

İSMAİL HAKKI BURSEVİ AND THE POLITICS OF BALANCE

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İSMAİL HAKKI BURSEVİ AND THE POLITICS OF BALANCE

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Thesis Abstract

Merve Tabur, “İsmail Hakkı Bursevi and the Politics of Balance”

This thesis examines the religio-political commentary of a late seventeenth and early eighteenth century Celveti sheikh, İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, who operated in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. The main focus is on the representation of political and spiritual authorities and Sufi-state relations in six texts composed by Bursevi in the early eighteenth century. The analysis of these narrative sources reveals that İsmail Hakkı Bursevi was one of the many commentators on what has been narrated as a post-Süleymanic decline in Ottoman historiography up to this day. As a follower of the twelfth century mystic Ibn ‘Arabi, Bursevi defined the reasons of decline and provided possible solutions to restore order within a religious discourse which fed from Sufi notions and concepts. Thus he formulated a Sufi interpretation of the decline paradigm. The estrangement of spiritual and political authorities, represented by the Sufi sheikh and the sultan respectively, formed the basis of his arguments. Furthermore, his views regarding the spiritual authority of the Sufi sheikh as the saint and the inheritor of the prophet reflect the ways in which the Sufi sheikh founded his legitimacy and situated himself vis-a-vis the Ottoman state. This thesis elaborates Bursevi’s political thought by contextualizing it not only within particular intellectual traditions but also within the historical realities of the period.

Tez Özeti

Merve Tabur, “İsmail Hakkı Bursevi ve İtidal Siyaseti”

Bu tez, geç onyedinci ve erken onsekizinci yüzyıllarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu topraklarında faaliyet göstermiş olan Celveti şeyhi İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin dini-siyasi yorumlarını incelemektedir. Ana odak Bursevi'nin erken onsekizinci yüzyılda yazdığı altı metinde siyasi ve ruhani otoritenin ve Sufi-devlet ilişkilerinin temsili sorunsalıdır. Anlatıya dayanan bu kaynakların analizi İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Kanuni Sultan Süleyman sonrası dönemi Osmanlı çöküş dönemi olarak ele alan yorumculardan biri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Onikinci yüzyıl mistiği İbn 'Arabi'nin takipçisi olan Bursevi, çöküşün sebeplerini ve düzenin sağlanmasına yönelik olası çözümleri tasavvufi terimlerden ve kavramlardan beslenen dini bir söyleme dayanarak açıklamaktadır. Bu sebeple çöküş paradigmasına sufi yorumu getirdiği söylenebilir. Argümanlarının temelini sırasıyla şeyh ve sultan tarafından temsil edilen ruhani ve siyasi otoritelerin ayrılması oluşturmaktadır. Bu açıdan, Bursevi'nin peygamberin varisi ve veli olarak değerlendirdiği sufi şeyhinin ruhani otoritesine yönelik görüşleri, şeyhin meşruiyetini sağlama ve kendisini Osmanlı devletine karşı konumlandırma yöntemlerini yansıtmaktadır. Bu tez Bursevi'nin siyasi düşüncesini sadece belirli entelektüel akımlar içerisinde ele almakla kalmamakta, aynı zamanda dönemin tarihsel gerçeklerinin bağlamına oturtmaya çalışmaktadır.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is the outcome of an effort to study on a much neglected period of Ottoman Sufism: the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It is most of all an attempt in intellectual history. Focusing my attention on a particular Sufi sheikh from the Celveti order, İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, and his writings, I aim to analyze his religio-political discourse within the broader socio-political context and intellectual traditions at the same time.

The period in which Bursevi lived (1653 – 1725) witnessed the rule of five sultans (Mehmed IV, Süleyman II, Ahmed II, Mustafa II and Ahmed III) and the Köprülüs who occupied the office of the grand vizier in an unbroken chain between the years 1656-1683 and at intervals in the early eighteenth century. While Mehmed IV was deposed after the Battle of Mohacs, Mustafa II was dethroned in a janissary uprising (*Edirne Vakası*) in 1703. Although Bursevi did not live long enough to see it, in 1730 Ahmed III was also going to be deposed by a janissary uprising, that of Patrona Halil. The rising visibility of the janissaries in political decision making processes was coupled by the increasing significance of vizieral households, local notables and palace staff (specifically the chief eunuchs) in the governance of the empire. One can speak of a gradual diffusion of political power among diverse groups and an expansion in the state apparatus during this period.

The later part of the seventeenth century was marked by constant wars with the Holy League which started with the second siege of Vienna in 1683. As the wars in

the European front ceased with Karlowitz (1699) and Istanbul (1703) Treaties, territorial losses pointed once again to the vincibility of the Ottomans which many early modern and modern historians viewed as one of the many signs of an Ottoman decline. However the period of peace did not last long since the Ottomans fought against Russia in 1710-1711 and against Venice and Austria in 1715-1718.

Indeed the period starting from the 1580's (referred to as the post-Süleymanic age) was marked for Ottomans by constant warfare both in the eastern and western fronts (only to stagnate in short intervals), increasing military defeats, janissary rebellions, banditry in the countryside, dethronements of sultans, political factionalization breeding ties of patronage along with increasing economic and social mobilization.¹ From a wider angle, Baki Tezcan claims that this was an era in which expansion in the "political nation" was matched by a correlated expansion in the rising economic and social power of diverse groups in the ruling elites, only to brim over to common men and women who by the early eighteenth century constituted an urban middle class.² We should keep in mind that the seventeenth century was also

¹ Dana Sajdi, "Decline, Its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way Of Introduction," in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. *idem* (London, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), pp. 1-40.

² I use the phrase "political nation" in reference to Baki Tezcan's use of the term. The expansion of the "political nation" in the early modern period indicates the increasing visibility of previously under-represented groups in the political arena. Throughout the seventeenth century they increasingly have more influence in the political decision-making processes. One such group is the janissaries, who by forming alliances with the grand mufti have influenced the deposition of many sultans. Other groups include royal women, bureaucrats, palace staff, etc. The "political nation" is thus a generic term used to denote all those groups who participate in the political arena as historical agents. Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); For a similar view that approaches the issue from the perspective of the offices of the grand mufti and the grand vizier: Hüseyin Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma Öncesi Meşrutiyetçi Gelişmeler," *Divan Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 13, no. 28 (2008).

marked by public religious discussions taking place at the mosque pulpits. The main parties to these discussions were mosque preachers who responded to the transformations the Ottoman society was undergoing through a sharia-minded religious discourse. Although these fervent discussions have frequently been described as a Kadızadeli contention against the Sufis, the lines between the two groups were not necessarily so clearly drawn. Indeed both shared a common discourse of piety and sharia abidance and the same cultural space of the mosque in voicing their concerns since in the seventeenth century it had become a usual practice for Sufi sheikhs to serve as mosque preachers.

Many Ottoman commentators reflected on these transformations, shaking of the status quo and the gradual decentralization of the absolutist central government as a sign of decline and decay which reflected itself in all segments of the society. Scholars from various milieus reflected on the perceived decay and degeneration of the Ottoman society and institutions in their writings and provided remedies to establish order again.³ Although it is difficult to tell whether these commentaries that addressed mostly figures of political authority (mainly the sultan, the grand vizier and other high-ranking statesmen) were sincere attempts at reform or instruments for pragmatic authors to establish networks of patronage, one can indicate for sure that

³ For a discussion regarding the transformations viewed as decline by Ottomans in the early modern period see Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline," in *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, no. 1-2 (1999), pp. 30-75; For a work that reassesses the European narratives of early modern Ottoman decline: Caroline Finkel, "The Treacherous Cleverness of Hindsight': Myths of Ottoman Decay," in *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchange with the East*, ed. Gerald M. Maclean (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 148-174; Donald Quataert, "Ottoman History Writing and the Changing Attitudes Towards the Notion of Decline," *History Compass* 1, no. 1 (January-December 2003), pp. 1-9.

the most popular genre among commentators was the mirrors for princes.⁴ A wide range of commentators including bureaucrats, administrators and religious scholars made use of the readily available concepts, imagery, motifs, stories and literary conventions of the genre and adjusted them to their own needs.⁵ Among the most frequently used themes were the morality and piety of the rulers, justice, order and disorder of the world, balance and the indispensability of counseling statesmen.⁶ There were also more reform-minded treatises whose most popular examples were given by figures like Lütfi Paşa, Katib Çelebi, Koçi Beg and Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa. Both the advice and reform treatises revolved around a narrative of decline and degradation which has affected the historiography of the early modern Ottoman Empire up to this day.⁷

Bursevi as a sunna-minded, sharia-abiding Celveti sheikh who witnessed the changes of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries belonged to one of the groups who participated in this exhaustive critique and commentary activity through

⁴ Rifa'at Abou-El Hajj, "The Expression of Ottoman Political Culture in the Literature of Advice to Princes (*Nasihatnameler*): Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries," *Sociology in the Rubric of Social Science*, eds. R. K. Bhattarcharya and A.K. Ghosh (Calcutta, 1995), pp. 282-292; Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* 1, (1962), pp. 71-87; Douglas A. Howard, "Genre and Myth in The Ottoman Advice for Kings Literature," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 137-166; Fatih Çalışır, "Decline of a Myth: Perspectives on the Ottoman Decline," *The History School*, no. 9 (January-April, 2011) pp. 37-60.

⁵ Howard, "Genre and Myth," pp. 147-148.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-166.

⁷ Baki Tezcan, "The Politics of Early Modern Ottoman Historiography," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, eds. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 167-198.

an adaptation of the available literary tools within a religio-political discourse.⁸ He was not only a prolific author who composed more than a hundred and twenty works but one who dispersed his religio-political commentaries in a variety of his texts. The way in which Bursevi perceived decline in the position of the Sufi sheikh (which he conceptualized as a saint) vis-à-vis political authority in his time constituted the core of his narrative regarding social and political disorder. For him the essential reason behind this disorder laid in the alienation of spiritual authority from political authority symbolized in the estrangement of sultans and statesmen from Sufi sheikhs. The Sufi epitomized in his existence the essentials of a balanced self governance combining the rules of the sharia, the sunna of the prophet and Sufi mores. This was the exact system Bursevi wished would be reflected in the governance of the empire. It was thus deemed necessary not only for the sultan but also for all other statesmen (and religious authorities) to actively engage in the improvement of their morality through engagement with Sufis. However, because they did not value Sufis, ask for their advice and make efforts to enjoin the Sufi path, rulers had gone astray under the influence of extremist people which in turn caused disorder to prevail in the society.⁹

⁸ For a late sixteenth century example of political commentaries made by a Sufi, see Nathalie Clayer, “Quand l’hagiographie se fait l’écho des dérèglements socio-politiques: Le *Menâkibnâme* de Müniri Belgrâdî,” *Syncretisme et hérésies dans l’Orient seldjoukide et ottoman (Xv^e-XVII^e siècles)* ed. Gilles Veinstein (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 363-381; Nathalie Clayer, “Müniri Belgradi: Un Représentant de la ‘ilmiyye dans la région de Belgrade fin XVI^e – début du XVII^e siècle,” *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte - Arts, Women and Scholars*, eds. Christoph K. Neumann and Sabine Prator (Istanbul: Simurg, 2002), pp. 549-568; For a seventeenth century example of a *nasihatname* written by a Sufi see Derin Terzioğlu, “Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The *Nasihatname* of Hasan Addressed to Murad IV,” *Archivum Ottomanicum*, no. 27 (2010).

⁹ İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” in *Üç Tuhfe: Seyr-i Süluk*, eds. Mehmet Ali Akidil and Şeyda Öztürk (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000) p.209/ Fol. 8b-9a. The volume cited includes three *tuhfes* of Bursevi and henceforth will be cited with the name of Bursevi instead of the editors for practical reasons.

Bursevi positioned the influence of these two generic groups of people to make a case of the two extreme poles around which his discourse of balance was constructed. He also provided remedies and counsels not only for the rulers, but also for the religious scholars and common people for the establishment of equilibrium in the social sphere.

Since he was a religious scholar, Bursevi's discussion relied heavily on a religio-mystical appropriation of the abovementioned themes, stories and imagery. A prominent aspect of the *tuhfes* analyzed for the purposes of this thesis is that they do not necessarily fit into the genre of mirrors for princes (except for *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*) by virtue of their organization and contents. However, throughout these works Bursevi made frequent recourse to the same themes, conventions and concepts that have been used by Ottoman mirror authors since the mid-sixteenth century in representing the political system in which they lived. Therefore an approach which focuses on the circulation of these shared discourses in different forms of texts which addressed various people rather than the mirrors as a genre can be beneficial in shedding light on the intellectual worlds of early modern Ottomans.

Secondary Literature

At this stage, it is difficult to speak of a comprehensive historiography on Ottoman political thought which establishes continuities, divergences and transformations within the currents of Ottoman intellectual history and connects it to other strands of thought emanating from different polities in time and space. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's article in that respect is one of the few attempts at delineating the main intellectual traditions in which Ottoman religious and political thought is rooted. The article is

helpful in providing the general framework of Ottoman intellectual thought and undertakes a very difficult task. However for the sake of theoretization the author sometimes slips into simplified categories which may cause more obstacles than provide help if not scrutinized carefully.¹⁰ The difficulty arises partly from the fact that the Ottoman scholars, even in their heyday of political expression in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, did not produce independent works dealing with political theory or philosophy. The historian has to dig in a wide range of works to catch a glimpse of the Ottomans' views regarding political authority and how they related to it. Cemal Kafadar has wonderfully emphasized the diversity of these sources such as fetvas, literature on ethics and jurisprudence, poetry and stories along with the widely recognized mirrors for princes and histories.¹¹

Among these sources the advice/reform treatises written within a period stretching from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century have gained much attention in modern historiography.¹² Some of these advice/reform treatises have been translated into English by scholars such as Andreas Tietze, Walter Livingston Wright and

¹⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Düşünce Hayatı, 14.-17. Yüzyıllar," in *Yeniçağlar Anadolu'sunda İslam'ın Ayak Sesleri: Osmanlı Dönemi* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011) pp. 147-192.

¹¹ Cemal Kafadar, "Osmanlı Siyasal Düşüncesinin Kaynakları Üzerine Gözlemler," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* vol. 1, 8th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), pp. 23-36.

¹² Some preliminary works on the subject: Bernard Lewis' "Ottoman Observers on Ottoman Decline" which provides only preliminary information without much critical stance towards the handling of sources. Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962), pp. 71-87; Agah Sırrı Levend, "Siyaset-nameler," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı Belleten* (1962): 162-194; Cornell H. Fleischer, "From Şeyhzade Korkud to Mustafa Âli: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman Nasihatname," in *IIIrd Congress on the Social and Political History of Turkey. Princeton University 24-26 August 1983*, eds. Heath W. Lowry and Ralph S. Hattox (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1990), pp. 67-77.

Geoffrey Lewis.¹³ These are becoming increasingly more available in Latin transcriptions and modern Turkish as well.¹⁴ The common trend has been to differentiate between works focusing generically on morality and ethics following the ancient Perso-Islamic tradition of counseling rulers and reform treatises which offer a more specific approach to the Ottoman state mechanism and historical realities from an administrative perspective. Particularly with the expansion of the bureaucracy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bureaucrats became one of the most visible producers of such texts. Thus modern historians' focus has been mostly on the writings of statesmen, administrators and bureaucrats whose political thoughts have been analyzed within a discourse of *kanun* (sultanic-secular law) minded reform as opposed to sharia-minded reformism. Indeed such a simple dichotomy of secular – religious has not proved beneficial in delineating the subtleties and common themes of Ottoman political discourses used by different authors with fluid identities, loyalties and hence intellectual views.

¹³ Andreas Tietze, *Mustafa Ali's Counsel for Sultans of 1581*, 2 vols, (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979-1982); Katip Çelebi, *The Balance of Truth*, ed. G.L. Lewis (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957); Sarı Mehmet Paşa, *Ottoman Statecraft: The Book of Counsel for Vezirs and Governors (Naşâ'ih ül-vüzera ve'l-ümera) of Sari Mehmed Pasha, the Defterdâr* ed. Walter Livingston Wright, Jr. (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press; Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1935).

¹⁴ For examples see: Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi: (Eski ve yeni harflerle)*, ed. Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara: Akçağ, 1998); Aziz Efendi, *Kamunname-i Sultani li Aziz Efendi, On Yedinci Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Devlet Adamının Islahat Teklifleri*, transl. Rhoads Murphey, ed. Şinasi Tekin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1985); Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhîsü'l-Beyân fî Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osman*, ed. Sevim İlgüren (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1988); for a comprehensive list of both the primary and secondary literature on the kanun minded Ottoman advice and reform treatises until the twentieth century see: Birgül A. Güler and Nuray E. Keskin, "Devlet Reformunu Tarihten Çalışmak," in *Tartışma Metinleri* no. 88 (November 2005), accessed at http://www.politics.ankara.edu.tr/eski/dosyalar/tm/SBF_WP_88.pdf, 10 September 2011.

Particularly the works of Rifa'at Abou El-Haj have been significant attempts to examine the mirrors for princes books in a critical fashion as reflections of the ways in which Ottoman intellectuals tried to accommodate social, economical and political change in their writings.¹⁵ Cornell Fleischer's study on the life and intellectual output of the late sixteenth century bureaucrat Mustafa Ali is a leading contribution to the area since it aims to contextualize the author's life and his political commentary within the historical realities of the period.¹⁶

Another work that stands out among the literature is Douglas Howard's article which focuses on the literary aspects of the mirrors for princes genre. He not only presents some of the generic themes and motifs available in the majority of the advice treatises but also comments on the way in which they were organized.¹⁷ It is necessary that such studies on literary conventions, common themes and images transcend the limits of particular genres to be able to reflect the diffusiveness and fluidity of political discourses among authors from different backgrounds and the various genres in which they reflect their ideas. This indeed is one of the prospects of this thesis.

¹⁵ Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj. *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, 2nd ed. (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005); Rifa'at Abou-El-Haj, "The Ottoman Nasihatname as a Discourse over 'Morality,'" in *Mélanges Professeur Robert Mantran*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi (Zeghouan: Publication du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Ottomanes, 1988), pp. 17-30; Rifa'at Ali Abou-El-Haj, "Power and Social Order: the Uses of Kanun," in *The Ottoman City and its Parts: Structures and Social Order*, ed. Irene A Bierman, Riffa'at Abou-El-Haj, and Donald Preziosi (New Rochelle: A.D. Caratzas, 1991), pp. 77-99.

¹⁶ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

¹⁷ Howard, "Genre and Myth," pp. 137-166.

Besides the advice/reform treatises whose significance for Ottoman political thought have been consistently repeated in the available literature, state-appointed histories written by Ottoman scholars have also come to the attention of modern historians as valuable windows into the minds of their authors.¹⁸ In this genre, Lewis V. Thomas's early survey on Naima is useful as an index to Naima's life and the common themes of his texts but is bereft of a critical analysis of his political commentary.¹⁹ Baki Tezcan's works remain to be the most nuanced takes on the political expressions of Ottoman historians in the early modern period. In the "Politics of Early Modern Ottoman Historiography," he deals particularly with Ottoman histories produced by court historians in the period between 1550 and 1800 and focuses not only on their contents but their production and reception by the intellectual circles and the wider public. This way, Tezcan reveals the intricate correlation between the disempowerment of the sultan and the formation of the state as a distinct entity from the sultan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the rising influence of court historiography and the way in which Ottoman historians reflected and conceptualized the Ottoman polity in their writings.²⁰ A general review of the available literature on early modern political thought thus points out to a

¹⁸ Kafadar, "Osmanlı Siyasal Düşüncesinin Kaynakları," p. 26.

¹⁹ Lewis V. Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, ed. Norman Itzkowitz (New York: New York University Press, 1972).

²⁰ Tezcan, "The Politics of Early Modern," pp. 167-198; Baki Tezcan, "The 1622 Military Rebellion in İstanbul: A Historiographical Journey," in *Mutiny and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jane Hathaway (Madison: University of Wisconsin, Center for Turkish Studies, 2004), pp. 25-43. For a more extensive historiographical discussion on the dethronement of Osman II see: Baki Tezcan, "Searching for Osman: A Reassessment of the Deposition of the Ottoman Sultan Osman II (1618-1622)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2001).

tendency to focus on the abovementioned two genres: histories and advice/reform treatises.

One last modern scholar to be mentioned before we pass on to the available secondary literature on the political expressions of Ottoman Sufis and their relationship with the state is Gabriel Piterberg. His book is important for its methodological discussion which lies at the foundation of this thesis as well: Piterberg focuses on the relationship between political discourses regarding the Ottoman state as produced in seventeenth century historiographical texts and the historical realities of the period. He tries to establish a midway between extreme post-modernist theories of history writing which reduce narrative sources to mere literary works and the restraint put on modern historians by the dominant paradigm that claims archival material to be the only reliable historical source.²¹

Studies on Ottoman Sufism, its relationship with the state and the political discourses used by Sufis in their texts have frequently been overlooked for the sake of more theological, literary or cultural debates. The history of Ottoman Sufism is in dire need of being articulated into the more general arguments regarding intellectual history and social, economic and political change in the Ottoman Empire. A simple elaboration of Sufi writings as timeless reflections of theological debates or as pure expressions of religiosity does not prove sufficient in enhancing our knowledge on Ottoman Sufis and how they shared in the common repertoire of Ottoman political discourses through a religio-mystical elaboration. The prevailing obstacle in the way

²¹ Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003).

of such an articulation is the stringent style and diverse languages (such as Arabic and Persian) in which most of these texts were composed. In that respect the theses composed mostly in the theology faculties of Turkish universities, although devoid of critical elaborations, are precious attempts at bringing these texts into light in Latin transcriptions which have been extremely beneficial for the purposes of this thesis. One of the prospects of this thesis is the critical elaboration and contextualization of these sources which are available only in raw format and articulate them into wider discussions on Ottoman political transformations and thought.

The general tendency in literature on Sufi-state relations and political thought has been to focus on particular periods and concepts, one such being the period stretching from the late Seljuk dynasty to the fifteenth century. The focus is on the role of the ghazi dervishes in the expansion and settlement of the early Ottoman polity. One of the early works on this issue was composed by Ömer Lütfi Barkan in which he emphasized the role of the dervishes in the sedantization and Islamization of the Ottomans and their settlement in the newly conquered lands through the establishment of lodges. Barkan mostly relied on the works of historians such as Aşıkpaşazade and Neşri.²² The seminal work about this period remains to be Cemal Kafadar's *Between Two Worlds* where he explores mostly historical and hagiographical texts. Even if the authors of such texts were not Sufis themselves, they were people associated with Sufism like the historian Aşıkpaşazade or at least they had shared in the syncretic and fluid political and cultural environment of the

²² Ömer L. Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri* (İstanbul: Hamle Yayın Dağıtım, n.d.).

frontier society in which the gaza ethos had flourished.²³ Thus although they cannot be investigated as direct channels into Sufi political thought, they offer us significant insights to the political discourses used in the expression of the relationship between the rising Ottoman state and early Ottoman ghazi dervishes (along with their subsequent marginalization with the centralization policies of the state in the fifteenth century).

Furthermore, Halil İnalçık's study on *Otman Baba Vilayetnamesi* analyses the way in which dervish-sultan relationships were conceptualized around the notion of the Pole²⁴ (which is adopted from Ibn 'Arabi) in a fifteenth century hagiography. Thus İnalçık introduces us the early Ottoman usage of a mystical discourse focusing on sainthood in negotiating power with the state.²⁵ Zeynep Aydoğan's master's thesis on the fifteenth century Saltukname, commissioned by Cem Sultan, adds to the study of hagiographies as political texts.²⁶ Sheikh Bedreddin and his fifteenth century messianic revolt against the Ottoman state is another much studied subject,

²³ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, CA; London: University of California Press, 1995).

²⁴ In Sufi literature pole refers to the person who is believed to occupy the highest rank in the spiritual hierarchy of saints. The subtleties of the term and Bursevi's take on it will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

²⁵ Halil İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the Otman Baba Vilayetnamesi," in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Indiana: Bloomington, 1993), pp. 19-36.

²⁶ Zeynep Aydoğan, "An Analysis of the Saltukname in Its Fifteenth Century Context" (M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007). See also Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Sarı Saltuk ve Saltukname," in *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2011) pp. 11-22.

sometimes to the detriment of historical criticism by way of an anachronistic reading of his life and political activism.²⁷

For the sixteenth century, studies focus mostly on the Süleymanic age. Transgressing the boundaries of genre is Hüseyin Yılmaz's doctoral dissertation which is an extensive study of Ottoman political thought during the reign of Süleyman I as expressed in a variety of works, through a variety of perspectives. He thoroughly examines the representation of the sultan, the grand vizier and the sultanate to comment on the changing political discourses of scholars and the parallel transformations in the organization of the Ottoman governmental system.²⁸ The most important aspect of this work for the purposes of this thesis is its introduction of the mystical theories of rulership into the discussion on political thought and its consideration of the writings of authors affiliated with Sufism in the sixteenth century. According to Hüseyin Yılmaz, the reason for the increasing circulation of Sufi concepts, titles and imagery in political discourses during this period was due to several factors (other than imperial rivalry with the Safavids) such as the increasing contact with non-Ottoman scholars' works, spread of Sufi orders in the empire, the rising interest of the ulema and the statesmen in Sufism and their millenarian expectations along with a current of messianism which affected diverse geographies

²⁷ Since there are many works dealing with Şeyh Bedreddin I provide only a few examples: Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "XIV. Yüzyılın Ahlatlı Ünlü Bir Sufi Feylesofu: Şeyh Bedreddin'in Hocası Şeyh Hüseyin-i Ahlati," in *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar*, pp. 35-43; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin* (Istanbul: Eti, 1966).

²⁸ Hüseyin Yılmaz, "The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Süleyman the Lawgiver (1520-1566)" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005).

in early modern Europe and Middle East.²⁹ Fleischer's article about the representation of Suleyman I in terms of messianic imagery is indicative of the widespread circulation of messianic expectations and Sufi discourses in the palace circle in the sixteenth century.³⁰ Ebru Sönmez's master's thesis on the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century bureaucrat İdris-i Bidlisi should also be mentioned at this point. The sources of this work transgress the mirror genre as well and address the significance of Bidlisi's religio-political writings in constructing the legitimacy of Ottoman rule vis-à-vis the Safavids.³¹

Particularly the sixteenth century has yielded interesting material due to the visible impact of the Sunnitization policies of the Ottoman state in the changing associations of the Sufis and their political expressions in texts. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's extensive research on the Sufi groups who resisted the enforcement of this particular Sunni interpretation of Islam by the state has produced many important works in the field all of which cannot be listed here. Ocak particularly focuses on the Bayrami-Melamis (and their insurgent discourse which revolves around the theme of the Pole) through analyses of the persecutions of their sheikhs and references to texts produced by the Bayrami-Melamis themselves.³² The Pole's position within the cosmic

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16, p. 129.

³⁰ Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleymân," in *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), pp. 159-77.

³¹ Ebru Sönmez, "An Acem Statesman in the Ottoman Court: İdris-i Bidlîsî and the Making of the Ottoman Policy on Iran," (M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2006).

³² Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15.-17. Yüzyıllar)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998); See the relevant articles in Ocak, *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar*.

hierarchy and his relationship to the sultan in some cases became an arena where claims to political authority were contested by groups who propounded the superiority of the Pole both in spiritual and material realms. In such instances the concept of the Pole could be used to question the legitimacy of the existing political authority and hence become a severe threat not only for the sultan but also for high-rank statesmen whose positions could be rendered illegitimate as well. Still, the Bayrami-Melami sources mentioned in Ocak's texts need further narrative analysis and contextualization within wider intellectual currents.

For the purposes of this thesis, the concept of the Pole is important firstly for delineating the religio-political discourses used by Sufis to accommodate themselves vis-à-vis political authority as historical agents, and secondly for understanding how they envisioned the Ottoman state and its respective place in the divinely ordained cosmic order. Pole, which is an essential part of the cult of sainthood has been conceptualized in a more or less coherent fashion by Ibn 'Arabi in the twelfth century and adopted by many Ottoman Sufis. Bursevi, being educated in religious sciences as much as in Sufism, was a devout follower of Ibn 'Arabi as well. However, Ibn 'Arabi had as many critiques as his followers, the most fervent being the fourteenth century scholar Ibn Teymiyya. The fervent attacks on Ibn 'Arabi's mystical doctrines had a long history in the Muslim world before its revival in the Ottoman context in the sixteenth century among high-ranking ulema such as the grand mufti and the jurists and in the seventeenth century among medrese graduate mosque preachers who tried to refute the famous mystic's claims by referring to

hadith and Qur'anic verses.³³ However an analysis of the way in which this concept entered into the religio-political discourses of Ottoman scholars of Sufi and non-Sufi backgrounds and the broader impact of Ibn 'Arabi's writings in the Ottoman intellectual sphere remains to be researched. Victoria Rowe Holbrook has indeed elaborated on the adoption of the Pole by the Ottoman Melamis through an analysis of some Bayrami-Melami texts.³⁴ The current thesis also attempts to provide some information regarding how the concept was elaborated by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi in the early eighteenth century context as a discursive tool.

Ottoman Sufis in the sixteenth century were not only subject to the disciplinary mechanisms of the state for outward expressions of their syncretic beliefs or messianic agendas but also started to be gradually incorporated to the state mechanism. This is the later stage of a long process in which rather disorganized and autonomous Sufis of the formative period institutionalized under the umbrella of the Ottoman state and started to formulate their doctrines and practices in texts which were domesticated to fit into the official religious ideology in consolidation: Sunni Islam.³⁵ Nathalie Clayer's conceptualization of the Halvetis as sunnizing agents during this period sheds light on a much neglected aspect of Sufi-state relations:

³³ For a brief overview of the ways in which Ibn 'Arabi's writings continued to influence scholars in the Islamic world see: James W. Morris, "‘Except His Face’: The Political and Aesthetic Dimensions of Ibn 'Arabi's Legacy," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 23, (1998), pp. 1-13.

³⁴ Victoria Rowe Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melami Supra-Order," *The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/melami1.html>, 2 Oct. 2011.

³⁵ For the characteristics of Sufism at the stage of inception during the eight and ninth centuries see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

Sufis were not mere targets of the disciplinary measures of the state; they also operated as agents who negotiated a discourse of Sunni orthodoxy in the elaboration of their relationships with political authority and other religious groups.³⁶ Adding on Clayer's works is Derin Terzioğlu's recent article in which she elaborates on the formation of the Ottoman state and its association with the Sufis. Her focus is on the effects of state-sponsored sunnitization and the gradual institutionalization of Sufi orders.³⁷

It was also during this period that the Celvetiyye emerged as a distinct Sufi order with Bayrami associations by way of Muhyiddin Üftade, the founder of the order. While Üftade did not leave behind much written material, one of his hagiographies is available in transcription. For the main lines of the life of this obscure formative figure, Mustafa Bahadıroğlu's thesis is informative but falls short of capturing the bigger picture within which Üftade emerged as a Sufi sheikh.³⁸ The long introduction to Paul Ballanfat's book on Üftade's poems is prominent for it opens a more comprehensive gateway to the sheikh's life and ideas through an analysis both of his hagiographies and the *Vakıat* which consists of the daily notes taken by his disciple Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi.³⁹ Indeed *Vakıat*, this colossal work

³⁶ Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques, Etat et Societe: Les Halvetis dans l'aire balkanique de la fin du Xve siecle a nos jours*, ed. Ulrich Haarman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).

³⁷ Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization, 1300-1600," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. C. Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2011).

³⁸ Mustafa Bahadıroğlu, "Üftade, Tasavvufi Görüşleri ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı" (M.A. thesis, Uludağ University, 1990).

³⁹ Paul Ballanfat, *The Nightingale in the Garden of Love: The Poems of Hazret-i Pir-i Üftade* (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2005).

written in Arabic, needs to be translated and subjected to a critical analysis to shed light on early Celveti formation. Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi is one of the most significant Sufi figures of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the Celveti order in particular. The most comprehensive works on his life remain to be the books of H. Kamil Yılmaz and Ziver Tezeren.⁴⁰ Although Hüdayi's letters to Murad III and Ahmed I are available in Latin transcription, they have not been handled within the larger framework of sunnitization, imperial rivalry with the Safavids and the roles played by Sufi sheikhs as agents of this process.⁴¹ These letters are precious sources for they provide direct insight as to how a Sufi sheikh positioned himself vis-à-vis political authority and materialized his political expressions in an intimate text which directly addressed the sultan.

It is surprising to see that there are no critical monographs about the intellectual output of Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi or the Celvetiyye order.⁴² Most of the works dealing with this period are either about Halvetis⁴³ or about the silencing of Sufi groups (such as the Bayrami-Melamis, Gülşenis, Kalenderis and other groups influenced by extreme shia beliefs) which resisted policies of sunnitization and integration into the state mechanism. More conformist Sufi groups like the Celvetis

⁴⁰ Hasan Kamil Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı*, (İstanbul: Erkam Yayınları, 1990); Ziver Tezeren, *Seyyid Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi: Hayatı, Şahsiyeti, Tarikatı ve Eserleri*, (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1994).

⁴¹ For Hüdayi's letters see: Mustafa Salim Güven, "Çeşitli Yönleriyle Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi'nin Mektupları" (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 1992). Henceforth, I will cite the transcriptions of Hüdayi's letters given in this thesis as *Mektuplar*.

⁴² I have not been able to acquire a copy of Gonca Baskıcı's master's thesis about the role played by Hüdayi in the political sphere. Gonca Baskıcı, "A Life Between Piety and Politics: Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi (ca. 1543-1628)" (M.A. thesis, Bilkent University, 2000).

⁴³ John J. Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halvetî Order, 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

who supported an absolutist state agenda but at the same time sought ways of negotiating power with its representatives have been neglected.

Particularly in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Sufis emerge not only as one of the most visible actors in the public scene as mosque preachers, opinion makers and mentors to statesmen but also as political commentators in texts which are not necessarily compilations of hagiographies. During this period, on an unprecedented scale, Sufis started to reflect their religio-political commentary in textual format (some adopting the *nasihatname* genre), providing a less mediated channel into their intellectual world. While the focus has been made mostly on the writings of statesmen and bureaucrats as reformers, modern historiography on the seventeenth century had skipped Sufi texts which are significant sources for Ottoman intellectual history in general and Ottoman representations of political authority within a religio-political discourse in particular. In that respect, Nathalie Clayer's two articles on the Halveti-Melami sheikh Münir-i Belgradi's political commentary in *Silsiletü'l-Mukarrebîn* (a late sixteenth century text), the related chapters of Terzioğlu's thesis on the seventeenth century Halveti Sheikh Niyazi Mısri and her recent article on one such Sufi figure who composed an advice treatise for Murad IV in the mid-seventeenth century are prominent contributions to the study of Sufi religio-political thought directly from the texts they have written.⁴⁴ Michael Winter's study on Abd al-Wahhab al-Sharani (d. 1565) who operated in Memluk and

⁴⁴ Clayer, "Quand l'hagiographie se fait," pp. 363-381; Clayer, "Müniri Belgradi: Un Représentant," pp. 549-568; Terzioğlu, "Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers"; Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyazi-i Misri (1618-1694)" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999).

later in Ottoman Egypt also contains a section on the Sufi's views regarding the state.⁴⁵

When compared with the Sufis, seventeenth century studies are relatively more abundant in the case of the Kadızadeli rise to power, the puritanical mosque preachers who proposed the restoration of religion to its pristine form as experienced during the time of Prophet Muhammad. They have been conceptualized mostly within the camp of sharia-minded reformists coming from the lower ranks of the ulema and not infrequently overlooked as fanatical retrogrades who responded to social and political transformation with fervent religious conservatism. Particularly Madeline Zilfi's works on the ulema and the Kadızadeli in particular have been significant contributions in the elaboration of the power struggle between religious and political authorities and within the religious authorities themselves. However still these works are devoid of literary analyses of the texts produced or used by the historical agents themselves hence do not yield much in the way of agents' political thinking.⁴⁶

In general, studies on Ottoman Sufism become increasingly scarce in the late seventeenth but mostly in the early eighteenth centuries. Two renowned exceptions are Elizabeth Sirriyeh's and Barbara von Schlegell's works on Abdülğani Nablusi (d. 1731), a Sufi from Damascus who just like Bursevi, wrote and travelled

⁴⁵ Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982).

⁴⁶ Madeline C. Zilfi. *The Politics of Piety: the Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)*. (Minneapolis, MN: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988); Madeline C. Zilfi, "The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth Century Istanbul," *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45, no. 4 (1986), pp. 251-269.

extensively.⁴⁷ For the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is a much richer literature focusing on Moroccan, Indian and North African Sufism as exemplified by the works of Vincent Cornell, Carl Ernst and Molly Greene among many others. For example, authors dealing with the late eighteenth and nineteenth century North African Sufism have touched upon Sufi-state relations in their writings but mostly within a discourse of anti-colonial and reformist Sufi activism.

Critical historical scholarship has been extremely negligent in the case of Bursevi (along with other seventeenth century Celvetis) despite the fact that he was a prolific author who composed more than one hundred and twenty works. Although many of his works have been and continue to be transcribed into the Latin alphabet, attention to Bursevi is almost exclusively limited to theological discussions about Sufism. Preliminary research about Bursevi has been conducted by Hüseyin Vassaf, Sakıb Yıldız and M. Ali Ayni, but these works deal mostly with biographical details and provide only a laconic outline of his intellectual world.⁴⁸ The most significant work dealing with Bursevi's life and views regarding Celveti doctrine and practices is Ali Namlı's book. This work is extremely beneficial since it relies extensively on Bursevi's works (including the ones written in Arabic) and the available secondary

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005); Barbara Rosenow von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World: Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1143/1731)" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1997).

⁴⁸ Hüseyin Vassaf, *Kemalname-i Hakkı (Bursevi Biyografisi)*, ed. Murat Yurtsever (Bursa: Arasta, 2000); Sakıb Yıldız, "Türk Müfessiri İsmail Hakkı Burûsevi'nin Hayatı," *Atatürk Üniversitesi İslami İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 1 (1975) pp. 103-126; Yıldız, "İbrahim Hakkı Hazretlerinin Ahlâk Anlayışı," *Atatürk Üniversitesi İslami İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 4 (1980), pp. 133-142; M. Ali Ayni, *Türk Azizleri I, İsmail Hakkı* (İstanbul: Marifet Basımevi, 1944).

sources to construct his biography in a detailed and coherent manner.⁴⁹ For biographical information about İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, I have relied mostly on the information provided by this book since it is the most comprehensive and recent one.

While some scholars have proposed the emergence of an Islamic awakening similar to European enlightenment and a current of neo-sufism in the eighteenth century, this discourse has neither been adopted in detail to analyse Ottoman Sufism nor has been criticized with reference to the operation of eighteenth century Ottoman Sufis.⁵⁰ The neo-sufi argument claims a transformation specific to the eighteenth and nineteenth century Sufis which made them socially and politically more active as sharia-minded reformists. Focus on hadith studies and the Muhammedan path, opposition to the cult of saints and to some of Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings formed the basis of the neo-sufi thought. Although Bursevi did emphasize following the path of the prophet and studying hadith, he was neither opposed to the cult of saints, nor to the doctrines of Ibn ‘Arabi. In this thesis, I have touched upon the neo-sufi arguments in a few places when they were relevant for the discussion, but they in no way form the general framework of my thesis. I believe that the neo-sufi arguments are rather reductionist and tend to look for abrupt transformations in eighteenth century Sufi thought without a critical approach to the historical back ground in which such changes were rooted.

⁴⁹ Ali Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi: Hayatı, Eserleri, Tarikat Anlayışı*. (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2001).

⁵⁰ For the related discussions see: von Schlegell, “Sufism in the Arab World,” pp. 16-22; Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700* (New York: State University Press of New York, 2005), p. 6; Rudolph Peters, “Reinhard Shulze’s Quest for an Islamic Enlightenment,” in *Die Welt des Islams* XXX (1990), pp. 160-162; R. S. O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, “Neo-Sufism Reconsidered,” in *Der Islam* 70 (1993), pp. 52-87.

This thesis is thus motivated by the lack of studies focusing on Sufi political thought particularly in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This era in Ottoman Sufism has been left as a gap with studies focusing either in the nineteenth or the previous centuries. For us to be able to see the continuities and ruptures in early modern and modern periods in history, scholarship about eighteenth century as a transitive era proves necessary. Specifically the texts produced by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi have still not been handled within a critical historical approach. An analysis of the writings of this Sufi sheikh might open up new areas of discussion regarding both the historical transformations of the period and the development of Ottoman Sufi thought.

Historiographical Discussion and Sources

Any study on Sufism in general, and the intellectual history of Sufism in particular carries the potential of de-contextualizing both the historical figures under scrutiny and their intellectual worlds as if they are representatives of timeless religious truths. Particularly the almost exclusively theological interest in İsmail Hakkı Bursevi and his works restrains our understanding of Bursevi as a person who lived and produced ideas within a particular context, being influenced by different historical realities and currents of thought. In this thesis, I hope to move away from ahistorical and uncritical theological discussions to a more encompassing understanding of intellectual history when focusing on the ideas produced by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi. In that respect, the need for a theoretical foundation for discussion instead of a simple descriptive analysis is evident. I also find it important that while handling material related to religio-political discussions, one does not fit historical realities into black

and white categories (such as secular-religious and orthodoxy-heterodoxy) for the sake of simplification and explanation. This may lead to anachronistic reflections of present-day discourses with regard to Islam on historical figures, but the definition of orthodoxy is not fixed in time and space and homogeneous.⁵¹

On the one hand, when dealing with early modern narrative sources, the barrier of language proves useful since it avoids a direct identification with the author of the text. However in case of texts dealing with religious issues, there is always the potential to identify too much with the historical figure through a shared religious vocabulary and a feeling of empathy based on belonging to the same religion. It is necessary to realize that even the uses of these religious (and political) discourses are not static in time and they tend to change over time.

