-Qadir Jilani notes that: 'If Ecstasic expressions come from sufi in the state of sobriety, one must assume they come from satan'. In Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts it seemed that *Şaths* of Melâmî-Bayrâmî fathers were not taken as seriously as those of their alignment with *Hurufi* doctrine which approves exemption from religious incumbencies. No record of a sufi sheikh censuring contested words of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs is mentioned.

Mevlevîye. In his time Melâmî-Bayrâmîye and Nakşibendîye disciples had not yet formed strong friendly ties, nor had a conflict. We have deciphered that he read Molla Abdurrahman Cami's (a prominent Nakşibendî disciple) *Nefâhatü'l-Üns,* in which Nakşibendî path has a distinguished place. Sarı Abdullah Efendi probably benefited from this text which gives a very detailed list of Nakşibendî links and some biographic information about them. Passionately praising the Nakşibendî order's link and teaching, he does not elaborate on the practical differences between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and Nakşibendîs.

Somewhat forty years after Sarı Abdullah's death, Nakşibendîs flourished across the Ottoman lands with the expansion of the Müceddidîye branch thanks to the solid relationship established between state elites and Murad-ı Buhârî (d. 1720). The popularity of the order was high particularly among the ulema class to the extent that Murad Buhârî became a target of internal hostilities and power struggles as well.[298] The rise of Nakşibendîs among the Ottoman elite actually coincided with the increasing presence of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sympathizers in the state organs. However, although Melâmî-Bayrâmîs has been gaining credit from the ulema and state elites, they were still suffering perpetual accusations leveled on them. That is why Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were likely to find a safe haven among their old allies, the Nakşibendîs. It is not clear how the Nakşibendî sheikhs welcomed these exhilarated mystics, which might have been a risky alliance for them. Major Nakşibendîye records of the time do not to touch on Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples, thus the issue still needs further studies. Even though Müstakimzâde compiled a Melâmî-Bayrâmî *Menâkıbnâme*; it is still not enough to gauge the reaction of Nakşibendîs. Even in his text as well, there is no particular

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[298] He felt the pressure from the state elite and changed the residence, then left the city and went to Bursa notably due to Sadrazam Çorlulu Ali Paşa's (d.1711) initiative. Halil İbrahim Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidîlk 17-18.yüzyıl*, (İstanbul: Sufi yayınları, 2004), p. 115. Also see Mustafa İsmet Garibullah, *Zikr-i Vefat-ı Şeyh Muhammed Murad-ı Buhârî*, Bayezid Devlet Library, Velîyüddin Efendi 2886, p. 26.

mention of how the Melâmî-Bayrâmî path was appreciated by Nakşibendî sheikhs, unlike what was done with the Halvetî sheikhs.

Regarding the Melâmî-Bayrâmî Nakşibendî relationship, Lalizâde made a contribution similar to what Sarı Abdullah had done for Bayrâmî-Mevlevî rapprochement. However, his *Sergüzeşt* similar to *Semerât* and *Menâkıbnâme* does not reflect the Nakşibendî impact on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî circle. At first, Lalizâde states that he will explain Nakşibendî pleasures as well as Melâmî-Bayrmi path, which are the ''most healthy'' *(selâmetli)* paths.[299] The reason why he does not explain Nakşibendî teaching in a different section might be his conviction that some fundamental principles of Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching were a part of the Nakşibendî path as well. Yet, Lalizâde does not discuss other Nakşibendî rituals like hidden *zikr* (rememberance) or *rabıta* (imagining one's master). We may be sure that Lalizâde had a special attachment to this order to the extent that he wrote hagiographical texts on sheikh Murad-ı Buhârî's life and meetings. And at the time when he wrote *Sergüzeşt*, he should have been well acquainted with Nakşibendî teaching. It was probable that he did not need to extend his discussion on Nakşibendî order, which is another evidence to suggest that his *Sergüzeşt* had a particular focus on Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching.

Müstakimzâde's silence over this relationship is actually more confusing. His sheikh Mehmed Emin Tokadî and Lalizâde were contemporaries and in *Menâkıbnâme* he records that Mehmed Emin Tokadî sometimes visited Lalizâde Abdülbâki.[300] Besides, Müstakimzâde transmits some stories on Lalizâde's father Lali Mehmed Efendi and confirms his attachment to Murad-ı Buhârî. So why did Müstakimzâde not give a longer discussion regarding Nakşibendî-Melâmî Bayrâmî orders? He might have mentioned in which ways or how these two orders overlapped, what Nakşibendî sheikhs

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[299] *Sergüzeşt*, pp. 157-59
[300] *Menâkıbnâme*, p. 136

thought about the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. Müstakimzâde presumably did not want to deal with these questions as he never mentioned his own Nakşibendî-Müceddidî attachment in *Menâkıbnâme*. Stemming from this ambiguity, there are a couple of questions that could emerge on the nature of the relationship between Nakşibendî-Melâmî Bayrâmî orders.

That is why we might ask, in this connection, if Lalizâde's effort was a personal one or represented a shared trend among the disciples. Based on the intellectual ground of these two orders, the answer is closer to the latter but it is still not clear why these biographical accounts gave less information than they could comfortably supply. Other than that, we know that Lalizâde set up a very close connection with Murad-ı Buhârî and even continued to serve in a lodge built by him in Eyup. Müstakimzâde also records that, as noted above, another important representative of the Nakşibendî-Müceddidî branch in İstanbul Mehmed Emin Tokadî had a contact with Lalizâde.[301] Keeping in mind that *Sergüzeşt* was a product of Lalizâde's later ages, we may claim that he did not give up his Melâmî-Bayrâmî identity. However, the hypothesis that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs chose another sufi order in order to hide themselves, as it has been discussed in this thesis as well, is not convincing for this case. Lalizâde produced dozens of books about Nakşibendîye, including pamphlets and hagiographies like *Risâle-i Muradiye* and *Mebde'u-l Meâd*, which explained the life of Murad-ı Buhârî and Nakşibendî *zevks*. Perhaps, his studies were an effort to merge the two orders. Unfortunately, we could not follow the traces of this intellectual endeavor in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries because the Melâmî-Bayrâmî branch almost disappeared by the mid nineteenth century, and the Nakşibendî-Müceddidî chain in the Empire continued under another sub-group, Halidiye, by the early nineteenth century.

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[301] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 137.

Conclusion

It is clear that this tension between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and sufi orders displays the multiple faces of inter-order relationships within the Ottoman Empire. Melâmî *Menâkıbnâmes* provide differing, sometimes conflicting, information on this issue. Sarı Abdullah discussed the origins and links of Halvetîye and Nakşibendîye orders in *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* where he showed the common points among them. Even though he gave valuable biographical information about significant earlier saints, no record was held about those non Melâmî-Bayrâmî sufis who lived in the Ottoman Empire until his time. Similarly, Lalizâde provides a few information on the relationship of Melâmî-Bayrâmîye with other sufi orders. On the other hand, Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* was written around the same years with *Sergüzeşt* but was much more comprehensive. Interestingly, Lalizâde should have had easier access to the relevant sources on Melâmî-Bayrâmî accounts. For many times, he stated that he had listened to his father who could hear stories from Sarı Abdullah. The reason of this difference could be attributed to the intention of authors in writing these texts.