On the other hand, there are significant Sufi texts particularly within the Celveti tradition that are written in Arabic, and even the ones written in Ottoman Turkish are quite difficult to penetrate as a result of the authors' heavy reliance on Sufi terminology involving symbolic meanings and the complex organization of texts. Language is one of the most important tools for making sense of the intellectual world of a particular historical period. Since the language of the early modern Sufi sheikh is so unfamiliar, it is necessary to acquaint oneself with particular tropes and notions that prevail in Sufi texts. And even that is not enough if one is dealing with the language of politics which is most often intermingled with mystical notions in the texts of Sufi authors. Then it proves obligatory to get

⁵¹ Brett Wilson, "The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of 'Orthodoxy' in the Study of Islam," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2007), pp. 169-194.

acquainted also with the circulation of political images and expressions in other texts which are not necessarily related to Sufism but reproduce common political discourses. Only then can we hope to assess the permeation of diverse representations of political authority in the early modern period in Sufi writings. This is a process which resembles that of learning a novel language but it is a necessary one since texts do not provide us direct access to the author's mind unless we are fairly acquainted with the world in which their authors' vocabulary is produced and to what it refers to. For the hardships arising from such a narrative analysis and for the sake of being able to be acquainted with more texts in a relatively short period of time to provide a fuller portrayal of Bursevi's religio-political expressions, I preferred to rely on Latin transcriptions of original texts.

For this thesis, I have relied on six of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi's *tuhfes* (books presented as gifts to particular people) as my primary sources. These are *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*⁵², *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*⁵³, *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*⁵⁴, *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*⁵⁵, *Tuhfe-i*

⁵² There are five extant copies of *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* in the libraries of Istanbul. The 1774 copy is located at Atıf Efendi Lib. no. 192/1 (49 fol.). Three are located at Selim Ağa Lib. Emirhoca-Kemankeş no. 210: One is copied by Mehmed b. Ali el-Üsküdarî in 1785, another one is copied by Seyyid Ahmed in 1855, the other one is undated and the scribe unknown. Last copy is located at Topkapı Emanet Hazinesi no. 1330 (70 fol.).

⁵³ The only known manuscript copy is located at Süleymaniye Lib. Esad Efendi no. 1374 (99 fol.). It is the original copy written by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi in 1718.

⁵⁴ *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* has eight manuscript copies. Those located at the Süleymaniye Library are: Halet Efendi, no 211 (194 fol.); Halet Efendi, no 212 (233 fol.); Hasan Hüsnü Paşa, no 809 (555 fol.); Hacı Mahmud, no 2327 (197 fol.); Mihrişah Sultan, no 164 (331 fol.). Others are located at: Hacı Selim Ağa Lib. Hüdayi Efendi, no 456; İstanbul Lib. No T-2132/1 (209 fol.); Bursa Genel Lib. no. 77 (175 fol.).

⁵⁵ There are seven extant copies. Three are located at the Süleymaniye Lib.: The one located at Mihrişah Sultan no. 162 is the original copy written by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi in 1721/1722; The other two are located at Hacı Mahmud no. 2882 (1721/1722) and no. 6362 (1824/1825). Another one which is copied by Dervişzade Mehmed b. Osman in 1818/1819 is located at Milli Lib. A-419/1. The last

*Vesimiyye*⁵⁶ and *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*⁵⁷. Most of Bursevi's *tuhfes* are located in the Süleymaniye Library. For the purposes discussed above, I used the available Latin transcriptions of these texts and provided the relevant folio numbers of the original manuscripts in footnotes. In this respect the book edited by M. Ali Akidil and Şeyda Öztürk has been very useful for three of Bursevi's *tuhfes*.⁵⁸ For *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* there are two available transliterations by Selim Çakıroğlu and Zübeyir Akçe but I preferred to rely on Akçe's doctoral dissertation since it is a more scrupulous work with a strict adherence to the use of Turkish transliteration letters.⁵⁹ For *Tuhfe-i Hasakiyye* I have relied on the transliterations of Mehmet Tabakoğlu and İhsan

two are located at the Library of Faculty of Theology, Ankara University. One of them is undated and the other one is listed with the year 1861/1862.

⁵⁶ There are fourteen available copies of which nine are located at the Süleymaniye Lib: Esad Efendi no. 1474/3 (1730); Hacı Beşir Ağa, no. 359/1-2 (1769); Hacı Mahmud no. 2675 (1773); Hacı Mahmud no. 2675/1-2 (1819); Hacı Mahmud no. 2260 (1788); Mihrişah Sultan no. 219; Pertev Paşa no. 253; Abdullah Efendi no. 32/ (1821); Hacı Mahmud Efendi no. 6362/2 (1825). The others are located at: Nuruosmaniye no. 2220 (1727-1728); Bursa Genel Lib. no. 81 (1774); Millet Lib. Şeriyeye no. 1179 (1870); Hacı Selim Ağa Lib. Hüdayi Efendi no. 441 (1787); D.T.C. Faculty İ. Saib Sencer no. 1801 (1845).

⁵⁷ There are twelve available manuscript copies. Four are located at Süleymaniye Lib.: Pertev Paşa no. 637 (1802-1803); Mihrişah Sultan no. 210; Hacı Mahmud Efendi no. 2767; Esad Efendi no. 1548. Others are located at: Hacı Selim Ağa Lib. Hüdayi Efendi no. 449 (1733); Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Ergin Yazmaları no. 613/2 and no. 987 (1787); Atıf Efendi Lib. Atıf Efendi Bölümü no. 1498/3 (1775-1776); İstanbul University Central Lib. Nadir Yazma Eserler, no. 1585 (1847), no. 2041 (1835), no. 7210 (1825); Sadberk Hanım Museum, Hüseyin Kocabaş Yazmaları no. 78 (1835).

⁵⁸ Bursevi, *Üç Tuhfe: Seyr-i Süluk*. It is a compilation of the Latin transcriptions of *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* and *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*. *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye* is a critical edition since Akidil has compared all of the available manuscripts. The manuscript used for *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* is located at Hacı Mahmud Efendi no. 6362/2 (1825) and in transliteration it has been compared to the available print copy and the manuscript copy located at Süleymaniye Lib. Hacı Mahmud Efendi 2260. The manuscript used for *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* is copied by Mehmed b. Ali el-Üsküdarî in 1785, and is located at Selim Ağa Lib. Emirhoca-Kemankeş no. 210 (35 fol.).

⁵⁹ Zübeyir Akçe, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Tuhfe-i Recebiyye Adlı Eseri (İnceleme-Metin)" (Ph.D. diss., Harran University, 2008). The manuscript used is located at Süleymaniye Lib. Esad Efendi no. 1374 (99 fol.). It is the original copy written by İsmail Hakkı Bursevi in 1718. Henceforth, the section in which Akçe transcribed the original work of Bursevi will be referenced with the name of Bursevi and the text under question instead of the name of the thesis.

Kara.⁶⁰ For *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, I have relied on the transliteration provided by Ahmet Koç.⁶¹ I have also used the relevant sections of Bursevi's *Tuhfe-i Ataiyye*⁶² and *Kitabü'n-Netice*⁶³ to elaborate on his conceptualization of sainthood. Other than these, when necessary I made recourse to compilations of hagiographies and histories of the period.

I am fully aware that such a focus on narrative sources needs self-reflexivity on behalf of the author at every level of writing. Since I am interested in the linguistic expressions of Bursevi, the most useful material for such an analysis remains to be the texts written by himself. My aim is not to derive absolute historical truths from these narrative sources but to understand how a Sufi sheikh in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries made sense of the world around him, related to political authority and conceptualized it. Although the sources do not portray objective realities, they still refer to the outer world and are very much shaped by the historical events taking place in that world. In that respect, the methodological perspective of this study is to comment on the two-way relationship between

⁶⁰ İhsan Kara, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Tuhfe-i Hasekiyyesi (III. Bölüm)" (M.A. thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 1997); Mehmet Tabakoğlu, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Tuhfe-i Hasekiyyesi'nin İkinci Bölümü (Metin ve Tahlil)" (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2008). The manuscript used is the 1726/1727 copy and is located at Süleymaniye Lib. Mihrişah Sultan no. 164 (331 fol.). They also provide the copy of the original manuscript in Ottoman Turkish at the end of their theses. Henceforth, the sections in which Kara and Tabakoğlu transcribed the original work of Bursevi will be referenced with the name of Bursevi and the text under question instead of the name of the thesis.

⁶¹ Ahmet Koç, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin (v. 1137/1725) Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye Adlı Eseri" (M.A. thesis, Yüzüncü Yıl University, 2008). The manuscript used is located at Hacı Selimağa Lib. Hüdayi Efendi no. 459 (1733). Henceforth, the section in which Koç transcribed the original work of Bursevi will be referenced with the name of Bursevi and the text under question instead of the name of the thesis.

⁶² Veysel Akkaya, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi: Kabe ve İnsan, Tuhfe-i Ataiyye* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000).

⁶³ İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice*, eds. Ali Namlı and İmdat Yavaş, 2 vol. (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1997).

Bursevi's religio-political discourse as expressed in his texts and the historical realities and other available discourses which this language refer to. As Pocock argues, political thought does not exist only in relation to historical realities within a given conjecture but also stems from and responds to the available intellectual traditions. Thus, it is useful to try to understand not only the intellectual currents but also the conjectures within which such political expressions are produced.⁶⁴ In this thesis, I have tried to adopt such a multi-tiered approach in the analysis of Bursevi's religio-political expressions. The intended audience and contents of the *tuhfes* along with the social and political implications of writing these texts in the early eighteenth century will be provided in the next section dealing with Bursevi's life and his affiliation with political authority figures.

This thesis is formulated around several lines of discussion. In the first chapter I provide information about Bursevi's life and his connection to the Celveti order. Commenting on his training as a Sufi, I briefly establish the lines of thought which had an impact on his intellectual world. At the same time, I comment on the socio-political conditions of the period in which Bursevi grew up and how these conditions might have affected him. While writing about his stay in Üsküdar, I comment on the implications of his writing activities there since most of the texts used for analysis in this thesis were written during this period.

In the second chapter, by an analysis of Bursevi's texts, first of all I explore how he conceptualized the hierarchical organization of the Ottoman state as a reflection of cosmic order and defined it in mystical terms. The state although

⁶⁴ J. G.A. Pocock, *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*, (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

operating within the temporal realm was inevitably linked to the spiritual and was defined with the duty of maintaining order on earth by virtue of its intricate relationship to the cosmic order. I also introduce the concept of the Pole as understood by Bursevi, a position he claimed for himself through auto-hagiography and exclamations in texts. The focus is on the similar representations of the sultan and the Pole and their respective governments.

In the third chapter, I turn my gaze to a deconstruction of Bursevi's propositions for the establishment of order, namely restoration of political authority through an analysis of his advices for the sultan and the statesmen. I delineate his vision of an ideal form of imperial governance which is first of all a reflection of his Sufi understanding of balanced self governance. The common themes analysed are balance, justice, discipline, sultanate as a trust and obedience to authority figures. I also place Bursevi's discussions within wider currents of thought by pointing out parallel literary conventions, themes and images found in particular traditions and in the works of his contemporaries.

The fourth chapter aims to clarify Bursevi's interpretation of Ottoman decline by analysing his comments on its reasons. Since Bursevi defined decline, its reasons and solutions in religious terms, the focus is on his criticism towards jurists, philosophers, medrese professors and other Sufis which he categorized under *ehl-i inkar* (deniers of Sufism) and *ehl-i ilhad* (deviants). They constituted for him the two extreme poles in religious interpretation as opposed to the balanced proposition of the competent Sufi sheikh. In this section I also briefly provide Bursevi's criticisms about the society by putting them in their early eighteenth century context.

In the last chapter, I discuss how Bursevi conceptualized the ideal relationship between the Sufi sheikh and state and legitimized the position of the first vis-à-vis the latter. Then I analyse his historical consciousness and perception of a decline in the relationship between spiritual and political authorities by focusing on the concrete examples he provided. For him the estrangement of these two forms of authority and the influence of religious extremities in the social and political spheres (which are discussed in the previous chapter) were the reasons of disorder in the Ottoman Empire. This discourse did not only refer to historical transformations in the affiliation of the sheikh with political authority but it was also a reflection of the wider trend among coeval Ottoman scholars to comment on an Ottoman decline.

CHAPTER II

İSMAİL HAKKI BURSEVİ AND THE CELVETİYYE ORDER

This chapter provides a biography of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi within the context of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Starting with a brief history of the Celveti order to which Bursevi belonged to, I try to establish the Sufi tradition within which he was rooted. Later I examine the aspects of his life and his association with his master Atpazari Osman Fazlı in relation to the wider socio-political environment of the period. The chapter ends with an introduction of the texts used for analysis in this thesis and the wider context which made their composition meaningful in the early eighteenth century. Brief information about their genre, contents, audience and availability in modern libraries are provided.

The Emergence of the Celvetiyye Order

The process of Celvetiyye's emergence as a separate order starts with Mehmed Muhyiddin Üftade (1490-1580).⁶⁵ To our knowledge, Üftade did not receive a proper medrese education, and although in hagiographies and biographies he emerges as a

⁶⁵ For hagiographic and biographic information about Üftade see: Baldırzade Selisi Şeyh Mehmed, *Ravza-i Evliya*, eds. Mefail Hızlı and Murat Yurtsever (Bursa: Arasta, 2000), pp. 95-103; Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliya* vol. 5, eds. Mehmet Akkuş and Ali Yılmaz (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2006), pp. 619-629. It should be pointed out that in "Hal-i Tarikat," there is already a differentiation of Celvetiyye from the other orders, particularly the Halveti order, in terms of its practices and doctrine. For differentiations between the Halvetis and Celvetis by Üftade see: Sami Bayrakçı, "Meşhur Osmanlı Sufilerinden Üftade (1490-1580) ve Hâl-i Tarikat İsimli Eseri (Metin Transkribe ve Tahlili)" (M.A. thesis, Selçuk University, 2010), p.47-8/ Fol7a-b, p. 54-60/ Fol.13a-Fol.18b, p. 68-9/ Fol.27b, p. 88-9/ Fol.44b-45a.

man who studied religious sciences with an imam named Muslihiddin Efendi and later on with his sheikh Hızır Dede, his educational background remains rather obscure.⁶⁶ Bursevi suggested that Hızır Dede received his Sufi training directly from Hacı Bayram Veli, the founder of the Bayramiyye order. However, this seems impossible because of the time gap between the two.⁶⁷ It is more convenient to suggest that Üftade's sheikh was Akbıyık Meczub, a vicegerent of Hacı Bayram Veli who operated in Bursa during the early sixteenth century.⁶⁸ While the staple of Üftade's education under this sheikh is not very clear, *Hal-i Tarikat*, a selection from *Vakıat* (Hüdayi's diaries which contain his conversations with Üftade) compiled by Ebu'l-Hazan er-Rifai⁶⁹ in the late eighteenth century, provides a rather limited representation of his erudition and sharia-consciousness.⁷⁰

In this text, Üftade is reported to have said that the rules of the sharia must be obeyed by all Sufis. He also advised Sufis to keep their experiences and inspirations

⁶⁶ In his hagiographies, it is believed that all the knowledge of the sciences was revealed to him after he studied the *Mukaddime* by Ebu'l-Levs with his sheikh. Hüsameddin Bursevi, *Menakıb-ı Hazret-i Üftade*, ed. Abdurrahman Yüenal (Bursa: Celvet Yayınları, 1996), pp. 18-19/ Fol. 22, pp. 27-28/ Fol.34-35.

⁶⁷ İlyas Efendi, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Kütübü's-Silsileti'l-Celvetiyye'si" (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 1994), p. 109 /Fol.60a.

⁶⁸ For a detailed geneology of the Celvetiyye order, see Seyyid Osman Ustaoglu, *Tarikatler ve Silsileleri: Geçmişten Günümüze* (Ankara: Filiz Matbaacılık, 2002), pp. 302-310. According to the genealogy provided in this book, Sheikh Muk'ad Hızır Dede was a disciple not of Akbıyık Meczub but of Sheikh Akşemseddin.

⁶⁹ According to Sami Bayrakçı who has written a master's thesis on *Hal-i Tarikat*, there is no information about Ebu'l-Hasan er-Rifai, who is the translator-editor of the article, in any of the Ottoman sources. The only extant copy of the work is in Konya Koyunoğlu Library, and it dates back to 1211/1796. Bayrakçı provides both the photographs of the original copy and the transcription of the text in his thesis. Bayrakçı, "Meşhur Osmanlı Sufilerinden."

⁷⁰ This colossal work is written in Arabic. It should be kept in mind that this was only a selection hence do not represent a comprehensive and unmediated access to Üftade's views.

as secrets and if they have to speak, then to use the “sharia cloth” (*libas-ı şeriat*) to communicate them.⁷¹ The rise of shia-sympathizing ideologies and messianic hopes among the people in the sixteenth century had posed a political threat for the Ottoman state vis-à-vis the Safavids. One of the main targets of disciplinary measures during this period was some Sufi groups or leaders who made their extreme interpretations of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine (like *hulul* and *ittihad*) available to the public through a messianic discourse. Those who managed to gain a large following in an attempt to challenge the authority of the Ottoman state were punished severely. Under these circumstances, Üftade’s words might be taken as precaution not to be misunderstood.

In “Hal-i Tarikat”, Üftade said: “Halvetis lapse into heresy on account of a trifle. Those who belong to the Celvetiyye are our community.”⁷² If we are to believe in the genuinity of Üftade’s words in this edited version of the *Vakıat*, as early as the time of Üftade, Celveti superiority was conceptualized as the supposed conformity of its methods and practices to sharia. Thus, as a latecomer to the *tariqa* scene, Celvetiyye’s legitimacy was grounded in the claimed superiority of its methods over others, particularly the Halvetis, one of the most widespread and popular Sufi orders of the Ottoman Empire. With Üftade, we see the early formation of an emphasis on sharia-abidance in the Celvetiyye and the impacts of the process of sunnitization on a

⁷¹ For examples of Üftade’s sharia-consciousness see: *Ibid.*, p. 58, p.74, p.80, p.87.

⁷² “*Halvetiyye azıcık şeyden ilhada düşerler. Celvetiyye olanlar bizim cemaatimizdir.*” Bayrakçı, “Meşhur Osmanlı Sufilerinden,” pp. 88/ Fol.44b-45a

newly emerging order.⁷³ In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, İsmail Hakkı Bursevi was building on this established Celveti tradition of a sharia-conscious Sunni interpretation of Sufism to make his arguments regarding the significance of combining the sharia and the divine truth (*hakikat*). For him *celvet* was the ultimate station on the mystical path (*gayetü'l-meratib*) and it indicated convocation (*davet*) and notification (*tebliğ*) of the people.⁷⁴ In fact the same concern was voiced also by Ibn 'Arabi: "The place of the living saint is among men: and when he is dead he will continue, through his *ruhaniyya* or spiritual presence, to mingle with them and watch over their fate. His true 'retreat' consists in concealing himself while remaining visible, *khalwa fi jalwa*."⁷⁵ Bursevi's conceptualization of *celvet* as superior from *halvet* did not imply a poignant differentiation between the Halveti and Celveti paths though. For him, if a dervish of the Halveti order managed to reach the secret (*sirr*) of the station of *celvet*, he would become a Celveti despite his affiliated order. Similarly if a Celveti remained on the station of *halvet*, he would be a Halveti.⁷⁶ Thus the distinction was more between the spiritual stations of the Sufis than the orders they were affiliated with. This can be taken as a sign of the fluidity and versatility of Sufi identities which frequently cross-cut the boundaries of Sufi orders which were themselves most of the time quite blurry.

⁷³ Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building."

⁷⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p.143/ Fol.13b.

⁷⁵ Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn Arabi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), pp. 172-173.

⁷⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," in *Üç Tuhfe: Seyr-i Süluk*, eds. Mehmet Ali Akidil and Şeyda Öztürk (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000), p.60.

It was not Üftade but his successor Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi who with his vast networks and alliances turned the rather obscure idea of Celvetiyye into an institutionalized and influential order. He expanded the operation sphere of the order from Bursa to Istanbul and to other western Anatolian and Balkan cities. Hüdayi sent the majority of his sixty-six vicegerents to places such as Plovdiv (*Filibe*), Aitos (*Aydos*), Provadia (*Pravadi*), Adrianople (*Edirne*), Bosnia (*Bosna*), Salonica (*Selanik*), Belgrade (*Belgrad*), Bitola (*Manastır*), etc.⁷⁷ During this period, the Ottoman state not only tried to domesticate and sunnitize Sufi orders and the general public by eliminating public manifestations of beliefs and movements which were deemed heretical. On the other hand, it helped strengthen the forces within the society like the Celvetis that had the power, reputation and networks to communicate with the people the kind of religious beliefs and practices that were being deemed orthodoxy, hence acceptable in religio-legal terms. Namely the state was in need of mediators that could negotiate a Sunni orthodoxy that was in the process of consolidation, with the people. Sufis having extensive ties not only with the commoners but also with the ulema and statesmen of all sorts were ideal agents for this purpose since Sufi affiliations cut across class boundaries. Thus in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sufi sheikhs started to be more visible in the public sphere as state-appointed mosque preachers, imams and educators. Celvetis

⁷⁷ For a list of the known representatives of the Celvetiyye in the Balkans see, Taxhidin Bytyqi, "Balkanlarda Celvetilik ve Münir-i Belgradi," in *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi Uluslararası Sempozyum Bildirileri 20-22 Mayıs 2005*, vol. II (Istanbul: Üsküdar Belediyesi, 2005), pp. 219-238; For a comprehensive list of Hüdayi's vicegerents and their places of appointment see Yılmaz, *Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi*, pp. 130-131; According to this list provided by Hüseyin Vassaf, there were also vicegerents sent to Amasya, Adana, Tokat, Madina and Algeria, but the expansion of the order in the eastern and southern parts of the empire was rather limited. Vassaf, *Sefine-i Evliya*, vol. III, pp. 27-28.

were one such group who operated as mosque preachers not only in the mosques of the capital city but also in the provincial towns they operated.⁷⁸

In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it becomes extremely difficult to establish a precise distinction between the ulema and the Sufis and their respective cultures as a result of the sunnitization process. There is an increasing affiliation between the two groups both in terms of education and religious outlook, particularly in the case of Celvetis as portrayed by the case of Hüdai. He was a college professor (*müderriş*) and an assistant judge (*naib*) turned Sufi sheikh. As a multi-faceted individual, he accommodated many roles of a Sufi sheikh as preacher, educator, dream interpreter, author and counselor. The kind of double education Hüdai had continued as a tradition for Celvetis all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, making the Celveti order one of the most educated and literary Sufi orders of the empire.⁷⁹ This is not to say that all Celvetis were medrese graduates turned Sufis like Hüdai although a great number of his vicegerents had some sort of *medrese* training before their submission to the Sufi path. During the seventeenth

⁷⁸ Filibeli İsmail worked as a preacher at Küçükayasofya and Bayezid Mosques. In 1636, he was appointed to Büyükayasofya. Veliyüddin Yusuf Efendi was giving sermons in Sultan Selim and Şehzade Mosques. After the construction of Sultanahmet Mosque, Hüdai started to give sermons there every first Monday of the month; previously he was giving sermons at the Fatih Mosque. Mahmud Gafuri (1667) served as a preacher at the Zeyrek, Valide-i Atik, Süleymaniye and Fatih mosques. Abdülhay Efendi was a preacher at Yenicaami. Mustafa Fenayi (1711) was the Friday preacher at the Şehzade Mosque. Zakirzade Abdullah Efendi (1658) preached at the Fatih Mosque and also at the Şehzade Mosque in Üsküdar on Tuesdays. Osman Fazlı served as a preacher at the Kul, Şeyh Vefa and Sultan Selim Mosques; See the section on Celveti sheikhs in Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliya*, vol. III.

⁷⁹ According to a graphic of the eighteenth century regarding the education level of Sufis in different orders, Celvetiyye stands out as the order with most *medrese* graduates; it is also the second (after Naqshbandi order) in literary output. For the table, see, Ramazan Muslu, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf (18. Yüzyıl)* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), pp. 703-750. One has to take into account the fact that Bursevi's enormous corpus consisting of over one hundred and twenty works forms the majority of Celveti texts.

century, Celveti lodges (of which there were around thirty in Istanbul only) as educational institutions could compete with the *medreses* in terms of the competence of their sheikhs as teachers and the level of education provided to disciples.

The strong ties established with the ulema elites and the statesmen during the time of Hüdayi might not have continued with the same intensity after his death but the changes in the governance of the empire with the expansion of the “political nation” indicated a different form of affiliation with political power particularly after the mid-seventeenth century. Although Bursevi’s sheikh Atpazari Osman Fazlı was also a very influential man in the palace, with the rise of new agents such as the Kadızadelis, the sultan’s preceptor and the palace circle to power, the influence of Celvetis on the sultan was curbed. However, as the case of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi will show Celveti influence changed direction in the early eighteenth century from the sultan to the palace circle and the grand vizier. Indeed during this period, with the retreat of the sultan to the background, the latter were more influential in directing state affairs and the political decision-making processes. Still, Hüdayi’s affiliation with Murad III and particularly close relationship with Ahmed I seem to have left a deep impact on Bursevi’s conceptualization of the ideal form of governance since he perceived a decline in the position of the Sufi sheikh vis-à-vis the state after the time of Hüdayi as shall be explained in detail in the next chapter.

The Early Life and Education of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi

When İsmail Hakkı Bursevi was born in 1653 in Aitos (*Aydos*, a town on the borders of today's Bulgaria) Celvetiyye was already established in the Balkan cities as a sunna-minded sharia-abiding Sufi order. It was under the guidance of one of Atpazari Osman Fazlı's vicegerents in Aitos, Sheikh Ahmed Efendi, that Bursevi received his first training. At the age of eleven, he left for Edirne and studied with another Celveti sheikh for seven years. According to Ali Namlı's paraphrasing from the autobiographical details Bursevi provided in *Tamamu'l-Feyz*, here he studied Arabic grammar (works of *Ibnü'l-Hacib*), jurisprudence, theology, Qur'anic exegesis and even read pamphlets about logic.⁸⁰ Although his early juristic education seems to have been based mostly on the works of Hanafı scholars, Bursevi was also acquainted with the works of Shafi authors. Some of his *tuhfes* with minimal juristic commentary reflect his acquaintance with the different schools of law and the respect he has for their respective founders.⁸¹ On jurisprudence, Bursevi studied the *Mülteka el-Ebhur* of İbrahim el-Halebi (d. 1549), an Ottoman Hanafı scholar from Aleppo. This book was not only taught in the *medreses* but frequently referred to by Ottoman jurists and judges in practice.⁸² On the fundamentals of jurisprudence (*usulü'l-fikh*) he read *Menarü'l-Envar* of Ibn Melek (d. 1418), an Ottoman jurist who relied mainly

⁸⁰ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 36-37.

⁸¹ The Hanafı School of law was gradually established as the official school of law in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century parallel to the developments of sunnitization and confessionalization. Derin Terzioğlu defines confessionalization as "initiatives taken by Ottoman religious and political authorities to refashion the attitudes and behaviors of the empire's Muslim subjects in conformity with the principles of Sunni Islam." Thus it refers to the establishment of imperial identities based on religious orthodoxies which are expressed in certain geographical boundaries. Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State," p. 1.

⁸² Şükrü Selim Has, "İbrahim el-Halebi," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* vol. 15, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), pp. 231-232. Henceforth, I will cite this source as *TDİA*.

on the Hanafi opinion while providing Shafi and Maliki views on juristic matters as well.⁸³ This work was a commentary on the work of the Ebu'l-Berekat en-Nesefi (d. 1310), a scholar from Buhara who compiled the works of classical scholars of Islam, followed the Hanafi School of law and showed proclivities for Sufism.⁸⁴

For theology, Bursevi made use of the *Şerhu'l-Akaid* of Sadüddin Taftazani (d. 1390), the famous scholar from Horasan. Taftazani was closer to the Ashari School and criticized some theologians for articulating the teachings of Greek philosophy rather freely in their works, an approach very similar to that of Bursevi as reflected in his *tuhfes*. Although Taftazani was a Sufi sympathizer, he was rather critical towards the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi particularly on the issue of the superiority of sainthood to prophethood.⁸⁵ The relationship between these two spiritual ranks was frequently discussed by Bursevi in his *tuhfes*. From *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye*, we learn that Bursevi was also informed about the exegesis of Hamidüddin Kirmani who was indeed a critic of Taftazani.⁸⁶ In his early education Bursevi relied on the famous Qur'anic

⁸³ Its wide-spread circulation among the Ottomans is proved by the many extant manuscripts found in the libraries of Turkey. Mustafa Bakır, "İbn Melek," *TDİA* vol. 20 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1999), pp. 175-176.

⁸⁴ Murteza Bedir, "Ebu'l-Berekat Nesefi," *TDİA* vol. 32 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), pp. 567-568.

⁸⁵ Despite the fact that he composed commentaries mostly on Hanafi works, Taftazani seems to have been closer to the Shafii School of law. In matters of theology, he was influenced from the Ashari School and Fahreddin Razi. He was quite critical of the Islamic scholars such as Ibn Sina, Farabi, Sühreverdi and Bağdadi who pursued a philosophical approach based on the teachings of the ancient Greeks. Although he blamed the theologians influenced by the Mutezili School for the penetration of philosophy into theology, Taftazani condoned the study of philosophy unless it opposed the teachings of Islam. Bursevi's sheikh Atpazari Osman Fazli had written a postscript (*haşiye*) on one of Taftazani's works on Arabic language, *el-Mutavvel* which was studied by Bursevi as well. Şükrü Özen, "Sadüddin Taftazani," *TDİA* vol. 40 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2011), pp. 299-308.

⁸⁶ İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," in *Üç Tuhfe: Seyr-i Süluğ*, eds. Mehmet Ali Akidil and Şeyda Öztürk (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000) p. 172/ Fol.64b; Two other works of Qur'anic exegesis that Bursevi read were the *Et-Teyisir fi't-Tefsir* (which he refers to as *Tefsir-i*

exegesis (which is called *Envaru't-Tenzil*) of Beyzavi (d. 1286), a Shafi jurist who is known to have submitted to the Sufi path in Tabriz after serving as judge for years. He was famous for combining philosophy with theology.⁸⁷ However, the most popular exegesis being taught in the Ottoman *medreses* was Zemahşeri's *el-Keşşaf* which Bursevi was also acquainted with as the reference to him in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* shows. Similar to Zemahşeri, another Hanafi and Mutezili scholar Bursevi studied was Ebu Yakub Sekkaki (d. 1229). His *Miftahu'l-Ulum* was considered a pioneering study which criticized the tendency to approach Arabic rhetoric solely as a literary device and aimed to establish it as a science.⁸⁸

A general look at the works which Bursevi studied reveals a multi-faceted education in religious sciences based on a variety of sources which reflected the diverse (and sometimes clashing) approaches of their authors. Thus the horizons of Bursevi's intellectual world were not determined by a single intellectual tradition. It was richly shaped by the multiple approaches and views expressed by different scholars coming from various traditions. The majority of these works were studied in the Ottoman *medreses*, illustrating the parallels between the educational culture of the ulema and the Sufis in the late seventeenth century.

Teyisir) of Ebu Nasr Abdürrahim Kuşeyri and the exegesis of Semerkandi-i Haddadi: *Ibid*, p. 175/ Fol.66a; Another one was the exegesis of Abdullah ibn Abbas: *Ibid*, p. 161/58b.

⁸⁷ Beyzavi interpreted the Qu'ranic verses from a philosophical perspective, suggesting that their meanings were not literal but symbolic. In matters of theology, his views belonged mostly to the Ashari School and influenced the latter theologians Taftazani and Cürçani which also had an affect on Bursevi's intellectual world. Although he submitted to the Sufi path under the guidance of his sheikh Muhammad al-Kathani, he composed only one work on Sufism. Particularly his exegesis was very popular among Ottomans and studied widely in Ottoman *medreses*. Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Beyzavi" *TDİA* vol. 6 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1992), pp. 100-103.

⁸⁸ İsmail Durmuş, "Ebu Yakub Sekkaki," *TDİA* vol. 36 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), pp. 332-334.

During this period, the political turmoil created by the contention between different factions within the palace circle such as the royal women and palace aghas had relatively settled down with the rise of the vizieral family Köprülüs. In 1651, the mother of Mehmed IV, Kösem Sultan was killed in the rivalry with the sultan's wife Hatice Turhan Sultan whereas the power of palace aghas was subdued. On the other hand, the third wave of Kadızadeli initiatives, the puritanical mosque preachers who wished to eradicate all religious innovations and return back to the time of the prophet, had gained impetus in the capital city. Madeline Zilfi suggests that “notwithstanding the centrality of the Sufis, the seriousness of the Kadızadeli challenge owes much to the underlying struggle between Kadızadeli Puritanism and the pragmatism of ulema decision-makers.”⁸⁹ The followers of Kadızade Mehmed seems to have remained on the less prestigious periphery of the ulema hierarchy as mosque preachers, provincial judges or jurisconsults at a time when prevalent networks of nepotism prevented merit-based ascendancy along with the swelling of the ulema ranks with increasing number of *medrese* graduates.⁹⁰ It must have been even more discouraging to see increasingly more Sufi sheikhs (mostly Halveti and to a lesser extent Celveti sheikhs) becoming mosque preachers at the expense of other candidates and gaining the favor of the sultan and prominent statesmen.⁹¹ Therefore the indignation Kadızadelis felt at the face of their limited career opportunities and

⁸⁹ Zilfi, “The Kadızadelis,” p. 252.

⁹⁰ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*.

⁹¹ According to Zilfi's research, between 1621 and 1685, Sufi sheikhs (mostly the halvetis) were preferred for the post of the Friday preacher in the imperial mosques of Istanbul (Aya Sofya, Sultan Ahmed, Süleymaniye, Beyazid and Fatih). Zilfi, “The Kadızadelis,” p. 267.

what they regarded as signs of social and moral decay turned into a dispersed/rather disorganized attack on Sufis who were enjoying a considerable degree of authority and influence over both the public and the state.

The grand-vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Pasha (d. 1676) who virtually held almost all of the state authority in his hands was personally very fond of the current leader of the Kadızadelis, Vani Mehmed Efendi. The latter, being also the preceptor of the sultan had thus gained the favor of the two most important loci of power (sultan and the grand vizier) as his predecessor. As Sufi dance performances (*sema*) were forbidden by 1665, a Bektaşî lodge near Edirne was abolished and Sufis were blamed for non-conformism to the rules of the sharia. It is important to see that these attacks, interventions and restrictions on Sufi practices were not necessarily an organized disciplinary application of Ottoman imperial policy towards Sufi orders but rather the consequences of Vani Mehmed's extensive influence in the palace which provided him with the tools to "decide the limits of tolerance and the official path of the faith."⁹² These measures can be seen as the manifestation of a continuation of the rising discourse of sharia-consciousness and Sunna-abidance not only among Kadızadeli circles but also among Sufi orders like the Celvetiyye: a discourse that was used to define the limits of acceptable religious and social behavior. The seventeenth century was neither the beginning nor the denouement of this puritanical discourse (which makes sense only under the light of the bigger framework of confessionalization and sunnitization) which found a mouthpiece in

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 263-4.

the person of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

By the time İsmail Hakkı Bursevi arrived in Osman Fazlı's lodge in Fatih, Istanbul as a young disciple in 1672, Vani was thus still famous in Istanbul as a preacher. Muhammed Bedirhan relies on Bursevi's *Tamamu'l-Feyz* (written in Arabic) for the details of Osman Fazlı's life and suggests that at this period, the fact that Osman Fazlı was studying Ibn 'Arabi's works (probably *Füsusü'l-Hikem*) with his disciples frequently caused discontent among the religious milieu.⁹³ Most likely this was a reflection of the fervent discussions churning the mosques of the capital city under the leadership of the Kadızadelis who denied Ibn 'Arabi's teachings, particularly the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine. In *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye*, Bursevi mentions an inspiration (*varid*) that his sheikh received during this period: "Follow the path of your ancestors. It is the path of secrecy." After these events, Osman Fazlı seems to have focused more on the teaching of religious sciences, writing commentaries on works such as Taftazani's *el-Mutavvel* (on rhetoric) which Bursevi studied as well.⁹⁴

Furthermore, according to *Tamamu'l-Feyz*, Osman Fazlı was even the subject of complaint to the şeyhülislam Minkarizade Yahya Efendi for teaching Ibn 'Arabi and was invited to his office to be tested. Refusing the invitation of the grand mufti, Osman Fazlı later wrote a letter with an inspiration adorned by the verses from the Qur'an to the grand vizier Köprülü Ahmed Paşa instead. In return Bursevi claimed

⁹³ Muhammed Bedirhan, "Osman Fazlı Atpazarî: Hayatı-Eserleri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri" (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2006), p. 13.

⁹⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 164/ Fol.60b; Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 38.

that the grand vizier enjoyed his commentary and even rewarded his master.⁹⁵ The grand vizier seems to have pursued a politics of balance between the Sufi sheikhs and those who attacked them by virtue of the influence both parties had in the society and among the ruling elites.

Whether the information provided by Bursevi is true or not, it appears that after this meeting Osman Fazlı Atpazari gained a more prominent place among the political authority figures which would continue well until his criticisms regarding the campaigns against Austria first in 1683 and then in 1689.⁹⁶ Although the details of Osman Fazlı's relationship with the vizieral Köprülü family and Mehmed IV remain to be researched, even a broad look at his life reveals the influence he enjoyed among political authority figures and the changing patterns of association with them. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, one of the factors that had a great impact on Hüdayi's acquisition of power in the political milieu was his close relationship with the family of the grand mufti Hocasadeddin. However, in the late seventeenth century Osman Fazlı was interacting more with the members of the vizieral Köprülü family who virtually held all power to rule in their hands. These changing patterns of association reflected not only the gradual waning of the office of the grand mufti (except for Feyzullah Efendi) with the rise of the grand vizier and bureaucracy in the seventeenth century but illustrated also how Sufi sheikhs were accordingly articulated into them.

⁹⁵ Bedirhan, "Osman Fazlı Atpazari," p. 14.

⁹⁶ Bedrettin Çetiner, "Atpazarî Osman Fazlı ve el-Laihatü'l-Berkiyyât adlı Tasavvufî Tefsîr Risalesi," *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 16-17 (1998-1999), p. 33.

For three years in Istanbul, Bursevi continued his education in religious sciences reading Hüseyin el-Kaşifi's Qur'anic exegesis and Sadrü'ş-Şeria Ubeydullah b. Mes'ud's (d.1632) book on usulü'l-fıkıh, *et-Tenkihu'l-Usul*. The choice of Sadrü'ş-Şeria is rather ironic because this scholar was known for his criticisms towards Ibn 'Arabi, particularly his *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine and claims about the relationship between sainthood and prophethood.⁹⁷ Osman Fazlı's decision to write a commentary on this work (along with *el-Mutavvel*) could be another sign of his attempts to cloak his Sufi identity and affinity with Ibn 'Arabi's teachings. In any way, Bursevi's sheikh paid special attention to provide his disciples with an education equivalent to that provided in the medreses before they submitted to the Sufi path to esoteric knowledge. Osman Fazlı would not approve any Sufis as his vicegerents if they were not well-versed in religious sciences first; a tradition passed on from Hüdayi. During his stay in Istanbul, Bursevi also studied Persian, poetry (of Hafız, Mevlana, Şirazi, Mevlana Cami, Ibn Kemal, etc.) and improved his skills in calligraphy.⁹⁸ After three years of education, he entered into seclusion (*halvet*) for ninety days, a practice that was still revered by the Celvetis as a disciplinary method for the taming of the ego and as a stepping stone for the higher rank of *celvet*.

After he came out of seclusion, Bursevi was sent to Skopje as a newly made vicegerent and resided in several other Balkan cities until 1685 when he was

⁹⁷ Şükrü Özen, "Sadrü'ş-Şeria," *TDİA* vol. 35 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008), pp. 427-431; Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 38.

⁹⁸ For a more comprehensive list about the books Bursevi studied see: Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 38-39.

appointed to Bursa.⁹⁹ Thus Bursevi had witnessed the last stage of the Kadızadeli contention even if for a short period of time. It is difficult to guess how much influence the religious discussions taking place in the public, particularly the teachings and sermons of Vani Mehmed had on Bursevi as a young man during the three years he spent in vicinity to the protagonists of the movement. He spent the subsequent ten years in the Balkan provinces away from the locus of direct interaction, and when he came back to Istanbul in 1686 to visit his sheikh, Vani Mehmed had already died in exile.

The Period of Vicegerency

Bursevi arrived in Skopje in 1675 and continued the (by then established) Sufi tradition of preaching and teaching at various mosques. Here, he seems to have committed himself strictly to commanding right and forbidding wrong (*emr bi'l-maruf nehy ani'l-münker*) in his sermons much like the Kadızadeli. Sufi sheikhs as preachers shared not only the pulpit but also a widespread discourse of Sunna abidance and religious revivalism with the Kadızadeli. Derin Terzioğlu states that “a pronounced emphasis on adherence to the Sunna and a puritanical outlook on Ottoman social and cultural life united the reform visions of both groups.”¹⁰⁰ In one of his letters sent to the sultan, Hüdayi was also making a claim that would be repeated all throughout the seventeenth century not only by Kadızadeli but also

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁰ Terzioğlu, “Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers.”

Celvetis like İsmail Hakkı Bursevi: “The wish of God and the ultimate aim of the prophet is the practice of justice by nullifying oppression and the revival of sunna by destroying innovations and the establishment of the provisions of sharia by the removal of the provision of nature as much as possible.”¹⁰¹

In this framework, the stern criticisms Bursevi directed towards the local religious leaders such as the mufti, judge, imams and even sheikhs in Skopje was the transformation of this discourse of piety to manifest action. According to *Tamamu'l-Feyz*, it seems to have made him quite an unpopular man in Skopje, judging by the fact that Osman Fazlı was forced to remove him to Titov Veles (*Köprülü*) when the events got out of control after Bursevi punished one of his students with bastinado for reasons that remain unclear. After this, Bursevi claims that the discontented locals reported him first to the local judge and mufti, then to the authorities in Istanbul.¹⁰² It is interesting to see that in the *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*, Bursevi exaggerated the event and claimed that the local elites of the city whom he regarded as hypocrites (*münafık*) had filed a complaint against him to the sultan and even wished that he be persecuted. Without providing further details, in this narrative Bursevi settled the issue by saying that being the righteous person he is (the influence of his pen name Hakkı) he used to exacerbate people's anger towards him by being too frank about their erroneous deeds.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ “*Hakk Celle ve Ala'nın muradı ve Rasul-i Ekrem akşa-yı maksudu zulmetler ref' olunup adiller icra olunması ve bid'atler ref' olunup sünnet ihya olunması ve hükm-i tabiat mehma-emken izale oluup ahkam-i şeriat istimal olunmasıdır.*” Hüdayi, “Mektuplar,” p. 53/ Fol.47a.

¹⁰² Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 43-45.

¹⁰³ Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*,” p. 289/ Fol. 35b.

After that we see both Bursevi and his sheikh seeking intercession from powerful figures to solve the problem: Whereas İsmail Hakkı Bursevi met the grand mufti Şeyhzade Ali Efendi, his sheikh sent a letter to the grand vizier Kara Mustafa Paşa to ask for help. Indeed this is another reflection of the changing patterns of affiliation with political authority figures in the late seventeenth century since by then it was not the sultan but the grand vizier and the grand mufti who virtually controlled the state affairs. According to Namlı, Bursevi's criticisms were mostly about people's disobedience to the rules of the sharia and disregard for religious morality as exemplified by the Sunna of the prophet.¹⁰⁴ These criticisms are indeed very similar to the generic ones he presented in *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* which he composed approximately forty five years later, pointing out the continuities in his definition of religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy. There is an underlying message in the way Bursevi ended his Skopje episode in *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* that he positioned himself as one of the friends of God for whom divine justice always prevailed. In the end the people of Skopje were punished for their mistreatment of a friend of God, Bursevi, when the occupiers (Hungarians) destroyed the city in 1689 and killed many locals.¹⁰⁵ This quote from *Kitabü'n-Netice* is telling about his attitude regarding the dangers of attacking saints: "Come now, if you are wise, do not attack the sultan, otherwise you will be attacking the poles. And attacking the poles is like attacking

¹⁰⁴ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

God. And God is overpowering and punishing. So none of those who have attacked the poles and the men of God with malice have recovered.”¹⁰⁶

Around this time in the capital city, the Celveti sheikh Selami Ali Efendi was removed from the Hüdai lodge allegedly with an imperial order issued by the sultan Mehmed IV (and influenced by Vani Efendi) on account of gossips, although the contents of the accusations are not known. Selami Ali Efendi had served as judge and later on as the mufti of İstanköy before entering the Sufi path under the guidance of Zakirzade Abdullah Efendi. This is not surprising since the Celvetiyye had been very popular among the ulema circles since the time of Hüdai. After his vicegerency in Bursa, he succeeded Devatizade Şeyh Mehmed Talib at the Hüdai Lodge in 1679. Hüseyin Vassaf suggests that in 1681, the Celveti sheikh was having troubles both with the preceptor of the sultan, Vani Efendi and with Niyazi Mısri, the controversial Halveti sheikh who would also be criticized by Bursevi for his “Risale-i Hasaneyn” in which he enounced the prophecy of Hasan and Hüseyin. According to Vassaf, it was possible for Selami Ali to return to office only after Vani Efendi was exiled in 1684.¹⁰⁷ Although Hüseyin Vassaf’s narrative seems plausible, there is no clear proof that supports the validity of these arguments: the details of Selami Ali’s discussions with Niyazi Mısri (who was indeed in exile at the time) and Vani Efendi and his official removal from the lodge remain unknown for the present. However, the

¹⁰⁶ “Gel imdi arif isen sultan üzerine huruc etme, ve illa kutub üzerine huruc etmiş olursun. Ve kutub üzerine huruc etmek Hak üzerine huruc gibidir. Ve Hak Kahhar ve Müntakim’dir. Onun için aktab ve ricale su’ ile taarruz edenlerden hiç biri felah bulmamıştır.” Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. I, p. 429.

¹⁰⁷ Mustafa Tatcı, M. Cemâl Öztürk, and Taxhiddin Bytyqi, eds., *Selami Ali Efendi: Hayatı, Tarikat-nâmesi ve Vakfiyesi* (İstanbul: Kaknüs Yayınları, 2006); p. 18-21.

religious discussions surrounding the mosque preachers of the period seem to have shaken the standing of the Celveti sheikhs at the time since subsequent two Celveti sheikhs, Basralı Halil and Mustafa Erzincani were also removed from the Hüdayi lodge. The first one was exiled to Egypt while the latter returned back to the lodge in 1705/1706.

Between 1681 and 1685, Bursevi was well received by the locals in Titov Veles and later Strumica (*Ustrumca*). He even claimed to have received an offer for the position of the mufti, which he rejected on account of his sheikh's cautions: Sufi sheikhs should not become muftis, for it could lead to an obsession with worldly power.¹⁰⁸ During this period, he also wrote a commentary on Taşköprizade's *Adabü'l-bahs* and claimed that this was a book which was well received among the intellectual circles in Istanbul and Bursa. In 1684, he went to visit his sheikh Osman Fazlı in Edirne who was present at the court of Mehmed IV for counseling.¹⁰⁹ Osman Fazlı is indeed one of the very intriguing and much neglected figures of the Celveti order; particularly his relationship with the political authority figures of his time awaits critical attention. Since it transcends the scope of this chapter I will

¹⁰⁸ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 47-48; Bursevi, *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, pp. 65-66; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice*, vol. I, p. 235. In *Kitabü'n-Netice*, Bursevi suggests that the offer for the position of mufti was made to him in Skopje, but according to Ali Namlı's extensive investigation of the sources regarding Bursevi's life, the offer is most likely made during his stay in Titov Veles; "Şeyhler müfti olmazlar." Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ The court was moved to Edirne in 1656 during the reign of Mehmed IV. Süleyman II, Ahmed II and Mustafa II had all been enthroned in Edirne. It was only after the 1703 uprising that the court made a total return to Istanbul. Indeed, it has been claimed that one of the reasons for this uprising was the rumors about Edirne becoming the new capital. Tülay Artan reads the residing of the court in Edirne throughout the second half of the seventeenth century as the court's search for legitimacy *vis-à-vis* other groups of power such as the janissaries and the viziers in Istanbul. Tülay Artan, "XVII. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Edirne Başkent miydi?" *Osmanlı Bankası Müzesi Voyvoda Caddesi Toplantıları Metinleri*, <http://www.obmuze.com/volvotop07.asp>, 26 Sept. 2011.

provide only brief information about the operation of this figure.¹¹⁰ Bursevi reports that he accompanied his sheikh to the palace during some of these counsel meetings which ended with dhikr rituals. According to him, during these meetings, Osman Fazlı was rather critical about the Ottoman stance towards engaging in war with Europe which indeed earned him unpopularity among the palace circle, particularly the grand vizier Kara Kethüda İbrahim Paşa.¹¹¹ It is highly probable that Bursevi made some acquaintances within the palace circle during these visits and some of those might have been the very people for whom he composed his *tuhfes* during his stay in Üsküdar near the end of his life.¹¹²

In Edirne, Bursevi also read his sheikh's interpretation of *Miftahü'l-gayb* by Konevi, one of the significant figures of the Ibn 'Arabi school who was very famous among Ottoman Sufis. Furthermore, he studied Ibn 'Arabi's *Füsusu'l-Hikem* on which he would write a commentary later on. Celvetis were staunch followers and supporters of Ibn 'Arabi starting with Üftade in the sixteenth century. In his *Divan*, Üftade paid heed not to transgress the acceptable limits of the mystical expression of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine as defined by sharia. He did not use any phrases that would lead to his enunciation as a heretic and reflected more an ascetic vision based

¹¹⁰ *Tamamü'l-Feyz* which consists of Bursevi's daily notes and conversations with this sheikh along with his biography will provide much information about the life Osman Fazlı and his influence in politics when translated from Arabic.

¹¹¹ Çetiner, "Atpazarî Osman Fazlı," p. 34.

¹¹² *Ibid.* pp. 47-51.

on piety.¹¹³ The effort on Celvetis' behalf to bring the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine closer to Sunni Islam and determine its borders with pantheism which they defined as heresy continued after him and is evident in the writings of Bursevi as well.

During the period he spent in the Balkans, the Ottomans were engaged in the war with the Habsburgs, and when the defeat arrived in 1683 the grand vizier of the time Kara Mustafa Pasha was persecuted. We learn from Bursevi's account that Osman Fazlı had indeed warned the grand vizier about the perils of engaging in this war but supposedly the latter did not lend an ear to the counsels of the sheikh.¹¹⁴ A similar encounter would take place between İsmail Hakkı Bursevi and the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa in the early eighteenth century after which the latter would be persecuted for his aggressive attitude towards the war with Russia.

In 1685, Bursevi arrived in Bursa and continued his preaching activities. He later on compiled the sermons he gave in the Ulu Mosque into a mystical interpretation of the Qur'an and titled it *Ruhü'l-Beyan*. During his stay in Bursa, Bursevi visited his sheikh in Istanbul five times and preserved his contacts in the capital city. One of his visits took place several months before the deposition of Mehmed IV and the enthronement of Süleyman II in 1687. However the dethronement did not calm down the angry mob of soldiers whose salaries were

¹¹³ For Üftade's interpretation of *vahdet-i vücud* see his Divan. In his letters Hüdayi claims that he found Ibn 'Arabi's *Anka-i Muğrib ve Şems-i Mağrib* among the books belonging to his deceased sheikh however this could also indicate Nurettinzade Efendi, his previous sheikh who was a Halveti.

¹¹⁴ Çetiner, "Atpazarî Osman Fazlı," p. 33. It is worth noting that the devastation that the campaign caused in the Ottoman economy was not insignificant. For brief discussion of the result of the heavy conscription by Kara Mustafa, see Stanford Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* vol. I *Empire of the Gazis* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 218-9.

unpaid. Accordingly, in *Tamamu'l-Feyz* Bursevi stated that Osman Fazlı was the principal mediator between the mob and the sultan in the event recalled as *Zorbalar Vakası*. Even though his influence among the state officials and the sultan in the first place may be regarded with suspicion, Uzunçarşılı acknowledges that Osman Fazlı made a speech in which he conveyed the notification of the sultan at a tower addressing the mob. He was indeed one of those who dared to give the banner of the prophet Muhammad to the people in front of the palace.¹¹⁵

In another instance in one of his sermons, Osman Fazlı defended the cause of Suleyman II in fighting against the Habsburgs. Regarding Belgrade as the gate of Istanbul, Osman Fazlı agitated for the sultan's cause.¹¹⁶ However he withdrew support from state policies regarding the extra taxes to be levied from the populace, and suggested that both soldiers and state officials attend the war themselves. Indeed his militant stance on the issue was furthered when he joined the army himself. In the end his critical attitude led to his exile in Magosa in 1690 with an order issued by the grand vizier.¹¹⁷ Here we see Osman Fazlı as an active agent in political discussions and favoring a militant stance in foreign policy much like Hüdayi (who frequently

¹¹⁵ According to Bursevi, the sultan asked Osman Fazlı how to eliminate the rebellious despots; and Fazlı, in return, suggested to gather under the prophet's banner after the sultan issued a decree. Bedirhan, "Osman Fazlı Atpazarî," p. 24-5; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* vol. III pt. I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1951), p. 521.

¹¹⁶ "The infidels have come near your gates. They invade villages; as they seize the lands of Muslims in such a way and capture those gates, what are you doing? Wake up and donate one third of your wealth for the help of the mujahid gazis. Those who are not able to do so [should] pray God in a sincere way for them. Giving away wealth is one of two lesser evils. Detachment of Muslims from their homelands, however, is the most striking evil of these two evils. In that case, it is necessary to accept the lesser evil." Bedirhan, "Osman Fazlı Atpazarî," p. 28.

¹¹⁷ Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* III:1, p. 533; Çetiner, "Atpazarî Osman Fazlı," p. 37; Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, 59-60.

supported the war with the Safavids in his letters to Murad III) although his counsels were not acted upon. This is the kind of militant and non-conformist stance that one cannot find in Bursevi. One of the reasons might have been the acceptance of the European military superiority after the Treaty of Karlowitz and the coming of a period of relative peace at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Another one is surely the impact his sheikh's exile left on Bursevi as a disciple. As we shall see in the subsequent chapters, Bursevi legitimized war in his writings, but he did not necessarily focus on militancy in foreign policy but rather in the disciplining of the society but all within a discourse of conformity.

Bursevi Operating as the Sufi Sheikh

After the death of Osman Fazlı, Bursevi attended the two campaigns against Austria (1695 and 1696) upon the request of the grand vizier to provide spiritual support for the army. Both of these campaigns resulted in defeats and in growing disenchantment with Ottoman military power. Many contemporaries regarded this as one of the signs of decline. As the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699, Bursevi set off on pilgrimage and returned to Bursa in 1703.¹¹⁸ It is interesting to see in the writings of Bursevi that the dispersed militant attacks on Sufi practices were not limited to the capital city in the seventeenth century but had also repercussions in Bursa at the beginning of the eighteenth. Bursevi speaks of a man with an “anti-Sufi” agenda (in his words) preaching in the Ulu Mosque and causing dissent among the public

¹¹⁸ Namlı, İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, pp. 73-79.

leading some of his followers to violent acts. A Sufi was killed while others were injured for attending the communal prayer during the night of Kadir: a traditional practice among the Sufis which was criticized by religious scholars for centuries.¹¹⁹ It may be presumed that the seventeenth century religious discussions in Istanbul had already spread to different regions, but particularly after the leaders of the Kadızadelis were dispelled, they might have become more visible in other places. In 1711 one comes across a similar attack at a group of dervishes in Cairo by some religious students who based their ideas on the teachings of Birgivi just like the Kadızadelis. Although Rudolph Peters analyses this attack within the framework of eighteenth century fundamentalist reform (one of the bold propositions of neo-Sufism arguments), centuries are just a matter of periodization. There is no rationale in separating the seventeenth century publicization of the discourse of piety from the continuing discussions in the eighteenth: the roots of such attacks were already laid within the previous centuries.¹²⁰

The early eighteenth century was marked by the event called the Edirne Incident which ended up with the deposition of Mustafa II and the enthronement of Ahmed III while the grand mufti Feyzullah Efendi was persecuted at the hands of the people. While the details of this event and Bursevi's approach to the grand mufti will be mentioned later on, let it suffice to say that one of the most important reasons for the manifestation of this rebellion was the extensive influence of the grand mufti in

¹¹⁹ The night of Kadir was believed by Muslims to be the night when the prophet Mohammed received the Qur'an by divine inspiration; Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 79-81.

¹²⁰ See Rudolph Peters, "The Battered Dervishes of Bab-Zuwayla: A Religious Riot in Eighteenth Century Cairo," in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 93-115.

state affairs. He not only monopolized the highest offices in the ulema hierarchy but also had gained the power to dismiss and appoint grand viziers.¹²¹ During this event, Bursevi was residing in Bursa and must have received the news about the events indirectly.

In 1708, Bursevi composed his *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* for the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa and in 1710, before he left for pilgrimage he responded to the invitation of the grand vizier to counsel him. Bursevi's advice indicated the significance of piety and religious morality for statesmen.¹²² Indeed as shall be seen in subsequent chapters, this reliance on a discourse of piety formed the basis of a majority of his counsels for political authority figures. While the initial encounter between the two is unknown, it is also probable that Bursevi initiated the affiliation by composing the advice book for him.

Bursevi's next destination was Damascus where he stayed between 1717 and 1720, forming networks with local religious scholars and particularly affiliating with the governor Receb Paşa for whom he wrote *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*. In his writings, Bursevi suggested that he reached the rank of Polehood in Damascus, a concept which he adopted from Ibn 'Arabi and elaborated in all his writings.¹²³ The concept of the pole is essential for understanding Bursevi's approach to politics since the sultan and the pole were virtually the two sides of a coin and the maintenance of

¹²¹ For the most detailed argument about this event see: Rifa'at Abou El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion and the Structure of Ottoman Politics* (Leiden: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te İstanbul, 1984).

¹²² Namlı, *İsmail Hakka Bursevi*, pp. 90-91.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-103.

order in the empire depended on their mutual respect for one another. Thus, while in Bursevi's elaboration, the concept did not defy the authority of the sultan or any other statesmen, it indeed claimed a considerable degree of power. The sultan was bound to the pole in all his actions even if he was not aware of it: the role of the Sufi sheikh was to awaken the sultan to this fact. Bursevi's conceptualization of the pole and definition of his roles in his *tuhfes* shall be handled together with his frank claims to the position. That way, we can see how his adoption of identification with this notion helped him situate himself vis-à-vis political authority.

The period between 1720 and 1723, Bursevi spent in Üsküdar where he composed most of his *tuhfes* and received gifts from the grand vizier Damad Ibrahim Paşa. It seems likely that Bursevi, after reaching Polehood as exclaimed in his texts in Damascus, decided to come to Istanbul to share his knowledge.¹²⁴ Therefore his extensive writing activities and willingness to communicate with a wider range of people through *tuhfes* might have been a consequence of his acquisition of the office of Polehood. His decision to stay particularly in Üsküdar must have been shaped by a wish to be in the vicinity of the Hüdayi lodge or maybe even be appointed as its next sheikh. According to Namlı, Bursevi criticized the current sheikh of the Hüdayi lodge for his incompetency.¹²⁵ If this is true, then we can suggest that Bursevi indeed wanted to establish himself in the capital city for the rest of his life. However this wish was not granted and he had to return to Bursa where he died in 1725. And even his three years of stay in Üsküdar was not without trouble. Bursevi claims to have

¹²⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 49/ Fol. 52a.

¹²⁵ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 104-107.

been criticized by the grand mufti of the time for exclaiming “There is no god but me” (*La ilahe illa ene*).¹²⁶ Indeed in *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, one of the texts he composed in Üsküdar, Bursevi tries to explain the station of *Ene’l-Hakk* and why it is forbidden to make such exclamations in the public.¹²⁷ Bursevi might have made recourse to writing in order to counter the claims of his attackers and defend his position. What follows before we continue with an analysis of Bursevi’s texts is a general overview of the *tuhfes* used for analysis, their audience, contents and the implications of his writing activities in the larger context of the eighteenth century realities.

Introducing İsmail Hakkı Bursevi’s Tuhfes: Language, Purposes, Audience

What singles out İsmail Hakkı Bursevi not only from the Sufi authors within the Celveti literary tradition but also from many other contemporary religious scholars is his prolific literary composition.¹²⁸ Having composed more than approximately one hundred and twenty works during a lifespan of seventy-two years (1653-1725), Bursevi helped the expansion of the literary culture of the Celvetiyye by producing

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ He claimed that God could only be known through his manifestations on earth in a relative (*nisbi*) manner, not in totality (*külli*). *Ene’l-Hakk* was the station in which the ego (*nefs*) was dissolved to the extent that God’s names and attributes were disclosed perfectly in a person. Hence it did not imply a total knowledge or emulation of God. It was neither necessary nor legitimate to make outward claims this station since people could misunderstand it. Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*,” pp. 54-57.

¹²⁸ It is interesting to come across another famous religious scholar of the time, Abdülğani Nablusi (1641-1731), a Damascene Sufi having affiliations with the Naqshbandi, Mevlevi and Kadiri orders, whose literary heritage emulates and even outmatches that of Bursevi. For more information on Nablusi see: Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005); Bekri Alaaddin and Veysel Uysal, *Abdülğani Nablusi: Hayatı ve Fikirleri* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1995).

works in diverse spheres. He also helped the dissemination of this literary production to different segments of the society by establishing networks of patronage and providing books as gifts to people from various walks of life.¹²⁹ Therefore, Bursevi provided the Celvetiyye order with an unmatched cultural capital that served to formulate, explicate, legitimize and most importantly spread his vision with regard to Islam, Sufism, morality, politics, society and cosmology.

Bursevi's works can be categorized within the generic spheres of Sufism, jurisprudence, theology, hadith, Qur'anic exegesis, poetry and hymns. However, a simple categorization of his literary output as such might limit the vision of intellectual historians as to what to expect from these texts. For example the contents of Bursevi's *tuhfes*, books that were written as gifts to particular people, were not only about Sufism or religious matters per se but they also covered a wide range of topics such as the personal life of the author and his comments on politics, the social order and contemporary issues which may help the historian catch a glimpse of how Bursevi envisioned the world around him and his place in it.

In this section, six of Bursevi's *tuhfes*,¹³⁰ which were all written in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, will be briefly introduced, and the context within which they were composed will be analyzed to shed light on several questions: What did Bursevi's extensive writing activities and provision of books as gifts indicate in

¹²⁹ For a comprehensive list of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi's literary works, their short descriptions, the libraries in which they are located and if available, their modern publications see: Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 161-219.

¹³⁰ The current author's reason for choosing particularly these six *tuhfes* are determined both by their availability in Latin transcription and the fact that they addressed a wide range of people (not only high-ranking statesmen such as the grand vizier and the governor of Damascus but members of the palace staff and a janissary soldier).

the context of eighteenth century Ottoman realities? What were the social and political implications of both the act of writing and the contents of these texts? What were the changing patterns of power relations; how could a Sufi sheikh relate with different loci of political and material power in the early eighteenth century?

In Ottoman Turkish, *tuhfe* means gift; as a literary genre, it is difficult to define it since *tuhfes* were not necessarily written in any particular way or topic. The only characteristic that all *tuhfes* shared was that they addressed particular individuals and were presented as gifts to them. In the sixteenth century, authors composing *tuhfes* addressed mostly the sultan, the princes and at times high ranking statesmen (viziers, governors, high status bureaucrats). These were not necessarily advice books per se; they could be about other topics such as history or poetry. Still, many authors preferred to compose advice books as gifts to benefit from the gift-reward system within the networks of patronage which revolved mainly around statesmen and authors from varying backgrounds at the time. According to Hüseyin Yılmaz, “gifts presented to men of high stature in the form of written works were handsomely rewarded by the recipient. This was a culture in which, histories, poems and legends praised statesmen’s protection and care of literati, with special veneration.”¹³¹ One of the most significant qualities of an ideal ruler or statesman was to be a patron of religious scholars and to ask for their advice when needed, be it on political or religious issues. Since it was quite difficult for the majority of statesmen to fully indulge in texts laden with the specialized vocabulary of Sufism and religious sciences and profound intellectual discussions, *tuhfe* authors preferred to refer to

¹³¹ Yılmaz, “Sultan and the Sultanate,” p. 132-3.

stories, parables, illustrative metaphors and poetry to render their words commensurable to their intended audience.

İsmail Hakkı Bursevi's *tuhfes* carried a similar sensibility for comprehensibility not only by the rulers or the high ranking statesmen as in the sixteenth century but by a broader group of people to which the texts were directed. Bursevi composed a total of fourteen *tuhfes* whose various recipients were as diverse as his son, his brother, a fellow dervish, a sheikh, a janissary soldier, the enderun agha, the chief haseki (*ser-haseki*), the inspector of imperial gardens (*hasbahçeler müfettişi*), the governor of Damascus and the grand vizier.¹³² Although the language of composition was adjusted according to the perceived scholarly and linguistic capabilities of the intended audience, all of the works were written in Turkish. In his *tuhfes*, Bursevi explicitly claimed his purpose to write the texts in simple Turkish to increase readability.¹³³ Being wordy and using a pompous language overburdened the mind and made it difficult for the reader to understand the essentials of the text: According to him such texts were tasteless whereas their writers were sinners.¹³⁴ For example, in his own words, *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* was composed with simple expressions that were close to the diction of public comprehension.¹³⁵ Particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was more common among Ottoman

¹³² For a list of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi's *tuhfes*, see: Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 217.

¹³³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.198/ Fol.1b.

¹³⁴ "*Ve esna-i takrirde çokluk tekellüf ve ahz-i tarik-ı te'assüf olunmadugunun sırrı vazıh ve 'illeti ruşendir. Zira tekellüf ile olan kelim bi-meze ve belki sahibi bezekar olur, zira müteşeddikdir.*" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 210/ Fol. 3a.

¹³⁵ "...*takrirat-ı fehmi avama akreb olan ibarat-ı sehle ile vücud buldu.*" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 123/ Fol. 1b-2a.

authors to experiment with the Turkish language to claim it as suitable “for literary elegance and educated Islamic discourse as Arabic and Persian”.¹³⁶ To illustrate the virtue of Turkish Bursevi claimed it to be one of the languages in which an angel spoke to Adam to make him descend to earth: it was only when the angel told him to get up in Turkish that Adam made sense of his words and was mobilized. This claim not only provided Turkish the sacral and mystical background it lacked but also made reference to its simplicity.¹³⁷

Bursevi believed in the continuous significance of textual material in the education of people for years to come and hence paid special heed to lay down all of his thoughts and experiences on paper and to do it in such a way that more people could have access to them:

It is sufficient for people’s hands to have no other perfection than that of writing down knowledge and the Qur’an. And all these works last for ages. People read, and benefit from them and pray for the authors’ souls.¹³⁸

Even if no one benefited from them, Bursevi believed that the authors of such texts would still be rewarded by God for engaging in this act.¹³⁹ Bursevi’s *tuhfes* were first of all educational tracts which aimed not only to inform the reader about the basic tenets of Celveti Sufism but also to offer a roadmap to live one’s life within the

¹³⁶ Howard, “Genre and Myth,” p. 150; Emine Fatma Fetvacı, “Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566-1617” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2005), p.22, p. 264.

¹³⁷ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 124 /Fol.152a.

¹³⁸ “İnsanın ellerinin bi’l-farz Kur’an ve ilim yazmaktan gayri kemali olmasa dahi ona kafidir. Zira bu kadar asar, dühur-i müteavile kalır. Nazar edenler, onunla müntefi’ olurlar, sebab-i dua olur. Bu cihetten Hacı İsmail’in iltimasına müsaade olunup bu Tuhfe kaleme geldi. Zira eğer kendi ve eğer beldesi olan Lefke ehli, ilmi ve ameli severler.” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i, İsmailiyye,” p. 170/ Fol. 27a.

¹³⁹ “Sa’y ü irşadının eseri zuhur etmeyip, kimse onun davetini kabul kılmadığı surette dahi kendine ecir vardır.” *Ibid.*, p. 143 /Fol.13a.

acceptable limits of sunna and sharia as a responsible member of the community. Through these texts Bursevi partook in the consolidation of orthodoxy and orthopraxy and regarded it as his responsibility to provide religious education to more people as a response to what he conceived as decline in all aspects of society due to impiety.

In the seventeenth century, many Sufi sheikhs and in a similar fashion the Kadızadelis were using the pulpit to transmit their views regarding religion to the general public within a discourse of commanding right and forbidding wrong.¹⁴⁰ This was as much a performance of negotiation of power as a conscious struggle to respond to the transformations in the society. Bursevi pointed out that just as the prophets were responsible for inviting people to religion, saints were in charge of warning others, showing and explaining them the right path.¹⁴¹ In the eighteenth century, Sufi sheikhs continued to serve as mosque preachers, Bursevi being one of them. During his stay in Üsküdar, he was preaching at the Mosque of Ahmediyye while in Bursa, he preached in the Ulu, Kaygan and Orhan Mosques.¹⁴² With his writings which aimed to bring religious education and the sharia and sunna abiding Sufi teachings of the Celvetis available to a wider range of people, he hoped to make information which was previously accessible by a small group of elites and religious scholars available to commoners as well. He was hence operating in the wider milieu of the text which was not necessarily limited to the pulpit of the mosque or the lodge

¹⁴⁰ Zilfi, "The Kadızadelis," pp. 251-269; Derin Terzioğlu, "Niyazi Mısri: Sufi and Dissident," 190-275.

¹⁴¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 143 /Fol.13a.

¹⁴² Ayni, *Türk Azizleri I*, p. 63.

in spatial terms but carried the potential for the transmission of ideas even at times when face-to-face interaction was not possible. Thus, these *tuhfes* which were written with specific people in mind actually made a claim to reach a much wider audience than that of the intended receiver. At the end of *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, in a couplet Bursevi was hence saying: “This folio was written in Üsküdar/ It enlightened the lands of Rum every morning and every evening”.¹⁴³ Despite Bursevi’s wishful thinking, it is not possible for us to know the actual circulation of these texts among the people.

In these *tuhfes*, Bursevi frequently relied on the existing discourses on Ottoman rulership as a metaphoric tool to explicate rather complicated Sufi terminology. Bursevi’s widespread use of the discourse on rulership as an educational tool in clarifying Sufi notions points to the availability of this discourse in the eighteenth century not only for statesmen and rulers but by a wide range of people who constituted his intended audience.¹⁴⁴

Bursevi’s *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* (also referred to as *Süluku’l-Müluk*, 1708) stands out among his other *tuhfes* not just because it was his earliest attempt in the *nasihatname* genre but also because it addressed a statesman of significant political authority, Çorlulu Ali Paşa, the grand vizier of the period. Bursevi claimed to have written the

¹⁴³ “Üsküdar içre yazıldı bu varak/ Rum’u ruşen eyledi her subh u şam” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p. 176/ Fol. 30a.

¹⁴⁴ For example, while commenting on the wantonness of professing such ecstatic exclamations as “*Ene’l-Hakk*” Bursevi made a resemblance to the redundancy of the sultan proclaiming that he is the sultan. After everyone paid allegiance to him in acknowledgment of his sultanate, there was no need for the sultan to prove himself. Similarly, the saint did not have to profess his spiritual rank and proximity to God. Mehmet Ali Akidil, “İsmail Hakkı Bursevi Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye’si (Tenkitli Metin)” (M.A. thesis Gazi University, 1996), p. 56.

text upon a divine inspiration. In this text, Bursevi did not only provide counsels but also commented on contemporary issues regarding Ottoman political authority and legitimacy mostly in a question-answer format. There are five extant manuscripts of the text indicating a limited circulation.¹⁴⁵ The text starts off as an imaginary conversation between the grand vizier and Bursevi who claimed to have written the text to provide assistance to rulers.¹⁴⁶ It was also during this period that Osmanzade Ahmet Taib (d. 1723/4) composed his biographical dictionary of grand viziers, one of the many indicators of the increasing significance attached to viziers in literature.¹⁴⁷ On the one hand, since the mid-sixteenth century, the grand vizier had gained increasing visibility as the director of state affairs with the withdrawal of the sultan. However this process was matched by the simultaneous limitation of his executive powers due to the increasing influence of diverse factions in the political sphere (particularly the grand mufti). As a result, many authors directed their counseling activities to the figure of the grand vizier throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁸ This must have been one of the reasons why Bursevi preferred to dedicate his tract of advice to the grand vizier. Although their first encounter cannot be asserted with certainty for now, in *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* Bursevi related his meeting with the grand vizier in Istanbul (1710) upon the latter's request to receive advice.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ See f.n. 52.

¹⁴⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.198 /Fol.1b.

¹⁴⁷ Tezcan, "The Politics of Early Modern," pp. 193-194.

¹⁴⁸ Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma Öncesi," p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 383-384 /Fol.78a.

The same year, he was dismissed from office and sent to exile in Kefe because of his rather aggressive approach to the war with Russia. Only a year later, he was persecuted by the fetva issued by his contender, şeyhülislam Paşmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi.¹⁵⁰ In *el-Varidat* (ca. 1717), Bursevi related the dismissal and subsequent persecution of Çorlulu Ali Paşa to his disregard for the advices provided in *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* and indulgence in his ego.¹⁵¹

In *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* (1718) which was written in Damascus for the city's governor Recep Paşa, Bursevi focused on the twelve names of God which were considered essential for the teachings and practices of the Celvetiyye order.¹⁵² Each of the twelve names was explained in relation to the equivalent station in the Sufi path within the framework of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine. Furthermore, Bursevi provided instructions as to what a beginner on the Sufi path should do to make these names manifest in his being. According to Bursevi, after being appointed as the governor of Damascus in 1718, Recep Pasha had become rather interested in his works and wanted to be better acquainted with his writings hence commissioning the

¹⁵⁰ Çorlulu Ali Paşa was appointed grand vizier to the court of Ahmed III in 1706. According to Danişmend, he was discharged from office in 1710 and sent to exile in Kefe because of his aggressive attitude towards Russia which was implied in the secret order he sent to the Crimean Khan to help Charles XII of Sweden in the war against Russia. Allegedly the grand vizier was not abiding to the pacifist stance of the sultan on the issue. İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı İslam Tarihi Kronolojisi* vol. IV (Istanbul: Bâb-ı Âli Yayınevi, 1960), p. 3.

¹⁵¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 191.

¹⁵² Bursevi openly claimed that he wrote *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* in Turkish, language of the common people, rather than Arabic, lingua franca of religious sciences, so that more people could benefit from it. Despite Bursevi's good intentions for accesibility, it is difficult to suggest that the language of the book was easy enough for commoners to indulge in its subtleties. The fact that there is only one extant copy in the libraries of Istanbul is further evidence for *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*'s rather limited circulation at least in the capital city. See Note 53 above; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 209/ Fol. 3a.

writing of this book.¹⁵³ The way in which Bursevi had changed the structure and the contents of *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* upon a divine inspiration echoed Ibn ‘Arabi’s claim to have written *Fütühat-ı Mekkiye* only by “divine dictation”.¹⁵⁴ It was not uncommon for Bursevi to comment in his texts on the divinely inspired and initiated nature of his writing activities.

Considering that the book was dedicated to a governor, who was well educated and had more reading history when compared to a janissary, it is not surprising to see that the language of *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* is much more sophisticated than *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*. The fact that it is copiously embellished with poetry, and unlike *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* opens up with a eulogy for Recep Paşa reflects the perceived high status of the addressee and suggests a patronage relationship between the governor of Damascus and Bursevi.¹⁵⁵ The more sophisticated and literary language of the text may point to the level of education of the governor and the depth of his knowledge of Sufi terminology. On the other hand, the sophistication of the text may be consciously constructed by Bursevi to imply the grandeur of the receiver as a patron of literary production.

Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye (1720, Üsküdar), one of Bursevi’s most easy to read texts, was addressed to a janissary soldier named Hacı İsmail Piyade (*Yeniçeri Lefkevi*)

¹⁵³ “... because he is aspiring for further education and wishing to study some of our works, some works and secrets have been inserted in this record, and the limited days which belong to the capital of precious life have been spent for writing this work. It has been named *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* on account of his glorious and privileged name and has been sent to their party by way of present.” *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208/ Fol. 2b.

¹⁵⁴ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 18; pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁵ Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*,” pp. 205-207/ Fol. 2a-2b.

who accompanied Bursevi during the two Austria campaigns (in 1695 and 1696) which he attended as spiritual and moral support to the army.¹⁵⁶ *Yeniçeri Lefkevi* was charged with the duty of escorting and protecting Bursevi during the two formidable campaigns in which he was moderately injured. According to Bursevi, this old acquaintance later on asked him some questions related to catechism (*ilm-i hal*) which he answered in writing.¹⁵⁷ Catechisms made a claim to the establishment of order and conformity through an authoritative voice which did not yield the possibility for religious debates, thus it was a popular form among the Ottoman scholars in the seventeenth century who were continuously reflecting their concerns for the re-ordering of the society.¹⁵⁸ In the text Bursevi explained different kinds and stations of faith and the significance of good deeds through stories, Qur'anic verses and hadith with no specific reference to works of other scholars. For Bursevi, the most important prospect of this text was its educational aspect although he did not shun away from adorning it with some poetry to spice up the aesthetic side.

Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye (1722, Üsküdar), along with *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* of which there are eight extant manuscripts, again does not indicate a wide-spread circulation since there are only seven manuscripts available in the libraries of Istanbul.¹⁵⁹ This

¹⁵⁶ Namli, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 70-73, p. 113; Ayni, *Türk Azizleri I*, pp. 65-67.

¹⁵⁷ "... hem-tarik ve her cadde-i zaruriyyede refikimiz olan Hacı İsmail Piyade, yani Yeniçeri Lefkevi bazı mesail-i ilm-i hal mutalebe ve sualde mügalebe etmekle, birkaç feride-i fevaid rişte-bend tahrir oldu." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 123 /Fol. 1b; "Hacı İsmail olup bais ona/ Eyledi tahriri için ihtimam" *Ibid.*, p. 176/ Fol. 30a.

¹⁵⁸ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, p. 202.

¹⁵⁹ For the details of the manuscripts copies of *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, see f.n. 55; For *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, see footnote 54.

was another one of his easy-to-read books about the basics of the Celveti order, its mores, dhikr practices and the idea of *tevhid* (unity of God) and was dedicated to a particular dervish Ömer who had entered the Celveti path.¹⁶⁰ While the contents of the text were mostly related to the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine and the importance of submitting to a competent sheikh, Bursevi also made use of political concepts and imagery (particularly about the sultan and the sultanate) in defining Sufi notions. It is difficult to imagine a patronage relationship between this newly made Celveti dervish and İsmail Hakkı Bursevi; rather the *tuhfe* must have been a sincere attempt at writing easy-to-read texts which discussed not only Celveti doctrines and practices but also a whole lot about Bursevi's worldview to a more extensive audience which was symbolized in the person of the dervish Ömer. The fact that there are no perspicuous eulogies and references to the intended receiver of the text, despite the frequent insertion of poems to increase literary value, supports this suggestion. It is an educational book which aims to simplify Sufi doctrines and practices for the general reader in a colloquial language.

Another one of Bursevi's *tuhfes* was composed for Seyyid Ahmed Vesimi, an enderun agha from the palace of Ahmed III, who requested from Bursevi to answer some of his questions regarding Sufism and religion in general.¹⁶¹ The text was titled *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* or *Kitab-ı Süluk* and was completed in 1722 in Üsküdar. A brief research in the libraries of Istanbul has yielded fourteen manuscripts, an availability similar to *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* of which there are twelve manuscripts. These seem to be

¹⁶⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 66.

¹⁶¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 118 /Fol.35a.

the most widely circulated *tuhfes* of Bursevi partly because of their much easier language of composition.¹⁶² The book is based on a question-answer format and written in a relatively simple Turkish similar to the other *tuhfes*. It opens with a discussion on paying allegiance to the Prophet and the position of the saint as his inheritor. Then throughout the text Bursevi comments on the significance of submitting to a sheikh along with the sultan and the Pole, the relationship between Sufis, the necessity of spiritual training, dhikr and conversation with saints. Although we do not know the extent of the relationship between Bursevi and this figure from the palace circle, it seems plausible to think that he was interested in the Celveti order or maybe even a disciple of Bursevi since the text resembles a beginner's guide to Sufism and invites the reader to join the order.

The last text used for analysis is Bursevi's *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* (1722), written for the chief haseki Tubazade Mehmed Ağa whom we know was a disciple of Bursevi and had received an *icazetname* (document of ratification) from him during his stay in Üsküdar.¹⁶³ A general search in the libraries of Istanbul has yielded only two available manuscripts. *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* was a quite voluminous text which contained Bursevi's commentaries regarding catechism, Sufism, the genealogy of the prophet, the unity of God and the mystical interpretation of Ottoman state institutions. It should be noted that *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, one of Bursevi's most structured *tuhfes*, contains neither an organized Ottoman history nor a coherent

¹⁶² For details regarding the manuscripts of *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* see footnote 14; for *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* see footnote 56.

¹⁶³ For the *icazetname* he received from Bursevi see: İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, *İcazetname*, Beyazıt Devlet Ktp., Genel, nr. 7890, Fol.12-18; Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 209.

analysis of Ottoman state institutions in their historical evolution. It cannot be claimed a treatise on political philosophy either. Although Bursevi provides examples for the workings of some Ottoman institutions in previous Islamic polities, these are narrated as illustrative stories in line with the advice for princes tradition. Thus it is not possible to suggest that Bursevi totally incorporated in his writing the novel attitude of administrators who aimed to analyze Ottoman state institutions in their historical development since the mid-sixteenth century. However still, as we shall see, there are the subtle signs of a disassociation between the Ottoman dynasty and the state particularly in this text. Considering the inclusiveness of the work and the limited scope of this thesis, only the parts dealing with the Ottoman state institutions have been taken into account. The master-disciple relationship between the author and the *ser-haseki*, the voluminosity of the text and the frequent literary embellishments through poems indicate not only the close affiliation between the two but also the high probability of a generous reward granted to Bursevi by the receiver of this gift.

Sufi Author vis-à-vis Socio-Economic and Political Power Groups

Before continuing with the analysis of the abovementioned texts, the contexts within which these *tuhfes* were written will be briefly explained. As has been indicated before, *tuhfe* as a genre had evolved within a gift-reward economy: the author provided his text as a literary object to a wealthy patron and in return received a reward. In the early modern context where the production, dissemination and the actual reading of texts were rather limited, patronage relations provided authors with

the financial means they needed to sustain themselves.¹⁶⁴ For the patron, this relationship indicated a manifestation of his social, economical and cultural distinction as a protector of artistic production.¹⁶⁵ In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, Bursevi legitimized the money paid for shari books (*kütüb-i şeriyye*), particularly the Quran (*Mushaf*), by claiming them to be gifts since they were basically invaluable.¹⁶⁶ Thus he was not necessarily against receiving rewards in the form of money or barter in exchange for his books. Although we do not know the extent of Bursevi's earnings from his writing activities, it is plausible to think that he received some sort of reward at least for the *tuhfes* he composed for the grand vizier, the governor of Damascus and the members of the palace staff who were significant loci of power during the early eighteenth century.