Besides, the audience of these texts is quite important. Heffernan argues that early hagiographical texts were the product of intra-communal activity and produced within this group. Cooperson points out a similar tendency in Islamic biographical dictionaries notably after the emergence of particular sufi identities.[302] From this angle, Lalizâde's primary concern seems to have been to instruct Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples. On the other hand, Müstakimzâde's pool was not so exclusive. His text demonstrates that other sufi disciples may have been interested in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order.

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[302] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) pp. 18-22; Michael Cooperson, *Classic Arabic Biography*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 1-22.

What they shared unanimously was that, even though some mystical rituals were depreciated none of the texts posed a direct criticism of a particular sufi order. Indeed, they carefully described the rituals, important men and practices of other orders. We may infer that a confrontation among sufi orders was not desired by the authors. The only exception for this comment might be the Sivasî Efendi tale but the details of this story, as noted, need further research.

In terms of the social and intellectual relationships among the sufi orders, we understand that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs could form friendly ties with the followers of the other mystical paths. It was obvious that especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they had a motivation, namely to shelter themselves in the face of state persecution. On the other hand, it was also apparent that Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples found certain aspects of Mevlevî, Nakşibendî or Halvetî teaching appealing. In other words, the individual pleasure of a Melâmî-Bayrâmî might have induced him to affiliate with another path.

Secondly Melâmî-Bayrâmîs applied some sufi practices denigrated by Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching in addition to the fact that they built lodges where a formal Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh served. It was quite probable that while Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes were visiting Mevlevî and Halvetî lodges, they performed their rituals as well. Growing suspicion of the order and changing social and political conditions might have led Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to revise some rituals and mitigate oppositional characteristics of the order. On the other hand, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs did not see other sufi practices as the most useful means of reaching God. For them, each ritual had an audience and appealed to individuals of different dispositions. Sheikh Edirnevî's deliberation of *sema* is an expression of this conviction. In addition to that, the strongest opposition of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs was against those sufis who did not understand the essence of mystical

training and pretended to be real friends of God with meaningless rituals and symbols. We have noted that Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde applied very high criteria in order to call somebody a ''true'' friend of God. Even further, they frequently urged the disciples to avoid claiming this state of friendship.

The reaction of sufi sheikhs towards Melâmî-Bayrâmîs displayed diverging patterns as well. The Halvetî repudiation of ''Hamzavîs'' in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was due to unorthodox practices Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were claimed to have performed. But there were a considerable number of sufis who welcomed Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching. Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching favored intoxication and ecstasy to attain divine knowledge. Besides, the centrality of *vahdet-i vücûd* and divine love among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs no doubt influenced a lot of mystics whatever their primary sufi affiliation was.

In the next chapter, we will look at the relations with the state organs, where the tension was higher and where the texts could be more straightforward in their criticism. It will present a more transparent picture of the challenges faced by the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER V

THE STRUGGLE WITH POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES

Persecution was not unfamiliar to the sufis, as they had sporadically faced suppression by the religious and political authorities since the tenth century[303]. A martyrological tone had become prevalent in sufi literature after the execution of Mansur al-Hallaj, and in hagiographical texts as well as other types of writings sufis sometimes struggled to

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[303] See John Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

answer the charges directed at them.[304] As argued in the first chapter, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies, *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* in particular, but also in a different way, Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme*, were likewise written at least partly with the intention to repudiate the label of "heretic" (mülhid) affixed to the Melâmî-Bayrâmîye and reinstate its image as an orthodox order.

In this chapter, we shall examine the ways in which these authors represented the episodes of controversy and persecution involving Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and tried to reconcile them with their highly sanitized image of the order, while at the same time refraining from criticizing the authority figures who had persecuted them. Since a considerable time period separated these writers from most of the events they described and since the relationship between the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and the state had changed considerably in this time period, we shall not try to use these accounts to reconstruct the history of the persecutions that took place. This would be an exercise that would require research into many other types of sources as well.

<div align="center">Representation of the Persecution</div>

Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts particularly the *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* pay considerable attention to the procedures of persecution. While their accounts, often written many decades and sometimes over a century after the events they describe, cannot be taken at face value, they still indicate that Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were not arrested overnight; the process of persecution took months and sometimes even years. In the tales of Hacı Bayram and Pir Ali Aksarayî, persecutors came to conduct an initial inquiry about these sheikhs for the purpose of checking if they had really disavowed the governments' authority. İsmail Maşuki and Hamza Bâlî, similarly, were warned by the authorities to halt their

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[304] For a detailed discussion see Frederick De Jong and Bernd Radtke. *Sufism and its Opponents: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

provocative speeches. Hamza Bâlî's trial seemed to be a long process during which he was questioned in Bosnia and İstanbul successively. It shows that the accused party, namely Melâmî-Bayrâmîs, had a chance to defend or change their conduct and to convince their persecutors who were believed to have been manipulated.

The hagiographical accounts stress that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs actually took advantage of this opportunity and countered their accuser with proof of their spiritual authority. Hacı Bayram and Pir Ali Aksarayî were able to prevail over the statesmen who slandered them. A similar scenario was at play when İdris-i Muhtefî confronted the Halvetî sheikh Ömer Efendi (d. 1624-25) who had earlier accused him of heresy (ilhad) and persuaded the latter of his innocence.[305] Thus, the hagiographical accounts transmit the message that as long as Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were allowed to explain their real intentions, they could prove they were doing nothing unfavorable in opposition to the state and established religious norms.

On the other hand, some Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs – most notably, İsmail Maşuki, Hamza Bâlî and Sütçü Beşir Ağa - could not escape ultimate persecution. The texts give limited details on the persecution process and, unlike other stories it is not possible to understand if their spiritual power was less convincing to escape death penalty. For instance, İsmail Maşuki was told to leave the city by Sultan Süleyman but he refused the offer.[306] Instead of the persecution process the texts dwell on how they were punished. At this stage, we can perceive that the Ottoman authorities took ultimately deterrent measures. Instead of being sent on exile, Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs were put into prison or executed, so it was almost impossible to reach a later conciliation once they were found guilty and convicted.

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[305] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 80-81.
[306] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 28.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies give a dramatic account of how these punishments were administered. Lalizâde describes how the corpses of Sütçü Beşir and İsmail Maşuki were treated brutally, and thrown into the sea. Sütçü Beşir's body was found near the shore in İstanbul, but he was relatively lucky compared to İsmail Maşuki, whose executed head and body were found separately. The texts also stress that İsmail Maşuki was only a teenager, who could not control his emotions, when he was put to death. In this manner, they subtly convey the message that some of his wayward acts could even been tolerated on account of his young age.[307] Similarly, the execution of Sütçü Beşir when he was in his nineties is presented as a particularly brutal act.

The martyrological tone in the texts is amplified with an in-depth depiction of the events that Ernst calls the enthusiastic model of martyrology-writing where the writers compose sensational images.[308] Accordingly, the model figure of martylogical literature, Mansur al-Hallaj, finds his place in *Semerâü'l-Fuâd*. Sarı Abdullah makes a long quotation displaying his murder, as Hallaj's hands are cut down and he rubs his bloody arms on his face. For, he does not want his face to seem pale and people to think he is scared.[309] More strikingly, Hallaj's dead body is burned because his organs keep uttering "I am the Truth (*ene'l-Hak*)''. Even then the ashes keep saying the same so that they are thrown into the river. Sarı Abdullah also compiles consecutive stories of sufi martyrs İmameddin Nesimî (d.1414), Mecededdin Baghdadî (d.?) and Aynu'l-Kudat Hamedanî (d.1131). Their fates were similar to that of İsmail Maşuki and Hamza Bâlî: they too had been the target of the governing elites of their time, and had been treated with hatred and atrocity. In Nesimi's tale, for instance, the executor does not

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[307] *Ibid*, p. 29.
[308] Carl W. Ernst, ''From Hagiography to Martryology: Conflicting Testimonies to a Sufi Marty of the Delhi Sultanate'', *History of Religions*, 24:4 (1985:May), pp. 314-316.
[309] *Semerât*, pp. 180-81.

want to touch Nesimi's dead body claiming that it is extremely dirty.[310] Since no direct spiritual link existed between these sufi martyrs and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs, it can be assumed that Sarı Abdullah included these harrowing tales about them in view of the parallel between their experiences of martyrdom and that of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs.

In these accounts, the brunt of the blame for the persecution of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs is not put on the political regime or the Ottoman dynasty but on "malicious" individuals who slandered the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs on account of their jealousy. These "malicious people" (*ehl-i fesad)* are sometimes identified as a member of the ulema, a sheikh of another mystical order or a provincial notable who put Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs under fire. [311] In some cases, the texts do not give the proper name of the accuser and it becomes impossible to predict the identity of those who were assailing and slandering the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs.

While describing sufi martyrs in the texts all of them use the term ''*şehid*'', which means an individual who sacrifices himself on the way of God. To Sarı Abdullah for instance, being murdered is an ''honorable experience'' for sufis, and they should not give up or run away when they are persecuted. In this way, it is suggested that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had nothing to lose but a life, and they could easily sacrifice it. He is the one who obtains the highest status for a human being to acquire, ''love of God'', and should never exchange it. Sarı Abdullah sends an even stronger message with the verse ''be courageous like a male lion, not afraid of losing your life''[312]

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[310] *Semerât*, p. 198.
[311] In some cases the texts identify who criticized Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. For instance, Sarı Abdullah dares to note that Zal Paşa, probably a *Vezir* of Sultan Süleyman I, slandered Hüsameddin Ankaravî, *Semerât 257*; and Lalizâde cites *Şeyhülislam* Sunizade (1662) as the enemy of Sütçü Beşir Ağa, *Sergüzeşt,* p. 55.
[312] *Semerât,* p. 251.

The relationship between Melâmî-Bayrâmîs and persecutors is telling as the texts imply that Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs inevitably faced these accusations because they were successful men doing the right things. Confirming this image Sarı Abdullah states that ''agony and calamity are registered for the right men.''[313] As indicated, Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies imply that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples are inevitable victims of ungrounded accusations made by malicious people. They have no means to escape slanders and attacks even if they do not deserve it. This message is strengthened by giving reference to Prophet's lifetime events like what İdris-i Muhtefî says ''Even Prophet could not be free of insults by his people, how could I?''[314] In other words, it is a shared destiny for all individuals who are willing to be charitable and to contribute to their environment.

However, it should be considered that during the era of intensifying competition among bureaucratic ranks by the late sixteenth century, Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples acquired some grants favored by the state elite. In the seventeenth century as well they were often becoming involved in palace affairs which put them into stronger competition.[315] Why they frequently became a target in this power struggle is unanswered in the hagiographical text. In addition, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were exposed to harsh punishments even though they were claimed to be victims of personal rivalries and of lighter crimes like building mosque in a provincial town.[316] It is reasonable to question whether it was not possible to conciliate with these men if there was not a lot of interest at stake. We may suggest that Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts were not enthusiastic to unearth existing problems and provocative deviations in the order, and shifted their

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[313] *Semerât,* p. 264; *''mihnet ve bela dogru adamlara hastır''*

[314] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 46.

[315] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 55. Sultan Beşir, for instance, had lots of disciples from the palace and Lalizâde implies that he was the victim of power struggle.

[316] To Lalizâde, Hüsameddin Ankaravî was a victim of personal hatred. He was put into jail due to mosque construction in his town. *Sergüzeşt*, p. 33.

gaze towards external causes that constantly hindered the activities of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. Now let's look at the other cases where we can decipher the impetus behind this attitude and the representation of the state institutions in Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies

The State and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî Order

Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies do not necessarily exalt the Ottoman state and Sultan. We should also recall that some Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples were sometimes reluctant to obey the commands of the Sultan and felt responsible to God only.[317] Melâmî-Bayrâmîs might have ruled the Sultan out if a superior gift was offered by God. Ahmed Sarban, Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* during the age of Sultan Süleyman, writes in one of his verses: ''If I could find the minutest message from your ruby lips, I would not but the Kingdom of Solomon for the smallest coin''.[318] The impression that a Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh is a superior figure to the Sultan can be traced in the lines of Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde when they describe Sultan Murad and Sultan Süleyman paying respect to Hacı Bayram and Pir Aksarayî. We see that they gave counsels to the Ottoman Sultans, prescribed them to maintain social justice and emulate caliph Ömer's fairness.[319] Although the dependency on the state evolved to become stronger via seventeenth century, a subservient image is not given in the texts.

On the other hand, while explaining the disputes and sufferings Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde do not depreciate the state and its ruler. A closer reading of these accounts indicates that the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples knew the limits of the critical tone they set up against the authority. The texts install a diligent use of language when they articulate

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[317] Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p 152; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, pp. 251-56
[318] Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p 152. For the complete version of these verses see: Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler,* p. 59
[319] *Semerât* pp. 235-6, pp. 246-7.

a discussion on the Sultan. In some other sufi readings like those of celebrated dissident Niyazi Mısrı, who dares to scorn the Sultan and his servants irreconcilably, the bridges with the authority are thrown away.[320] Compared to that, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs are in a different line. They did not relate the problem with the Sultan or the Ottoman system, eschewing a systematic structural critique. In this parallel, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts tend to draw a peaceful image, whenever available, of their relationship with the state authorities. When a Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh attracted disciples within the Ottoman palace, the accounts meticulously record names like *sadrazam* Halil Paşa and *sadrazam* Şehit Ali Paşa, implying that there were officers inside the state who appreciated and supported them. It can also be speculated that Sarı Abdullah, Lalizâde and Müstakimzâde might also have known more controversial events to tell but purposefully avoided that.

At the time when Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies were written the likelihood that ongoing repression against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs was still prevailing and that might have led them to abstain from criticizing respected men of the Ottoman governing elite and the ulema class. Some celebrated names involved in the persecution process like *Şeyhülislam* Ebussud Efendi and Sultan Süleyman are mentioned but they are not described as belonging to the rival party. We indeed need to dwell on basic controversies which caused trouble in the state- Melâmî-Bayrâmî relations to elucidate this attitude and basic intentions of Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies in representing the state authorities more clearly.