With the enlargement of the “political nation” and the accumulation of material wealth by different sections of the society all throughout the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, new loci of political and financial power such as the janissaries, royal women and palace officials started to become increasingly more visible as political actors.¹⁶⁷ The increasing visibility of these previously under-represented groups in the political sphere was matched by a parallel visibility in the

¹⁶⁴ Halil İnalçık, *Şair ve Patron* (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2003), p.16.

¹⁶⁵ Fetvacı, “Vizier to Eunuchs,” p.7.

¹⁶⁶ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” pp. 130-131 /Fol.6a.

¹⁶⁷ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, p. 58-72, pp. 100-108, p. 175-180; For a detailed account of the rising influence of royal women in Ottoman politics see: Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). As an example for the wide-spread architectural patronage of royal women in the seventeenth century see: Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

public through architectural and artistic patronage and their changing consumption patterns.¹⁶⁸ For example, in the first half of the eighteenth century Hacı Beşir Agha (palace agha) with his extensive networks of power had patronized the construction of many lodges, libraries and mosques.¹⁶⁹ Particularly the court strived to manifest itself physically in the urban space of the capital city through the construction of gardens, fountains, promenades in order to strengthen the imperial image which was scarred by long years of unsuccessful warfare in the late seventeenth century.¹⁷⁰ A comment he made in *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye* is indeed illustrative of the increasing charitable activities in the capital city and Bursevi's approach to such acts: "They establish pious foundations with properties acquired by oppression and usurpation, and they do not receive any rewards in the afterlife."¹⁷¹ In that case the real owners of these usurped properties (Bursevi probably referred to the collection of heavy taxes) would be rewarded, not the patrons of these works.

Tülay Artan's study shows that initially dignitaries, high-ranking bureaucrats and grand viziers endowed the books in their private collections to waqf libraries founded mostly in their residences.¹⁷² However during the eighteenth century, they

¹⁶⁸ Shirine Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the 'Inevitable' Question of Westernization," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 63, no. 1 (Mar., 2004) p. 45.

¹⁶⁹ Muslu, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf*, pp. 598-590.

¹⁷⁰ Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early," p. 43.

¹⁷¹ "Zulm ve gasbla tahsil olunan emvalden hayrat iderler ve ahiretde menfaatin görmezler." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 70-71; Bursevi provided as an example the case of Zübeyde-i Saliha Hatun (the wife of the Abbasid caliph Harunü'r-Reşid (d. 809)) who had many pious foundations in Mecca and Medina (*Haremeyn-i Şerifeyn*) but was rewarded in the after life for something else.

¹⁷² While the grand vizier Damad İbrahim Pasha had donated around 1525 titles to his waqf library in 1720, there were still one hundred and sixty three items in his private collection. Similarly in

started to found increasingly more free-standing libraries (just like free-standing water fronts): the libraries of Ahmed III, Şehit Ali Paşa, Damad İbrahim Paşa being some of the early examples.¹⁷³ Thus the circulation of texts gained impetus in these newly established libraries which were not necessarily attached to a mosque, or a lodge. Furthermore, newly rising power groups found in the object of the book another mirror of socio-economic and cultural distinction hence commissioning the writing of literary works. However the extent of literary patronage and circulation of texts during this period remains to be researched as the available studies focus either on architectural patronage or consumption habits.

The fact that most of his *tuhfes* (except for *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* and *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*) were written during his stay in Üsküdar points to the possibility that Bursevi was trying to associate with various people from the palace circle. It was also during this period that both the chief inspector of the imperial gardens Bahri Hüseyin Efendi and the chief-haseki Tubazade Mehmed Ağa received their *icazetnames* (documents of ratification) from Bursevi, indicating a master-disciple relationship.¹⁷⁴ Considering that he also composed a work for Seyyid Ahmed Vesimi, the enderun agha, it seems plausible to think that Bursevi had established connections with

his mansion and two waterfront residences, the grand admiral Kaymak Mustafa Paşa had around 2000 titles which he aimed to endow to a library. Tülay Artan, “Problems Relating to the Social History Context of the Acquisition and Possession of Books as Parts of Collections of Objets d’Art in the 18th Century,” in *Proceedings of the Xth International Congress of Turkish Art, 17-23 September 1995*, (Geneva, 1999), pp. 89-91; Shirine Hamadeh, “Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Muqarnas* 19, (2002), p. 154.

¹⁷³ İsmail E. Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1991), p. 57-64.

¹⁷⁴ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p.209.

various figures from the palace circle. The fact that he composed *tuhfes* specific to them and even established ties of discipleship indicates his position vis-a-vis the newly articulated members of the “political nation”. These groups who were previously loyal only to the sultan, by the early eighteenth century had turned into factions within themselves, accumulating significant financial resources.¹⁷⁵ The changing façade and definition of politics with the expansion of the “political nation” through the seventeenth century (notwithstanding the continuing centrality of viziers, governors and high-ranking administrators) was thus reflected in the changing patterns of patronage and association with power groups. In that sense Bursevi’s composition of these texts was a political act in itself: an act which associated its perpetrator with various loci of power.

Tülay Artan argues that during this period “illustrated manuscripts and other books were hoarded as never before, and thesaurized into a proliferation of private libraries”, but still it is difficult to assert how much of this consumption and circulation was indeed finalized by the actual reading of the books.¹⁷⁶ Eighteenth century poet Nabi’s resentments about the superficial attitude towards the acquisition of books may be recalled at this point: “No one pays attention to the meanings and subtle witticisms in books/ They just care for the decoration of the heading and the

¹⁷⁵ For the expansion of the “political nation” Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*; For the architectural patronage of these previously under-represented groups see Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

¹⁷⁶ Tülay Artan, “Aspects of the Ottoman Elite's Food Consumption: Looking For 'Staples,' 'Luxuries,' And 'Delicacies,' in a Changing Century,” in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Donald Quataert (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 2000), p. 111.

gilding of the preface.”¹⁷⁷ Since this was an age in which consumption had become a signifier of social and cultural distinction, the book was regarded more as a commodity, an object of art reflecting the owner’s social status and openness to new kinds of knowledge.¹⁷⁸ Although understandability, readability and commensurability in the minds of the readers seem to have been one of the decisive factors for the organization of Bursevi’s *tuhfes*, the extent of these texts’ circulation within the newly established public libraries outside the court circle remains to be researched.

One last note about the intended audience of these texts needs to be made. In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, Bursevi exclaimed: “I rendered my gift’s words simple/ So that common people can grasp its meaning.”¹⁷⁹ Which sections of the society did Bursevi point to when he used the generic words *avam*, *enam* and *amm* in reference to common people; it is quite difficult to tell. Considering the fact that both literacy rates and access to books among the commoners were quite low, it can be claimed that the only way ordinary people could have access to these books was if someone read it out loud for them. It seems more plausible to argue that for Bursevi, common people included those who were not well-versed in religious sciences and Sufi teachings and the foreign languages associated with them. These probably included

¹⁷⁷ “*Aramaz kimse ma’ani vü nikatın kütübün/ Nakş-ı ser-levha vü dibaçe-i halkarın arar.*” Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Nâbi: Hayatı Sanatı Eserleri* (Ankara : Akçağ, 1999), pp. 79-80.

¹⁷⁸ On the consumption craze during the Tulip Age, see Ariel Salzmann, “The Age of Tulips: Confluence and Conflict in Early Modern Consumer Culture (1500-1730),” in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire* ed. Donald Quataert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 88; Artan, “Problems Relating to the Social History,” p. 88.

¹⁷⁹ “*Tuhfemin asan kıldım lafzını/ Ma’nasın fehm eyleye ta kim enam.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p. 176/ Fol. 30a.

administrators, soldiers, palace staff as well as literate urbanites, new disciples, beginners in Sufism and people who frequented a lodge but were not necessarily disciples. Thus if we are to speak of an expansion in the circulation of Sufi texts through the broadening of patronage ties and the increasing availability of books in the newly established libraries in the eighteenth century, we should not mistake this with the popularization of works in today's sense. Still, expansion must have remained in a limited milieu which consisted of people who had both the educational skills and material wealth to access books.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ In his study on the histories produced by the court in the sixteenth century, Baki Tezcan also points out the difficulty of knowing how much such texts circulated beyond the palace circle. Tezcan, "Politics of Early Modern," pp. 180-181.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUALIZING SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL AUTHORITIES

This chapter details the conceptual background of Bursevi's attitude towards Sufi-state relations by analyzing the way in which spiritual and political authorities were represented in a similar fashion in his writings. Through a focus on the ordination, operation, function, characteristics and titles of the sultan and the Pole, I try to show firstly how the Ottoman political system was defined by Bursevi as a reflection of the cosmic scheme and a manifestation of the divine names hence the reason of order on earth. However this was by no means a one-way process: Bursevi adopted the organization of political authority in defining spiritual authority as well. In that respect one can find in his formulation of an expansion in the spiritual hierarchy echoes of the expansion of the Ottoman state apparatus during the seventeenth century. Secondly, I propose that the similarity in the conceptualization of the sultan and the Pole (and the other offices emanating from their rank) did not only provide a religio-mystical legitimacy for Ottoman rule and superiority but also established the Pole and his vicegerents as legitimate authority figures vis-à-vis the Ottoman state.

Order in the Cosmos, Order in the World

Just like many other polities in history, the way early modern Ottomans conceptualized the organization of their governmental system was similar to their understanding of cosmology. As Aziz Al-Azmeh suggests "the problematic of order

is most often, until the advent of modernity, situated in terms of the connection between terrestrial and extra-terrestrial orders, and takes the form, most notably of the metaphorisation of power in terms of the sacred.”¹⁸¹ Bursevi too attributed the characteristics of the organization of the sacred to define the profane and vice versa. This way, he not only conceptualized the hierarchical organization of political authority in the Ottoman state as a manifestation of divine will but also pointed out the divinely ordained purpose of the power to rule (which was symbolized in the sultan but not necessarily limited to him) as the maintenance of this mirrored order.

According to Bursevi, the façade of the cosmos (*suret-i ‘alem*) was maintained with the reign of the sultan who by virtue of his rank at the zenith of temporal authority was the reason of the order of mankind (*sebeb-i intizam-ı Beni Adem*), an attribute which prevailed among almost all polities in time and space.¹⁸² The sultanate as a rank was conceptualized by Bursevi as both the work and manifestation of divinity (*uluhiyyet*) on earth.¹⁸³ In the organization of the governmental hierarchy, it was necessary that the sultan be ordained as the initial rank so that other ranks and offices were established in relation to him.¹⁸⁴ He was the second cause (the first one being God himself) from which all other causes and

¹⁸¹ Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997), p. 4.

¹⁸² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 214/ Fol. 11b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” p.44; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye,” p. 181/Fol. 201b.

¹⁸³ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 203/ Fol. 5a.

¹⁸⁴ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” 50-51.

degrees emanated.¹⁸⁵ In mystical terms, before his accession to throne, the sultan existed at the level of one essence (*zat-ı ehadiyye*) where there was no allocation of duties, positions, attributes and features. Only after his enthronement (*cülus*) did he condescend to the level of unique essence (*zat-ı vahidiyye*) from which other ranks of the sultanate were derived. The sultan became manifest and acknowledged by the people who were expected to pay allegiance to him.¹⁸⁶ A similar but symbolic process of enthronement was also conceptualized for the Pole where he was seated on the throne wearing a crown of dignity (*vakar*) and a robe of honor (*hilat*) made of the divine names.¹⁸⁷ This level corresponded to that of creation through which God's names, attributes and their owners became manifest. According to Gottfried Hagen, the Ottoman "theological tradition was based on a concept of causality through divine ordination".¹⁸⁸ The process of the formation of the state was thus explained by Bursevi in theological and mystical terms in correspondence to the creation of the cosmos wherein first of all, the universal soul (*ruh-ı külli*, the sultan) and secondly the prime intellect (*akl-ı evvel*, the grand vizier) were created. Only after that, other cosmic ranks (*meratib-i kevnîyye*, other state offices) came into existence.¹⁸⁹ This

¹⁸⁵ First cause is defined as the absolute existence of the one God while the second cause is his first creation from which all other created beings emerged. Ibn 'Arabi, *Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom (At-Tadbirat al-ilahîyyah fi islah al-mamlakat al-insaniyyah)*, interp. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1997), pp.24-25.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

¹⁸⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 135/ Fol. 45a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 213/ Fol. 11a.

¹⁸⁸ Hagen, "Afterward: Ottoman Understandings," p.220.

¹⁸⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 74; Ibn 'Arabi, *Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom*, pp. 26-27.

hierarchical ordination of political authority implied order and an expectable seriality.

Just as all of creation looked up to God and existed only in relation to him (not independently), the *reaya* and the statesmen submitted to only one sultan and were obliged to obey him because he was *zillullah* (the shadow of God) meaning the manifestation of God's names and attributes on earth as an image of God (*suret-i Hakk*).¹⁹⁰ However in Bursevi's account it is not always clear whether the sultan was *zillullah* vis-à-vis God or through the mediation of the Pole since the sultan was defined also as the shadow (*saye*) of the essential man (*Adem-i hakiki*) and the divine truth (*hakikat-ı ilahiyye*). This divine truth found its manifestation in every age in the person of the *kutb-ı vücud* (the pole of existence) as the most complete inheritor of the prophet Muhammad's spiritual heritage. The Pole was the pivotal figure through whom God's blessings and benediction reached earth and the reason of existence of the spiritual world (*melekut-ı 'alem*).¹⁹¹

Pole had several literal meanings such as axis, shaft and the leader of a community.¹⁹² In Ibn 'Arabi's elaboration, the term had two connotations: the first usage implied an idealistic pivotal point occupied by a person within a given community. For example, there was a pole around which ascetics rotated: he was the epitome of asceticism, its most perfect example.

¹⁹⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye" p. 44; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 12; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 93/ Fol.272a.

¹⁹¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 159-160/ Fol.181b-182a.

¹⁹² For a brief summary of the uses of the term by Muslim scholars before the formulation of Ibn 'Arabi see Süleyman Ateş, "Kutb," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* vol. 26 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002), p. 498.

Thus the concept of the pole emerged as an abstract utopian feature utilized to indicate the epitome of a particular activity or condition at any given time and space.¹⁹³ The second usage by Ibn ‘Arabi implied the highest rank in the invisible hierarchy of saints; this was the person around whom not only other saints but the whole creation rotated. This rank was an office of vicegerency inherited from the prophet Muhammad. The hierarchical organization of saints was topped by the Pole, followed by the two imams, four evlad, seven abdals and many other ranks of saints in a condescending manner.¹⁹⁴ According to Bursevi, the Pole was the most perfect manifestation of divine truth as passed on from the prophet Muhammad in the spiritual station of *hakke’l-yakin* (truth of certainty) at a given time.¹⁹⁵ Friend of God (*Veliyyullah*), just (*adil*) and judge (*hakim*) were some of his names (which were attributes also associated with temporal rulers) although Ibn ‘Arabi provided a more extensive list regarding the characteristics of the Pole.¹⁹⁶ He claimed his most important attributes to be confidentiality, moderation and justice. The Pole was not to manifest any supernatural deeds and wonders; he accepted traditions and acted

¹⁹³ Suad El-Hakim, *İbnü’l-Arabi Sözlüğü* trans. Ekrem Demirli (İstanbul, Kabcı, 2005) pp. 430-431.

¹⁹⁴ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fütihat-ı Mekkiyye* vol. I (İstanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2009), p. 464.

¹⁹⁵ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” p. 44; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 307 /Fol.44a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ataiyye,” p. 148/ Fol.70a; Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. I, p. 299. *Hakke’l-yakin* is the final station in the Sufi path to divine knowledge: it indicates absolute knowledge whose epistemological foundation is insense and spiritual experiences based on one’s proximity to God. The method to acquire this knowledge and hence proximity to God is defined as unveiling and inspiration. For more information see: Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Hakke’l-Yakin,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* vol. 15 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), pp. 203-204.

¹⁹⁶ Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. I, pp. 1-2, p. 172; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ataiyye,” p. 92/ Fol. 26a.

accordingly so as not to disturb the social order; hence he was a figure of social conformity and secrecy.¹⁹⁷

The sultan was hence defined as shadow by virtue of his manifest position as the temporal ruler vis-à-vis the invisible Pole since appearance (*suret, kutb-ı zahir*) was conceptualized as the shadow of the meaning (*ma'na, kutb-ı batın*) beneath it.¹⁹⁸ According to this conceptualization, the Pole and other saints (constituting the spiritual hierarchy) and the sultan and the statesmen (constituting the temporal government) were portrayed as the two sides of a coin which were intricately linked and could not be separated. This did not only reduce the sultan to a mere manifestation on earth whose dominion was intricately linked to the workings of the invisible realm of the saints dominated by the *kutb-ı vücud* but it also idealized the relationship between the political and spiritual authority figures: “Meat and bone cannot be separated.”¹⁹⁹

Governance of the Divine Names

When Ibn ‘Arabi mentioned the assistant/mediator nature of the saints and the Pole in particular, he denoted “the capacity of the saints to receive, according to the circumstances, the authority and power of one of the divine Names, and to reflect Justice or Mercy or Majesty or Beauty, according to what is required by the state of

¹⁹⁷ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fütuhât-ı Mekkiyye* vol. 10, pp. 18-21.

¹⁹⁸ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 429; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 160/ Fol.182a-b, p. 181/ Fol. 202a.

¹⁹⁹ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 429

things at any given moment.”²⁰⁰ What Chodkiewicz calls the “cosmic function” of prophethood was realized in the concept of the Pole who, on account of his being a perfect man was the channel through which the Creator interacted with the created ones. As the reason for the sustenance of the worldly order through his mere existence, the saintly figure was believed to have the capacity to intercede for the affairs of people as the vicegerent of God (*vekil-i Hakk*).²⁰¹

Bursevi suggested that according to Sunni Islam, everything must be requested only from God because He is the one who provides for His subjects.²⁰² The issue of intercession was discussed by religious scholars for centuries on account of the perils this belief carried: it could lead people to explicit idolatry.²⁰³ If the individual requested things from other people, he would be ascribing human beings godly qualities, expecting them to make their wishes come true when the only true actor was God himself. Being a perfect man, with a complete manifestation of the names of God, the Pole could act as a channel between God and the people.

And if he is to request from the created ones, he should turn towards the *kutb* since because of his name he is the most inclusive. Meaning, he should request from God on account of the *kutb* because in the name of *kutb* there is amplitude.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 57, p. 70.

²⁰¹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p.163/ Fol.30a.

²⁰² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p.349/ Fol.63a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 127/ Fol.40a.

²⁰³ John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* (Berkeley : University of California Press, c2008), pp. 277-279.

²⁰⁴ “*Ve eğer mahluktan taleb ederse kutba teveccüh eyleye. Zira, ismi yüzünden ecma’dır. Ya’ni kutbun yüzünden Allah Teala’dan taleb eyleye. Şol cihetten ki kutbun isminde vüs’at vardır.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p.349 /Fol.63a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye”, p. 65; Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. II, p. 203.

Conceptualizing the Pole and the other saints as mediators between God and the people, Bursevi also legitimized the much criticized practices of visiting saints' tombs and asking for intercession from those renowned as saints: "God the Almighty does not deny the mediation and testimony of the saint."²⁰⁵

It is important to recognize here that after God, it was not the sultan first but the *kutbu'l vücut* who was seen capable as acting as a mediator, signifying the degree of power and authority attributed to the figure of the Pole. Indeed in a poem in *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* Bursevi used metaphors such as the nurturing of the universe (*kainatın gıdası*) and abundance flowing like a river (*feyzim kevser gibi*) to imply his mediating position as the Pole.²⁰⁶ Although both the sultan and the Pole manifested the same names of God such as *Gani*, *Malikü'l-mülk*, *Mütekebbir*, *Rahman*, *Rahim*, etc. (all of which indicated the capacity to provide and assist creatures) the sultan, because he was not a perfect man, lacked the esoteric aspects of these names.²⁰⁷ God's names were manifested in the sultan and the Pole in totality whereas in common people and statesmen only some of his names were disclosed. The totality of the names manifested in their beings was the source of their power, authority and legitimacy.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 68.

²⁰⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," pp. 155-156/ Fol. 19b.

²⁰⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 65.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 70.

In the case of the temporal government, all the people who occupied state offices were hierarchically organized according to the inclusiveness of the names they manifested and aimed to bring to perfection. Thus not only the sultan but the whole state was conceptualized as a reflection of the cosmic order through the divine names of God. It was from the rank of the sultan that all of these names were distributed accordingly to the state officials hence a continuous focus on the centrality of the sultan. For example the grand mufti was the manifestation of the name wise (*alim*) while the chief judge of the name judge (*hakim*): both names were derived from the sultan.²⁰⁹

Judges, the gracious and the like are the ones who are the manifestations of government and benediction. In effect, their government and benediction is on account of the divine names that oversee them. Meaning, the appearances dominate the image and in reality what is manifest in the image is the divine name and indeed the God Almighty since he is the source and origin of all the names.²¹⁰

Bursevi's use of the divine names of God in explicating the Ottoman governmental system had two aspects. Firstly, focusing on the names manifested in particular state institutions helped the formation of a relatively more abstract idea of state and to the disassociation of offices from the people occupying them. Previously the state was frequently equated with the person of the sultan and his patrimonial household. Particularly in the seventeenth century, with the enlargement of its apparatus and the gradual retreat of the sultan, the state started to be conceptualized by Ottoman

²⁰⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 62/ 236a.

²¹⁰ "*Hakimin ve rahimin ve emsali, mezhahir-i hükümet ve rahmet olanlardır ki, fi nefsi 'l-emr hükümet ve rahmetleri üzerlerine nazır olan esma-i ilahiyye hasebiyledir. Yani sureta hakim olan mezhahir ve fi 'l-hakika mezhahirde zahir olan ism-i ilahi ve fi 'l-hakika Allah Teala'dır ki, cemi' esmanın me'haz ve mebde'idir.*" Ibid, p. 64/ Fol. 238a.

scholars more as a separate entity comprised of institutions. This approach was most apparent in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* where Bursevi's narrative was divided into sections about the functions and ideal forms of some Ottoman state institutions within the context of the names of God. Although Bursevi's approach towards Ottoman institutions were rather uninformed about administrative procedures, generic and disconnected, to a certain extent a similar tendency for abstraction could be seen in his writings as well. However this did not directly imply a disinterest in the morality and the piety of the sultan and the statesmen. "It is on account of the victory of their religion and piety that rulers and sultans become triumphant and victorious."²¹¹ Indeed it seems to have continued to be an underlying concern for a better government for Bursevi and many other authors.²¹² Secondly, the separation and the simultaneous enlargement of the state was reflected by Bursevi as the distribution of the names revealed by God to the sultan and then to statesmen, hence a hierarchical diffusion of power. Thus despite the increasing attention given to institutions, for Bursevi the sultan remained to be the central figure. The multiplicity of state offices was related to the broadness of the manifested names of the sultan from whom every statesman received his authority to exercise power.²¹³

²¹¹ "Müluk ve selatinin mansur ü muzaffer oldukları, dinleri ve takvaları galip olmaktadır." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 169/ Fol. 27a.

²¹² Focus on individuals as the sole agents of history hence analyses on individual factors as reasons for societal and historical change continued to be in use among Ottoman intellectuals in the seventeenth century: Gottfried Hagen, "Afterword: Ottoman Understandings of the World in the Seventeenth Century," in *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi*, ed. Robert Dankoff (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 238.

²¹³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 62/ Fol. 235b-236a.

The mediation of the Pole or the sultan and the Ottoman state in general was legitimate for a sharia-abiding mind like Bursevi only within the framework of the *vahdet-i vücud*. He approached the issue from the perspective of *esmaullah* (the names of God) being manifest in all of God's creation which constituted an essential part of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine. What Bursevi perceived in the Pole and the sultan or other statesmen were not specific powerful individuals but rather the names of God that their positions referred to and that became manifest through the beings occupying those positions. Hence in theory, it was actually not the person of the Pole or the sultan who was the mediator but rather the names of God that were manifest in their beings.²¹⁴

Aktab-ı İrşad: Expansion of the Spiritual Government

In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi added the grand vizier and other state officials as the deputies of the sultan to the list of legitimate mediators in case of need: indeed their operation was obligatory since the sultan could not undertake the governing of worldly affairs alone.²¹⁵ As has been mentioned before, this could be read as a reflection of the increasing power of loci other than the sultan in governance and the

²¹⁴ In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, to simplify the application of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine to real life, Bursevi advised his audience to observe the names of God in the whole creation. For example when one came across a mountain, one had to observe the names *Kavi* and *Metin* (strong and sturdy) instead of the mountain itself. In the sea, one would observe the name *Vasi* (wide), etc. Through this abstraction it was possible to free one's self from a simple association with the physical realm and catch a glimpse of the inner, esoteric dimensions of existence. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 153/Fol. 19a.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 72 /Fol.248a.

gradual expansion of the state apparatus throughout the seventeenth century. What is interesting is that one comes across a similar expansion and diffusion of power in Bursevi's depiction of the hierarchy of sainthood as well. While Ibn 'Arabi reserved the title "Pole" for the kutbū'l-aktab, Bursevi used the term to imply not only that unique Pole who occupied the office of the gavs at the top of the saintly hierarchy but a wider range of saints called aktab-ı irşad (the poles of spiritual training) who reached the station of ayne'l-yakin. "*Aktab-ı irşad* are many and all of them are gathered under the flag of the gavs just like viziers and emirs are under the hand of the grand vizier."²¹⁶ *Kutb-ı irşad* was the position which could be attributed to all the competent Sufi sheikhs who by reaching the level of ayne'l-yakin would gain the authority to instruct others in religion (*mürşid-i kamil*).²¹⁷ Thus although both kutb-ı irşad and kutb-ı vücud shared a position of polehood, they differed in terms of proximity to God (except for the *efrad*, the solitaires²¹⁸) and function. Bursevi elucidated the numerosity (*bi-hisab*) of the *aktab-ı irşad* (reaching a thousand) in his age by suggesting that in the previous ages the reason for the scarcity of poles was

²¹⁶ "Eğerçi aktab-ı irşad çoktur ki cümlesi gavsın taht-ı livasındadır. Vüzera ve umera vezir-i a'zamın zir-i destinde oldukları gibi." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 135 /Fol.44b.

²¹⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 307 /Fol. 44a; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, pp. 12-13. The station of *ayne'l-yakin* is the second stage on the three-tiered Sufi path to absolute divine knowledge. Its epistemological foundations are observations based on sight. El-Hakim, *İbnü'l-Arabi Sözlüğü*, p. 698; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.217 /Fol.13a.

²¹⁸ Ibn 'Arabi defined *efrad* (also referred to as *mukarrabin*) as the highest station of sainthood, those who are "prophets among the saints". What differentiated them from others was the fullness of their knowledge of the divine which was not necessarily derived from books or studying, hence the focus on the epistemological position of *hakke'l-yakin*. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 55; The Pole although occupying the highest position in terms of office was not superimposing over the *efrad* since spiritually speaking both *efrad* and *aktab* were believed to share the same level. Sometimes a member of the *efrad* could even be more advanced in divine knowledge than the Pole. The *efrad* did not need the mediation of the Pole to interact with the Creator. Ibn 'Arabi, *Fütuhât-ı Mekkiyye* vol. 11 trans. Ekrem Demirli (Istanbul: Litera Yayıncılık, 2009), p. 302.

the abundance of prophets who pointed out the signs of God through wonders. Back then people simply did not need more poles because they were guided by the prophets themselves.²¹⁹ The term *kutb-ı irşad* hence emphasized a focus on the function of the saint not only as a mediator but also as an educator and an active guide for the people and rulers. It is through these *aktab-ı irşad* who operated under the supervision of the Pole that people would enter the Sufi path, learn about divine knowledge and lead a balanced life. In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*'s introduction Bursevi blatantly stated that just like prophets were responsible for convocation (*davet*) and notification (*tebliğ*), saints were tasked (*me'mur*) with the duty of declaration (*beyan*) and showing the right path (*irşad*) emphasizing the saints' role in directing people in religious matters. This was one of the reasons why he paid heed to compose colloquial books he hoped would be used by people for religious training.²²⁰

Everyone grasps their meanings (the truth of the Qur'an and the hadith) depending on their capability, and those who do not understand, listen to those who understand carefully and are subject to them. As a matter of fact, those who understand and speak are the translators of God to listeners. This is why there is the need for a mediator between those who are shrouded and God, just as imam is for the community, vizier is for the sultan, butler is for the lord and *asadar* is for the sheikh.²²¹

In *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* Bursevi argued that a particular *kutb-ı irşad* served as the second *imam-ı zaman* along with the first imam who was the shadow of God, namely

²¹⁹ Bursevi argued that until his time there were only twenty five saints who operated as Poles. Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 327; vol. II, p. 21; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 135 /Fol. 44b.

²²⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 143 /Fol.13a.

²²¹ "Velakin herkes onlardan isti'dâdı olduğu kadar maani fehm eyler ve fehm etmeyen fehm edene tâbi' olur ve ona kulak tutar. Zira fehm edip söyleyen, dinleyenlere Hakk'ın tercümânıdır. Bundandır ki, mahcublarla Hak arasında vasıta lâzımdır. İmam cemaate ve vezir sultana ve kethuda beglere ve asadar şeyhlere vasıta olduğu gibi." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 148 /Fol. 15b-16a.

the sultan.²²² Both imams were under the supervision of the Pole.²²³ Here we see Bursevi differentiating between the spiritual imam of the time (*kutb-ı irşad*) who is the equivalent of the sultan and the head of the saintly hierarchy (*kutb-ı vücud*). While the *kutb-ı vücud* was responsible for providing general blessings and abundance to people, the duty of the *kutb-ı irşad* was to lead people on their religious path. A plausible explanation for this differentiation is that *kutb-ı vücud*, by virtue of his being hidden and unknown, was represented on earth by the most suitable *kutb-ı irşad* of the time as his vicegerent. The relationship between the two can be compared to that of the sultan and the grand vizier: it is the grand vizier through whom the commoners know the sultan and only a select few from the palace circle have direct access to him. It is also the grand vizier, who by virtue of his position of vicegerency holds the authority to organize state affairs in the name of the sultan. Similarly, it was through the *kutb-ı irşad* that the omnipotent *kutb-ı vücud* communicated with the people; the first was the vizier of the latter.²²⁴ Thus one can

²²² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 124/ Fol.38b.

²²³ These two *imam-ı zaman* corresponded to Ibn ‘Arabi’s definition of the two imams who operated under the puissance of the Pole, only articulated by different names by Bursevi. Ibn ‘Arabi suggested that in each epoch, there could only be one Pole and two imams, no less no more. According to *Fütuhât-ı Mekkiyye*, of the two imams, the one which was situated on the left of the Pole and referred to as *Abdü’l-Malik* was responsible for taking care of worldly affairs and succeeded the Pole when he died because the rulership of the temporal world was considered inclusive of the spiritual realm. People took refuge in this imam in times of hardship and through him God removed their burdens. The imam on the right was referred to as *Abdü’l-Rabb* and he was in charge of the spiritual world. This imam’s duty was praying for the people, pleading to God to show them mercy and lead them to the right path. He was protected from the tricks and dodges of the devil, and provided divine knowledge to everyone according to their competency. Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fütuhât-ı Mekkiyye* vol. 10, p. 14-17; Konuk, *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye: Tercüme ve Şerhi*, p. 204; However, in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi used the same description provided by Ibn ‘Arabi but did not necessarily denote the sultan and the *kutb-ı irşad* as the two imams: Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 202-203 /Fol.221a-b.

²²⁴ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” pp. 124-125 /Fol.38b.

speak of a relative de-mystification, increasing visibility and expansion at the level of *aktab-ı irşad* who were numerous and operated as the vicegerents of the Muhammedan truth (epitomized in the person of the *kutb-ı vücut*) on earth. The multiplicity of *aktab-ı irşad* and their authorization to educate people and to intercede in their affairs imply a diffusion of the Pole's power and an expansion in the saintly hierarchy which was conceptualized in similar ways to the governmental hierarchy.

It is highly probably that Bursevi adopted the term *kutb-ı irşad* which does not exist in the writings of Ibn 'Arabi (and the Bayrami-Melamis who frequently relied on the concept to define the head of their order) from Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) a Naqshbandi sheikh from India who is regarded as the founder of the reformist Mujaddidi branch.²²⁵ Sirhindi's focus on the station of spiritual training (*makam-ı irşad*) and following the path of the prophet by combining the shari and the divine truth are indeed very much similar to Bursevi's vision of Sufism as shall be seen in the following chapters.²²⁶ Sirhindi defined *kutb-ı irşad* as the perfect successor of Muhammad as God's prophet, hence pointing to his public role in educating people, inviting them to the right path and interpreting divine law. The *kutbu'l-aktab* on the other hand, inherited the prophet's aspect of sainthood.²²⁷ In that respect his understanding of the nature and function of the *kutb-ı irşad* was similar to that of

²²⁵ He is most often referred to as the renewer of the second millenium. J. G. J. Ter Haar, *Follower and Heir of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi as Mystic*. (Leiden : Het Oosters Instituut, 1992).

²²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 39, p. 50, pp. 55-57.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 88-89.

Bursevi. Indeed Ali Namlı points out the fact that Bursevi named two of his sons (Bahüddin Muhammed and Ubeydullah) after the famous Naqshbandi sheikhs Ubeydullahü'l Ahrar (d. 1490) and Muhammed Bahaü'd-din Buhari (d. 1389). In his *Mecmuatü'l-Fevaid ve'l-Varidat*, Bursevi openly stated that he named his sons as such in respect for some newly emerging Naqshbandi saints (*bazı evliya-i nakşibendiyye*).²²⁸ The Mujaddidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya started to become influential in the Ottoman lands during the late seventeenth century with the arrival of Murad-ı Buhari in Istanbul and later with Mehmed Emin-i Tokadi.²²⁹ Although Bursevi's relationship with the rising Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sheikhs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has not been detailed yet, this frank comment reveals his keenness towards them.

The Issue of Manifestation and Visibility

Visibility in the temporal sphere was defined as one of the decisive factors for the enforcement of political authority and the main reason why women could not become prophets, caliphs or imams. These positions of leadership required manifestation (*zuhur*), communication (*tebliğ*) and judgment (*hüküm*) all of which were deemed forbidden for women since they were expected to remain concealed within their established boundaries in the private sphere. To legitimize this argument

²²⁸ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 117.

²²⁹ Halil İbrahim Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidilik XII/XVIII. Yüzyıllar* (Istanbul: ISTAM, 2004, pp. 106-120, p. 215.

Bursevi quoted a hadith which said: “A tribe which is ruled by a woman cannot find salvation.”²³⁰ Defining the inability to govern with femininity he added that those who were short of intellect (*noksan-ı akl*) and imprudent (*fesad-ı tedbir*) were also to be considered within the category of women despite of their sexuality. One wonders whether these exclamations of Bursevi were subtle reprovals of the rise of royal women (specifically the mother and the wife of the sultan) in the political sphere in the seventeenth century.²³¹

According to Bursevi the office of Polehood was similar to that of the sultanate indicating that it required manifestation which was impossible for women who needed to remain concealed. Indeed Ibn ‘Arabi suggested that both men and women could become Poles. The statement about the necessity of manifestation becomes even more ambiguous when the most significant aspect of the Pole has frequently been defined by Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers as confidentiality and concealment. Bursevi also suggested that although those who recognized the authority of the *kutb-ı vücut* and submitted to him would benefit from this proximity, knowledge of this most prominent saint was limited to a select few. Thus the Pole was not an easily approachable and recognizable figure.²³² However in *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye*, Bursevi also

²³⁰ “*Kendilerini kadının yönettiği kavim kurtulamaz.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 201/ Fol. 3b-4a.

²³¹ See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*. In Bursevi’s conceptualization, the sultan’s harem was a taboo much like the harem of the Sufi sheikh: no one could marry their mothers or wives. They were considered sacred on account of their association with the ruler. In Sufi terms, it meant that the sultan being the soul in the body was under the influence of two forces: the protected ego (*nefs-i kudsiyye*) symbolized by the mother and the animalistic ego (*nefs-i hayvaniyye*) indicating the wife. The eunuchs as the servants of the sultan represented the ceasing of lust (*şehvet*). This association seems to have been influenced by Ibn ‘Arabi’s conceptualization of body as a political metaphor for the Sufi. Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 86/ Fol. 263a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” pp. 88-89.

²³² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 125 /Fol.38b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” p. 74.

legitimized the participation of the saints in social life by arguing that it was not necessary for them to remain veiled after reaching the highest station on the spiritual path: “After perfection there is no need for concealment (*tesettür*).”²³³ What did Bursevi mean by the necessity of manifestation then? It is clear from his statements that he did not imply the disclosing of the Pole on earth as the temporal ruler. He did not provide any direct influence to the Pole in having direct political agency and changing the world; he could only work indirectly through fate and fortune (*kaza ve kader*) or by training people in the esoteric knowledge of the divine. At least in theory, his authority was limited to the spiritual realm because they were not “permitted to start rehabilitating the world”. The burden to alleviate the disorder in the empire thus remained on the shoulders of the rulers, the statesmen and the religious scholars who were supposed to educate and warn them.²³⁴ Similarly Sarı Abdullah specified at the beginning of his text that unlike the sultans, saints and men of the hidden realm (*ricalü'l gayb*) were not appointed as rulers on earth; they were only the spiritual (*manevi*) caliphs.²³⁵

In *Kitabü'n-Netice*, Bursevi related a rhetoric question regarding the temporal authority of the poles as such: “If one asks: That being the case, wasn't it necessary

²³³ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 154/ Fol. 55b.

²³⁴ “*Ve alemde hala mevcud olan aktab ıslah-ı aleme mübaşerete me'zûn değillerdir. Belki kaza ve kader ile cereyan ederler.*” *Ibid.*, pp. 299-300 /Fol.40a.

²³⁵ Süleyman Erşahin, “Bir Siyasetname Örneği Sarı Abdullah Efendi'nin ‘Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüshateyn' Adlı Eserinin Transkripsiyonu Ve Değerlendirilmesi” (M.A. thesis, Kırıkkale University, 2002), p. 36-37 /Fol.2a. Henceforth, the section in which Erşahin transcribed the original work of Sarı Abdullah will be referenced with the name of Sarı Abdullah and the text under question instead of the name of the thesis.

for the poles of the world to exercise authority for the rehabilitation of the universe and act in a way so as to assist in the establishment of the order of the world?”²³⁶ The answer he provided went on like this: “The requirement of true unity with God is to abandon the exercise of authority and to endorse the order of God.”²³⁷ In this response, Bursevi’s approach regarding the possibility of direct social and political activism on behalf of the poles was limited by his rather fatalistic vision since he suggested that whatever was written in divine knowledge (*ilm-i ilahi*) could not be altered with anyone’s exercise of authority. Everything that occurred in an epoch was founded on solid knowledge (*ilm-i tamm*) and manifest wisdom (*hikmet-i bahire*) from which digression was impossible.²³⁸ However although the poles and other men of God, at least in theory, were not to manifest themselves and exercise authority on earth perspicuously as rulers, they were still conceptualized as having the control of both the temporal (*mülk*) and spiritual (*meleket*) worlds in their hands: “The perfect man is the caliph of God and the dominion of the temporal and spiritual worlds have been given to them [*ricalullah*]. Then, it is God Almighty who exercises power on earth through them.”²³⁹

²³⁶ “Sual olunursa ki: Çün ki hal böyledir, akitab-ı dünyaya gerek idi ki ıslah-ı alem için tasarrufat göstereler ve nizam-ı ‘aleme bais olur vechile hareket edeler?” Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. I, p. 12.

²³⁷ “Mukteza-yı tevhid-i hakiki, terk-i tasarruf ve tefviz-i emr illallahdır. Zira, ilm-i ilahide olan nesne kimsenin tasarrufuyla mütegayyir olmaz.” *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ “Ve ricalullah yüzünden olduğu budur ki, insan-ı kamil Hakk’ın halifesidir ki, mülk ve meleketun tasarrufu onlara verilmiştir. Pes, hakikatte onların yüzünden mutasarrıf olan Allah Teala’dır.” Bursevi, *Kitabü’n-Netice* vol. I, p. 227.

In the case of the *aktab-ı irşad* manifestation and participation in the public sphere was more important since they were incumbent with providing religious training and showing people the right path. In *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, Bursevi explicitly claimed the function of the poles to be forbidding wrong (*nehı ani'l-münker*) which required their socialization and visibility in the public sphere.²⁴⁰ Sufis should try to counsel people and act as mediators for their salvation (*şefaat*) following the footsteps of the prophet.²⁴¹ The aim of sending vicegerents to different places, according to Bursevi, was to revive religion (*ihya-yı din*) by showing people the right path both in exoteric and esoteric aspects, hence combining Sufistic teachings with sharia rules and practices handed down from the prophet's Sunna.²⁴² However, Bursevi never condoned the occupation of state offices or engaging in worldly endeavors other than the teaching of religion. According to his account, he had been offered the position of mufti at least two times, a position which was usually occupied by medrese professors.²⁴³ The reason why Sufis like Bursevi denied

²⁴⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 208 /Fol.7b; For a similar comment by Bursevi see Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 85/ Fol. 262b; Ali Erken's study shows there was a similar approach for the saints' active participation in public life in the Bayrami-Melami hagiographies of the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth centuries as well. They emphasized the significance of working in a daily job, and this stance was one of the reasons for many Bayrami-Melamis' (among whom there were statesmen, craftsmen and traders) pursuit of temporal power. Erken, "A Historical Analysis of Melami-Bayrami," pp. 54-57.

²⁴¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p.353 /Fol.64b-65a.