In specific, the ordeal of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs in their relationship with the Ottoman state is believed to have derived from the messianic accent in their teachings. The idea of a forthcoming *mehdi* who would restore justice and religion and preside

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[320] Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, pp. 323-327

over worldly kingdom has been held by Muslim peoples, especially by those following the Shiite version of Islam.[321] Messianic faith seem to be quite popular in Anatolia as it was seen in the case of Şeyh Bedrettin (d.1420), the *kadıasker* of Ottoman Prince Musa, who propagated the idea that he was *mehdi* of the time. The idea of *mehdi* is not only related to deep theological contest but also entailed severe political implications.

Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts present a clear picture regarding the accusation against early Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. Firstly, the founding father of the order Hacı Bayram was accused of claiming leadership alternative to Sultan Murad II (d. 1451). The Sultan was informed that Hacı Bayram had gathered dozens of people around him and was ready to declare his autonomous authority.[322] Sultan Murad asked his officers to investigate the problem and sent them to the Ankara region where Hacı Bayram was instructing his disciples. At the end of the initial inquiry, Sultan Murad had a conversation with Hacı Bayram and understood that the intelligence he had received was wrong. Hacı Bayram's eloquence and reliable personality influenced him so that he exempted Hacı Bayram's disciples from taxation and military service.[323]

Sarı Abdullah Efendi gives a detailed account of what Lalizâde and Müstakimzâde interestingly disregard it. However, Sarı Abdullah does not use the term ''*mehdi*'' in his account. When we look at the phraseology employed by the antagonists who reported Hacı Bayram to the Sultan; the term ''*saltanat*'' (power holding) is striking. This might be a ''*saltanat*'' of worldly heaven, a part of the *mehdi*'s divine mission on earth. Since the secondary literature gives little information on his supposed claim for this stiuation, it is not fair to speculate on the details of the story.

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[321] Mehdi belief was not only welcomed enthusiastically by Shiites, but Sunnis also invented their own Mehdis. Abbasid and Umayyad caliphs used the term. Ekrem Sancakoğlu and Yusuf Şevki Yavuz 'Mehdi', *DIA*; also Wilfred Madelung 'mahdi', *EI²*

[322] Sarı Abdullah records it: 'Hacı Bayram Ankara'da hayli mürid toplayıp ve bazı kelimatı gayr-ı merbuta söyleyip haşaklığı izlal ve belki kasdı *saltanat* olmak ihtimali vardır', *Semerât,* p.235.

[323] *Ibid*, p. 240.

We may question why Sarı Abdullah was the only author to narrate this story. As shall be seen in the following discussions, Sarı Abdullah seemed to have multiple purposes such as the manifestation of the superiority of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. Actually, this story differs from the other stories where the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs are persecuted in that it implies nothing about the heretical imputations and controversial sufi rituals. At this point, why Hacı Bayram-ı Velî was only accused of claiming political leadership is indicative of the traces of the *mehdi* debate and the question of heresy among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs as well. Yet, being the story of the founding father of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs who had a special importance, it does not find place in *Sergüzeşt* and *Menâkıbnâme*. Since these texts mention other similar stories on *mehdi* debate we cannot attribute a feeling of a possible political suppression. As noted, Müstakimzâde's goal was to list the successors of Hacı Bayram-ı Velî and possibly because of that he did not give information on his life time whereas Lalizâde's omission remains unexplained.

Following that event, the first use of the term *mehdi* appears with regard to Pir Ali Efendi's case, the third sheikh in the chain of the Bayrâmîye order. Once he was claimed to say *"If İbrahim Edhem lived in my time, I would not allow him to leave the state. I would educate him. (Kemaline eristirirdim)*, and thereby he would be *sultan* of this world and the world hereafter *(âhiret)*. It is not required for a loyal follower *(sâdık mürid)* to leave worldly *saltanat"*.[324] This expression may be interpreted, as Sheikh Ali advising his disciples to participate in worldly life and repudiating the prevalent sufi practice of seclusion from society. Perhaps Pir Aksarayî did not mean that he had a claim over the Ottoman throne but invited the governing elite to submit to his

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[324] *Sergüzeşt*, p.24; *Menâkıbnâme*, p.17. Terzioğlu points to the image of *Mehdi* ascribed both political and religious power. Derin Terzioğlu, *Niyazi Mısri*, p. 414.

instruction.[325] It is also noticeable that Pir Ali Aksarayî's conversation with Sultan Süleyman (r.1520-1566) was covered in depth in all of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts. They record that Süleyman I visited him during his campaign to Iraq, and asked if he indeed claimed to be *mehdi*; but after this encounter the sultan was convinced that Sheikh Ali was a real friend of God.[326] This case shows us that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were interested in the fact that their sheikh was praised by the Sultan. This is the only story narrated by all Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies in the same form.[327] It seems that the story and the audience of the message it addressed did not change and the writers needed kept recording this version of the story in their text.

The Ottoman historiography ascribed to Selim I (r. 1512-1520), the title of world conqueror (*Sahib-i Kıran*) and called him the Messiah of the Last Age (*Mehdi-i Âhir Zaman*) in an attempt to relate Ottoman sovereignty to a messianic model.[328] This model was further developed during Sultan Süleyman's early years. Sultan Süleyman's personality was glorified; he was recognized as *mehdi* and the Last World Emperor, and his political measures were endorsed as divinely represented acts by some court officials.[329] Committed to this ideological set, Süleyman I and his officials could not be expected to tolerate such challenges which would undermine his sanctified political authority. The coming of the *mehdi* might have found a warm welcome in Anatolian lands which had witnessed similar movements in the near future; and where traces of Shiite belief had diffused into local cultural codes. However, the political authority shaped under the divinely sanctified and apocalyptic framework during the early

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[325] Regarding this discussion Ernst points to two aspects; one is that a sufi may react against the Sultan due to his inclination towards worldly richness; the other impetus lies in the Sultan's failure in his attachment to the Sharia. W.C. Ernst, *Eternal garden,* p. 15.

[326] *Semerât,* p. 24; *Sergüzeşt,* p. 24; *Menâkıbnâme*, pp. 17-8. Here we find the phrase: ''Aksarayda bir kimesne mehdilik dava edermiş, cennetin dört ırmağı benim hanemde mevcuddur deyu halkı davet edermiş''.

[327] The story about Emir Sıkkini and Akşemseddin is also employed by the three texts but Lalizâde employs a different version.

[328] Cornell Fleischer, *Mahdi and Millennium*, pp. 43-5.

[329] Cornell Fleischer, *Mehdi and Millennium*, pp. 45-50.

sixteenth century was unlikely to consent to this. Yet, it was a fact that seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marked a change in the Ottoman worldview.[330] Political ambitions embedded in the religious motivations of the sixteenth century were no longer on the agenda. In addition, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order shifted its center to the capital city and became more integrated with the elite circles.[331] That was probably why Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts employed a defensive tone in their response to these accusations. They tried to avoid any allegation which would put them into strife with the Ottoman Sultan. That is why the texts unanimously record that Pir Aksarayî told Sultan Süleyman ''O majesty you are the real *mehdi* of our time'' when he was asked by Sultan Süleyman if he claimed being *mehdi* of the time.[332]

Another major development that disturbed the Ottoman ruling elite most was the structuration of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî community as an independent body in social life. Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts do not require a causal relation between persecution attempts and this secondary community they fortified. Lalizâde frequently admits that pre-established norms for this group should be preserved, and anything which would keep it stronger should by no means be put into practice, even if it overrides state institutions' sphere of authority. Like Sarı Abdullah, he denies this problem as the cause of persecution against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. Regarding this structure he frankly sounds that it contributed a lot to keeping the Melâmî-Bayrâmî community together under strict disciplinary rules, and bolstered their spiritual motivation in mystical training. He thinks that the things got worse and the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples missed group harmony after Sütçü Beşir was executed.[333] Similarly Müstakimzâde asserts this

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[330] Yet messianic debate still continued in the the seventeenth century where people like Sabatay Sevi and Niyazi Mısri sounded messianic claims.

[331] On the other hand, Ottoman official sources record that İsmail Maşuki was imputed on this accusation, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, p. 287.

[332] *Sergüzest*, pp. 25-6*; Semerât,* p. 247*, Menâkıbnâme,* p. 19.

[333] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 113.

structure was providing an atmosphere where the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples could taste the ''love of God''.[334] According to Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts, the problem seemed to lie in the quality of followers, rather than the challenging rituals and patterns. In this perspective, Lalizâde and Sarı Abdullah frequently note that the rising number of followers provoked the animosity and jealousy of people, leading to intervention from the state. That is to say, they recognized the problem but, probably, believed that it should be healed by Melâmî-Bayrâmî leaders instead of state intervention, which upset genuine and innocent disciples as well.

We ought to consider that growing appeal to the order must have been harmful in terms of group homogeneity. Imber points out that cohesion and group consciousness probably deteriorated with the expansion of the order.[335] For, Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine became more popular among the artisans of İstanbul by the mid sixteenth century as its urban character replaced rural patterns. Acquaintance with heterodox beliefs like Bektaşîs, Hurufis and those non-Muslim groups in the Balkans might also have induced them to revise religious incumbencies. For example, Hamza Bâlî was visiting wine houses to find new novices, which indicates that some Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples had been drinking before they were admitted to the order, and perhaps continued to do it though less frequently.[336] The Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples in the region were being accused of trading religious norms as the Ottoman legal authority classified the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples in the same line with *kızılbaş* groups.[337]

It was a fact that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs maintained a closer and stricter communal network compared to other mystical groups. The authorities were anxious about not

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[334] *Menâkıbnâme*, p. 161.
[335] *Ibid*, p. 151.
[336] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 37.
[337] Colin Imber*, Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p. 117, 148, 152. Both groups were being accused of sexual immorality .

being able to scrutinize what was going inside this brotherhood. The early sixteenth century as noted marks a shift in terms of the geographical expansion of the order. Central Anatolia lost its central importance whereas Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs like İsmail Maşuki and Ahmed Edirnevî (d. 1592) gave rise to Melâmî-Bayrâmî activities in the imperial cities of İstanbul and Edirne. The Melâmî-Bayrâmî order was becoming more visible and Melâmî-Bayrâmî doctrine eventually became more popular in the urban context. As a contested mystical order with provocative reflections, to have grown up around the central authority would have been detrimental for Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. Facing the danger of overreaction by the state, the code of Melâmî-Bayrâmî principles indeed offered a safeguard for them. For, Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were disposed to perform rituals secretly mostly in order to eschew from censure of ill minded people, and were fond of covering their Melâmî-Bayrâmî identity. They were less willing to gather in formal spaces like *tekkes* and *zaviyes*, feeling more comfortable in small retail shops or the newly arising public domains, probably like coffee houses.[338] As indicated, Hamza Bâlî was visiting taverns to spread the teachings. Therefore in the urban context which was quite a suitable base for finding new followers for Melâmî-Bayrâmîs, authorities were having trouble identifying and controlling these disciples.

Intimate friendship among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs, after all, probably generated boosted self-confidence among the disciples as they felt less attachment to the state institutions and did not care for those commands prescribed by the authorities.[339] The intensity of the sheikh disciple relationship displays itself in Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Sultan Beşir's supervision of his community (*cemaat*). He was executing the rules of the Sharia, questioning the crime his disciple committed and applying the punishment,

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[338] Ekrem Işın, 'Melâmî-Bayrâmîler', *Dünden bugüne İstanbul ansiklopedisi,* (Ankara: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı**,** Kültür Bakanlığı, 1993-1995). Cilt V, pp. 382-85.
[339] Yusuf Ziya İnan, *İslam'da Melâmî-Bayrâmîliğin Tarihi Gelişimi*, p. 151.

which was ostensibly in accordance with the sacred rule. Even Sarı Abdullah was once sent to a trial conducted by him.[340] Carrying out this mission, he was making a decision without consulting a member of the ulema class or the responsible *kadı*. Besides, the leader of the community, namely Melâmî-Bayrâmî *velî,* could have excluded those members who infringed the Melâmî-Bayrâmî code of conduct. Governors should have became more furious as to the similar images displaying private juridical and executive bodies of the community as can be viewed in the trial of Hamza Bâlî, whose disciples were claimed to have independent ''*kadı*'' and ''*vezir*' and entitled him ''Sultan Hamza''.[341]

We may argue that Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde intensively pondered on the formation of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. Lalizâde in particular implied that something had to be improved and probably tried to restore the things that were getting worse. That is why the phrases in *Sergüzeşt* were more striking and straightforward representing the general picture explicitly. These comments can also be read as the contemplations of a high rank Melâmî-Bayrâmî who had higher expectation from his Melâmî-Bayrâmî brothers, and therefore reflect a critical view. We suppose that the reader of the text were the disciples as well and it must have made sense to them. It can be argued that Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde were aware of the changing composition of the disciples and the problems it produced. This tension could be best read in Lalizâde's Sergüzeşt as he was a part of the state authority and should have a different perception of the state from his predecessors. That is why he probably tried to find out a way to

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[340] *Menâkıbnâme,* pp. 100-101.
[341] Hamzavîs were active not only in the Balkans but also across the other parts of Western Thrace. Persecution records indicate that in Rodos, Hayrabolu and Burgas Hamzavî dervishes were being under persecution in 1572, Ahmet Refik Altınay, *Onaltıncı Yüzyılda Râfizîlik ve Bektaşîlik*, pp. 33-34. Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p. 151-3 Nathalie Clayer. *"L'œil d'un savant de Belgrade sur les Melâmîs-Bayrâmîs à la fin du XVIe-début du XVIIe siècle"*, in *Melâmîs-Bayrâmîs: Études sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans*, Clayer, Popovic and Zarcone (eds.), (İstanbul: Editions Isis, 1998), p. 165.