²⁴² "*Bundan fehm olundu ki, bu makule işi tutmadan garaz-ı asli, halkı, zahir ü batına irşadla ihya-i din etmektir ki din, vaz'-ı ilahi'dir*". Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmaliyye" p. 143/ Fol. 13b. This vision which focused on the role of the Sufi sheikh as a religious educator was in contrast with the seventeenth century Celveti sheikh Selami Ali's views as expressed in his *Tarikatname* (composed in the latter part of the seventeenth century) which warned vicegerents to Sufi sheikhs not to engage with the people and counseled them to lead an ascetic life. *Selami Ali Efendi*, pp. 106-107, p. 109.

²⁴³ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure Of Power* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 234; An offer for the position of the mufti had been made by the locals to Bursevi during his stay in Köprülü, and on account of his

occupying offices was because they thought such an active engagement with worldly positions would prevent them from reaching higher levels of spiritual enlightenment. Moreover it was frequently reflected as an indication of superior Sufi morals when a post was turned down in modesty.²⁴⁴

If someone is affiliated with external affairs like the peasants, that person cannot know the affairs of the *ulema*. And even the *ulema*, if they are affiliated with official positions cannot know the conditions of the *ulema* of truth. For this reason, *ulema* who have reached the level of *ayne'l yakin* mostly avoided externalities.²⁴⁵

Accordingly Bursevi's comment on the resemblance of Polehood to the sultanate in terms of the requirement of manifestation (*zuhur*) can be read either literally or as a metaphor. If we are to engage in a literal reading then we should ask: How visible was the Ottoman sultan in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that Bursevi associated him and the Pole with manifestation? The growing importance of

sheikh's prohibition of accepting offices, Bursevi had to decline the offer. In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi informs the reader about another offer made by Recep Paşa, the governor of Damascus, for him to become the mufti of the region which he denied in remembrance of his sheikh's words. Osman Fazlı wrote in his letter to Bursevi these words: "A müftü can be one of the pious, but one of the pious cannot become a mufti." (*Müftü takva ehli olur ama takva ehli müftü olmaz*) As quoted from *Tamamü'l-Feyz* in Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, p. 47; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," pp. 65-66 /Fol.240b-241a.

²⁴⁴ Bursevi praised Celvetis on account of their disregard for state or religious offices suggesting that there were many sheikhs in the order who, like Hüdayi, quit their jobs after enjoining the Sufi path but not vice versa. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 66; Eighteenth century court poet Yusuf Nabi who wrote eulogies for statesmen showed a similar concern in *Hayr-i Name* written as an advice book for his son. In this text, Nabi constantly counseled his son not to occupy state offices and depend on the salaries provided by the state. Obviously his personal experience had taught him the instability of these offices since he was dismissed from office and sent to exile in Aleppo by the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa. It was only after the latter was dismissed from office and later executed that Nabi could return to Istanbul under the protection of the new grand vizier Baltacı Mehmed Paşa (the former governor of Aleppo). The best option was to become a professor (*divan hocası*), indeed a very stable and favourable position in the eighteenth century.

²⁴⁵ "Nitekim bir kimse ahval-i hariciye ile mukayyed olsa rençberler gibi ol kimse ahval-i ulemayı bilmez. Ve ulema dahi ulum-i resmiyyeye müstegil olsalar, onlar dahi ulum-i hakikiyyeden bihaberlerdir. Bu cihetten ulema-i ayne'l-yakin ekser-i zevahiri terk ettiler." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 314 /Fol.47a.

the office of grand vizier can be found in the Asafname of Lütü Paşa, a grand vizier himself, as early as the mid-sixteenth century. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the sultan lived mostly in seclusion in the palace and gradually stopped attending the meetings of the imperial council while the office of the grand vizier was transferred to a separate building outside the palace. Thus most of the time the sultan was not available even to the grand vizier who communicated with him through *telhis* (a condensed report) documents.²⁴⁶ The imperial ceremonies and rituals which required the attendance of the sultan were not being performed until 1675. Indeed the residing of the court in Edirne for almost forty years during the reign of Mehmed IV implied even a more retreated sultan away from the workings of the state in the capital city. Upon his accession to throne, Mustafa II had indeed tried to change this trend by attending the campaigns against Austria and organizing a wedding ceremony for his daughter and a circumcision festival for his two sons.²⁴⁷

Nevertheless seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marked the retreat of the sultan into the back ground of the political sphere and the political decision making processes whereas the grand vizier gradually came to the front since the sixteenth century. State affairs were handled mostly by the latter and the associated bureaucracy. Particularly the Köprülüs who occupied the office of the grand vizier from 1656 until 1683 without interruption and intermittently in the subsequent years

²⁴⁶ Yılmaz, "The Sultan and the Sultanate," p. 274; Pal Fodor, "Sultan, Imperial Council, Grand Vizier: Change in the Ottoman Ruling Elite and the Formation of the Grand Vizieral *Telhis*," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, no. 1-2 (1994), pp. 67-85; Howard, "Genre and Myth," p. 151; Tezcan, "Politics of Early Modern," p. 187.

²⁴⁷ Artan informs us about the lack of any circumcision or wedding ceremonies for seventy five years until 1675. Artan, "XVII. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında".

marked the way in which Ottoman governance took shape during this period. The increasing importance attached to the position of the grand vizier in the writings of Ottoman scholars since the sixteenth century was thus matched by a parallel development in the Ottoman governmental system. Bursevi too was aware of the increasing significance and visibility of the grand vizier since he dedicated *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* to the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa. He provided the etymology of vizier suggesting that the term was derived from *viz* which meant heavy (*sakil*). This meaning pointed to the function of the grand vizier as carrying the burden of the sultan. Another possible root for the term was *vezere*, meaning refuge (*melce*): the sultan took sanctuary in the grand vizier at times of hardship.²⁴⁸ Every creature was in need of assistance, particularly the sultan because he was incumbent with maintaining the order of the empire: “If God wishes the well-being of the sultan, he grants him an auspicious grand vizier so that with his precautions, consistency prevails on earth.”²⁴⁹ The grand vizier was expected to keep the sultan in the right path with his shrewdness and diligence.²⁵⁰ Bursevi further justified the need for a vicegerent (*vekil*) and assistant (*muin*) by providing the example of the prophet Solomon and his vizier Asaf, a classic that has been referred to quite a number of times in the *nasihatname* literature.²⁵¹ A similar conceptualization regarding the

²⁴⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 197/ Fol. 216b.

²⁴⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye” p. 417/ Fol.91b.

²⁵⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 197/ Fol. 216b.

²⁵¹ “*Pes, her kar-ı kavi ehline Hazret-i Süleyman’ın veziri Asaf gibi mu’in lazımdır.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 371 /Fol.72a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 166 /Fol.61b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 203/ Fol. 221b.

increasing significance of the grand vizier in directing state affairs was reflected in Sarı Abdullah Efendi's *nasihatname* for Mehmed IV.²⁵² He even advised the grand vizier to take rather autonomous initiatives about oppressive governors without waiting to inform the sultan about the issue or else he could be accused of negligence.²⁵³

While the historical realities imply an increasingly more invisible sultan, the visibility of the Pole who is likened to the temporal ruler by Bursevi in almost all aspects, can be taken as an ideal feature which did not necessarily respond to the historical conditions of the period. It could also be read as a metaphor, a literary instrument Bursevi used to justify his case of women's exclusion from the ranks of Polehood. Bursevi nevertheless acknowledged the possibility of women's attainment of other positions within the saintly hierarchy.²⁵⁴ His reference to Rabia Basri, famous saint of the eight century, in *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* is further evidence for his recognition of the sainthood of women.²⁵⁵

²⁵² Sarı Abdullah's *Tedbirü'n-Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüşateyn*, written during the reign of Mehmed IV and presented to the sultan as a book of counsel, can be considered an example of the political advice literature which feeds from the tradition of Ibn Arabi's mystical interpretation of political authority. The author himself makes it clear in the text that he was influenced by Ibn Arabi's *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye* and gives frequent references to his *Fütühatü'l Mekkîyye* as well. In this work, Sarı Abdullah relies heavily on mystical concepts, titles and interpretations which were rooted in Ibn Arabi's conceptualization of the divine governance of the human kingdom which established a parallel between the governance of the self and the governance of the empire.

²⁵³ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, "Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüşateyn," pp. 64-65 /Fol.25a.

²⁵⁴ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, p. 241; Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 98.

²⁵⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 169 /Fol. 63a.

Centrality of the Sultan and the Pole

In *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*, Bursevi mentioned the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa who had invited him upon receiving the news of his arrival in Istanbul in 1710 before trotting off for pilgrimage. The grand vizier was hoping to receive some advice from Bursevi at a time when the Ottomans were at the verge of entering a war with Russia and animosity against Çorlulu Ali Paşa was gaining impetus due to his combatant stance on the issue. According to Bursevi, the grand vizier asked him how he evaluated the actions of the state and the future of their affairs. In response Bursevi advised the grand vizier to focus on his heart and strengthen his piety because a person's heart was like the sultan; if the heart was stout then the body had vigor (likened to soldiers' strength). This can indeed be read as a political metaphor which placed the sultan at the center of government by claiming that if the sultan (and hence the grand vizier as his vicegerent) abided by the rules of religion, his army would also act in accordance to it and be victorious.

Use of the body as a political metaphor went back to prominent names such as Plato, Titus Levi and Plutarch and has been elaborated many times throughout medieval and early modern Europe.²⁵⁶ Aziz Al-Azmeh's extensive research suggests that the image of the sultan as the soul animating a body was abundant in the verbal enunciations of power within many societies.²⁵⁷ The extensive application of the

²⁵⁶ The discourse of body politic basically defined the state as a corporate entity that resembled the body, explaining social pathologies and political disorder also within a semi-medical discourse of bodily illnesses.

²⁵⁷ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, pp. 16-17.

body analogy to the Sufi interpretation of politics (both at the individual and state levels) had been effectuated by Ibn ‘Arabi in his *Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom*. According to his formulation, every body part corresponded not only to a position in the hierarchical organization of worldly authority (political organization) but also to a position within divine governance which was manifested in the individual. Through this multi-tiered deconstruction of the body, Ibn ‘Arabi defined the esoteric meanings, qualities and tasks of every body part in relation to the higher orders of worldly and divine governance. Hence the heart of the individual was regarded first of all as the center, the capital city of the body; the soul’s abode. The soul which Ibn ‘Arabi claimed to be residing in the heart corresponded to the ruler/imam as worldly authority and to the universal soul (*ruh-ı külli*) as the divinely ordained vicegerent of God in the individual’s being (which Ibn ‘Arabi called the human kingdom).²⁵⁸ In the manifest government, if the imam was pious (*salih*), his people were also pious; and if he was corrupt (*fasid*), then his people were corrupt too just like the body’s health depended on the condition of the heart.²⁵⁹ Keeping in mind that İsmail Hakkı Bursevi was an ardent follower of Ibn ‘Arabi (whom he frequently referred to as *hatmü’l evliya*, the seal of the saints) and an interpreter of

²⁵⁸ Konuk, *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye: Tercüme ve Şerhi*, pp. 105-108.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106; For the same conceptualization in Bursevi see, Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p.244 /Fol.29a.

his works, it is plausible to believe that he adopted the body as a political metaphor in the Sufi sense from Ibn ‘Arabi.²⁶⁰

In the seventeenth century both Katib Çelebi and Sarı Abdullah relied on a similar body analogy in their explication of the Ottoman political system and society, manipulating the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabi and Ibn Khaldun. For example Katib Çelebi (1609-1657), famous Ottoman intellectual coming from a scribal back ground, related the ulema to the heart. Just as the heart pumped blood to every cell in the body to keep it alive, the ulema maintained the continuity and enlightenment of the society by providing knowledge to people. For him the grand mufti as the highest rank of the ulema corresponded to perceptivity, and intellect meant power.²⁶¹ Thus he imputed extreme importance to the role of religious scholars whereas the sultan was interestingly reduced to the *nefs* (ego) which indicated a temporal and ephemeral existence that must be domesticated. It was the *nefs* (sultan) who virtually controlled the body (empire), but the person needed intellect (the ulema) to tame the *nefs* and put him on the right path. Katib Çelebi’s vision had repercussions in the realities of the period when the power of the grand mufti had witnessed a considerable increase. It was in the hands of the grand mufti to issue fetvas that could dethrone and enthrone sultans as in the cases of Osman II and Mustafa II, putting him in a position

²⁶⁰ For more examples of Bursevi’s use of the body analogy see Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p.225 /Fol.18a; Veysel Akkaya *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi Kabe ve İnsan Tuhfe-i Ataiyye* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2000), p.94 /Fol.28a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 120-121 /Fol.148a-b.

²⁶¹ Katib Çelebi, *Düsturu’l Amel li İslahı’l-Halel*, trans. Ali Can (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1982), pp. 22-23, p. 29.

of considerable political authority.²⁶² However it is more plausible that Katib Çelebi used the analogy to point out the importance of the role of the ulema in guiding the sultan.

On the other hand, for Ibn Arabi, Sarı Abdullah and Bursevi alike, heart was the seat of the soul hence the throne/residing place of the sultan. Their politico-mystical vision placed the ruler at the centre: at least at the symbolic level of royal power, it was him who maintained social and political order by reaching out to every person through a hierarchically organized system of vicegerents and officials similar to the heart pumping blood to every cell in the body. The maintenance of the functioning of the society was thus affiliated with the ideal of an absolutist central government. When Bursevi recognized the executive powers of the grand vizier, this was only because of his position as the vicegerent of the sultan and hence did not necessarily arise from an acknowledgment of his position as an autonomous will to decision-making but from his direct appointment by the central authority.²⁶³ The imagery of the sun and the moon was illustrative in defining the relationship between the two: justice and benevolence were disclosed by the grand vizier (moon) only through their reflection from the sultan (sun).²⁶⁴ By the early eighteenth century, this proposition did not imply a historical reality though. The sultan's executive powers

²⁶² Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 46-78; Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma," pp. 7-9.

²⁶³ Bursevi pointed out the concurrence of the orders of the grand vizier and the sultan. This is why obedience to the grand vizier directly indicated obedience to the sultan. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 222 /Fol.16a; Sarı Abdullah did open some space for autonomous action on behalf of the grand vizier though.

²⁶⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 222 /Fol.16a.

(and even that of the grand vizier) were indeed considerably limited: a figure like the grand mufti Feyzullah Efendi could indeed appoint and dismiss grand viziers bypassing the sultan.²⁶⁵ Bursevi made clear in his *tuhfes* several times the superiority of the grand vizier vis-à-vis the grand mufti due to his proximity to the authority to rule (symbolized in the sultan). Therefore it was not the grand mufti but the grand vizier who was recognized as the aide of the sultan and his right hand in directing the affairs of the state.²⁶⁶

Similar to the centrality of the sultan, the Pole, by virtue of his pivotal position in the universe, was situated at the center. He was of equal distance to every being and conceived all directions as one.²⁶⁷ He was thus conceptualized as the heart of the world from which all of God's blessings fell upon earth. No matter where the person of the Pole was situated on earth in bodily terms, Bursevi claimed that he was still spiritually bound to Mecca.²⁶⁸ As the spiritual stronghold of the Pole, Mecca (particularly the Qaba) was the pivotal center of the world, the heart towards which all men steered for. Likewise, the heart of the man was his Qaba, the place from which his spiritual prowess emanated.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 215-220

²⁶⁶ The fact that Bursevi disliked the extensive influence of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah could have been another factor in his attitude towards the superiority of the grand vizier and indeed he has reflected on the issue in relation to the persecution of the grand mufti in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*: Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 203/ Fol.221b; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 226 /Fol.18b.

²⁶⁷ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p.1.

²⁶⁸ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, pp. 94-95.

²⁶⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 133 /Fol.43b; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 341.

Unity of Rule

Bursevi justified the absolute oneness and uniqueness of the sultan following the line of Ibn-i Arabi's *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine: unity of the ruler corresponded to the unity of the Pole and to the unity of God.²⁷⁰ "The existence of the great sultan who exercises authority over the external world necessitates oneness; the existence of the caliph, being the *kutb-i vücud* and the pivot of the permanence of the world, who exercises authority of the inner aspect of man necessitates oneness as well."²⁷¹ In every age, there could be only one *kutb-i vücud* who inherited the spiritual legacy of the Prophet Muhammad (the eternal universal Pole) in totality.²⁷² Since there was only one God, his names and attributes was believed to be perfectly manifest in only one person. All the other ranks of sainthood within the saintly hierarchy would emanate from this unique person at the top and would inherit a smaller portion of the Muhammedan truth depending on their spiritual stations.²⁷³ Indeed the process was quite similar to the ordination of state offices in relation to the sultan as has been described above.

²⁷⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 201/ Fol.219b.

²⁷¹ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 367; for other examples of Bursevi's commentary on the *kutbü'l-aktab*, see Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," Fol.194b-195a.

²⁷² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ataiyye," p.143 /Fol.70a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p.135 /Fol.44b; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, p. 159; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.213 /Fol.11a.

²⁷³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p.74; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," pp. 214-215 /Fol.11b.

Just as a multiplicity of gods and Poles would cause disorder; multiplicity of sultans was believed to breed chaos.²⁷⁴ Again the concern was on the maintenance of order and stability. Thus any aggressive action or war for the establishment of this unity such as fratricide was considered legitimate based on the hadith of the prophet which permitted the killing of one of the imams if there were two contenders to throne.²⁷⁵ The sultan would also be rewarded in the afterlife (*me'cur*) for calming down sedition (*teskin-i fitne*). Although the practice of fratricide in the early eighteenth century had become a mere historical fact due to the transformed succession policy since the time of Ahmed I, Bursevi still legitimized the practice by providing the example of Selim I who killed his brother Korkud and later on supposedly claimed: "I split the domains between the two of us: I took the earth, giving the underground to him."²⁷⁶

Caliphate and Ottoman Superiority Contested

The unity of the sultan did not imply a universal claim to sovereignty as was the case during the reign of Süleyman I though: Bursevi indeed acknowledged the fact that the Ottoman claims to caliphate as the control over Muslim communities were by then ineffective. He found an ideal form of universal rule in the reigns of Süleyman I

²⁷⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 213 /Fol.10b.

²⁷⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 80; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.213 /Fol.10b.

²⁷⁶ "“*Biraderimle memleketi hisseleşip yerin üzerini bana ve altını ona verdim’ dedi.*” Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 303-304 /Fol.42a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 80; For the changes in the succession policy in the seventeenth century see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp.46-78.

and Alexander the Great which existed no more due to the existence of many countries (*memleket*) which were ruled by their own monarchs.²⁷⁷ Even in the sixteenth century (after the conquest of Egypt in 1517) when there were some efforts on behalf of the sultan and the grand mufti Ebussuud to claim the title caliph for the sultan as the protector of the holy law and the Muslim community, caliph remained one of the rather infrequently used titles of the sultan. Ottoman sultans' lack of Kureishi descent and the fact that the era of righteous caliphs was over centuries ago were issues rasping the efficacy of the title for purposes of claiming political power.

At a time when mystical concepts and sensibilities were penetrating into the political discourses of the religious intelligentsia in the sixteenth century, the title started to connote a different meaning, that of the caliph as a vicegerent of God.²⁷⁸ Both Sarı Abdullah Efendi and Bursevi referred to this usage within the religio-mystic discourse which claimed Adam to be the first caliph of God: Adam was imam and caliph by virtue of the manifestation of God's divine names in his being.²⁷⁹ All human kind as successors of Adam was expected to fulfill their roles as the caliphs of God on earth by aiming to become perfect men. The title caliph thus did not necessarily refer to being a bloodline successor of the prophet or political authority over the whole Muslim community but to the position of every man vis-à-vis God which could be improved by emulating the morality of the prophet. This was a rather

²⁷⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 213 /Fol.10b-11a.

²⁷⁸ Yılmaz, "Sultan and the Sultanate."

²⁷⁹ Sarı Abdullah, "Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüshateyn," p. 36/ Fol.1b.

perilous connotation of the term since it expanded the application of the title caliph to virtually everyone and carried the potential to challenge the authority of the sultan.

Bursevi used the title interchangeably for the sultan and the poles and emphasized the importance of paying allegiance to them both. Caliph was a term loaded with various meanings. In one of the cases Bursevi used the title in reference to the sultan, he suggested that the sultan was the inheritor of the prophet Muhammad only in form (*surette varis-i nebevi*) since he occupied the rank of the manifest name (*seccade-nişin-i mertebe-i ism-i zahir*). Here he equated the caliph with mere rulership. The poles on the other hand were the vicegerents to the prophet in spiritual aspects (*manada vekil-i Ahmedi*) meaning they were following the path of the prophet by obeying to the rules of the sharia and paying attention to Sunna.²⁸⁰ By virtue of his being the caliph as an *insan-i kamil* both vis-à-vis God and the prophet Muhammad, the pole was perceived as being devoid of any sort of oppression unlike the sultans and rulers. Thus the true, ideal caliph was reflected in the person of the pole who was above all a provider of justice and balance.²⁸¹ And contrary to the limitations put on the Ottoman sultan's claim to universal sovereignty by historical realities, the range of the Pole's authority expanded not only to the non-Muslim subjects of the empire but also to the lands of the non-Muslims.²⁸²

Although it was not seen as a necessity for sainthood (and particularly polehood), many Sufi sheikhs who operated within the Ottoman lands indeed made a

²⁸⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 125/ Fol. 38b.

²⁸¹ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 2; vol. II, p. 35; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 345-346/ Fol. 60b-61a.

²⁸² Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, p. 329.

claim to genetic association with the prophet Muhammad as *sayyids* (descendants of the prophet's family).²⁸³ The Pole could thus merge the spiritual/moral aspect of caliphate which Bursevi called esoteric piety (*batini takva*) with the genealogical aspect namely belonging to the Kureishi descent (*Haşimilik*).²⁸⁴ Bursevi too claimed descentance from the prophet through his father's lineage, but the document ratifying his family's position as *sayyids* was lost when the house in which his parents lived before his birth was burnt down. He suggested that this was the reason why he could not wear the green turban which was exclusive to the sayyids as a sign of social distinction, but had to wear a white one.²⁸⁵ He also suggested that his sheikh Atpazari Osman Fazlı was a *sayyid*. The position of *sayyid* was not simply a signifier of spiritual and social distinction based on a genetical prophetic inheritance; it also had economic and political implications in the Ottoman context where *sayyids* were granted many concessions and subsidies.²⁸⁶ Thus, the position of the Sufi sheikh as a saint (regardless of his position as the pole) and a *sayyid* indicated a two-tiered prophetic inheritance: one at the level of blood ties and one in terms of morality and knowledge. Thus, while constructing the genealogies of their orders Sufis paid heed

²⁸³ For the implications of this position and its institutionalization in the Ottoman Empire, see: Rüyâ Kılıç, *Osmanlı'da Seyyidler ve Şerifler* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2009); Hülya Canbakal, "The Ottoman State and Descendants of the Prophet in Anatolia and the Balkans (c. 1500-1700)," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 52 (2009): 542-578.

²⁸⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 89/ Fol. 266b.

²⁸⁵ Namlı, İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, p. 35.

²⁸⁶ Kılıç, *Osmanlı'da Seyyidler ve Şerifler*, pp. 96-103.

to trace their roots back to the Prophet through the caliphs Abu Bakr or Ali by way of blood ties or spiritual inheritance.²⁸⁷

In another instance, Bursevi used the term “God’s caliph on earth” (*halifetullah fi’l alem*) to designate the sultan’s duty of jihad on account of his position as the owner of sword (*sahibü’s-seyf*), the ability to exercise power on earth.²⁸⁸ “And this sword has passed on from the Messenger of God to the Caliph Omar and other caliphs and from them to rulers. In that respect, rulers are the inheritors of the Prophet.”²⁸⁹ Reflecting on the Ottoman past, he claimed that other Muslim rulers had to surrender to the Ottoman sultan because the latter was the servant of the holy cities (*hadimu’l-haremeyn*), a title which was formulated during the reign of Selim I. On the other hand the capture of the lands and properties of the non-Muslims (*ehl-i harb*) and the taxes extracted from them were also justified: According to Bursevi, the Ottomans were only taking back what initially belonged to the Muslims.²⁹⁰ Thus the Ottoman polity was still represented by Bursevi as the protector of Islam against non-Muslims and the establisher of order on earth even after the long and mostly unsuccessful wars with the Holy Entente in the late seventeenth century.

Bypassing the facts which made the caliphate impractical for political purposes, Bursevi aimed to illustrate the glory and superiority of the Ottoman sultanate by relying on a mystical explanation. He claimed that the real caliph was

²⁸⁷ On early hagiographical information regarding the representation of saints as genealogical heirs to prophets see: Renard, *Friends of God*, pp. 68-70.

²⁸⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” pp. 200-201/ Fol. 3b.

²⁸⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 187/ Fol. 207b.

²⁹⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 213/ Fol. 10b-11a.

expected to be the Meccan sheriff since Kureishi descent was one of the requirements of the caliphate.²⁹¹ However although they were not of Kureishi descent, the Ottoman sultans were still privileged (*rüçhan*) over the Meccan sheriffs by virtue of their overwhelming power (*kuvvet-i kahire*).²⁹² Bursevi's comments were rather defensive particularly in *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* where he targeted those who claimed Meccan sheriffs to be the real sultans.²⁹³ The Meccan sheriffs according to him were incapable of protecting themselves because Mecca and Medina were at the level of essence (*zat*) which implied invisibility and mystification. The essence derived its power in the temporal sphere from the divine attributes (*sifat*). In political terms, this meant that the Ottoman sultanate was incumbent with fulfilling the manifestation of these attributes and derived its power from the inclusiveness of the divine names it manifested on earth. The most significant of these names was *Rahman*, meaning the merciful provider of all creatures' needs. Indeed this depiction of the sultan was the same with the function of the Pole: that of providing people blessings and abundance.²⁹⁴ Bursevi resembled the position of the Ottoman sultan vis-à-vis Meccan sheriffs to that of *ensar*, those people who helped Prophet Muhammad during his migration from Mecca to Medina.²⁹⁵ This way, the Ottomans

²⁹¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 87.

²⁹² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 120/ Fol. 148a-b.

²⁹³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 212/ Fol. 10a-b.

²⁹⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 118/ Fol. 35a.

²⁹⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 415/ Fol. 91a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 121/ Fol. 149a-b; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 212/ Fol. 10a-b.

were conceptualized as superior in terms of political and military power and were held responsible for the protection of the most sacred domains of Islam: Mecca and Medina. Therefore, it was also important that they paid heed to the safekeeping of pilgrimage routes: obviously this comment was also related to Bursevi's own experience of bandit attacks on the way to Mecca.²⁹⁶

Istanbul was also conceptualized as being superior to Mecca since it was the place where the sultan, the chief judges (*sadaret-i sadreyn*) and the grand mufti, namely the high ranking officials of the state resided. In *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, Bursevi also utilized *İslambol* to indicate the superiority of Istanbul among Islamic cities on account of accommodating not only the Ottoman sultanate but also the Pole.²⁹⁷ Indeed both Hüdayi and Osman Fazlı whom he regarded as Poles had resided in Istanbul, and it is highly likely that Bursevi decided to return to Istanbul after he was granted Polehood in Damascus for this reason. He probably believed that the Pole, by virtue of his indispensable position vis-à-vis the sultan, had to remain close to the court.

Hence on the one hand Bursevi continued representing the Ottomans as superior to other polities in time and space by suggesting the Ottoman Empire to be the last of the states (*düvelin ahiri*), the sum of all sultanates (*saltanatın ecma'ı*) and the most powerful in all aspects (*her cihetten akvası*).²⁹⁸ Having witnessed the loss of great amounts of Balkan territories with the Treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and

²⁹⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 209/ Fol. 9a.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 213/ Fol. 11a.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 209/ Fol. 8b-9a.

Istanbul (1703), Bursevi still portrayed the Ottoman power and community (*kuvvet ü menea*) which he addressed as the side of Islam (*taraf-ı İslam*) as perfect (*ber-kemal*). This approach is most evident in *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* which was written for the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa in 1708, two years before the official declaration of war against Russia. Indeed about the previous defeats of the Ottomans, Bursevi suggested that if those in charge of the army had abided by the rules of religion and acted in piety, then the enemy soldiers would not be able to resist (*mukavemet*) the Ottomans for so long and they would not be allowed (*müsaade-i adu*) to approach. He thus defined the failure of the army in the constant wars against the Holy Entente (to which he had attended twice) between 1683 and 1699 in religious terms. It was the weakness of religion (*za'f-ı din*) which caused the authority figures to mislead the army when the Ottomans were still capable of gaining victories.²⁹⁹ On the other hand, he considered it better to convoke the names of God through the practice of dhikr and go on pilgrimage than to undertake jihad in order to worship God. Providing the example of the prophet Muhammad's emphasis on peace, Bursevi mentioned the superiority of peace over war since the latter, no matter what its reasons, led to the killing of God's servants (*ibadullah*) and the destruction of God's cities (*biladullah*). Although it is possible to read these comments of Bursevi as a sign of his support for the imperial ambitions of the grand vizier which indeed caused his downfall in 1710, Bursevi did not exclaim an immediate wish for jihad. It is true that he legitimized Ottoman conquests and imperial ambitions by claiming that during the time of Adam people used to engage in agriculture (*ekincilik*) but the

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

age in which he lived was the age of war: “What is most virtuous for this ummah is jihad and gaza.”³⁰⁰ And the *ricalü'l-gayb* (men of the hidden realm, saints) helped Ottomans on the battleground. However it would be more accurate to suggest that he rather invited the grand vizier to gauge the necessity of war since jihad was legitimate only when the purpose was to honor (*i'zaz*) the religion of God and to sack those who attacked the servants of God.³⁰¹ Thus, in times of peace it was not legitimate to wage war unless the other party broke the peace treaty.³⁰²

While Bursevi continued to represent the Ottoman sultanate as superior to other polities in military power, the historical realities of the period had become far too harsh to overlook. Bursevi did show signs of his acknowledgment of the vincibility of the Ottomans in a work which he wrote ten years later. Approximately four months before he finished writing *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*, the war against Habsburgs and Venetians (1715-1718) had ended with the Treaty of Pasarowitz causing the Ottomans to lose lands in the Balkans, particularly in Serbia. The fact that Bursevi subtly commented on this defeat in a section about the city of Edirne needs further elaboration. He suggested that this city by virtue of the divine name it manifested, *hafiz* (protector), was important for the maintenance of the boundaries of Islamic territories (*hudud-ı İslam'ı muhafaza*) since the old times when it was the capital city (*darü's-saltanat*). Edirne had indeed served as the capital city of the Ottomans until the capture of Istanbul in 1453, and after that its affairs were not handed over to a

³⁰⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p. 168-169 /Fol. 26b.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 163/ Fol. 24a.

³⁰² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 209/ Fol. 8b-9a.

separate governor but directed from Istanbul. In the earlier periods, the city was very much associated with the idea of ghaza due to its location at the frontier and in the later periods, the western campaigns of the army continued to start from here.³⁰³

Cemal Kafadar's analysis of a passage from *Saltukname* (fifteenth century hagiography of Sarı Saltuk, a gazi dervish) is telling about the prominence attributed to the city of Edirne for the purposes of gaza:

Whoever wishes to conquer (all of) the land of Rum, must be stationed in Endriyye. And whoever wishes to destroy the infidels of the enemy, should remain in Edirne since it is the hearth of the ghazis. There is no better place for gaza than that.³⁰⁴

This view of Edirne as the frontier for gaza seems to have remained vivid in Bursevi's mind even after the expansion of Ottoman territories in the Balkans. Just after identifying Edirne as the frontier of religion (*serhadd-ı din*), Bursevi seems to have made a sly reference to the Ottoman-Austrian war which ended with Treaty of Pasarowitz by claiming that in 1717/8 (H. 1130) obscure (*muğlak*) events took place. It is interesting that Bursevi used the words *galak* (meaning a door latch) and *muğlak* (whose literal meaning is locked/closed) most probably in reference to the position of Edirne not only as a door to the Balkans but also as a place of refuge both for retreating armies and people running away from Austrian conquests in Beograd and Timisoara (*Temeşvar*) among other places. Furthermore he provided two verses from the Qur'an to comment on the Ottoman defeats in a concealed manner. The verses indicated surrender to God's will about the loss of territories: "The One Who is

³⁰³ Artan, "XVII. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Edirne." About the significance of Edirne for gaza as represented in *Saltukname*, see Aydoğan, "An Analysis of the Saltukname," pp. 92-108.

³⁰⁴ As quoted in Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 148.

Sovereign of Dominion, You give dominion to whom You will and You tear away dominion from whom You will. (Ali İmran 3/26)” and “Have they not considered that We approach the earth, reducing it from its outlying parts? (Ra’d 13/41)”³⁰⁵ Bursevi’s approach to the Ottoman defeats and the loss of territories in the Balkans in *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* was rather fatalistic in the sense that he contemplated them as a sign of God’s appreciation and maybe even punishment for irreligiosity. “What is most necessary is surrender and silence and resignation to the will of the Immortal One. God is the one who expands and contracts.”³⁰⁶ By comparison with the fall of the Umayyad rulers and Abbasid caliphs, Bursevi acknowledged the place of the Ottoman Empire in history not as an invincible super power but as another state subject to defeats and losses.

Carl Schmitt argues that in every age the metaphysical imagery drawn out by a polity reflects the way in which they conceptualize their political organization.³⁰⁷ This chapter has shown that Bursevi’s conceptualization of the Ottoman political system, with a focus on the sultan, was very similar to his conceptualization of cosmic order and spiritual authority. Thus the sultan and the Pole were defined in similar terms as the two authorities which worked to maintain order on earth and protect the foundations of religion. Furthermore his reliance on the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine and the divine names of God in explaining the operation of the Ottoman state worked to explain the changing nature of the Ottoman political organization in

³⁰⁵ *The Sublime Quran*, 6th ed. trans. Laleh Bakhtiar. (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 2009) p. 59, p. 291; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 414/ Fol.90b.

³⁰⁶ “*Evceb olan teslim ve sükut ve tevekkül-i Hayy-ı la-yemut itmekdir. Vallahü'l-Kabizü'l-Basit.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 414-415/ Fol. 90b-91a.

³⁰⁷ Carl Schmitt, *Siyasi İlahiyat* (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 2005), p. 49.

the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In an age which he perceived as a period of degradation and decline, the theory of the Pole was utilized by Bursevi not only as a literary trope in the formulation of an utopic form of authority and worldly order but also as a vehicle to claim his position within the society as an authority figure.

Bursevi's discussions regarding Polehood and sainthood were both an intellectual endeavour within the tradition of the cult of saints but also a political claim which makes sense only if handled within the context in which Bursevi composed his texts. As shall be seen in the following chapters, his constant claims to saints' superior form of knowledge, association with prophethood, role as mediators between God and the people, significance for political authority figures and the maintenance of the state and competency as religious educators is far from an abstract theoritization of the spiritual realm when coupled with his constant criticisms regarding the conditions of the Ottoman society in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Texts written by and about Sufi sheikhs in the Ottoman context were fraught with references to their virtues as the poles of the period. Sometimes it was other people who attributed this quality to some particular sheikh, as exemplified by Bursevi's constant attribution of polehood to his sheikh despite the latter's denial.³⁰⁸ He claimed that Osman Fazlı had served as a pole and the polehood of Hüdayi was

³⁰⁸ Bursevi referred to his sheikh as "Seyyidü'l-aktab Seyyid Fazlı İlahi Hazretleri" Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, pp. 429-430; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 147 /Fol.51a, p. 164 /Fol.60b.

acknowledged by everyone upon general consensus (*bi'l-ittifak*).³⁰⁹ It was quite common for the disciples of each order to tag their sheikhs as poles sometimes to legitimize their claims to political authority as in the case of the Bayrami-Melamis in the sixteenth century, but mostly as an indicator of spiritual distinction and religious authority. Figures like Niyazi Mısri and İsmail Hakkı Bursevi did not hesitate in exposing their status as the pole through their texts rather pompously despite the fact that the position, at least in theory, was one which needed to be hidden from the public eye in modesty: “And even the saints do not know each other. Even if he knows his sainthood, he does not boast with it since he is at the station of piety, awe, solemnity and glory.”³¹⁰ However, theory and practice did not go hand in hand. The discourse on polehood and sainthood was thus subject to political instrumentalization even if it did not always indicate a non-conformist approach to political authority. Whereas some Bayrami-Melamis figures in the sixteenth century relied on the same discussions in an oppositional manner to oppose the authority of the sultan, Bursevi’s use indicated a conformist approach which did not counter political authority outwardly but sought to find ways of consolidating power with it within a given order.

Thus by the eighteenth century, use of the term seems to have gained widespread acceptance and visibility not only among Sufi circles but also among other intellectuals such as poets, historians and administrators who were more or less

³⁰⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ataiyye,” pp. 88-89/ Fol.23b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 179 /Fol.200b.

³¹⁰ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p.327.

acquainted with the mystical terminology of Sufism. The expansion of the coverage range of the title pole parallels the development in the changing meanings attributed to titles such as imam and caliph which could be used interchangeably to imply both temporal and spiritual authority figures particularly since mystical concepts derived from Sufism started to be used to endow the sultan with symbolic religious authority from the sixteenth century onwards, implying a rapprochement in the conceptualization and perception of worldly and religious authority.³¹¹ Bursevi used the titles imam and caliph to refer both to the sultan and the pole; not to mention the common use of the term caliph to refer to the position of each man vis-à-vis God.³¹²

The transformation observed in the increasing inclusiveness of such titles of temporal and spiritual authority might be explained by a process in which an understanding of absolute authority both in the political and spiritual spheres started to be challenged. The political authority of the sultan was challenged by the rise of diverse groups in the political arena until he was reduced to only one of the many political actors. The process was reciprocated in the spiritual world by the reduction of *kutb-ı vücut* to a mere rank of symbolic value while expanding the area of application of the title *kutb* to a wider range of saints. The transformations in the conceptualization of political authority was thus paralleled by the changing theroretization of spiritual authority. The process had political implications since although defined within an invisible hierarchy of saints, the position of the saint had become increasingly more demystified and visible in the public and political spheres.

³¹¹ Yılmaz, "Sultan and the Sultanate."

³¹² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 124 /Fol.38b; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p.172.

It was not only that many Sufi sheikhs made a claim to polehood but they did it outwardly in the public and through their texts, transforming a position of spiritual authority and an abstract concept of ideal authority whose most important aspect was its confidentiality to outward temporal authority not only in religious but also in political matters.

CHAPTER IV

MAINTENANCE OF ORDER

This chapter scrutinizes the ideal form of governance according to İsmail Hakkı Bursevi through an analysis of some of his religio-political counsels. Focusing my attention on the recurring motifs of religious balance, justice, discipline, rights and duties and conformity to authority figures, I firstly aim to contextualize Bursevi's concrete propositions for the restoration of order in the empire. Secondly, at a more abstract level, I try to reveal the main lines of Bursevi's political thought (if not philosophy), particularly his views on the ideal state, which was fed from an existing pool of political wisdom literature stretching back to the ancient times and Sufi ethics.

A Balanced Interpretation of Religion: Sharia and the Divine Truth

The remedy for the destruction of the order of the world was defined as such by Bursevi:

A balanced purpose and a steadfast ground are needed which will endure with the rules of the sharia on the outside and be permanent in the presence of God on the inside until the temporal world reaches consistency with its surface and the spiritual world finds fortification with its inner dimensions so that appearance and meaning are saved from disorder.³¹³

³¹³ “*Binaen ala-haza bir mu'tedil 'amd ve bir muhkem sened gerektir ki zahiri adab-ı şer' ile kaim ve batını huzur-i Hakk'ta daim ola ta ki ehl-i mülk onun zahiriyle kıvam ve ehl-i melekut batını ile istihkam bulup suret ve ma'na ihtilalden halas ola.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” pp. 361-362/ Fol. 68a-68b.

The previously mentioned two groups *ehl-i inkar* (those who deny the esoteric aspects which is epitomized in Sufi teachings and practices) and *ehl-i ilhad* (those who deny the exoteric aspects which are the sharia rules) represented the two opposite poles of the *zahiri-batini* dichotomy and illustrated for Bursevi the malice of taking things too far in one or the other direction. He thus propagated in his texts a balanced and moderate religious vision which merged sharia and the Sunna of the prophet with Sufism. When he emphasized the significance of being balanced (*mu'tedil*) in religious matters for the maintenance of social order, Bursevi was not only echoing the themes of moderation and composure prevalent among the Sufis for centuries but he was also in line with many of the seventeenth century intellectuals such as Katib Çelebi and Sarı Abdullah who were responding to social transformations the empire was going through within a discourse of balance. Bernd Radtke reports of a similar concern for moderation and balance in social and religious life in the writings of some eighteenth century Arabic speaking Sufi scholars as well.³¹⁴

In his *Mizanü'l-Hakk* Katib Çelebi propounded that balance between two extreme poles (*ifrat* and *tefrit*) was the resolution to the social, political and economic problems the empire was facing: he thus struggled to establish a middle ground between the religious views of different groups through a rational analysis of

³¹⁴ Radtke, "Sufism in the 18th Century," p. 337.

the ideas proposed by all parties.³¹⁵ For him imbalanced behavior was not only an act that disturbed social order and disobeyed the law but it was also an irrational one. This is why he criticized Kadızadeli for their insistence on changing the age-long practices of people by tagging them as *bid'ats*. He believed that the forceful transformation of people's habits was close to impossible hence the Kadızadeli were not being rational in their arguments and actions.³¹⁶ While Katib Çelebi emphasized the importance of the intellect/comprehension (symbolized in the grand mufti), Bursevi highlighted the significance of divine inspiration, revelation and gnosis (symbolized in the Sufi sheikh) in revealing the divine truth and defining the rules of the sharia, claiming the words and deeds of the saints as constituting Shari rules as well. In any case the criteria for any kind of action (political, social, economic or personal) were defined through a discourse of balance established by sharia-abidance.