find a middle point by which the Melâmî-Bayrâmî codes and practices, and most notably close communal structure which could be preserved.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî Order and the Religious Elite

Malami-Bayrâmî hagiographies had a relatively different tone towards religious elites and suggest that those people who have expertise in ''applied science'' (*zahiri ilims*) can not understand what Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were doing and the real meaning of utterances in state of ecstasy. Nevertheless, it is also installed that the ulema were being manipulated by ill-minded people who did not like Melâmî-Bayrâmîs. In addition, they give the impression that some people inside the ulema class led anti-Melâmî-Bayrâmî movements within the state having provoked other people to execute the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh.[342]

The tension between the Ottoman ulema and the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs had been gradually augmenting by the early sixteenth century. Actually the Ottoman ulema were not hostile to the sufi orders in the fifteenth century thanks to the conciliatory attitude of prominent men of religion like Molla Fenari.[343] The tide ostensibly changed by the mid sixteenth century. During the reign of Sultan Süleyman when İsmail Maşuki and Hamza Bâlî were executed, the enforcement of orthodox Islam was encouraged by the governing elite, and this mission was effectively undertaken by the ulema class.[344] It was no surprise that the masters of religious sciences had to take it seriously whenever something went wrong with the established religion. In this process ''unorthodox'' dervishes came under fire by leading ulema members such as Çivizade Mehmed (d.

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[342] *Şeyhülislam* Sunizade Efendi (1662) was accused of provoking hatred against Melâmî-Bayrâmîs

[343] İbrahim Hakkı Aydın and Tahsin Görgün, 'Molla Fenari', *DIA;* Mehmed Bayraktar, *Kayserili Davud*, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları 912. Türk Büyükleri Dizisi 79, 1988).

[344] In the preambles of the some Imperial decrees we may find such expressions as: ''since in the days of my Imperial Sultanate, the enforcement of the Shariah of Ahmed is the utimate goal of my desire and obedience to the laws of Mustafa at the end of all my wishes''. Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman history and Law,* p. 140

994), who extended his criticism even to Mevlânâ Celaleddin Rumî and İbn Arabi.[345]

His successor and the longest reigning *şeyhülislam* of the Empire Ebussud Efendi was

not as intolerant as his predecessor but issued critical juridical decision (*fetvas*) against

sufi orders.[346] Besides, the growing appeal of sufism and mystical movements raised

questions in the ruling elites' mind of the Empire. The trend was fueled by the relative

recession in financial and military achievements towards the end of the century.

Growing discontent against deviant behavior and laziness of sufis spread among the

Ottoman educated circles and bureaucrats.[347] It seems that there was a propaganda led

by the authority to warn ordinary people against Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. In other

words, reaction to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples was a part of the disputes stemming

from prevailing intellectual and political atmosphere during the sixteenth century.

The complexity of the problem of conformity to the sacred law can be traced in the

lines of this thesis. An idealized image of Melâmî-Bayrâmî given in the Melâmî-

Bayrâmî texts sometimes contradicts the information we collect through the stories and

other state records. The first case where the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples were claimed to

distort the established conduct of religious obligations was seen during İsmail Maşuki's

short adventure in the capital city. He had been sent to İstanbul by his father as his

regent as Sultan Süleyman had asked his father to reside in İstanbul.[348] Lalizâde and

Müstakimzâde record that he preached in the imperial mosques of Ayasofya and

Beyazid, where his arousing speeches attracted huge crowds. The juridical records

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[345] Mehmet İpşirli, 'Çivizade Muhiddin Mehmed', *DIA*.
[346] Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussud Efendi'nin Fetvaları ışığında 16.Asır Türk Hayatı,* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1972). *Fetva no:978.*
[347] Cornell Fleischer, *Tarihçi Mustafa Ali: Bir Osmanlı Aydın ve Bürokratı,* Trans. Ayla Ortaç. (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), p. 141, 175; Celebrated biography writer and poet Latifi (d. 1572) and Mustafa Ali (d. 1600), the Ottoman bureaucrat of the late sixteenth century who was apparently sympathetic towards the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order, fervently denounced idle sufis and described them as a burden to other people see Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*. (Salt Lake City : University of Utah Press, c1994).
[348] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 25, *Semerât,* p. 249 *, Menâkıbnâme,* p.18. İsmail Maşuki's visit to İstanbul was a controversial adventure. İsmail Erünsal relying on *Miratu'l-Işık* of Abdurrahman Askeri's, another halife of İstanbul, claims that İsmail Maşuki was himself willing to go to İstanbul in spite of his father. Furthermore, it is not clear whom Sultan Süleyman had invited to İstanbul, whether Ali Aksarayî or his son İsmail Maşuki.

show that he was accused of making controversial statements about the established norms of Islamic jurisprudence like redefining *helal* and *haram*, allowing adultery and inventing new forms of praying.[349] Likewise, as recently noted, very similar accusations were being produced in Hamza Bâlî's case. Secondly, we understand that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs were accused of heresy because of some ecstastic expressions (*şathiyyat*) they uttered as was the case in İsmail Maşuki and Hamza Bâlî again.[350] Here Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts admit that Hamza Bâlî was a ''man of ecstasy'' and somewhat extravagant in his speeches; Sarı Abdullah, like Müstakimzâde, quotes that ''hypocrites claimed he was saying words incompatible with the Sharia'' yet the content of speeches is left untouched. In Lalizâde's record it is stated that ''Esrâr-ı rahmâniyi mutazammın türki eşâr ve ledünni güftârı sudûra başladı (he started composing Turkish verses about the divine secrets)''[351] Similarly, Sarı Abdullah defines Hamza Bâlî as a man who was intoxicated (*cezbeli)* and was therefore executed. That is to say, Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts concede that their sheikhs said some strange words and showed abnormal behavior.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmîs seem to have been more successful in setting up friendly ties with the ulema class after the late sixteenth century.[352] Müstakimzâde records that *Şeyhülislam* Ebu'l-Meyamin Mustafa (1603-4, 1606) was a disciple of İdris-i Muhtefî.[353] Imber, again, points out that *vezir* Ferhad Paşa (d.1595) became a disciple of Bosnian Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Hüseyin Lamekani, (d. 1625) and this rapprochement intensified in the eighteenth century when the Melâmî-Bayrâmî *kutb* Paşmakçızâde Ali Efendi became *Şeyhülislam* in 1703. It also suggests that certain members of the ulema class might have been attached to the order and thus might have

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[349] *Zeyl'u-Şakâik,* pp. 87-88.
[350] Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı*, Melâmîlik ve Melâmîker,* p. 48. For an extended discussion of the problem see Ernst's *Words of Ecstasy* particularly pp. 9-51, also see footnote 34 in the second chapter
[351] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 26, for the exact phrase recorded by Mustakimzde also see *Menâkıbnâme* pp. 18-20.
[352] *Studies in Ottoman History and Law,* p. 150; Notably Melâmî-Bayrâmî kutb Hasan Kabaduz plays a significant role in forging better ties among Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples and *Ulema* members.
[353] *Menâkıbnâme,* p. 145.

read Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies. The authors therefore probably needed to represent an image of Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in perfect compatibility with the sacred law. Furthermore, we have already discussed that during the time of Lalizâde and Müstakimzâde, the Melâmî-Bayrâmîs intermingled more with the religious authority. Lalizâde and Mustakimze were coming from ulema families; both probably knew very well the concerns of these people. We should recall that Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts employ a rigid tone in forming attachment with the Sharia. In *Meslekü'l Uşşâk* of Sarı Abdullah, quoted by Lalizâde, the verses say:

> ''Supererogatory pray makes you closer to God.
> You hear, hold, walk, see with him''.[354]

That is why Müstakimzâde too used a careful language particularly in the sections he talked about the Sharia, and saw no reason to reignite past disputes. Perhaps, he aimed to forestall the accusations imputed on a sufi order for whose adherents he had sympathy and respect. He gives the impression that the stamp of ''heretic'' labeled on Melâmî-Bayrâmîs was ungrounded. Probably as a Nakşibendî disciple who was supposed to be a perfect follower of the Prophet's way *(ehl-i sünnet)*, he paid special attention to this discussion. Furthermore, Müstakimzâde was a curious man who could collect any available information he sought to find; that is why we can assume that he should have known other relevant sources and was aware of the contrasting arguments. However, he gave very limited information on the accusations made against İsmail Maşuki and Hamza Bâlî.[355]

On the other hand, the problem of commitment to the religious norms continued in the seventeenth century. British traveler Rycaut's description of the religious sects in

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[354] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 139, 146. '' Nevafil çün takarrubtur, Hak ile söyler, işitir
Hakla tutar, yürür, görür, kurb-maiyettir.'' (There is a 'vezin' problem in the verses)
[355] He makes very little comment on the issue meanwhile in Atâyi, from whom Müstakimzâde cites some of the stories, a detailed description of thepersecution trials are given

the Ottoman society of the seventeenth century signifies that a group of people whose leader was Sütçü Beşir were transgressing the sacred law.[356] In addition, Lalizâde notes Sütçü Beşir was being visited by dervishes of the Hurufi order, founded by Nesimi who is venerated by Sarı Abdullah in *Semerât*, from his homeland *Arnavutluk*. He adds that these meetings gave rise to notorious rumors about Sütçü Beşir Ağa's activities.[357] Given the fact that Sütçü Beşir was executed in the 1660s, we may argue that traces of heterodox beliefs were still tangible within the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order even in the late seventeenth century. Lalizâde makes it clear that after Sultan Beşir's death, Melâmî-Bayrâmî brethren *(erbab)* began to display deviant behavior and ''only God could know why they went astray''.[358] These findings hint that the disciples failed to perform what was suggested to them in the texts. Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographers were probably suffering as well from those undisciplined disciples, and were predominantly concerned with training them. To explain the attitude of Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies, the argument that most dervish orders unorthodox in their practices sought to appear as if professing loyalty to the Sharia in order to appease the oppression seems valid but lacking.[359] Taking a closer look at the texts, we see that they convey the message through letters written to the *halife*, or to the disciples. In other words, in Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies esoteric purposes were on the agenda. To Lalizâde because of these people's wrongdoing, the bad reputation of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs increased and eventually state authorities tightened their surveillance on the order.[360] Therefore, Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies presumably intended to define a prototype of Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple that would not arouse reaction among the ulema.

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[356] Paul Rycaut, *the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, p. 131. However, he identifies these people as Bektasis.
[357] *Sergüzeşt,* p. 54 and *Semerât*, pp. 195-98.
[358] *Sergüzeşt*, pp. 70-75
[359] Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p. 141.
[360] *Sergüzeşt*, p. 113.

It can be acceded that the legacy of executions did some harm to the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order.[361] Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs had to cope with the legacy of their past.[362] In the case of Hazma Bâlî's execution, he was put to death due to the fact that he was of the same order with İsmail Maşuki as Ebussud Efendi explained the cause of execution to be ''due to his belonging to Oğlan Şeyh's path''.[363] Similarly, İsmail Maşuki's trial was shown as reference while Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh Gazanfer Dede (d. 1566-67) was persecuted.[364] As the legacy of the events was reconstructed in public discourse, Melâmî-Bayrâmî affiliation might have become an umbrella under which, ''dissipated'' (*sefih*) and ''idle'' (*heva ehli)* people, could perform what they wanted and distort the established norms of religion. Though the texts do not give a convincing answer as to why the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order appealed to these men, it seems clear that Melâmî-Bayrâmîs hagiographies aimed to find a way to cleanse these people. Besides, they seem to focus on eradicating the memory of the state elite and ulema class who frequently retrieved past incidents of Melâmî-Bayrâmî dervishes. We could not reach a clear idea about whether the authors approved of these controversial behaviors of the former sheikhs. It is rather more tangible that Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies invented a different agenda where they could define and describe the kind of Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples that would fit into the conditions of the time these texts were produced.

Conclusion

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[361] Colin Imber, *Studies in Ottoman History and Law*, p. 147. Imber implies that the real reason why they did not wear distinguishing clothes might have been due to hiding from the state authorities who were searching for them because of heretical applications.

[362] See the records of 1559 about İsmail Maşuki in Ahmed Refik Altınay, *Onaltıncı Asırda Râfizîlik ve Bektaşîlik*, p. 17.

[363] ''*Oğlan Şeyhin tarikindendir diye*''

[364] Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliyâ*, Cilt II, pp. 546-7, "*... Oğlan Şeyh'in katli işinde, fakir hadd-i mutaddan hariç tevekkuf ve teenni etmişimdir. Merhüm Mevlânâ Şeyhi Çelebi ilhadına hükmettikten sonra, iki üç meclis dahi tevekkuf edip, asla tevcihe mecal kalmayıp, ihtimal munkati' olmayınca hükmolunmamıştır. Bunun (Gazanfer Dede) ol tarikden idiği şer' ile sabit olmadan, onun mecrasına icra olunmak meşru değildir.*"

Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde were presumably cognizant of the changing behavior of the disciples and possible dangers of intensive power struggle that turned out to be competitive and more harmful in the capital city. To have been backed by the state elite inside the palace and by the ulema would have given a strong hand against the possible conflicts they would encounter. Reluctant to blame the sultan or the Ottoman ruling establishment, they instead chose to blame some "malevolent" individuals who were envious of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs. This approach was very probably intentional to sustain the activities of the order and remain in the administrative body for a so long time.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî order should have built up a legitimate ground on which they could be motivated to resist the troubles they had to face. At the same time, it should have enabled them to maintain the code of conduct and establish networks they were attached to. Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies notably *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeş*t served this function. They also manifested the firm attachment of Melâmî-Bayrâmî to their codes and sheikhs.[365] As noted, Sarı Abdullah lists other sufi martyrs and marks that they were proud of being sacrificed for the sake of their ideal end and notes that İsmail Maşuki intentionally chose to be murdered even though he had chance to escape. Actually, employment of such terminology as ''şehid'' and ''aşık'' in Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts are significant signifiers for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî conception of persecution. ''God's lover'' (*aşık)* should be courageous, stand firm against the attacks whatever its consequence.[366]

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[365] The attachment of disciples to their master was firm to the extent that followers of Sütçü Beşir demanded Sunizade to apply the same punishment to them when their sheikh was killed.