In Bursevi's accounts there was an application of the discourse of balance in the definition of an ideal form of religious life similar to that expressed by Ibn 'Arabi: it was necessary for individuals to base their actions in the rules established by the Qur'an and the hadith to keep themselves in balance.³¹⁷ Bursevi's discourse of balance revealed itself mostly through the emphasis he placed on combining sharia with the divine truth (*hakikat*). While the knowledge of sharia provided the Sufi with the authority to interpret divine law (as Bursevi did in many of his texts) like a jurist,

³¹⁵ Katib Çelebi, *Mizanü'l-Hakk fi İhtiyari'l-Ehakk* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972), p. 68.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³¹⁷ Konuk, *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye: Tercüme ve Şerhi*, p. xxiv.

the proximity to divine truth indicated the superior level of the Sufi sheikh in religious matters and morality vis-a-vis other religious scholars. To exemplify his stance on the issue, he related a very interesting dream he saw while writing *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* and then provided also his own mystical interpretation of it. In this dream, he saw the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, Fatima, falling into a river and then coming out wounded. Then he informed the prophet about the situation of his daughter to which the prophet responded by smiling and marrying her daughter to a judge named Musa Efendi. Later, Bursevi saw Ahmed III³¹⁸ kissing the hand of a *hafiz* (someone who reads the Quran out loud by memory) and cry. According to Bursevi's interpretation, this dream implied the connection and coalition between the divine truth and the sharia. While Musa Efendi symbolized the prophet Moses who abided by the rules of the sharia, Fatima symbolized the gnosis/truth of Islam which has been manifested in the prophet.³¹⁹ Fatima's fall and coming out wounded must have implied the inability of gnosis to stand strong without the application of the rules of the sharia hence the decision of the prophet to bind both. Bursevi elucidated the second part of the dream as Sultan Ahmed III indicating the soul and *hafiz* indicating the heart. He suggested that the power of the memory (*hafiza*), which is an important quality for the *hafiz* since he memorizes the whole of Qur'an, depended on the heart and started discussing the significance of the dhikr in enhancing the

³¹⁸ He did not necessarily say Ahmed III but rather Ahmed Han. Considering the fact that during the composition of this text, Ahmed III was on the throne, it is plausible to assume that Bursevi was referring to him.

³¹⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 368-369 /Fol.71a.

memory for Muslims.³²⁰ Bursevi did not provide the reader with a more detailed interpretation of the second part of the dream, however following the tracks of the clues he has hinted, it is possible to speculate about what this dream could have implied for Bursevi. Sultan Ahmed III's display of respect and abidance (manifest in the act of kissing his hand) to a *hafiz* indicated his veneration of the Qur'an and dhikr which most Sufis regarded as its essence. The symbolism surrounding the sultan of the time and the *hafiz* indicated bowing down of the temporal ruler to the spiritual authority of the Sufis.

Bursevi narrated another vision which occurred to him around fifteen years ago while he was writing his commentary on the Masnawi of Mevlana (that he finalized in 1116/1704) where he was given a golden scale with which he had to weigh a golden ring and another object. He interpreted this dream also as a sign for him to understand how significant it was to keep both aspects of religion, sharia and *hakikat*, in balance.³²¹ In *Tedbirü'n-Neş'eteyn fi Islahi'n-Nüshateyn*, Sarı Abdullah's³²²

³²⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 369 /Fol.71b.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² Sarı Abdullah Efendi was trained under the patronage of Halil Paşa and had been in relationship with different Sufi sheikhs (Bayrami-Melami sheikhs İdris-i Muhtefi, Hacı Kabai and Beşir Ağa; Celveti sheikh Hüdayi and the Mevlevi sheikh Ankaravi) since his youth. He paid allegiance to all three of the Bayrami-Melami poles while receiving most of his training from İdris-i Muhtefi. When Halil Paşa was appointed grand vizier in 1616, Sarı Abdullah attended two of his expeditions in the east as his scribe (*tezkireci*) and upon the death of Mehmed Efendi, replaced him as the nişancı of the army. It is known that Halil Paşa had a close relationship with Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi since he had taken refuge in his lodge upon being attacked by the palace circle for leading the army to failure in the expeditions against Iran. It is suggested that during his stay at the lodge in 1626, Halil Paşa was accompanied by Sarı Abdullah who was dismissed from office as well. During their stay at the lodge, Sarı Abdullah must have become a disciple of Hüdayi. He returned to office only in 1637 and until 1658, served at several positions in the scribal hierarchy as *reisü'l-küttab kaymakamı*, *muhasebeci* (accountant) and *mukabeleci*. During and after this period he composed many works related to Sufism. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani* vol III (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ile Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı , 1996), p. 420; *İslam Alimleri Ansiklopedisi* vol. XVI, p. 166; Ayvansarayı Hüseyin Efendi, Ali Satı' Efendi and Süleyman Besim Efendi, *Hadikatü'l-Cevâmi'*:

reference to the scale of the sharia (*mizan-ı şer'*) indicated the establishment of social order and just rule through the implementation of divine law by the sultan and his vicegerents. Particularly the sultan was expected to be balanced not only in his personal life but also in all his actions regarding the administration of the empire: appointing statesmen, collecting taxes, leading people to war, etc.³²³

The choice to start off his *Tuhfe-i Aliyye* which was addressed to the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa with an explication of the *Fatiha* verse through a discussion of the *sirat-ı müstakim* (the right path) was a conscious choice on behalf of Bursevi to emphasize his definition of orthodoxy which implied a balanced provision of religion without any deviations. In the governance of the empire everything that transgressed the boundaries established by the sharia was forbidden, but the provisions of the sharia had to be strengthened with gnosis and esoteric knowledge merging the path of the fetva (*tarik-i fetva*) with the path of the piety (*tarik-i takva*).³²⁴ One aspect of this counsel was the increasing bindingness of the sharia on the authority of the sultan, and another was the politicization of religious discourse through a discussion on orthodoxy.

Since the mid-sixteenth century both the grand mufti and the jurists' interpretation of the divine law had gained significance particularly with the specialization of the office of fetva. The grand mufti and his clerks could issue hundreds of fetvas everyday which aimed at the organization of social and economic

İstanbul Câmileri Ve Diğer Dini-Sivil Mimârî Yapılar, ed. Ahmed Nezih Gelitekin (Istanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 2001), pp. 313-314; pp. 612-613.

³²³ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, "Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüşateyn," p.75 /Fol.32b

³²⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 198-199/ Fol.2a.

life in the empire. The seventeenth century was also the period in which the fetvas of grand muftis provided legitimacy for political action such as the enthronement and dethronement of sultans, not to mention the aristocratization of the high-ranking ulema positions. Thus the office of the grand mufti had become a prominent locus of power whereas the influence of the Sufi sheikhs did not have an official, legal backing as such. By the early eighteenth century, the Ottoman ulema became stabilized through a hierarchical organization as the official representatives of Sunni Islam bypassing the claims of Kadızadelis and the Sufi sheikhs. On the other hand Sufi orders, despite their gradual institutionalization under the Ottoman state were not directly involved in the state apparatus. Although Bursevi acknowledged the authority and necessity of the grand mufti (ultimate symbol of the path of fetva), he suggested that the sole provision of laws was not sufficient for the establishment of order. Particularly when the grand mufti was incapable of solving matters, he was expected to consult a competent sheikh.³²⁵

In Bursevi's enunciations of the necessity to combine the path of fetva and the path of piety and the necessity for the grand mufti to consult with the Sufis in controversial matters, one can see beyond a discourse of balance, an attempt to assert the position of the Sufi sheikh as a legitimate commentator on religious orthodoxy. Particularly since the late sixteenth century, many Sufi sheikhs like Hüdayi by way of their approachment to the religious and educational culture of the ulema,

³²⁵ Bursevi legitimized obedience to the fetvas issued by the grand mufti by claiming his orders to be the enactments of the will of God: in reality it was not the grand mufti but God who issued these fetvas, and every fetva was subject to the prophet. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 52 /Fol.224a-225a.

established themselves as legitimate commentators on issues regarding jurisprudence. Did their claims have enforcement on the provision of law? It is difficult to tell, but they at least participated in the discourse of sharia and Sunna abidance at the social, political and intellectual levels. There were times at which Bursevi took this approach one step further and claimed that the words and deeds of the saints constituted shari rules as well, challenging the authority of the jurists as the official representatives of Sunni Islam particularly on discussions regarding Sufi practices.

One of Bursevi's advices indicated that the grand vizier was responsible for the appointment of righteous/just (*adil*) and competent individuals for positions of religious authority such as the mufti, judge, medrese teacher, preacher, imam, etc.³²⁶ Indeed in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* it was the sultan who was held responsible for the appointments of religious and state offices. This is another sign of Bursevi's recognition of the increasing prominence of the grand vizier in directing state affairs. Based on the Qur'anic verse, "Truly God commands you to give back trusts to the people (Nisa, 4/58)" Bursevi commented on the temporary nature of offices which had to be granted in a meritocratic fashion.³²⁷ The reason for Bursevi's exclusive focus on religious officials might have arisen both from his lack of knowledge about the administrative and financial offices and also from his tendency to base "decline and disorder" on religious decay. Although Bursevi did not solely refer to sultan's piety and morality and pointed out the significance of religious institutions in the

³²⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 383-384 /Fol.78a-78b

³²⁷ *The Sublime Quran*, p. 98; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 204/ Fol. 5b.

improvement of the Ottoman society, he still pursued a line of thought which focused on individuals instead of institutions both in finding the reasons for corruption and to provide solutions for it. This was a readily available and ancient discourse which was shared by Sarı Abdullah in his *Tedbirü'n-Neş'eteyn* as well. This tendency to focus on the morality, religious piety and competency of individuals continued to be prevalent in the works of *nasihatname* authors from various backgrounds throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries despite novel attempts mostly initiated by statesmen at conceptualizing decline and its resolutions at the institutional level through a historical and administrative approach.³²⁸

Justice and Discipline

In Bursevi's *tuhfes* there was a frequent recourse to the concept of justice which was deeply entrenched in the discourses of Ottoman intellectuals who were acquainted with the concept through the Indo-Persian advice literature.³²⁹ He claimed that all of the prophets, saints and rulers were incumbent with justice and mercy; with justice there was order in the universe, without it disorder prevailed.³³⁰ According to Linda Darling, in the early sixteenth century all around the Middle East, works focusing on

³²⁸ Yılmaz, "The Sultan and the Sultanate," p. 2.

³²⁹ Halil İnalçık, "State, Sovereignty and Law During the Reign of Süleyman" in *Suleyman the Second and His Time*, eds. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993), pp. 72-75.

³³⁰ "Her ne kadar enbiya ve evliya ve müluk gelmişler ise cümlesi adl ü insafla meb'us ve me'murlardır ki, adl ile nizam-ı alem ve hilafıyla ihtilal hasıl olur." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 169 /Fol.27a.

the concept of justice started to circulate at an unprecedented level.³³¹ Previously in the Ottoman context, works dealing with political authority in the form of mirrors for princes were mostly reproductions of classical works such as *Kelile ve Dimne*, *Kabusname* and *İskendername*.³³² Justice was conceptualized as one of the constituent elements of the Ottoman state which many Ottoman scholars found its ideal reflection in the reign of Süleyman I (as illustrated by the epithet “Lawgiver”).³³³ It meant for Bursevi moderation (*vasat*), equilibrium (*i'tidal*) and the maintenance of the preexisting order of things which have come to be regarded as their ideal forms.³³⁴ Bursevi borrowed the concept to comment on the ideal form of rule and social order: “Some of the viziers have said that what holds this government together is oppression. Then they were killed. Forasmuch, all institutions are maintained by justice, not oppression.”³³⁵ Providing the example of Anushirvan (Chosroes I, Sassanid ruler of the sixth century) who was frequently mentioned by Ottoman authors in reference to his just rule, Bursevi pointed to a notion of justice which transgressed boundaries of religion and was conceptualized as a universal truth by which all rulers were expected to abide by. One of the first authors to voice the prominence of justice over faith was Nizamü'l-Mülk who claimed in his

³³¹ In her article Darling specifies the similarities between the political discourses which circulated in Europe and in the Middle East. Darling, “Political Change and Political,” pp 507-508.

³³² Pal Fodor, “State and Society, Crisis and Reform in 15th-17th Centuries Ottoman Mirror for Princes,” in *In Quest of the Golden Apple* (Istanbul: Isis,), p. 26.

³³³ İnalçık, “State, Sovereignty and Law,” p. 69

³³⁴ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 182/ Fol. 203a.

³³⁵ “Bazı vüzeradan mesmu' idi ki, 'bu daire-i devleti zulüm tutar' demiş idi. Sonra katl olundu. Zira cemi-i daireleri muhafaza eden adldir, zulüm degildir.” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p.169 /Fol.27a.

Siyasetname written in the eleventh century that rulership would rain with faithlessness but not with injustice.³³⁶ On the other hand, Bursevi defined justice also as one of the stations of faith: “The attribute of justice which is one of the greatest stations of creed, is required for those who have faith.”³³⁷ It was a significant aspect of the Sunna of the prophet as well: “The one who is just, revives the prophetic tradition with his justice.”³³⁸ Thus the relationship between justice and faith (and hence reward in the afterlife) was very much emphasized by Bursevi who claimed that in the afterlife, just rulers would be enthroned (*cülus*) on minbars made out of light (*nurdan minberler*).³³⁹

While in Bursevi’s commentaries, the attribute of justice remained rather abstract, for Sarı Abdullah Efendi it entailed concrete administrative actions such as the merit-based appointment of state officials, sufficient provision of their salaries, and surveillance of administrators, control over the tax collection process and the personal acquaintance of the sultan with the socio-economic conditions of the people.³⁴⁰ The difference may have arisen from Sarı Abdullah Efendi’s more elaborate knowledge regarding administrative issues due to his long tenure as a scribe. A similar concern for the necessity of such state control mechanisms to

³³⁶ Fodor, “State and Society, Crisis and Reform,” p. 25.

³³⁷ “*Pes ehl-i imanda sıfat-ı adl gerektir ki şuaab-i imandan şu ‘be-i azimedir.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 302/ Fol.41b.

³³⁸ “*Adil olan kimse adliyle ihya-yı nebevi etmiş olur.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 182/ Fol. 203a.

³³⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 207/ Fol. 7b.

³⁴⁰ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, *Tedbirü’n-Neş’eteyn fi Islahü’n-Nüşateyn*, p. 289-290/ Fol.36a.

prevent oppression had been expressed in Machiavelli's Prince written more than a century before, pointing out to the possible similarity in European and Ottoman conjunctures and available political discourses in which commentators voiced their concerns.³⁴¹

The opposite of justice, oppression, was basically defined as the transgression of someone else's right (*müteaddi*)³⁴² and it would be punished even if the oppressor was a Muslim. One finds a similar description of justice by Evliya Çelebi: it indicated everyone occupying his assigned place in the society and being careful not to violate the boundaries of social stratification. This view of justice as the preservation of existing social boundaries was indeed based on the Aristotelian tradition of political philosophy.³⁴³ In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi explicitly defined oppression (*zulm*) as placing an object somewhere apart from its original location, indicating a transgression of established boundaries. The act implied deviancy/aberration (*inhiraf*) for it pulled the actor to either one of the two extreme poles of *ifrat* and *tefrit*.³⁴⁴ Whomever slid to each one of these extreme poles was defined as a non-believer (*kafir*), hence defining the maintenance of order also through religio-mystical terms.³⁴⁵ It was incumbent on the political authority which was held responsible for the establishment of justice to maintain this order. "If there

³⁴¹ Darling, "Political Change and Political," p. 510.

³⁴² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 389 /Fol.80a.

³⁴³ Hagen, "Afterword: Ottoman Understandings," p. 240; Darling, "Political Change and Political," pp. 514-515.

³⁴⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 179 /Fol.200b.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 182/ Fol. 203a.

is the justice of sultan, even if there is no harvest and mill, there will still be abundance in that place. But there can be no fertility with oppression, even if there is no defect in agriculture and farming.”³⁴⁶ And when people died of famine and sickness arising from oppression, then there could be no state to organize their social life. Thus justice established not only the social and political but also the natural order of things. Aziz Al-Azmeh has reflected on the almost universal nature of this attribute which can be found in the political expressions of different polities.³⁴⁷

The justification for the sultan came not so much from his personality or divinity but from his function which Bursevi defined as the maintenance of religion (*ikamet-i din*). The sultan was expected to accomplish this purpose by arousing feelings of fear in the people so that they would withdraw from transgressing their boundaries (*teaddi*) and feel obliged to respect the rights of others. The sultan was thus compulsory (*vacib*) because he acted as a vehicle for people to fulfill their required religious and social duties and hence for the establishment of order.³⁴⁸ According to Sarı Abdullah as well, it was incumbent on the ruler as the caliph to protect the boundaries of sharia (*hudud-ı şer’i muhafaza*) and to use his domains (*mülk*) at the service of religion not vice versa (*mülkü şer’a hadim ide*) since sharia and justice were needed to replace the provisions of nature with the provisions of divine law.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 76/ Fol. 252b.

³⁴⁷ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*.

³⁴⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 211/ Fol. 9b.

³⁴⁹ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, “Tedbirü’n Neş’eteyn fi Islahı’n Nüşateyn,” p. 42 /Fol.7b, p. 45 /Fol.9b.

The sultan could choose to manifest justice either as wrath through his left hand the janissaries or as grace through his right hand the grand vizier just as God disclosed himself both through wrath (*celal*) and grace (*cemal*) on earth. The left hand worked to discipline (*te'dib*) and punish (*tazir*) whereas the right hand disclosed benevolence (*ihsan*) and blessings (*in'am*).³⁵⁰ Could Bursevi's representation of the grand vizier as operating through beneficence be a reflection of the changing trends in vizieral appointments? In the eighteenth century, increasingly more people coming from bureaucratic backgrounds were occupying the office of the grand vizier while in the previous centuries grand viziers came mostly from military backgrounds as devshirmes. Itzkowitz uses the title efendi-turned-pasha in describing the phenomenon of grand viziers coming from governor backgrounds.³⁵¹ To illustrate the docility of the grand vizier Bursevi provided the example of Moses (*Musa*) who was austere like a razor (*ustura*) and his brother and vizier Aaron (*Harun*) who was clement.³⁵² However in *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, an earlier work dedicated to the grand vizier, in a rather contradictory manner, Bursevi conceived of the vizierate as vicegerency by sword (*meb'us bi's-seyf*) and defined the responsibility of the vizier as

³⁵⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," pp. 168-170 /Fol. 16b-27a.

³⁵¹ Norman Itzkowitz, "Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities," *Studia Islamica* 16, (1962): 73-94.

³⁵² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," pp. 198-199/ Fol. 217b-218a.

suppressing rebellion and establishing order by way of violence.³⁵³ To legitimize disciplinary procedures, Bursevi relied on the Sunna and the Qur'an:

Since the disciplining of people is a fundamental aspect of the sharia, the janissary order is the most powerful column of the state. And the fundamentality of discipline and governance is revealed in the verse "Get up and warn (el-Müddessir, 74/2)". Forasmuch, the path of the Prophet is maintained first with intimidation because heralding is built upon it. And there can be no heralding with Heaven unless faith is formed.³⁵⁴

In the second chapter, I have already detailed the implications of vicegerency by sword for imperial ambitions, so in this section the focus is on the implications for the Ottoman society. Application of the "sword", a symbol which sacralized disciplinary violence for the enactment of divine law on earth, was one of the prevalent motifs of Bursevi's political vision. Although it was better to show mercy (*rahmet*), the rulers were compelled to undertake the disciplining (*te'dib*) of the Ottoman subjects who did not abide by the rules of the sharia (i.e. did not practice the obligatory salaah and drank wine).³⁵⁵ This was not an uncontrolled violence; its limits were indeed defined by the rules of the sharia. In his texts, Bursevi also drew the boundaries of legitimate violence as an interpreter of the divine law: people's

³⁵³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.200 /Fol.3a-3b; His usage of the term *meb'us bi's-seyf* for the grand vizier could also be related to the position of the grand vizier as the commander of the Ottoman army. For the significance of the grand vizier in military affairs: Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma," p. 5.

³⁵⁴ "Ve te'dib-i nas şer'de asl olmağla yeniçeri ocağı erkan-ı devletin akvası oldu. Ve te'dib ü siyaset asl olduğu 'Kalk, uyar' ayetinden mefhumdur. Zira Cenab-ı Nebevi ibtida inzar ile kaimdir. Zira tebşir, inzar üzerine mebnidir ki iman husule gelmedikçe Cennet ile tebşir etmek de hasıl olmaz." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 79/ Fol. 255a.

³⁵⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 187/ Fol. 207b; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," pp. 79-80/ Fol. 255a.

bones would not be broken and their flesh would not be cut. Just like everything, disciplinary mechanisms also had to remain moderate. Indeed the last section of *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* consisted of such Shari provisions to be applied for the disciplining of people. For example the punishment of *kisas* (retaliation) was necessary for it would serve as an incentive for others not to commit similar crimes.³⁵⁶ It was not only the sultan and the grand vizier but also the governors, judges and amirs who were responsible for implementing the shari in order to establish the order of the cosmos (*nizam-ı alem*) and correct the conditions of the world (*ahval-i alemi tadil*).³⁵⁷ The aim was not so much to persecute the disobedient but to domesticate them through particular methods and to literally put them in their place (*icra-i hudud*) so that they do not dare transgress the established social and moral boundaries.³⁵⁸ Thus exercise of violence to subdue the ones who were regarded as subverts and unruly subjects was inherent to the definition of justice and order: indeed Bursevi defined the people of his day as in dire need (*muhtaç*) of such disciplinary provisions because of their proximity to the apocalypse.³⁵⁹ This was the kind of thinking that underlined Bursevi's legitimization of the persecution of the

³⁵⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," pp. 163-164/ Fol. 24a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," P. 74/ Fol. 250b.

³⁵⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," pp. 74-75/ Fol. 250b-251a.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 90/ Fol. 267b.

³⁵⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 187-188/ Fol. 207b-208a; In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi made detailed juristic discussions not only about crimes and their required punishments but the organization of social relationships: Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," pp. 106-107.

Sufi sheikhs Hamza-i Bayrami and Ođlan Őeyhi on account of their disregard for the sharia and transgressive heretical (*melahide*) activities.³⁶⁰

Still, one should be careful when analyzing Bursevi's reliance on legitimate violence as a response to the changing circumstances of the empire. Obviously his proposals supported the repression of social and political issues, but this does not necessarily imply the proposition of a clearly defined out reform agenda on behalf of Bursevi. Indeed many *nasihatname* authors who came up with solutions to what they regarded as the decline of the Ottoman Empire were not necessarily active reformists. Supporters of the neo-sufi thesis claim a new reformist direction in Sufi thought (particularly in the Middle East and Northern Africa) starting from the eighteenth century. They claim this novel Sufi vision to be concerned with the social and moral revival of the society by way of political and military activism and the application of the sharia and the Sunna of the prophet. Clearly the ideas proposed by Bursevi for the betterment of the society do fit in this scheme, however it is difficult (at least at the moment) to identify him as a reformist. During his early tenure as the vicegerent of his sheikh Bursevi seems to have put his heart in commanding the right and forbidding the wrong by taking harsh measures such as bastinado (*falaka*) and the frequent admonishing of the people. However in his later life Bursevi emerges as a more subtle man who refrained from open criticism and frank religious or political activism in the public sphere, directing his attention to writing.³⁶¹ The problem with placing him in the neo-sufi arguments is that Bursevi was a man who had grown up

³⁶⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 209/ Fol. 8b.

³⁶¹ See Chapter Two on Bursevi's life.

in the second half of the seventeenth century, and many of his ideas were influenced by long transformations which were rooted in the previous decades and even centuries. He was shaped more by their long-term dynamics: the public discussions regarding religious innovation, constant wars at the European front, factionalization in the political sphere, dethronements of sultans, increasing social mobility, economic hardships and most importantly the impact of Sunnitization (a process which had gained impetus during the sixteenth century rivalry with the Safavids) on the Sufi orders. Without taking into account all these aspects and the seventeenth century increase in political treatises by Ottoman scholars from diverse backgrounds, it is not possible to contextualize İsmail Hakkı Bursevi's intellectual world and particularly religio-political commentary. The neo-sufi arguments fall short in that respect, namely they attribute exclusive and transformative characteristics to eighteenth and nineteenth century Sufism neglecting historical and intellectual continuities with previous periods.

Sultanate as a Trust: Discourse of Rights and Duties

According to Bursevi, not only the sultan but all statesmen were conceptualized as occupying offices entrusted to them (*dünyevi emanet*).³⁶² The entrusted nature of their offices indicated temporality and responsibility. In *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, Bursevi made reference to the duties incumbent on the sultan and the statesmen: The sultan, viziers, governors, judges, etc. were all expected to oversee the deeds of the Muslims

³⁶² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 86/ Fol. 262b.

as if they were their own personal affairs. Serving the people was so important and even sacred that the rulers were advised not to focus on extra devotional practices when they were needed for governance. They would be rewarded for their service in the afterlife. “Working for someone else is one of the greatest [forms of] proximity [to God].”³⁶³ Furthermore, he provided examples from history and the Quran to illustrate his point. Khidr had earned eternal life by helping the soldiers of Alexander the Great find water. Besides, according to the story narrated in the Qur’anic verse Ta Ha (20/9), Moses had heard the words of God and was granted prophethood when he approached a burning tree at night to take a firebrand for his household (*ehl-i beyt*).³⁶⁴

Sarı Abdullah also counseled the sultan to be aware of the significance of his rank as the temporal ruler and abide by the rules and obligations which this rank stipulated. Rulers were disclosed on earth as temporal caliphs only by the will of God hence their positions were entrusted to them.³⁶⁵ His use of the title *halife-i sahib-i emanet* (caliph as the owner of the sultanate as a trust) made reference to the fragility of his position as the ruler and his restricted discretionary capacities; he was thus reduced to a symbolic channel held responsible to enact the orders of God in the governance of the empire while in reality it was the jurists who interpreted and

³⁶³ “*Sa’y fi hakki’l-gayr azam-ı kurubattandır.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” pp. 201-202 /Fol. 3b-4a.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid*; “Has the conversation of Moses approached you? When he saw a fire, he said to his people: Abide! Truly I observed a fire so that perhaps I would bring you some firebrand from there or I may find guidance at the fire. When he approached it, it was proclaimed: O Moses! Truly I – I am your Lord!” *Sublime Quran*, pp. 360-361.

³⁶⁵ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, “Tedbirü’n-Neş’eteyn,” p.42/ Fol.7a.

judges who enacted divine law. This fact made the sultan's position as the ruler a fragile one, indeed a position which had repercussions in the historical realities of the seventeenth century when the sultans were dethroned by coalitions of soldiers and grand muftis one after another. Scholars like Hüseyin Yılmaz and Baki Tezcan have analyzed these dethronements as constitutionalist tendencies in the early modern Ottoman period.³⁶⁶ The pervasive discourse of rights and duties which obliged the rulers to act in certain ways and oversee the needs of the people found in the literary works of this period may be conceived as a reflection of these tendencies. Again Sarı Abdullah argued that once deposed, the sultan could no longer benefit from the glory attributed to him on account of his superior rank since this rank was not inherent to his existence. On the contrary, the ranks of the saints as spiritual caliphs were perpetual because they have been attained by personal struggle and training.³⁶⁷ If the ruler managed to act in accordance with the requirements of this rank, then he could expect to find peace both in this world and afterlife.³⁶⁸ A strong emphasis on the sultan's responsibility of serving the good of the people, protecting their rights, fulfilling his responsibilities along with a focus on justice established by the rule of the sharia were recurrent themes in the text.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁶ Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma;" Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*.

³⁶⁷ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, "Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn," p. 40-41 /Fol.5b-6a.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37 /Fol.2b, p. 40-41 /Fol.5b.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41-42 /Fol. 6b; "... emanet-i hiyanetinde olan ibadullahın ahvalı ile mukayyed ola. Ve anları şer'r-i kavim ve sırat-ı müstakim üzre isbat ede." p. 53 /Fol.16a, p. 71 /Fol.30a.

Conformity and the Absolutist Ideal

Submission to the will of the rulers whom Bursevi regarded as having complete sovereignty over the people was one of the constituent elements of faith and essential for the maintenance of social and political order. Therefore, disobedience to sultan's commands and prohibitions implied swerving from the path of the true faith and had to be punished with death. The killing of rebels was justified by the wish to keep the status quo and the order of the society intact, or else opposition to political authority would breed disorder (*ihtilal-i alem*). Similarly a disciple was expected to completely submit himself to the will of his sheikh, if he tended to disobey him, he would be banned and would not be given further education unless he repented.³⁷⁰ By formulating obedience to the leaders of a society, be it the religious leaders such as the ulema and the sheikhs or the temporal ones such as the sultan and the statesmen as one of the many pillars of faith which a proper Muslim was expected to pay allegiance to, Bursevi reproduced in religious terms the conformist political discourse of complete obedience to authority figures. Since political authority was defined in religious terms and the maintenance of order was sacralized, obedience to figures who represented this authority was represented as a matter of true faith: "Whoever denies the rulership of the sultan becomes a heretic."³⁷¹ And those who

³⁷⁰ "*Biri dahi ulü'l-emre itaat etmektir. Ulü'l-emr, müluk ve meşayih ve ulema ve zühhaddır. Zira müluk, cümle-i reyaya hakimdir. Mahkuma gerektir ki, hakime muti' ve mübayaasında dahil ola.*" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 134/ Fol. 8a.

³⁷¹ "Ve bir kimse imamat-ı sultanı inkar eylerse zındık olur." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 220/ Fol. 15a.

obeyed him would be saved. To justify his conformist claims, Bursevi has frequently relied on the hadith of the prophet which ordered people to obey their leaders.³⁷²

What were the possibilities of social change and political action in the face of unjust rulers or religious authority figures who were regarded as aberrant then? Nowhere in his life did Bursevi stand as a man of radical or oppositional political action. Throughout his texts, he emphasized the significance of obedience to the leaders of a society for the maintenance of social order although he criticized their disregard for religion. In contrast to his sheikh Atpazari Osman Fazli who was sent to exile in Magosa because he was quite outspoken on political issues, Bursevi was rather solicitous in disclosing his views with regard to the workings of the Ottoman state publicly. One can gain some insight as to what to do in the face of injustice according to Bursevi through the bits and pieces of information scattered throughout his works. For example one of the pillars of faith Bursevi mentioned in *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* was helping the tyrant through the Devil (*nusret ala-İblis*). This help could be granted by giving advice to the oppressive person or speaking softly to dismantle the influence of devil on him. It was also considered important to give advice to sinners (*fasık*) so that they withdrew from their deviant actions and served as examples to be shunned.³⁷³

Bursevi reminded the reader that when a person was treated in an unjust manner, according to the sharia, he had the right to appeal to the sultan by filing a

³⁷² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 90/ Fol. 267b.

³⁷³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 135 /Fol.9a.

complaint or appearing before the court to make his case heard.³⁷⁴ But to what extent could these resolutions for injustice be legitimately applied to oppressive authority figures? In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, in a short passage Bursevi pointed out the importance of telling words of justice to an oppressor sultan instead of being a flatterer. This for Bursevi was the biggest of all jihads. Hence the prominence of giving advice/speaking righteous words not only to common people but also to political authority figures was once again justified. One should not prostrate one's self before the grandees just to gain their favor and worldly rewards and should have enough courage to disclose their wrong deeds according to the formula commanding right and forbidding wrong.³⁷⁵ Still, none of this advisory activity yielded a manifest disobedience to authority; conformity to authority figures was taken as one of the building blocks of social order. Only when a ruler's orders transgressed the boundaries of the sharia and brimmed over to *şirk* (denial of God) were the people granted the possibility of resistance based on the hadith: "There is no compliance to any creature on the issue of disobedience to God."³⁷⁶ However it would be far-fetched to claim that this declaration constituted a legitimate ground for dissident political activism on behalf of Bursevi whose dominant view on political authority almost always promoted submission and moderation.

³⁷⁴ "...ihtimal ki o kimse mazlum ola. Bu surette o mazlum için sultana ve hakime çıkıp tezallüm etmek meşrudur." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 106 /Fol.9b.

³⁷⁵ "Cihâdın efdali, şol kelime-i haktır ki, sen onu cevri ehli olan sultana veya muahezesinden havf ettigin kimseye söyleyesin, müdahane eylemeyesin. Feemma sen aks edersen, dünya için ekabire secde kılarсан, nerede zaif ve abalı var ise onu incitirsen, vay haline!" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 159/ Fol.22a.

³⁷⁶ "Allah'a isyan hususunda mahluka itaat yokdur." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 127/ Fol. 40b.

In that respect, Bursevi's views were substantially similar to those of the Moroccan mystic Ahmad b. Idris (d. 1837) who repeated the necessity not to bow and scrape before oppressive rulers in the texts he composed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³⁷⁷ On the other hand, Sarı Abdullah opened up some space for resisting the sultan when the latter made a decision deemed inappropriate by the sharia: for example, in the time of war, the leader of the soldiers was granted the right to disobey the sultan's orders (if they were not suitable to the sharia) even if he was to be punished for this action.³⁷⁸ Viziers and local leaders also had the right to warn the sultan if he inclined to disobey the divine law. This line of thinking indicated that sultanic laws and orders were not regarded as binding as the shari laws by Sarı Abdullah. Such a strong sharia-consciousness which subjected the sultan to the authority of a transcendental law which was defined by jurists could point to the influence of sixteenth century transformations which brought about the rising significance of jurists' law vis-à-vis sultanic law (*kanun*).

Bursevi tried to prove the need for political authority in several ways. One was a more or less self-referential claim: In mystical terms, the sultan's rank was equivalent to that of God as defined by *vacibü'l-vücud*, meaning that it was simply impossible for him not to exist.³⁷⁹ Interestingly Bursevi also provided a legitimizing factor by referring to the animal world: even the cranes and the monkeys designated a leader for their communities, thus it was only normal that humans required a ruler

³⁷⁷ Radtke, "Sufism in the 18th Century," pp. 337-338.

³⁷⁸ Sarı Abdullah Efendi, "Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüşateyn," pp. 83-84 /Fol.38b.

³⁷⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 166 /Fol.61b.

too.³⁸⁰ The hadith which necessitated the appointment of an amir if there were three people on a journey was another indicator of the significance of the leader for the maintenance of order among creatures who lived in communities. “When one gives and the others receive commands, the order gently remains.”³⁸¹ Bursevi’s not so infrequent efforts in proving the necessity of the sultan and constant focus on the prominence of obedience can be taken as an indication of the rising tendency to question the authority and legitimacy of the sultan’s power in the eighteenth century Ottoman society. Particularly the serial dethronements of sultans through a series of janissary revolts and the fetvas issued by the grand muftis in the seventeenth century must have been a significant factor in the increasing visibility of such discussions in the writings of Ottoman scholars. In fact the legitimacy of the sultan and the dethronements seem to have occupied Bursevi’s mind since in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* he openly stated that it was not rightful to depose the sultan by way of violence: “When there is discontent about the sultan, it should be removed and rehabilitated with no assault on the person of the sultan.”³⁸² The sultan, by virtue of the greatness of his name had the right to rule over all other names (manifested by statesmen), appoint and dismiss people and give commands according to his will. However, those of rank (*ehl-i meratib*) could not pass judgments on the sultan. Bursevi further added that no pole was ever dismissed from office since the time of Adam, again correlating the position of the pole with the sultan. While making these pro-sultan comments it is

³⁸⁰ Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, III,” p. 88/ Fol. 265b.

³⁸¹ “*Kimi emir ve kimi me'mur olunca, nizam-ı hal rıfkan ziyade olur.*” Ibid.

³⁸² “*Sultan hakkında ihtilaf vaki' olsa def' ve ıslah edip kendine taarruz olunmamak gerekir.*” Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, II,” p. 172/ Fol. 193a-193b.

highly likely that Bursevi had the janissary uprisings which resulted in the killing of Osman II and İbrahim I in mind. He was frankly against the killing of sultans while justifying the persecution of other statesmen (such the grand mufti Feyzullah or grand viziers) was justified indicating the special status he attributed to the sultan. “Maybe the whole creation is maintained with the name of the sultan whose existence is necessary for the commoners and the privileged ones. Then why do they curse him and demand his destruction?”³⁸³

Was Bursevi criticizing the rebellious janissary soldiers whom he regarded as the foundation of the Ottoman state? Despite his absolutist views and conformist attitude towards political authority, in his *tuhfes* Bursevi did not direct any frank criticism to the army. To the contrary he exalted the janissaries and their association with Hacı Bektaş.

“The sultan commands the right and forbids the wrong in whatever fashion he wishes.” Indeed when he ordered something licit (*mübah*) it was necessary to obey the sultan since such an order would lead to righteousness (*salah*). Here Bursevi made reference to the permission granted by Mehmed II for the communal Kandil salaats, a practice fervently criticized by the Kadızadelis throughout the seventeenth century.³⁸⁴ Indeed as mentioned in the section about Bursevi’s life, in the early eighteenth century a dervish was killed by probably some Kadızadeli followers during a Kandil prayer at the Ulu Mosque in Bursa. An important aspect of Bursevi’s

³⁸³ “*Ve sultan ki vücudu avam ve havassa lazım, belki cemi-i mevcudat onun ismiyle kaimdir, nice sebb olunup vücudun zevali talep olunur?*” Ibid, p. 194/ Fol. 214a.

³⁸⁴ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 220/ Fol. 15a.

political vision is that he expects unquestioned obedience to political authority. Thus even if the sultan was insufficient in terms of morality and religiosity, one still had to obey him since it was extremely difficult to find a ruler who merged political authority with perfect morality.³⁸⁵ This seems more like a pragmatic approach which accepted the inadequate religiosity and character flaws of the existing sultans and pointed to the suppression of non-conformity as a solution to the empire's problems. Although the pious ruler continued to be the ideal one for Bursevi, the instable governments and the uprisings of the period in which he lived must have caused him to take refuge in and promote the idea of absolute conformity to the sultan despite his character. The way in which Bursevi represented political authority and its ideal form in his texts through counsels, stories, titles and concepts was very much related to his perception of the power to rule, symbolized in the sultan and the sultanate, as the maintainer of order on earth. This was an ancient attribute of ideal rulership which had been in circulation among different polities for centuries.³⁸⁶ The exercise of authority was sacralized by virtue of its integration to the cosmic order and organization of chaos into coherence by way of keeping the temporal world under constant surveillance of the norms of the spiritual world. These norms were defined by Bursevi in terms of a religious orthodoxy whose boundaries were defined by the rules of the sharia on the one hand and the knowledge of the divine truth on the other. Hence order and justice were frequently defined through the relationship between the sacred and the profane; an imbalance in their affiliation bred disorder

³⁸⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 90/ Fol. 268a.

³⁸⁶ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, p. 18.

not necessarily in abstract but historical terms. The state was incumbent with maintaining this religious balance through the exercise of justice, use of disciplinary mechanisms when needed and ensuring conformity to authority figures.

CHAPTER V

A DECLINE PARADIGM FOR THE SUFI SHEIKH: REASONS OF DECLINE

In Bursevi's elaboration of the decline paradigm, there were two reasons for the disorder arising from the circles of rulers and their vicegerents. First one was the deniers (*ehl-i inkar*) who repudiated the realities of the Sufi path and the Sufis; second was the deviants (*ehl-i ilhad*) who transgressed the boundaries of the sharia in mystical experiences.³⁸⁷ Statesmen by being in proximity to either one of these groups (instead of the true friends of God) were leading the empire into disorder and corruption; the issue was one of misguidance. Statesmen were heedless to the counsels of the Sufis unlike the previous times: "The conditions of this epoch are so dreadful that in his whole life even if one provides seventeen counsels [to the rulers], it is considered too much, and even they are not fulfilled according to one's wish."³⁸⁸

In the majority of his religio-political comments in his *tuhfes*, Bursevi refrained from directing criticisms towards the sultan. His only mistake was conceptualized as lending credence to people who misguided him instead of submitting to a competent Sufi sheikh. On the one hand, such an approach reduced the sultan to a mere puppet whose decision-making process was severely limited by the intrusion of different actors. Indeed, this was very much reflective of the political environment of the period since by the early eighteenth century the grand vizier and the grand mufti

³⁸⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 360 /Fol. 67b.

³⁸⁸ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 66 /Fol.241b.

(particularly Feyzullah Efendi) virtually held almost all of the authority to direct state affairs in their hands. Not to mention the pressure put by the palace aghas and the janissaries on political issues. The enthronement of sultans at a very early age and the changes in the succession policy in the seventeenth century had also created new opportunities for royal women, specifically the queen mothers, to interfere in state affairs acting as the sultan's regents. It is thus difficult to speak of the sultan as an autonomous agent, and Bursevi resented the rising influence of diverse groups in the political sphere: a sign of his absolutist ideals.

Bursevi paid attention not to make frank comments on the actions of statesmen either; his remarks remained either generic or implicit. This was probably a conscious decision on his behalf to stay away from politics not to face the destiny of other famous sheikhs like Niyazi Mısri and his own master Atpazari Osman Fazlı who were sent to exile on account of their forthright political expressions in the seventeenth century. A resenting passage on commanding right and forbidding wrong from *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* might help us understand the rather prudent approach of Bursevi while commenting on issues of decay. "Particularly in our times, it is not possible to open one's mouth and say a word to the people and the grandees since they not only reject your advice but also show hostility. Maybe they send you to exile and maybe they kill you."³⁸⁹ It is very likely that while writing this section, Bursevi had the exile of his sheikh in mind as well as the problems he had with the

³⁸⁹ "Hususan ki bizim a'sarımızda, ağız açıp halka ve ekabir-i nasa söz söyleyecek hal kalmamıştır. Zira kabul etmediklerinden ma-ada, buğz u adavet dahi ederler. Belki nefy-i beled ve belki katl eylerler." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," pp. 139-140 /Fol.11a-11b.

local religious authorities during his six years of stay in Skopje (1675-1681) as the newly made and inexperienced vicegerent to his sheikh.³⁹⁰

Religious Scholars as *Ehl-i İnkâr*

Philosophers: Denial of Sufi Epistemology

Bursevi's criticisms regarding the ulema, although generic in style, were widespread. His texts were fraught with remarks and criticisms about what he perceived as the deviations and incompetence of the Ottoman religious scholars: they were indeed the reason of social, moral and political disorder. The group which he referred to as *ehl-i inkâr* did not necessarily connote a denial of God, hence atheism in the modern sense of the term, but rather a denial of some aspects of Sufi epistemology and practices. These were the people with animalistic souls (*ruh-ı hayvani*) upon whom the apocalypse would break.³⁹¹ In *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, Bursevi once used the term *ehl-i inkâr* to refer to those religious scholars (not acquainted with Sufism) who denied the experience of Hallac-ı Mansur: "The public, particularly those who deny upon hearing that word (*Ene'l-Hakk*) assume God to be the created object."³⁹² In epistemological terms, it implied those members of the ulema who were educated in

³⁹⁰ Namlı, *İsmail Hakkı Bursevi*, pp. 41-46; Sakıb Yıldız, "Türk Müfessiri İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Hayatı," in *Atatürk Üniversitesi İslami İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 1 (1975) pp. 110-112.

³⁹¹ Bursevi, *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, p. 86.

³⁹² "Avamm-ı nas hususan ki erbab-ı inkâr ol sözü işitdikde Hakk olan cism-i mahlukidir sanurlar." *Ibid.*

classical religious sciences and preferred a rather critical stance towards Sufi epistemology and practices. As an exemplar, Bursevi frequently quoted Suleyman's criticism of the grand mufti Çivizade who used to attack Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi particularly on issues of *vahdet-i vücud*.³⁹³

Bursevi's criticisms regarding the *ehl-i inkar* were vague: he addressed rather indefinite categories in his mind such as *ulema-i zahir*, *ulema-i rüsum*, *müdde'i*, *zahids*, etc. as if they were homogeneous bulks of adversaries who epitomized in their existence those practices and ideas which Bursevi regarded as deviant, arrogant or ignorant. *Müddei'* which literally means "the one who bets/claims", was a generic category which for Bursevi contained all the above mentioned groups who denied particular Sufi beliefs, practices and most importantly epistemology, and emphasized the importance of coming to conclusions based on rational thinking and argumentation. Hence they did not value divine inspiration, revelation or epiphany as legitimate sources of knowledge:

Regard the rampages of the *ulema-i zahir* whenever a subtle meaning does not have repercussions in their narrow minds' comprehension, they transgress their boundaries and quickly attempt at rejection. They are not aware that this treatment results in the rejection of the sharia.³⁹⁴

These people conceptualized under the categories *ulema-i rüsum* or *ulema-i zahir* trusted their knowledge of the religious sciences such as theology, hadith and fiqh,

³⁹³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 156 /Fol.56b.

³⁹⁴ "İşte nazar eyle ulema-i zahirin tuğyanlarına ki her ma'na-i latif ki havsala-i şuur-i kasırlarına gencayeş bulmaya hadlerine tecavüz edip redde müsaraaat ederler, bilmezler ki bu muamele redd-i Şari'a müeddi olur." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p.119 /Fol.35b.

but in fact they lacked Sufi wisdom.³⁹⁵ “A small amount of ink stain and smudge remains on the mouths of some *ulema*, unless they wash and purify themselves, *ilm-i feyz* (spiritual knowledge) will be away from them.”³⁹⁶ *Ulema-i inkar* resided mostly in the Anatolian lands while the lands of Rum and Acem, which manifested the divine name *Cemal* (grace), hosted great saints (*evliya*) and authors (*müellif ve musannif*).³⁹⁷ Bursevi argued that their denial had started to contaminate the lands of Rum as well.³⁹⁸

In *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* in a verse Bursevi called out to religious scholars as such: “O *medrese* men, all you have attained are mere delusions.”³⁹⁹ Actually, this epistemological hierarchy which shaped Bursevi’s intellectual world had existed for centuries. As early as the tenth century, religious scholars had differentiated between the knowledge of the external which indicated the study of *hadith* and *fiqh* for the interpretation of divine law and the knowledge of the inner which implied being acquainted with the spiritual dimensions of man and the cosmos in general. A third kind of knowledge was reserved for the knowledge of God’s attributes and himself.⁴⁰⁰ It was thus a common theme among the Sufis to relate the acquisition of

³⁹⁵ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 224 /Fol. 9a; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 142 /Fol.48a-b.

³⁹⁶ “*Bazı ulema saliklerinin ağızlarında, bir miktar mürekkep lekesi ve bulaşığı kalır. Bir hoş yunup arınmadıktan sonra, ilm-i feyz onlara noksan üzerine olur.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p.151 /Fol.17b.

³⁹⁷ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” pp. 86-87.

³⁹⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 68/ Fol. 243b.

³⁹⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 182 /Fol.70a.

⁴⁰⁰ Bernd Radtke, “Sufism in the 18th Century: An Attempt at a Provisional Appraisal,” *Die Welt des Islams* 36, no. 3 (November 1996), p. 339.

divine knowledge, the knowledge of the inner dimensions, to mystical experiences which could not be attained merely by the study of books and necessitated allegiance to a spiritual master.⁴⁰¹

It is possible to discern from Bursevi's comments that *ehl-i inkar* included the philosophers who believed in the supremacy of rational sciences and derived conclusions based on rational thinking. Philosophers, since they were dominated by the rule of reason and did not abide by the rules of the sharia, could not attain unity with God.⁴⁰² In *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*, Bursevi criticized *ehl-i istidlal*, *ehl-i mizan* and *ehl-i nazar* namely different types of philosophers for relying too much on rational methods and at times contradicting themselves.⁴⁰³ Their unveilings (*keşf*) were not coming from their hearts but from their imagination, causing their knowledge to be incoherent and unsteady.⁴⁰⁴ In historical reality, this distinction did not indicate mutually exclusive categories though: just as there were jurists interested in Sufism and sharia minded Sufis like the Celvetis educated in jurisprudence, it is plausible to believe that there were philosophers who did not condemn Sufi knowledge and maybe even showed an active interest in it. According to Khaled el-Rouayheb, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, contrary to common belief, there was an active

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 340.

⁴⁰² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 138 /Fol.46a.

⁴⁰³ *Ehl-i nazar* was a term used to denote philosophers whose knowledge was based solely on their observations of the material world; they undermined the value of inspirations and revelations. *Ehl-i istidlal* was used to refer to those philosophers whose epistemological foundations were based on deduction from evidence.

⁴⁰⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 49; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 150 /Fol.53a, p. 165 /Fol.61a.

interest in rational sciences such as logic, dialectic, philosophy and rational theology among Ottoman scholars. Bursevi's frequent comments about the rising influence of *ehl-i inkar* and the deficient knowledge of the philosophers could also serve as another reflection on the maintenance of these sciences in the curriculum of *medreses*. Actually another significant issue pointed out by el-Rouayheb is the increase in the number of *medreses* which taught rational sciences in the seventeenth century.⁴⁰⁵ In the early eighteenth century Es'ad Yanyavi (d. 1722) had translated a work from Aristotle into Arabic for the court of Ahmed III who had also ordered a translation of *Sırrü'l-Esrar*, the pseudo-Aristotelian book which induced Ibn 'Arabi to compose his *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye*.⁴⁰⁶ Similar to Bursevi, Mehmed Saçaklızade Mar'aşi (d.1732-3) was also grumbling about contemporary scholars' and students' curiosity for philosophy although he did not vilify the study of sciences such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, logic and dialectics.⁴⁰⁷

Bursevi's criticisms regarding the *ulema-i zahir* referred to a group of dialectic others through which he situated himself as a religious authority and claimed the superiority of Sufi epistemology and practices. Thus Bursevi was claiming himself a position within the Ottoman religious circles as a member of the superior *ulema-i*

⁴⁰⁵ Khaled El-Rouayheb, "The Myth of 'The Triumph of Fanaticism' in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Die Welt des Islams* 48, no. 2 (2008), pp. 196-221; on the proliferation of *medreses*, see: Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 227-235.

⁴⁰⁶ El-Rouayheb, "The Myth of the 'Triumph,'" p. 205; The Turkish translation of the pseudo-Aristotelian book which was titled *Keşfü'l-Estar An Sırrı'l-Esrar* was prepared by Muhammed el-Hamidi upon the request of Ahmed III. İbn Arabi, *Tedbirat-ı İlahiyye: Tercüme ve Şerhi*, ed. Mustafa Tahralı interp. Ahmet Avni Konuk (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1992), p. xiv.

⁴⁰⁷ El-Rouayheb, "The Myth of the 'Triumph,'" p. 203; p. 208.

hakikat (ulema-billah or urefa) as opposed to *ulema-i rüsum*.⁴⁰⁸ In a rather patronizing manner he suggested that such *ulema-i rüsum* submit to a sheikh who was conscious of the inner workings of their minds and the ill-wills of their egos and knew how to discipline the malice arising from their *nefs*.⁴⁰⁹

Interestingly Bursevi warned the reader also against those who lived as ascetics (*erbab-ı zühhd*).⁴¹⁰ Once in *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye*, he mentioned how some people criticized him for travelling extensively throughout the empire and tried to legitimize himself by claiming that he had the permission of the prophet, of Ibn ‘Arabi, of Khidr and his sheikh Osman Fazlı to engage in these travels.⁴¹¹ Although he did not provide any details about these people and their criticisms, he provided a clue a couple of passages later in his poem where he called out to the *zahid* to stop breaking hearts by gossiping because he would not understand from Bursevi’s state - the state of the lover of God (*hal-i aşık*).⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 51 /Fol.223b

⁴⁰⁹ “Binaen ala-haza gerektir ki, bu ahvalin batınından haberdar olmus bir mürşide teslim olalar ta ki onun terbiye ve irşadıyla Hakk’a yol bulalar.” *Ibid.*, p. 141 /Fol.12b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 181 /Fol.69b.

⁴¹⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p. 150 /Fol.17a.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173 /Fol.28b.

⁴¹² “Hal-i aşıktan haberdar olmadan çün zahida, Ko bu kıyl u kali, hatırlar gönüller yıkma gel!” *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174 *Ibid.* /Fol.29a

Jurists: Discourse of Religious Innovation

On the juristic functions of the ulema, Bursevi disclosed even more fervent attacks. All throughout his *tuhfes*, he made frequent recourse to a discourse of religious innovation versus Sunna to legitimize his position on a particular subject. The discourse was in circulation among Muslim scholars at least since the time of Ibn Teymiyye, but had found its public repercussions in the Ottoman context in the seventeenth century. Bursevi challenged the jurists' interpretation of the sharia by claiming that the method of *re'y u kiyas* (analogical reasoning) to reach legal conclusions was invalid, an innovation in itself.⁴¹³ The age-long Sufi practices had not been subject to such legal sanction before, and since the orders of the jurists had to depend on the decisions of the previous jurists, all the fetvas which vilified Sufi practices such as *sema*, dhikr meetings, reading the Quran out loud in a melodic fashion and the communal Kandil prayers were all *bidats* in juristic interpretation.⁴¹⁴ "They issue so many fetvas, did they exist at the time of the prophet?"⁴¹⁵ Bursevi sought to provide basis for Sufi actions in examples from the time of the prophet, and when he could not, he made recourse to either to the bindingness of the words and deeds of the saints or the sultanic law. For example, he justified the communal Kandil prayers by referring to the permission granted by Mehmed II: the word of the

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p.104 /Fol.287a.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.102-105 /Fol.284a-288a.

⁴¹⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 105 /Fol.287b.

sultan if it abided by the sunna was considered divine law hence any deviance from the norm established by the sultan indicated a religious innovation as well.⁴¹⁶

Mosque Preachers and Professors

His criticisms regarding the ulema were not limited to the insufficient nature of their knowledge and insincerity of their religious practice but brimmed over to the social functions of the ulema as well: The professors and mosque preachers of his time had become toys at the hands of the devil and swerved away from the circle of morality and religious devotion. Hence their words echoed in air in vain because they had no effect on the listeners.⁴¹⁷ The vibrant discussions that swept the pulpits of the mosques particularly in the capital city in the seventeenth century reflected a transformation in the parties who regarded themselves as legitimate negotiators of an Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Religious discussions were not necessarily pursued among the high-ranking ulema and through texts but among Sufi sheikhs who had been increasingly more integrated into the ulema culture since the sixteenth century and the *medrese* graduate mosque preachers coming from modest backgrounds.⁴¹⁸ The important aspect of this transformation was the increasing

⁴¹⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.220 /Fol.15a; However sultanic laws were not binding for the future sultans; particularly since the sixteenth century, as the jurists' interpretation of the sharia came into prominence, the bindingness of sultanic decrees was decreased. It was the grand muftis who held the legislative function in their hands and manipulated law to a great extent according to their own agendas. Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşma," p.7, pp. 14-16.

⁴¹⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p. 150/ Fol.17a.

⁴¹⁸ Zilfi, "The Kadızadelis: Discordant;" pp. 251-269; Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp.129-181; Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident," pp. 190-275.

publicity and politicization of such discussions and the participation of commoners in this public sphere. It was the successors of these mosque preachers that Bursevi criticized, without making a categorical distinction between Sufis and Kadızadelis, for transgressing the boundaries of piety and ethical behavior.

The differentiation between *ulema-i hakikat* and *ulema-i zahir* was appropriated by Bursevi as a motif around which he constructed his criticisms regarding the misguidance of political authority and situated himself as a determinant of the boundaries of religious orthodoxy. The position of the sheikh as a balanced interpreter of religion both in juristic and mystical terms was seen as essential for the governance of the empire and the human ego. Actually the blurring of the lines between the ulema and Sufi cultures since the sixteenth century⁴¹⁹ was reflected in the way Bursevi perceived himself not only as a Sufi sheikh and a saint and but also as a member of the ulema with the capacity to juristic and theological commentary.

The Zenith of Religious Hierarchy: Grand Mufti

In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi defined the grand mufti as the manifestation of the divine name *Alim* and emphasized the significance of abiding by his fetvas. However right after this, he engaged in a discussion of the position of the Sufi sheikh vis-à-vis the sultan in the previous eras (which is discussed in detail in the next chapter). Why did Bursevi focus his attention on Sufi sheikhs in a section about the grand mufti?

⁴¹⁹ Terzioğlu, “Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers,” p. 237.

Bursevi regarded both the grand mufti and the Sufi sheikh as the manifestations of the same name (*Alim*): the difference was that one occupied a state office and was given the authority to make law while the authority of the latter was unofficial. Despite this unofficiality Bursevi still regarded the position of the Sufi sheikh as important as that of the grand mufti, and thus viewed the authority of the latter as a challenge.

Grand mufti Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1703) was another figure whom Bursevi slyly resented in his texts, and although he never mentioned the reasons why, one can still speculate. Particularly since he was already persecuted and disliked among many groups, it was easier to comment on him even though Bursevi did not mention his name. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the grand mufti/preceptor Feyzullah (son in law of the famous Kadızadeli figure Vani Efendi) had seized almost all of the high-ranking positions within the ulema hierarchy for his family members and turned them into aristocratic offices. He had acquired so much power and influence that he had the upper hand not only in legislative but in all kinds of state affairs.⁴²⁰ The ulema elites were not fond of him since they found the path to higher posts blocked whereas Bursevi resented him as well since by his dual position as the grand mufti and the preceptor he had monopolized sultan's mentorship. In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, Bursevi made an implicit comment about Feyzullah's extensive influence over the sultan and state affairs: It was not the grand mufti but the grand vizier who was the top aide of the sultan, and all those who believed the opposite,

⁴²⁰ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 215-216.

implying Feyzullah, deserved to be persecuted like him.⁴²¹ It should be noted that Bursevi's situating the grand vizier above the grand mufti did not necessarily imply a secular ideal but reflected the rising significance of the vizieral households along with the expansion of the bureaucracy in the seventeenth century. Although he did not provide any names, Bursevi did refer to the reign of Mustafa II and the persecution of the grand mufti, making the subject of his lampoon obvious.⁴²² It is highly likely that his ironic remark about one of the dajjals being killed in his time in *Kitab-ı Kebir* referred to the persecution of Feyzullah as well.⁴²³

Feyzullah was renowned for his extensive networks of nepotism, but according to Namlı, in *Varıdat-ı Hakkiyye*, Bursevi criticized the grand mufti and his entourage for their disregard for Sufism. He must have found in the person of Feyzullah the epitome of *ehl-i inkar*, who by virtue of his proximity to the sultan had caused disorder in religious and state affairs: a common theme which circulates in all of

⁴²¹ Feyzullah Efendi was persecuted during the 1703 rebellion which is remembered as *Edirne Vakası* or *Feyzullah Efendi Vakası* in modern historiography. The grand mufti's power during this period had extended so much that he even exercised control over to the dismissal and appointments of grand viziers. On account of his extensive nepotism within the ulema hierarchy, he was dreaded by the members of the ulema as well. Particularly the gossips about the transfer of the capital from İstanbul to Edirne and the delayed salaries of the soldiers aroused wide-spread discontent among the soldiers, craftsmen, ulema and the public in general who started to march from İstanbul to Edirne when their demands from the sultan were not granted. As the army residing in Edirne joined the one coming from İstanbul, Sultan Mustafa II had to leave the throne to Ahmed III whereas the angry mob partook in the persecution of Feyzullah Efendi. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 215-220; Abou-El-Haj, *The 1703 Rebellion*; Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures*, pp. 25-26; According to Bursevi, Feyzullah's nickname *Meftuni* (captivated, enchanted) had been influential in directing the course of his fate and causing his persecution at the hands of the sultans' servants (*kul fitnesi*). Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 67.

⁴²² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 203/ Fol.221b.

⁴²³ İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, *Kitab-ı Kebir*, Fol.119b-120a quoted in Nuran Döner, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevi'nin Kitab-ı Kebir'i ve Bursevi'de Varıdat Kültürü," *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, no. 15 (2005) p. 330.

Bursevi's *tuhfes*.⁴²⁴ However, the grand mufti's association with the Halveti order and the Naqshbandi sheikh Murad-ı Buhari (d. 1720) who arrived in Istanbul in 1681 indeed contradicts Bursevi's views and reflects Feyzullah's interest in Sufism.⁴²⁵ A detailed study on Feyzullah's relationship with Sufi orders and sheikhs needs to be done in order to better contextualize Bursevi's comments, which seems to have arisen more from a personal resentment than a historical reality.

Therefore, in the early eighteenth century we see İsmail Hakki Bursevi quite discontented about the rising influence of the high-ranking ulema in the ruling circles and his marginalization as a Sufi sheikh within it. His resentment did have some historical foundations: by the early eighteenth century the office of the grand mufti had become rather stabilized and the ulema hierarchy had transformed into an aristocratical establishment and the official representative of religion in the Ottoman Empire.⁴²⁶ High-ranking ulema families were receiving many concessions and privileges from the state regarding the appointment of their family members to significant offices.⁴²⁷ Hence this was a period in which the ulema grandees held the upper hand while Sufi sheikhs, at least that is how Bursevi perceived it, were relegated to the background in terms of having direct communication with the sultan. There was no significant Sufi figure like Hüdayi who assumed the spiritual training of the sultan. As has been discussed previously, this relegation of the Sufi sheikh vis-

⁴²⁴ Namlı, *İsmail Hakki Bursevi*, pp.82-84.

⁴²⁵ Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidilik*, p. 112, pp. 142-143.

⁴²⁶ Madeline C. Zilfi, "Elite Circulation in the Ottoman Empire: Great Mollas of the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, No. 3 (1983), pp. 318-364.

⁴²⁷ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 183-235.

à-vis the sultan did not necessarily imply a loss of power and position but a different form of association with political power whose representatives were becoming increasingly more inclusive.

Sufis as *Ehl-i İlhad*

It was not only the ulema who were subject to Bursevi's criticisms but also other Sufi sheikhs. He reflected that the Sufi lodges, just like the *medreses*, were out of order as a result of the insufficient knowledge of the sheikhs regarding both rational (*akli*) and traditional (*nakli*) religious sciences.⁴²⁸ Envisioning his time as the age of disorder (*zaman-ı ihtilal*), similar to the reflections of Ottoman scholars from diverse backgrounds, he complained about the incompetence of *müderrişs* and Sufi sheikhs in religious instruction and portrayed the situation as a gloomy sign (adorned with an imagery of owls and fire) of the approaching apocalypse.⁴²⁹ Douglas Howard suggests that it was a common trope among Ottoman authors of *nasihatnames* since the mid-sixteenth century to claim a prophetic voice by making references to the Day of Judgment.⁴³⁰ Similarly Bursevi based his comments upon the imagery of an approaching apocalypse, indeed at the end of *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, he made detailed calculations to anticipate the coming of the Messiah which he argued was postponed

⁴²⁸ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 387 /Fol.79b; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 164 /Fol.60b.

⁴²⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 74-75. For another example of apocalyptic imagery, see Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 146 /Fol.50b.

⁴³⁰ Howard, "Genre and Myth," 149-150.

after the year Hicri year 1500.⁴³¹ In *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye*, he reflected on the condition of the society in a similar literary tone: “The situation of these ages is absolutely disastrous. The circle of people is filled with Ahrimans and the masjids being transformed into taverns, minarets are left alone.”⁴³² According to Radtke’s analysis of the texts of some eighteenth century Arabic speaking Sufi scholars, a similar concern for the moral degradation of Sufi sheikhs and their practices were abundant among the authors. Particularly doctrinal issues such as *hulül* and *ittihad*, from which Bursevi paid explicit effort to distance himself⁴³³, and mingling with women and beardless youths were among the most resented themes.⁴³⁴ In *Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye* Bursevi criticized the Sufi morality of his time for congruent reasons: “Those who are sheikhs employ drunken songsters. Women, like men, convoke a circle of dhikr and make their voices heard by foreigners and strangers.”⁴³⁵

There was a particular reference to a sheikh of his time who was poisoned by the last sultan because he had become a heretic (*mülhid*) although he did not mention exactly which practices and beliefs he was accused of.⁴³⁶ Was the Sufi that Bursevi

⁴³¹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p.230 /Fol.21a.

⁴³² Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 139 /Fol.46b; for a similar grievance regarding people’s disregard for religion, see: Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 66 /Fol.241b-242a.

⁴³³ In his explanations of the *vahdet-i vücud* doctrine, Bursevi emphasized that *vahdet* (unity) did not imply the union of God with men (*ittihad*) but the manifestation (*zuhur*) of God’s absolute existence in the servant man’s dissolved being. Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 158 /Fol.57a-b.

⁴³⁴ Radtke, “Sufism in the 18th Century,” p. 341.

⁴³⁵ “*Meşayih namına olanlar, sarhoş zakirler istihdam ederler. Avratlar, erler gibi halka-i zikir akd edip savtlarını ecnebilere ve na-mahremlere işittirirler.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye,” p. 140 /Fol.11b.

⁴³⁶ “*Ve bizim zamanımızda ba’zı şuyuh varta-i ilhada düşmüş idi. Akranı olanlar ilhadını te’yid eylediler. Ve kendi dahi musır oldu. Egerçi onu irşada kadir kimse var idi ve ahir-i sultan elinden*

was referring to, the controversial Halveti sheikh Niyazi Mısri who claimed to have been poisoned in his diaries? In a poem he accused Mısri for exposing the secrets of the Sufi to commoners who could not distinguish between legalistic and general forms of prophethood. In *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye* and *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, he approved the persecution of those who claimed prophethood for themselves or for people other than the canonically recognized ones.⁴³⁷

According to Hüseyin Vassaf who quoted one of the letters Bursevi wrote against Mısri, Bursevi frankly criticized the Halveti sheikh for claiming legalistic prophethood (*nübüvvet-i örfiyye*) for the sons of caliph Ali, Hasan and Hüseyin in his *Risale-i Hasaneyn*.⁴³⁸ Although Mısri claimed to have been poisoned, he was not persecuted by the grand mufti Feyzullah Efendi as Bursevi allegedly narrated in this letter but was sent to exile in Limni. This could be a case of misinformation on Bursevi's behalf.⁴³⁹ In a hagiographic text about Niyazi Mısri written by a Halveti sheikh named Abdi-i Siyahi, Bursevi's criticisms were portrayed as being caused by his verdancy.⁴⁴⁰ However, the fact that Bursevi was drawing attention to the same issue also in his later texts such as *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye* (1718) and *Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye*

mesmum oldu." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp.266-267 /Fol.27a; Bursevi defined *ilhad* (religious deviancy) as misconceptions about prophethood and the names and attributes of God. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 216 /Fol.12b.

⁴³⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 80; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," pp. 214-215 /Fol.11b, p. 216 /Fol.12b.

⁴³⁸ Abdi-i Siyahi, *Limni'de Sürgün Bir Veli*, pp. 37-38.

⁴³⁹ Mustafa Aşkar, *Niyazi Mısri ve Tasavvuf Anlayışı* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998) pp. 348-350; For Niyazi Mısri's response to İsmail Hakkı Bursevi see: Abdi-i Siyahi, *Limni'de Sürgün Bir Veli*, pp. 34-39; For a more detailed account on the discussions surrounding Niyazi Mısri, see Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman."

⁴⁴⁰ Abdi-i Siyahi, *Limni'de Sürgün Bir Veli*, p. 36.

(1722) is an indicator of his abiding stance regarding the discussion. Bursevi's fervent criticism of Niyazi Misri was not only a reflection of his youth and insufficient knowledge but also of his discretion not to diffuse mystical knowledge to the masses in an easily understandable manner because this could lead to misconceptions and disorder.⁴⁴¹

In the *tuhfes* used for analysis, Bursevi made a case for the prominence of saints as inheritors of the prophet in the mode of Ibn 'Arabi while highlighting the fact that no one could claim prophethood for anyone other than those recognized by the Qur'an and the divine law. He thus distinguished between two forms of prophethood: the legalistic and spiritual one. By drawing the boundaries of acceptable doctrines and practices within the Sufi circles Bursevi underscored to the importance of abidance by the sharia. It can hence be suggested that by the early eighteenth century Sufis through at least two centuries of Sunnitization had become enmeshed with the ulema culture, acquiring a more or less stable position as consolidators of orthodoxy with figures like İsmail Hakkı Bursevi positioning themselves vis-à-vis other religious scholars (Sufis or not) as the mouthpiece of a sharia-abiding sunna-minded Sufism. This was also one of the reasons why Bursevi did not hesitate to criticize the practices of other Sufis through a discourse of orthodoxy/orthopraxy in texts that aimed to circulate beyond the limited milieu of the Sufi order and religious scholars and reach a wider range of people.

⁴⁴¹ This is not to say that Bursevi showed outward hostility towards the Halveti path in his *tuhfes* though. At least on theoretical grounds he maintained the mainstream Celveti position which emphasized the superiority and subsequence of the station of *celvet* in comparison with *halvet* while recognizing the significance of *halvet* as a stepping stone for that higher rank. Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 60.

Bernd Radtke argues that these Sufi laments and criticisms of the eighteenth century should not be taken at face value as a “will to reform” but rather as timeless clichés which are abundant in Sufi literature of all times.⁴⁴² Although it is true that Sufi critics of Sufism who operated within a discourse of social disorder and immorality had always existed, the context within which such criticisms were rendered meaningful still needs to be taken into account. Particularly the case of Bursevi whose criticisms were directed not only to the limited milieu of the Sufis and religious scholars but to all segments of society, his perception of a decline marked by an imaginary golden age had parallelisms with the writings of other contemporary commentators who composed advice treatises or reform tracts. In that respect, Bursevi’s criticisms regarding the members of the religious establishment was similar to the grievances of commentators from different backgrounds such as administrators and bureaucrats who elucidated on the decline of the institutions they belonged to within a more general vision of imperial decline.

As the second cause of disorder Bursevi pointed out the group of deviants (*ehl-i ilhad*) which he, without distinguishing its features, singled out as *‘ışık* (illumination). When used in reference to a specific group, *‘ışık* implied in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries antinomian deviant dervishes with shia proclivities. The term could be used in reference to different sorts of esoteric dervishes who were accused for deviant behavior by groups who made a claim to orthodoxy: thus *‘ışık* could imply members of the Bektaşis, Hurufis or Kalenderis as

⁴⁴² Radtke, “Sufism in the 18th Century,” p. 342.

well.⁴⁴³ These mystics were frequently attacked by more conservative groups for their disregard for the rules set forward by the sharia and the Sunna: they shaved their beards, traveled around half naked, wore earrings, smoked weed and did not perform the obligatory salaah.⁴⁴⁴ Bursevi's criticisms with regard to the wide-spread practice of barbers' shaving beards and people walking around half-naked could have implications for the socially transgressive behaviors of *'ıřık*. However it is also probable that Bursevi did not associate these practices with a particular group but operated within a discourse of piety based on Sufi ethics.⁴⁴⁵

Bursevi's use of the term was generic and indiscriminate among different groups of dervishes: He argued that this group of *'ıřık* did not only have an influence on statesmen but they also sneaked in Sufi lodges to spread their teachings.⁴⁴⁶ They had caused disorder in the workings of the state and the universe, leading to the depredation of the foundations of the world and the religion. Through an almost apocalyptic vision, Bursevi portrayed a scene of social, moral and political decay in which the blame lied on the people of *'ıřık* for abolishing piety (*takva*) and bringing about ominous signs such as the hooting of owls on every roof.⁴⁴⁷ His focus seemed

⁴⁴³ Helga Anetshofer, "Meřairü'ş-Şu'ara'da Toplum-Tanımaz Sapkın Dervişler," in *Ařık Çelebi ve řairler Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar*, ed. Hatice Aynur and Aslı Niyazioęlu (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), p. 89.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

⁴⁴⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," pp. 139-140 /Fol.11b.

⁴⁴⁶ "Ve ol iki řahsın biri dahi ehl-i ilhaddır ki 'ıřık ta 'bir olunurlar. Ve bunların bu a 'sarda kesretleri vardır." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 361 /Fol. 68a.

⁴⁴⁷ "Ve bu ıřıklar ile ahval-i devlet muhtell ve umur-i alem müşevveř olup erkan-ı dünya ve din yıkılmaya yüz tuttu ve esas ve bina-ı takva münhedim olup harab-abad ve dünyanın her sakfında bir türlü baykuř öttü. Ve zahir ve batın işi tamam olup bitti." *Ibid.*

to be more on the socially unacceptable behaviors portrayed by this group than on the particulars of their religious beliefs and practices. It is probable that when he used the term *'ıřık*, Bursevi did not necessarily refer to a particular dervish group or members of a specific Sufi order but to all those individuals who ignored social order and went into extremes in social and religious behavior. In a similar manner, Hüdaiyi was complaining in the late sixteenth century about the rising influence of *'ıřık* dervishes in the Balkan provinces and warning Murad III to take solid actions against them in his letters. However, his warnings implied an actual historical threat to be taken care of unlike those of Bursevi who seems to have used the term not as a signifier of historical realities but more as a literary device to indicate epitomes of religious and social extremism.⁴⁴⁸

As for the Bayrami-Melamis, Bursevi legitimized the persecution of Hamza-i Bayrami and Ođlan řeyhi on account of their disregard for the sharia and transgressive deviant (*melahide*) activities.⁴⁴⁹ These two figures belonged to the controversial Bayrami-Melamis whose genealogy reached back to Hacı Bayram Veli through Ömer Dede in the fifteenth century. Ođlan řeyhi İsmail Mařuki was one of the most influential sixteenth-century representatives of this group (a preacher at some of the imperial mosques in the capital city) and was persecuted with his twelve disciples after a trial (directed by the grand mufti Ibn Kemal) on account of his denial of the fundamental elements of Sunni Islam. In the court record of this

⁴⁴⁸ In Hüdaiyi's letters the *ıřık* emerges as another group of heretics (*melahide ve zanadık*) following the footsteps of Ibn Simavi in the Balkans. After defining the components of the heretics, Hüdaiyi gears toward immediate resolutions to sunnitize these elements such as the appointment of a Sunni imam to every village who will provide religious education to men, women and children and the destruction of the leaders of these non-sunni groups. Hüdaiyi, "Mektuplar," p. 59/ Fol. 52a.

⁴⁴⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 209/ Fol.8b.

trial, he was represented as having denied inter alia the distinction between good and sinful, the obligatory salaah, the apocalypse, the hell and claimed the possibility of *hulül* (penetration of God into a person's body).⁴⁵⁰ It was not necessarily his beliefs but his outward expression of them in the public and gaining a considerable following that turned him into a threat for social order. Hamza Bali was another representative of the Bayrami-Melamis who carried the movement to Bosnia and was persecuted in 1561 by the fetva issued by Ebussuud on account of being a follower of İsmail Maşuki.⁴⁵¹ Despite the manifest relationship between the Celveti and Bayrami orders by way of Üftade and Hüdayi's protection of Sarı Abdullah in the seventeenth century, it is difficult at this moment to speak of an overarching positive Celveti stance vis-à-vis the Bayrami-Melamis. In *Tuhfe-i Aliyye*, Bursevi disassociated himself from these "suspicious" figures and legitimized their persecution. In his other *tuhfes* he was even more silent about them; despite his detailed discussions regarding poles and saints, he never mentioned the famous Bayrami-Melami poles. The reason for this silence could be that in the early eighteenth century, Celvetis had already stabilized their positions as the defenders of a sharia-abiding Sunna minded Sufism which was well articulated into the religious and educational culture of the ulema.

⁴⁵⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak "XVI.-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Bayrami (Hamzavi) Melamileri ve Osmanlı Yönetimi," in *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar idem.* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2011) pp. 157-158; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devrinde Osmanlı Resmi Düşüncesine Karşı Bir Tepki Hareketi: Oğlan Şeyh İsmail-i Maşuki," in *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar, idem.* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2011), pp. 59-68.

⁴⁵¹ Ocak, "XVI.-XVII. Yüzyıllarda Bayrami," pp. 161-162; Ali Erken, "A Historical Analysis of Melami-Bayrami Hagiographies" (M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2009), p.18, pp. 77-80, pp. 121-122.

Social Critique: Impiety and Commingling

The eighteenth century Ottoman Empire which is popularly remembered in modern historiography as the Age of Tulips (*Lale Devri*) was one in which mass consumption, pleasure activities and social influx had gained impetus due to the changes in the stratification of the society, organization of the public sphere and the accumulation of wealth by new social groups such as middle class urban men and women, artisans, craftsmen and soldiers).⁴⁵² Particularly imported manufactured objects of which the most famous were the tulips, were circulating among a wider range of people, wavering the existent social and economical organization of the society.⁴⁵³ These people who were articulated to the Ottoman elites had new aspirations, consumption habits and cultural practices which were transformed into signs of social and economic distinction through public displays of pomp and power.⁴⁵⁴ The expansion of the “political nation” throughout the seventeenth century and the increasing monetization of the Ottoman economy had started to reflect itself in the organization of the public sphere and the aesthetic expectations of the Ottoman elites in the eighteenth.⁴⁵⁵ Shirine Hamadeh describes the process as such:

⁴⁵² For the diffusion of patronage ties in the eighteenth century see: Hamadeh, “Splash and Spectacle,” pp. 123-148; Linda T. Darling, “Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 4 (Spring 2008), p. 531.

⁴⁵³ Salzmann, “The Age of Tulips,” p. 88.

⁴⁵⁴ Hamadeh, “Ottoman Expressions of Early,” p. 34.

⁴⁵⁵ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 1-45.

To a certain extent, this aesthetic and cultural opening was occasioned by a wider exposure to foreign ideas and material culture. But the greater receptiveness to innovation grew primarily out of a long process of transformation in the Ottoman social order that had begun to crystallize in the architectural and cultural landscape of Istanbul in the eighteenth century.⁴⁵⁶

Particularly with the closing of the Ottoman frontier in Europe with the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) and Treaty of Istanbul (1703) after several terribly unsuccessful attempts to siege Vienna, one can speak of the early eighteenth century as a relatively stable era of peace in which the court, statesmen and the newly arising middle class elites were engaged in a competition to manifest their power in the urban texture of the capital city.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, one has to keep in mind that the context in which Bursevi composed his *tuhfes* (considering that he composed most of them during his stay in Üsküdar) was shaped by increasing public visibility, commingling, pomposity and a topsy-turvy social order. The literary and conceptual tools he needed to formulate a critique of this society were already well elaborated in the seventeenth century works of scholars from various backgrounds.

As a Sufi sheikh Bursevi directed his discourse of piety towards the transformations of the society when he claimed that the empire had resembled the countries of the infidels (*ehl-i harb*), filled with sinful objects.⁴⁵⁸ He probably regarded people's excessive tendency to consume, acquire European commodities

⁴⁵⁶ Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early," p. 45.

⁴⁵⁷ Rifaat Abou-el-Haj, "The Formal Closure of the Ottoman Frontier in Europe: 1699-1703," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 89, no. 3 (July-September, 1969), pp. 467-475.

⁴⁵⁸ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p.163 /Fol.23b.

and engage in pleasure activities as a sign of decline in morality and emulating the life-styles of the Europeans.⁴⁵⁹ Members of the ulema too were represented by Bursevi as taking part in these new consumption practices which emphasized social visibility and distinction by eating too much from everything without a disregard for sinful and dressing in gallant costumes. He thus invited people to lead a pious life of abstinence away from engagement in these activities of conspicuous consumption.⁴⁶⁰ Obviously there is also the possibility that Bursevi's comments were informed more by a generic discourse of Sufi piety as a literary convention instead of a specific response to the historical realities of the period.

Particularly with the expansion of recreational spheres such as the square fountains, public gardens and coffeehouses in which people could gather together, one can speak of an increasing socialization among people of varying backgrounds including women who have led their lives mostly in seclusion up until then.⁴⁶¹ In Bursevi's criticisms, one comes across an underlying discourse of contamination in the stories he manipulated as illustrative examples of his views. It is true that most of these stories had a mythical and universally applicable nature particularly within Sufi wisdom; however the way in which Bursevi related them alongside his fervent criticisms of the society may help us understand the context in which these stories

⁴⁵⁹ Leslie Peirce, "The Material World: Ideologies and Ordinary Things," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Dan Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 225.

⁴⁶⁰ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye," p.163 /Fol.23a-23b.

⁴⁶¹ Shirine Hamadeh, "Public Spaces and the Garden Culture of Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Dan Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 277-278, p. 283-285.

were made relevant by Bursevi. One particular story he mentioned reflected his view on the dangers of mingling with others. Bursevi recounted the story of some women in Baghdad during the Abbasid period who used to spin yarn at nights on the roof of their houses. They would stop spinning when the caliph's torches passed from the street because they suspected that the yarn they spun under the light of those torches would contaminate the yarn they spun under the moonlight. Praising their extreme caution in being "clean" as to not mixing even the suspected light of the torch with moonlight while spinning yarn, Bursevi suggested that "if these women had seen today's men and maybe the sheikhs and the ascetics of today, they would say: 'they are animals, they will not be rewarded in the afterlife'".⁴⁶² A similar story about Ebu Yezid Bistami was related to illustrate the precaution of pious people against contamination and mingling: Bistami had made his baby son vomit when he saw a female neighbor instead of his wife breastfeeding him.⁴⁶³ It is interesting that here Bursevi referred to the widespread practice of wetnursing among Ottoman elites. These stories, other than their universally exemplary nature for acts of piety, may have been indications of Bursevi's reserved and conservative stance towards social and cultural influx which arose from increasing social mobility and socialization. There was a certain attitude in these stories which praised remaining within ones' boundaries to stay away from suspicious people and activities. Thus, to transmit his message of the necessity of finding balance in all aspects of life Bursevi relied on a

⁴⁶² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i İsmailiyye." "*Eger ol makule hatunlar, bu zamanın erlerini ve belki şeyhlerini ve zahidlerini görelerdi, 'bunlar hayvanlardır, bunlara ahiretten nasip yoktur' derlerdi.*" *Ibid.*, p.162 /Fol.23a.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162/ Fol. 23a.

reservoir of dreams, ancient stories, myths and imagery which invoked in the mind of the reader a discourse of piety and moderation.

Stepping out of the safety limits of the sharia (*had-i şer*)⁴⁶⁴ both in intellectual, spatial and social terms and mingling with the “others” implied danger: “Many people have fallen off the cliff because of wrong acquaintances and have deviated from the path of *ehl-i sünnet*.”⁴⁶⁵ Telling the story of a disciple of Ebu Yezid Bistami who fell from grace and supposedly engaged in actions that were not convenient for a dervish (what kind of actions the reader was not informed) Bursevi claimed that this dervish suffered for crossing the lines of the sharia by being both physically and spiritually inflicted.⁴⁶⁶ In *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*, referring to the same story, he suggested that the common people have failed to recognize such deviant individuals because they did not have the “scale of sharia in their hands”.⁴⁶⁷ Being subject to the commands of the sharia once again established the limits of acceptable behaviors and beliefs not only on behalf of the people but also on behalf of the Sufis. For Bursevi, sharia did not only imply abidance by the precepts of the Quran but also by the words and acts of the sheikhs and saints who had attained divine knowledge: “All of the words and actions of those who have reached this station (meaning the highest level of gnosis) are considered sharia and divine law and whoever acts in

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 154 /Fol.19a.

⁴⁶⁵ “Nitekim niceler su-i karine ile vartaya düşmüşler ve ehl-i sünnet mezhebinden çıkmışlardır.” *Ibid.*, p.146 /Fol. 15a.

⁴⁶⁶ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” pp.224-225 /Fol.9a.