[366] Hidden sheikhs of the order seem to be paradoxical figures not willing to sacrifice their lives. It could be argued that they were personally not anxious to be executed but opted to obscure their identity for the good of their disciples.

In this chapter, we have tried to decipher the representation of the codes thanks to which the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order could remain alive in the social and political domain. The decline of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order by the mid eighteenth century, which deserves further specific research, occurred around a hundred years after the death of the last executed Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh. It would essentially require an in-depth picture of the relations among Melâmî-Bayrâmî order and major state institutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to better decipher the codes of Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this study, I dealt with different but related aspects of three hagiographic texts devoted primarily to the sheikhs of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. I suggested that hagiographic texts could be read from different perspectives in terms of intention, context and audience. By paying attention to these different aspects of hagiographic writing I have analyzed the representation of particular themes in the Melâmî-Bayrâmî hagiographies and sought to shed light on the endeavor of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in the Ottoman Empire.

The Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples embraced the idea of '*melâmet*', which promoted hiding their state of spiritual training and drawing blame upon themselves even by openly displaying their faults. Some Melâmî-Bayrâmîs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were persecuted and executed, which led other Melâmî-Bayrâmîs to hide their affiliation. Yet by the early seventeenth century Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching became popular among the ulema class and political elites.

Given the turbulent history of the order, it was crucial to first locate the three hagiographers within that history. Sarı Abdullah Efendi wrote *Semerâtü'l Fuâd* in the early seventeenth century when Melâmî-Bayrâmî were still reeling from the conflicts of the sixteenth century but also gaining ground among the Ottoman ruling elite. By contrast, the persecutions had already become a thing of the past, when Lalizâde Efendi wrote his *Sergüzeşt,* and Müstakimzâde wrote the *Menâkıbnâme-i Bayrâmiye* in the eighteenth century.

Despite this basic difference between the contexts of the three texts, nevertheless, all three texts represented an effort to project a considerably sanitized image of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî. This effort stemmed partly from the fact that all three authors belonged to the ruling elite and shared the norms and sensibilities of that elite, while two of them (Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde) were adherents of the Melami Bayramis, and one (Müstakimzade) enjoyed good relations with them. The authors presumably met many people who had negative opinions about the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order but we have also found out that the stories of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order were still appealing to the people around them. In order to influence public opinion, Sarı Abdullah Efendi and Lalizâde in particular seem to have made a projection from their age to the past and define the contemporary Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching with the information they collected about the former experiences of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order. In other words, they might have aimed to maintain the prestige of the famous sheikhs of the past, or to be freed of the burden of past struggles.

In terms of hagiographical scholarship there was a transformation of the Ottoman literary world by the mid-sixteenth century. *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* was an early representative of this new trend consisting of sufi life stories relying on a comprehensive literature. Around a century later Lalizâde's *Sergüzeşt* and

Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* were written one after another. During this period, there was an increase in the number of biographical sources which can be detected in Müstakimzâde's *Menâkıbnâme* as he aimed to compile the life stories of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and probably present them to a slightly different audience. No other record was written on Melâmî-Bayrâmî sufis after the *Menâkıbnâm*e, thereby making Müstakimzâde the last author who wrote on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî history.

This study has shown that particularly *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* had an important function in defining the codes of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî teaching, describing an ideal type for the Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciple. The sheikh of the order was represented as someone who remained at the centre of relations with the disciples, sympathizers and also antagonists. He was expected to have spiritual potency, from which the disciple could benefit in his/her personal and social life. Importantly, the Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikh also had to comply with the norms of the shariah and the Sunni community (ehl-i sünnet). This last point emphasized by the Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts presents a different picture of the order than that suggested by modern scholarship. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's wholesale representation of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs as "heretical" and "oppositional" would be a case in point.

It can be presumed that these Melâmî-Bayrâmî texts were addressed at Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples who had to be unconditionally attached to their sheikhs. Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde presumably wanted to educate the disciples whenever the communication among Melâmî-Bayrâmîs loosened and deprived them of necessary training. The texts probably aimed to address the disciples of other sufi orders as well. Sarı Abdullah Efendi and Müstakimzâde emphasized the converging patterns among the different sufi orders.

The representation of Melâmî-Bayrâmîs' relations with the other sufi orders was another major theme examined in this study. Melâmî-Bayrâmîs sometimes benefited from this friendly relationship when they were persecuted. On the other hand, some stories display conflicting attitudes among Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs and other sufi sheikhs. They probably aimed to exalt Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs where they could prove the superiority of the order. Besides, we may notice that the texts touches on the relationship with Halvetîs and Nakşibendîs who seemed to be committed to orthodox İslam at large, but gives no information about the relationship between Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples and the Bektaşi order or Kalenderi dervishes even in the sixteenth century. Yet, it should be considered that Müstakimzâde and Lalizâde wrote in the eighteenth century where the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order became more integrated with the mainstream religious codes and probably did not need to speculate on this controversial relationship.

The third and last theme examined in this study was the representation of the persecution of earlier Melâmî-Bayrâmî masters. Since all three of the writers examined here were state servants or the members of ulema families, they had to write on the institutions to which they belonged and its relations with the sufi order they were attached to. Sarı Abdullah and Lalizâde Abdülbâki might have thought about how to overcome this dilemma, and probably sought to reach a consensus. These texts intended to present a righteous image of the order to provide relevant answers in the face of possible opposition from the ulema and the state elite who would read them. The texts include some conflicting, or paradoxical, images in their evaluation of this relationship. Actually the patterns of *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* resembled some *menâkıbnâme* texts of the seventeenth century such as Halvetî Nazmi Efendi's *Hediyetü'l-İhvan* which explained the life stories of Halvetî sheikhs, presenting an explanation for the

conflicts and disputes in which they engaged. However, we may argue that they, including Müstakimzâde's text, tend to conceal the details of the stories of persecuted sheikhs. It is claimed that the sorrowful fate of Melâmî-Bayrâmî sheikhs stemmed from personal hatred and misunderstandings. While doing this, *Semerâtü'l-Fuâd* and *Sergüzeşt* in particular address to Melâmî-Bayrâmî disciples defending the idea that being the target of critics is an ultimate end for those people with Melâmî-orientation; and praise their ancestors who had suffered from this. What is striking is that despite a century of interval between the two authors, they employed the same perspective in evaluating these experiences.

Hagiographic texts on the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order require a careful reading with respect to the discourse, representation and themes they employ. They provide valuable information for the researcher who would stroll around the contested domains of mysticism or the question of orthodoxy and heresy. On the other hand, observing the history of the Melâmî-Bayrâmî order in the Ottoman Empire could be helpful to overcome the limitations of hagiographic writing. Yet we should stick to the interpretation of what the texts say happened or should happen, and can better understand the ''messages'' contained in the texts and their ''function'' in relation to their social-historical context. Then, deciphering these texts and their socio-political implications will be a meaningful scholarly endeavor.

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