⁴⁶⁷ “Zira ellerinde mizan-ı şeriat yoktur.” *Ibid.*, p.306 /Fol.43a.

abundance to them finds the true path.”⁴⁶⁸ The estrangement of spiritual authority exemplified by the saintly Sufi sheikh from political authority, of which the ultimate symbol was the sultan, implied the collapse of the foundational pillars which held the Ottoman state and society in order and intact. This process of estrangement had surfaced with the influence of actors (defined in the imagery of the *ehl-i inkar* and *ehl-i ilhad*) who misguided rulers through their misinterpretation of religion. According to Bursevi, misinterpretation implied an unbalanced, immoderate reading of religious doctrines and practices which meant either a denial of the mystical elements of the Sufis or the denial of the temporal provisions designated by the sharia. They constituted the two opposites poles that through a tug of war constantly altered religious equilibrium which he believed was the essential aspect for the maintenance of political and social order. Therefore, Bursevi’s thinking was very much in line with many of his contemporaries from different backgrounds who made an almost exclusive claim to the indispensability of establishing order through a balanced proposition.

⁴⁶⁸ “*Ve bu mertebeye vusulu bulunanların akval ve ef’ali bi’l-cümle şariat ve kanun-i ilahidir ki her kim kabul edip amel ederse hidayet-i hasa bulur. Onun için sünen-i meşayih ve ezkar-ı evliyaya rağbet ederler.*” *Ibid.*, p.237 /Fol.15a.

CHAPTER VI
SUFİ SHEİKH AND POLİTICAL AUTHORITY

The arguments provided in this chapter follow two lines of discussion. Firstly I examine how Bursevi constructed the Sufi sheikh as a saint and the inheritor of the prophet to legitimize his spiritual authority and to claim the indispensability of paying allegiance to him for political authority figures. Secondly I describe how Bursevi relied on an existing repertoire of narratives and motives to reflect on the way in which he perceived a semi-mythical historical decline in the relationship between Sufi-state relations in the Ottoman context. Narrating examples of the mystical beginnings of the Ottoman state, he commented on the constitutive nature of spiritual authority in the foundation of the empire. The sultan's power and legitimacy to rule came from his proximity to this particular form of spiritual authority which did not imply the institutionalized ulema but the saintly Sufi sheikh who was perceived as the perfect human being, the epitome of balance.

İsmail Hakkı Bursevi defined the real binding authority behind the sultan as the Pole and the *ricalullah* (men of God, saints) under his authority since he considered the Pole superior (*a'zam*) to the sultan.⁴⁶⁹ The actions and decisions of the rulers were dependent on the saints since the latter constituted the truth, the real meaning of existence (*hakikat-i vücud*): “*Kutbü'l-aktab* and other *ricalullah* are the manifestations of the esoteric name and they are concealed under woolen cloth. The

⁴⁶⁹ Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, p. 67.

dominion of the sultan is dependent on their dominion.”⁴⁷⁰ One should keep in mind that despite his comments on the necessity of the manifestation of the Pole (as discussed in the previous chapter), Bursevi still conceptualized both the saints and the Pole as hidden. This concealment did not necessarily imply asceticism or a total shunning of social life as Bursevi himself was a man very much active in social life. It seems to have indicated rather abstinence from direct involvement in political affairs and occupying state offices. The phrase under woolen cloth (*tahte'l aba*) openly distinguishes the Sufi sheikh as the man of God who influences the affairs of the world but only in an indirect manner. It is because of this concealment that the knowledge of the binding spiritual authority remained a secret for a select few to acknowledge. The role of the Sufi sheikh is emphasized at this point. Bursevi made it clear that particularly the sultans were unaware of this secret unless they were informed by a competent sheikh or were the caliphs of God themselves. However, it was very rare that a sultan merged the qualities of worldly and spiritual authority in his hands:

Nevertheless externally, the sultans do not know of this secret. For knowing occurs either via illumination which is then subject to conversation or by himself being one of the caliphs, for the caliph is shadowed. Nevertheless, [the number of] caliphs among those who are appointed as vicegerents for the seizure and dominion of the universe are less than the least.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰ “*Kutbü'l-aktab ve sair ricalullah batın ismine mazharlardır ki tahte'l-aba muhtefi olmuşlardır. Eeđerçi tasarruf-ı sultan anların tasarruflarına menuttur.*” Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,*” p. 379 /Fol.75b-76a.

⁴⁷¹ “*Velakin zahirde selatin bu sırrı bilmezler. Zira bilmek ya ta'rif ile olur ki sohbe mevkuttur veyahud kendi hulefadan olmakla olur. Zira halife mazludur. Velakin zabt ve tasarruf-i âlem için müvekkil olanlardan hulefa ekall-i kalildir.*” *Ibid.*, p. 379 /Fol.76a.

Bursevi blamed the sultans of his time for the disorder and destruction that befell on the people over which they ruled. Because the sultans were not recognizing the spiritual authority of the saints (most importantly of the Pole), acting according to God's will and subjecting their world to religion, they and their people were left without divine assistance. "In the times of the just rulers, *kutbs* and men of importance would travel from surrounding countries to the empire and seek protection under the shadow of the sultan."⁴⁷² The well-being of the people for Bursevi (just as for many of the *nasihatname* authors in the past two centuries) depended on the morality and religiosity of the rulers and their willingness to implement the divine law in the governance of the empire. Hence the remedy was the revival of the religiosity of the sultan and the statesmen as the representations of political authority which would bring about the favor of God and his friends back into the realms of the Ottoman Empire. "And in this epoch, the sultans do not have sheikhs, the ones they have are like preceptors (*hoca*). However, just as there is no body without a soul, there can be no sultan without a sheikh."⁴⁷³ Bayezid Bistami's much referred aphorism "Satan is the sheikh of those who do not have a sheikh" was another example Bursevi relied on to imply the significance of submission to a Sufi sheikh.⁴⁷⁴ Indeed particularly during the reign of Murad IV, the Kadızadeli preacher Üstüvani had found his way into the palace not only as the mentor of the sultan but

⁴⁷² "Müluk-i adile zamanlarında ise aktab ve rical etraf-i biladdan şedd-i rihl ederler. Ve istizlal için saye-i sultana giderlerdi." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p.299 /Fol. 40a.

⁴⁷³ "Ve bu a'sarda şeyhu's-sultan yoktur, olan dahi hoca namınadır. Velakin bi-ruh beden olmadıği gibi bi-la-şeyh dahi sultan olmaz." *Ibid.*," p. 419 /Fol.92b.

⁴⁷⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 136/ Fol. 45b.

also as the court preacher, a position established just for him.⁴⁷⁵ In terms of influence in the palace circle, Üstüvani was followed by another Kadızadeli preacher, Vani Mehmed as the favorite of the grand vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed who presided over the state between the years 1661 and 1676. Although Bursevi's master Osman Fazlı had also established relations with Mehmed IV and the Köprülü viziers during this period, the rising influence of actors such as the Kadızadeli and the palace staff (particularly the chief eunuch) in the political sphere seems to have resulted in a division of power. Thus it was not possible for a particular Sufi sheikh to establish a monopoly in associating with the authority figures due to the politics of balance pursued by the sultan and high-ranking statesmen who tried to consolidate power between different groups. An exceptional figure is Feyzullah who rose from mentorship of Mustafa II to the position of the grand mufti in the late seventeenth early eighteenth century. Feyzullah with his extensive influence in state affairs and ulema appointments indeed enjoyed a great deal of influence in the political arena until his persecution at the hands of the people in the 1703 uprising.⁴⁷⁶ Grand mufti's preference for the rising Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi sheikhs may have been another factor in the changing patterns of association for the Celveti sheikhs like Bursevi who in the early eighteenth century interacted more with the grand viziers and people from the palace staff rather than the sultan and the grand mufti.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁵ Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, p. 141.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 215-220.

⁴⁷⁷ Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidilik*.

Obviously none of these figures who held the upper hand in associating with the sultan during the lifetime of Busevi were Sufi sheikhs, a fact that Bursevi frequently resented in his texts. It was not sufficient for a sultan to receive guidance in any form from any one. The ideal form of guidance was the spiritual training of the ruler which could be undertaken only through the supervision of the Sufi sheikh. The master-disciple relationship between the Sufi sheikh and the ruler would not only help the improvement of the ruler's piety and morality but also strengthen him in the decision-making processes so that the influence of other groups such as the *ehl-i inkar* and *ehl-i ilhad* on the sultan would be dismantled. In many aspects, Bursevi's approach to the Ottoman political system reflected an absolutist ideal since the main locus of discussion remained to be the sultan (who was regarded as the maintainer of order) and the bad influence of other groups (who were the reasons of disorder) on the sultan.

The role of the Sufi sheikh in the establishment of worldly order was hence defined as to provide spiritual training to rulers and statesmen. However since this master-disciple relationship rarely took place it was still important to provide at least counsels. The significance of counseling rulers was a considerably old theme reflected in the Islamic political wisdom literature that aimed to present examples of an ideal form of political authority through sagely stories and archetypical examples as early as the eighth century.⁴⁷⁸ In the Ottoman context the same notion was being highlighted by Ottoman *nasihatname* authors since the sixteenth century.⁴⁷⁹ For

⁴⁷⁸ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, p. 89.

⁴⁷⁹ Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Batılılaşıma," pp. 25-26.

Bursevi, consultation (*müşavere/meşveret*) had two aspects: In the first one, the rulers were expected to consult with religious authorities to decide on the legitimacy of their actions in terms of religion. Obviously this was already the responsibility of the jurists, most importantly the grand mufti. However, throughout his texts Bursevi constantly criticized the jurists for their denial of Sufi knowledge and their worldly concerns. Rather it was himself as a Sufi sheikh who, by virtue of his position as the balanced merger of the knowledge of sharia and Sufi wisdom, emerged as an authoritative voice in the provision of both legal and spiritual guidance to political authority figures. The second aspect of consultation was to decide on whom to appoint as state officials. Religious authorities, having insufficient knowledge in temporal affairs (*umur-i örfiyye*) could only point to competent people to be consulted on these issues. And if both the religious and administrative authorities were unable to settle a problem, then it would be best to consult a Sufi sheikh who could provide a solution through inspiration and unveiling as Bursevi claimed to be the case for Ahmed I and Hüdayi.⁴⁸⁰

Bursevi also found it incumbent on those who were invited by the rulers to give advice to respond to their invitation; otherwise they would be transgressing the limits established by the *ehl-i sünnet* and become *ehl-i bidat*. Here Bursevi equated *bidat*, which is mostly used to connote innovations in religion, with disobedience to the leaders of the society. The most important aspect of counseling for him was to speak

⁴⁸⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 385-386/ Fol. 78b.

softly and lucidly to convey one's message to the figures of political authority.⁴⁸¹ So when the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa invited Bursevi to take advice from him in 1710, the Sufi sheikh responded immediately although he was on his way to Mecca for pilgrimage. It was the duty of the sultan and his vicegerents, because of their superior position, to invite religious scholars and ask their opinion, not vice versa.⁴⁸² It is difficult to conceptualize the position of the consultant Sufi sheikhs as a limiting power on the authority of the sultan or any other statesmen though: the counsels they provided did not have a binding character, and any transgression or frank exclamation on behalf of the sheikhs could end up in their exile. Still both in literature and practice receiving advice from spiritual leaders were one of the established Ottoman political traditions if not the necessary constituents of being a ruler.

Inheritors of the Prophet: Submission to the Sufi Sheikh as the Saint

Just as the people recognized the sultan of their time and obeyed him, it was extremely important that the capable ones (*erbab-i istidad*) submitted to one of the poles of their period or they would become men of innovation (*ehl-i bid'at*) and would be deprived from divine assistance forever.⁴⁸³ Here, Bursevi was referring to the *aktab-ı irşad*, those saints who had the authorization to guide people in matters of

⁴⁸¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 203/ Fol. 5a.

⁴⁸² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 383-386/ Fol.78a-78b.

⁴⁸³ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 298-299 /Fol. 39b.

faith since he used the plural form of *kutb*. At the roots of this commentary lay the emphasis on the necessity of submitting to a competent Sufi sheikh who by virtue of his spiritual rank would be considered one of the *kutb-ı irşad* and had the capacity to train the disciple so that he could gain the knowledge of *kutb-ı vücud*.⁴⁸⁴ Therefore obedience to poles were regarded as (or maybe even more) significant as obedience to the sultan who held most of the time only worldly authority in his hands. His power did not extend to the realm of the prophets, saints and religion unless he paid homage to the spiritual authority of the men of God and protected them. But the *kutb-ı irşad* was not only a member of the spiritual government but he was also a publicly available and approachable figure: a merger of two worlds.

The sheikh of a community, by virtue of his divine knowledge and intellect is like a prophet among the ummah. Obedience and submission to him are necessary since he is one of the leaders.⁴⁸⁵

Bursevi's definition of *ulü'l-emr* (leaders of a society) included prophets, sheikhs as their inheritors and the temporal rulers to whom complete obedience was seen obligatory since rebellion against them was equated with obedience to God.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁴ Ibn 'Arabi claimed that he intentionally withheld the information regarding the Poles until the Day of Judgment for the sake of the people. If the information was available and they denied it out of ignorance, their punishment would be worse. *Ibid.*, p. 380 /Fol.76b.

⁴⁸⁵ "Bir kavmin şeyhi ilm u aklına nazarla meyan-ı ümmette nebi gibidir. İtaati lazım ve mütabaati vacibdir. Zira ulü'l-emrdir." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 136 /Fol.45b.

⁴⁸⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p.127 /Fol.40b; p.136 /Fol.45b; on the requirement of obedience to *ulü'l-emr*, see Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.220 /Fol.15a, p.226 /Fol.18b. Bursevi defined the necessity of submitting to a sheikh boldly by claiming that it was not possible to find one's way without a competent guide who could train the disciple in constant fight with the ego (*mücahedat*) and abstinence (*riyazat*). He also suggested that the rules of the sharia were for the commoners while allegiance to a sheikh was the lot of a select few (*havass*) pointing to a position of social distinction among those who belonged to a Sufi order and engaged in Sufi training. It was also extremely important that one's sheikh was not lost in divine ecstasy (a *meczub*) but someone who strictly followed the rules of the sharia (*edeb-i şeri*). Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 128/ Fol. 41a, pp. 131-132 /Fol.42b-43b.

It is not valid to attribute the position of *ulü'l-emr* [only] to temporal rulers because rulers are considered *ulü'l-emr* in the exoteric sense, their orders are sometimes congruent with the sharia and sometimes against it. God's religious scholars are *ulü'l-emr* in the esoteric sense and their orders are always in congruence with the sharia.⁴⁸⁷

This is a rather important statement on behalf of Bursevi since he represented the Sufi sheikhs (*ulema billah*) as the crystallization of cosmic order and the perfect manifestations of divine law with their actions and deeds. Just like the prophets, they were sheltered from misdeeds.⁴⁸⁸ This stout belief in the purity of the Sufi sheikh (not just any Sufi sheikh though, the competent one who merged the sharia with the divine truth) resembled the claims voiced by early Muslim scholars such as Mawardi and Gazzali regarding the primacy and the “clerical purity” of the ulema who claimed themselves to be the inheritors of the prophet Muhammad.⁴⁸⁹ Since the service of the prophet was limited to his life time, after his death his duties were passed on to the sultan and to the Sufi sheikhs: thus submission to the Sufi sheikh who assumed the function of the prophet was the only way to reach God and as much important as submitting to the sultan.⁴⁹⁰ Furthermore those who denied the authority of the sheikh were put in a position of denying not only the prophet but also the

⁴⁸⁷ “Zira, burada ulü'l-emri müluke tahsis etmek sahih değildir. Şol vechden ki müluk zahirde ulü'l-emrdir ki, emirleri gah şer'e muvafik ve gah muhalif gelir. Ulema-i billah ise batında ulü'l-emrdir ki, emirleri daima şer'e muvafikdir.” Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I, p. 317. Similarly Sarı Abdullah's definition of *ulü'l-emr* in *Tedbirü'n-Neş'eteyn* contained God, the prophet, the sultan along with the poles and the saints as spiritual caliphs. Sarı Abdullah Efendi, “Tedbirü'n Neş'eteyn fi Islahı'n Nüshateyn,” pp. 51-52 /Fol.15a.

⁴⁸⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 127 /Fol.40b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye,” p. 82/ Fol. 258b, p. 112/ Fol. 296b-297a.

⁴⁸⁹ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, pp. 103-106.

⁴⁹⁰ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye,” p. 84; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 214/ Fol. 11b; Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 72/ Fol. 247b.

Qur'an and God: "Namely, submitting to the prophet and to the successor of the prophet indicates submitting to God, and two hands are the same. Therefore it is one of the conditions of self-control not to disobey the sheikh, since it indicates disobedience to God and it is disrespect for religion."⁴⁹¹ To further justify his arguments and avoid the pitfall of equating sainthood with prophethood, Bursevi defined the prophet as the father and the saint as the mother both of whom were authorized in directing their children whereas the authority of the latter was limited. By feminizing sainthood vis-à-vis prophethood he also managed to distinguish the superiority of the latter.⁴⁹²

The Sufi sheikh as the saint thus acquired his legitimacy in associating with the sultan and the society at large from an association with the Prophet: "Conversation with the sheikh is equal to conversation with the prophet."⁴⁹³ The focus on the prophet was one of the aspects of neo-sufism arguments that regarded the increasing emphasis of eighteenth and nineteenth century Sufis (operating mostly in the Middle East and North Africa) on Sunna and following the path of the Prophet as a novel development indicating the changing direction of Sufi movements. Indeed many of the neo-sufism arguments claim a transformation in Sufi thought and politics mostly after the late eighteenth century disregarding that these transformations had their

⁴⁹¹ "*Yani Rasul'e ve varis-i Rasule mübaya'a demek heman Hakk'a mübaya'adır ve iki el birdir. Anunçün iradetin şurutundandır ki şeyhe i'tiraz eylemeye zira Hakk'a itirazdır ve Hakk'a i'tiraz küfrdür.*" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p.334 /Fol. 56a, p. 392 /Fol. 81b.

⁴⁹² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 124/ Fol. 38b.

⁴⁹³ "Sohbet-i şeyh sohbet-i peygamberdir." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 164/ Fol. 60a; "In this world, looking at the face of the perfect man is like looking at the faces of the prophets." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 93/ Fol. 272a.

bases in the previous centuries and in the local dynamics of the contexts within which Sufis lived. The neo-sufi thesis assumes that this changing direction implied a sharia-based reformist agenda on behalf of the institutionalized Sufi sheikhs. However Bursevi's extensive focus on the prophet and the saintly Sufi sheikh as his inheritor had its roots in the formulations of Ibn 'Arabi and can very well be associated with the Ottoman Sunnitization process reaching back over at least two centuries. Particularly in the seventeenth century Sunna-minded Sufi sheikhs like the Celvetis were already sharing a public discourse of piety and a focus on the Prophet with the Kadızadeli preachers operating in the Ottoman context.

The position of the sheikh as the inheritor of the prophet was emphasized by Bursevi particularly in *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* and needs further elaboration to understand how he viewed the position of the Sufi sheikh conceptualized as a saint (be it the pole or not) vis-à-vis political authority.⁴⁹⁴ In Bursevi's texts, saints played a revered and superior role which had to be recognized even by the rulers and statesmen.⁴⁹⁵ Saints, because they were regarded as the inheritors of the prophets had to be treated as prophets were.⁴⁹⁶ Indeed Bursevi referred to the famous Levlake hadith "I would not create the worlds if it was not for you" and suggested that the saints as the prophet's inheritors were also included in the definition, hence conceptualizing the saints as one of the reasons for the creation of the world.⁴⁹⁷ Following Ibn 'Arabi,

⁴⁹⁴ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 30, pp. 50-52.

⁴⁹⁵ "Her padişaha bir ehl-i hal şeyh gerekdir." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye," P. 83/ Fol. 259b.

⁴⁹⁶ "Verese-i enbiya ise enbiya hükmündedir." Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," pp. 257-258 /Fol.23b; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p. 214 /Fol.11b.

⁴⁹⁷ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye," p. 119/ Fol. 35b.

Bursevi also claimed that in his age there was no need left for prophethood (*nübüvvet*) and messengership (*risalet*) since the true ulema (*ulema-i muhakkikin*) were the actual deputies (*vekil*) of the prophets:

Then, succession at the level of sainthood is sufficient so that there is no need for the claim to prophethood and de facto messengership, and with this the perfection of the capacities of the ummah of the deceased [Prophet Muhammed] has become manifest since their most perfect ones substituted the prophet.⁴⁹⁸

According to Bursevi, Prophet Muhammad's aspect of prophethood was being represented by the rules of the sharia while his sainthood/spiritual aspect, also defined as the esoteric aspect of the Qur'an (*bevatın-ı Kuran*), had passed on to the sayyids of poles (*sadat-ı aktab*).⁴⁹⁹ Thus, a saint did not necessarily inherit his prophethood in the legalistic sense of bringing a new set of divine laws to the temporal world but his sainthood, meaning the esoteric contents of his laws. Particularly the coming of Muhammed as the seal of prophets had invalidated any possible successors to his salvatory position. However following Ibn 'Arabi, Bursevi suggested that the saints, by virtue of their being conceived as the actual inheritors of the prophets, could still interpret divine law.⁵⁰⁰ The Pole was thus responsible for the maintenance and true interpretation of the rules established by the seal of the prophets. Bursevi's repetitive avowal of the necessity of considering saints' words and deeds as constituting divine law is an indicator both of the

⁴⁹⁸ "*Pes velayet mertebesinde vekalet kafi olıcak da'va-yı nübüvvet ve bi'l-fi'il risalete hacet kalmadı ve bundan ümmet-i merhumenin kemal-i isti'dadı zahir oldu ki ekamil olanları Cenab-ı Nübüvvet yerin tutdı.*" Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Ömeriyye," p. 80; Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. II, p. 159.

⁴⁹⁹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye" p. 119 /Fol.35b, p. 143/ Fol. 48b.

⁵⁰⁰ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 51.

transparent position of the saint as a channel which transmits the orders of God and as the inheritor and protector of the prophet's legacy:

Nevertheless, common people not comprehending this meaning, get involved with ego comparison and suppose that the state of the notables are like theirs. This supposition is corrupt and this belief is ill-willed. And the words and acts of those who have attained this level correspond entirely to sharia and divine law so that anyone who accepts them and perform deeds accordingly finds exclusive salvation. This is the reason why they esteem the Sunna of the sheikhs and the dhikrs of the saints.⁵⁰¹

The sultan on the other hand was a fallible man, and it was not necessarily his character or person but his power to rule and hence to establish order on earth which was sacred.⁵⁰² This power had to be channeled in the right direction under the guidance of the truly pious religious scholars (whom Bursevi considered Sufi sheikhs) as the caliphs of the prophet. Through a comparison of the prophet to the sultan Bursevi said that the majesty of the prophet was derived from his piety while the sultan needed rituals and regiments to display his power: another example illustrating the legitimizing aspect of associating with the prophet and being pious for the authority of the Sufi sheikh.⁵⁰³ Just like people paid allegiance to the sultan, the sultan was expected to submit to a sheikh because unlike the prophets and the sheikhs, sultans were not protected (*mahfuz*) from sin and did not always act with justice.

⁵⁰¹ “*Velakin avam-ı nas bu ma'nayı idrak edemeyip kıyas-ı nefis ederler. Ve ahval-i havassı kendi halleri gibi zann ederler. Bu zann ise fasid ve bu i'tikad kasıddır. Ve bu mertebeye vusulu bulunanların akval ve e'ali bi'l-cümle şeriat ve kanun-i ilahidir ki her kim kabul edip amel ederse hidayet-i hasa bulur. Onun için sünen-i meşayih ve ezkar-ı evliyaya rağbet ederler.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p.237 /Fol.114b-5a.

⁵⁰² The late sixteenth century bureaucrat Mustafa Ali also commented about the fallibility of the sultan which led to an inadequate government and the influence of other groups in the governance of the empire. Fodor, “State and Society, Crisis and Reform,” p. 30.

⁵⁰³ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Aliyye,” p. 203/ Fol. 5a.

Maybe if they are just, then they can be like the prophets and the sheikhs and otherwise the conditions of their subjects and them will be forlorn. This is why they have said that those rulers who are in proximity to sheikhs and associated with them are victorious and otherwise they are despicable.⁵⁰⁴

Thus, justice was not a quality inherent to the sultan; it had to be uncloaked with the help of the sheikh. He further argued that by virtue of the role played by the saints in the establishment of the foundations of the state (*vaz'ı- saltanat*), it was necessary to preserve their prayers (*nefes*).⁵⁰⁵ They were the columns which held the state and the social order intact by virtue of the support they provided to those who held political authority in their hands. “In the beginnings of sultanate, the order of the Ottoman domains was materialized by the supervision of the saints.”⁵⁰⁶ This was the reason why sultans could not be *münkirs* (meaning deniers of saints and Sufism) although other statesmen and the ulema could. Indeed Bursevi associated the economic, social and political issues of the empire with these figures who had a bad influence on the sultan: Their inauspiciousness (*şeamet*) was contagious (*bulaşıcı*).⁵⁰⁷

Bursevi’s ideas regarding the influence of saints in the operation of Ottoman state institutions were mostly influenced by Ibn ‘Arabi’s conceptualization of

⁵⁰⁴ “Müluk ise böyle değildir, belki adil olurlarsa rusul ve şuyuh gibi olurlar ve illa kendilerinin ve etba’larının ahvali perişan olur. Bu yüzden demişlerdir ki şuyuha muttasıl ve lahık olan müluk mansurlardır ve illa mahzullerdir. Yani onlara dahi lazımdır ki, reaya kendilerine mübayaa ettikleri gibi kendileri dahi verese-i enbiya olan şuyuhdan birine mübayaa etmek lazımdır.”Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 127-128 /Fol.40b.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid*; “Vaz’-ı saltanat nefes-i evliya üzerinedir.” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” p. 55/ Fol. 229a.

⁵⁰⁶ “Evail-i saltanatta Nizam-ı müluk-ı Osmaniyye evliyanın nazarıyla olmuştur.” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II,” p. 177/ Fol. 198b.

⁵⁰⁷ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” Fol. 228b-229a.

sainthood and mystical authority.⁵⁰⁸ Pursuing Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical theory of rulership, Bursevi claimed that nothing on earth happened without the permission of the Pole; thus temporal authority of the rulers were subject to the spiritual authority of the saints. This argument was further justified by his stout belief in the constitutive nature of saints in the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Bursevi idealized the saint in the figure of a competent Sufi sheikh who had the authority to engage in the spiritual training of others. Therefore, it was necessary for the sultan, his vicegerents, statesmen, the grand mufti and all the other religious scholars to pay allegiance to such a sheikh and enjoin the Sufi path since each Sufi sheikh had a position within the hierarchical organization of saints and could help others to benefit from the blessings of the Pole.⁵⁰⁹ A literal reading of one of his poems in *Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye* is indicative of this approach: “If you want a state, recline upon/ A great lodge, a gate/ If it had not leaned its back on Qa’ba/ No one would bow down to the mihrab.”⁵¹⁰

Historical Consciousness of the Sufi

The way in which Bursevi organized *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* reflects very much how he situated and legitimized the existence not only of the sultan but of the Ottoman state

⁵⁰⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 361 /Fol.68a; For Ibn ‘Arabi’s conceptualization of sainthood, see Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*.

⁵⁰⁹ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” p. 361 /Fol.68a.

⁵¹⁰ It should be kept in mind that Bursevi might have used the terms *devlet* and *asitane* not necessarily to indicate the state and the dervish lodge but as metaphors. “*Devlet istersen arka ver arka/ Bir ulu asitane bir baba/ Ka’beye vermeseydi arkasını/ Kimse baş eğmezdi mihraba.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p. 140 /Fol.47b.

in relation to the prophet, to the pole and the cosmic order of the universe. Starting the text with a commentary on God's unity and the prophethood of Muhammad, Bursevi later on traced Muhammad's genealogy up to the prophets Samuel, Abraham, Noah, Idris, Seth and lastly Adam. Here his focus was on the protected and pure nature of the prophet's posterity which reached back to the first man. What made Prophet Muhammad superior to others and an exemplary figure was his moderation/balance (*i'tidal*) in terms of his life style, a concept frequently used by Bursevi in his *tuhfes* to denote the ideal form of both self and imperial governance.⁵¹¹ What follows the genealogy of the prophet Muhammad is a discussion on the perfect man and the Pole which culminates in a focus on the significance of the saints (who are conceptualized as the inheritors of the Muhammadan truth) for the foundation of the Ottoman state.⁵¹² This way, Bursevi established, at least at the symbolic level, a connection between the prophet Muhammad and the Ottoman state topped by the sultan. The state received its legitimacy from the prophet but through the mediation of the saints who claimed to be his inheritors. What follows is an analysis of Bursevi's historical consciousness regarding the foundation of the Ottoman Empire and the role of the saints in it.

Underlying Bursevi's discourse of decline and social/moral decay was a semi-mythical historical consciousness revolving around a mythical past during which worldly authority was subject to the religious and spiritual authorities: time of the prophet Muhammad, Ibn 'Arabi's period and the early Ottoman era being such

⁵¹¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye II," pp.145-147/ Fol.169b-170b.

⁵¹² Ibid, p.160/ Fol.182a.

examples. He especially emphasized the relationship between the Sufi sheikhs and the state in the first centuries of the empire.⁵¹³ The existence of close ties between the two actors during the founding period of the Ottoman state pointed to the original, constitutive and hence indispensable nature of such ties. Comparing the status of the poles (*aktab*) vis-a-vis the sultans to the relationship between the roots of a tree and its leaves, Bursevi suggested that the fundamental aspects which sustained the Ottoman state were guarded by the saints (*evliya*): “Maintenance of the state depends on the maintenance of the perfect man. With his extinction and decline, the façade of the world is destroyed and the Day of Judgment arrives.”⁵¹⁴

Although Bursevi’s approach was rather hyperbolic and idealizing in nature, the prominence he attributed to Sufis who collaborated with the rulers in the establishment of the Ottoman state did have some basis in the narrative (historiographical and hagiographical) sources regarding Ottoman beginnings. Modern historians have investigated these sources, which emphasized the roles played by the *gazi* dervishes and the abdals of Rum not only in the expansion of the Ottoman territories through their promotion of the *gaza* ethos in the frontiers but also in the colonization and islamization of the Balkan populations.⁵¹⁵ Many of these *gazi* dervishes of eclectic backgrounds collaborated with the state until the fifteenth

⁵¹³ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” pp. 386-388/Fol.79a-79b; pp. 360-361 /Fol.67b-68a.

⁵¹⁴ “*Baka-i devlet, baka-i insan-ı kamile menuttur ki, onun fena ve inkırazıyla suret-i alem dahi harab olup tamme-i kübra kaime olur.*” İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, *Kitabü'n-Netice* vol. I ed. Ali Namlı and İmdat Yavaş (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1997), p. 308.

⁵¹⁵ Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 62-90; Terzioğlu, “Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers,” p. 234; Terzioğlu, “Sufis in the Age of State Building and Confessionalization.”

century centralization efforts of the latter alienated them.⁵¹⁶ Bursevi did not make any reference to the syncretic and combatant nature of these dervishes and their environment though; he rather focused on the advisory nature of prominent figures such as Hacı Bayram Veli and Şeyh Ede Bali. However, his resentments regarding the estrangement of Sufis from the Ottoman state in the early eighteenth century resembled the nostalgic grievances of marginalized *gazi* dervishes that were transmitted in late medieval narratives.⁵¹⁷

Seljukids and the Family of Mevlana

According to Bursevi, since the foundations of the Ottoman Empire, sultans had paid heed to the advices of the sheikhs and saints of their times, consulting them in issues of religion and righteous government, and this provided their rule divine legitimacy. For the pre-Ottoman period, Bursevi provided the example of the Seljukid ruler handing over the government to Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, telling him: “The state is not mine, is yours.”⁵¹⁸ In fact the relationship between Seljukid authorities and the family of Mevlana had started with his father’s arrival in Konya sometime in the 1220’s. In *Menakibü’l-Arifin* (a fourteenth century compilation of Mevlevi hagiographies) Bahaeddin Veled, Mevlana’s father is represented as a powerful and

⁵¹⁶ Terzioğlu, “Sunna-Minded Sufi Preachers,” pp. 138-150.

⁵¹⁷ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds.*; For the centralization policies of Mehmed II see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Fatih, Fetih ve Osmanlı Merkezîyetçiliği,” in *Yeniçağlar Anadolu’su’nda İslam’ın Ayak İzleri: Osmanlı Dönemi* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011) pp. 36-50.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

pious man who at first refused the invitation of the sultan on account of his alcohol addiction and fondness for the harp. It is after these criticisms that the ruler decided to quit his habits just to receive the favor of Bahaeddin Veled. Aflaki narrates that the sultan even kissed the latter's knee.⁵¹⁹ Although *Menakıbü'l-Arifin* provides many examples of Mevlana's association with political authority, in this work, a sentence very similar to the abovementioned one related by Bursevi is attributed to Mevlana's father instead. The Seljukid ruler says to him: "Oh king of religion, I am a bondsman. After today I want to be your *subaşı* and I want Our Master to exercise the office of sultan. Indeed, the outer and the inner sultanate has long since belonged to you."⁵²⁰ The loyalty of Alaaddin Keykubad to Bahaeddin Veled is very much emphasized in this text since a couple of pages later we see the sultan saying: "I wanted the Sultan of the Religious Scholars to sit on the throne with complete independence and for me to be his army commander so that I would undertake his conquests and obtain spiritual gifts."⁵²¹ If Bursevi was acquainted with this work then his strong and frequent emphasis on the wisdom of the Seljukid sultan is understandable since he is reflected in *Menakıbü'l-Arifin* as having surrendered almost all of his authority to the Mevlana family. In fact coupled by his acquaintance with and respect towards Hacı Bektaş Veli, Alaaddin Keykubad (whom Bursevi addressed as Alaaddin Selçuki) stood out as one of the exemplary rulers Bursevi looked up to. He respected Sufis and subjected his government to the rule of religion.

⁵¹⁹ Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manağeb al-'arefin*, ed. John O'Kane (Leide; Boston: Brill, 2002) pp. 21-22.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 23.

⁵²¹ *Ibid*, p. 25.

Hacı Bektaş Veli and Ottoman Beginnings

Bursevi suggested that Hacı Bektaş Veli had not only supervised the establishment of the janissary army but also the foundations of the Ottoman Empire through an encounter with Osman. According to the story he recounted, Osman was on his way to receive some advice from Hacı Bektaş Veli when he had to stay overnight at a house. The room in which he was to sleep contained a copy of the Qur'an: upon acquiring this piece of information, Osman supposedly spent the whole night on his feet out of respect for the holy book. On his way he encountered the saint who coiled up a piece of rag on top of his scepter like a banner and gave it to Osman, wishing God's grace to be upon him.⁵²² The imagery of the scepter of the saint transforming into the banner of the prophet Muhammad pointed out to the coalition of spiritual and political authorities at the inception of the empire. The story served other didactic purposes as well: Osman had attained the right to rulership on account of his respect for the Qur'an and the consent of the saint. Thus the legitimacy for rule was not derived directly from God but through the mediation of the saint who was believed to enact nothing but the will of God. Bursevi suggested that it was necessary for every sultan to submit to a competent sheikh and to ask for advice from saints (even the dead ones) when they were in need. It was not enough that the bond was established by Osman and Hacı Bektaş Veli at inception; this bondage had to be maintained for the perpetuity of the Ottoman state.⁵²³

⁵²² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p.80 /Fol.256b-257a.

⁵²³ *Ibid*, pp. 80-82/ Fol.257a-257b.

It is interesting that Hacı Bektaş Veli was regarded not only as the patron saint of the janissaries but almost the founding figure of an empire by Bursevi and many other Ottoman scholars. Although the exact time of the emergence of these semi-mythical narratives are not known, the hagiographies of saints seem to have been very influential in their diffusion. Since he did not provide any references to the sources of his stories, it is difficult to distinguish the works and narratives which shaped Bursevi's intellectual world. However it seems highly probable that Bursevi was acquainted with the saint's hagiography, *Vilayetname*, of which the earliest surviving copy dates back to seventeenth century. Indeed in *Vilayetname*, there is a section about Hacı Bektaş Veli as the founding saint, but the main figure he associates with is Osman's father, Ertuğrul. Similar to the beginning of Bursevi's story, here we see Ertuğrul setting off to see the famous saint upon the death of his brother who was a *sancak beğ*. His aim is to receive the prayers of the saint and to take permission to replace his brother. Then the saint says: "We are seated upon your heart, we speak through your tongue, we make you seem nice to him [the ruler of the Anatolian Seljuks] and you take your brother's sanjak."⁵²⁴ Furthermore he informs Ertuğrul that his and his sons' souls are held within the realm of sainthood, pointing to the approval of the saint for future rulers to come from his progeny.⁵²⁵

Although there is no reference to the Qur'an story as related by Bursevi, *Vilayetname* had also a section on Osman. He was represented as an intrepid *gazi*

⁵²⁴ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Manakıb-ı Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî "Vilâyet-nâme*, (Istanbul: İnkilap Kitabevi, 1958), pp. 71-75.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 72.

making raids to Bursa and thus aggravating the ruler of the Anatolian Seljuks who had made a covenant of peace with the governor of Bursa. When the Seljuki court encounters Osman, they are awed by his presence and not knowing what to do, they decide to receive the opinion of Hacı Bektaş Veli. The saint gives his headgear (*elifi tac*), his belt and a candle to Osman along with counsels and *tekbirs* (saying God is Almighty). It is also from Hacı Bektaş Veli that he receives the right to rule since the saint gives his own title *hünkar* (sovereign, sultan) to Osman.⁵²⁶ On the issue Bursevi exclaimed: “It is true that the ancestor of the Ottoman rulers, Osman Gazi, had established the domains and the state with respect to Qur’an and the prayers of the wise ones. Alauddin Selçuki, who gave him authorization, was also of the Sufi path.”⁵²⁷ It is clear that Bursevi included Hacı Bektaş in the category of *ehl-i irfan* (the wise ones) and acknowledged the association of the Seljukid ruler and Osman.

Contrary to Aşık Paşazade’s claims that neither the early Ottoman sultans nor the outfit of janissaries had anything to do with the Bektashis, *Vilayetname* (in a similar line to *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* as shall be seen subsequently) suggested that the janissary head gear (*ak börk*) had in fact come from Osman who had received it from Hacı Bektaş himself. Bursevi’s abovementioned narrative seems to have adopted elements from the stories of Ertuğrul and Osman. It is also possible that Bursevi articulated new veins into the narrative based on his imagination. A detailed study on Hacı Bektaş Veli hagiographies might reveal further information regarding

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 71-75.

⁵²⁷ “*Asl budur ki mülük-ı Osmaniyyenin cediti Osman Gazi mülk ü devleti ta’zim-i Kuran ve enfas-ı ehl-i irfan ile bulmuşdur ki ol kendüni me’zun iden Ala’üddin-i Selçuki erbab-ı tarikatten idi.*” Bursevi, “*Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*,” p. 360/ Fol.67b.

the sources of these stories. Consulting the saint (whom he equated with the Sufi sheikh) and obeying to his will were the most important aspects of these narratives and the ideal way to solve difficult political and religious issues according to Bursevi. This association between the saints and the rulers at the inception of the empire was one of the most emphasized aspects of the relationship between spiritual and political authorities for Bursevi. On account of this relationship the sultanate was not only legitimate and victorious but its sustenance had also helped the maintenance of order until his time when the ties between the saints and the rulers were severed.

Bursevi did not forget to mention that the Ottoman rulers had blood ties with saints since Osman's son and successor, Orhan *Gazi*, was believed to be born to the daughter of Sheikh Ede Bali, a prominent *gazi* dervish whose name was mentioned in many Ottoman hagiographies and histories.⁵²⁸ In these sources, Sheikh Ede Bali was not only conceived as a genealogical link between the saints and Ottoman sultans but also as the interpreter of Osman's famous tree dream regarding the formation of the empire.⁵²⁹ Besides the chronicles and hagiographies that assert the familial ties between Sheikh Ede Bali and Osman, Kafadar points to a document which refers to Ede Bali as Osman's father-in-law. Although not conclusive, the availability of such a document when coupled with the existing narratives indicates the wide-spread acceptance of the association between these two families.⁵³⁰ On the

⁵²⁸ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 361/ Fol.68a.

⁵²⁹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak invites the reader to take a critical stance on the mythical nature of such attributions. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Ahilik ve Şeyh Ede Bali: Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluş Tarihi Açısından Bir Sorgulama," in *Yeniçağlar Anadolu'sunda İslam'ın Ayak İzleri* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011) pp. 13-22.

⁵³⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, pp. 129.

issue of the dream interpretation, Kafadar argues that the tree dream must have entered into the narratives at least after the sedentarization of Ottomans since it envisioned a future sedentary rule. However, the exact identity of the dream interpreter is not known: he has been defined not only as Sheikh Ede Bali but also as Hacı Bektaş and Abdülaziz in various narratives.⁵³¹

Hacı Bektaş Veli and the Janissary army

“The foundations of the sultanate indeed were established upon the prayers/breaths/souls of the saints, and the conditions of the state were organized in this way.”⁵³² The saints had overseen the establishment of the foundations of the Ottoman state which according to Bursevi consisted of two groups. The first one consisted of the members of the military: janissary (*yeniçeri*), cavalry soldiers (*sipahi*), artilleries (*topçu*) and armored soldiers (*cebeci*).⁵³³ And the second group included the members of the central administration: viziers of the dome (*vüzerai-kubbe*) whom Bursevi equated with the Seven Sleepers (*ashab-ı kehf*).⁵³⁴ All other

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 132-133.

⁵³² “*Erkan-ı saltanat fi’l-asl enfas-ı evliya üzerine te’sis olunmuş ve etvar-ı devlet ol vechile tertib kılınmıştır.*” Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Vesimiyye,” p.128 /Fol.40b; for a similar expression see Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III” p. 55/ Fol.229a.

⁵³³ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III,” pp. 79-80 /Fol.255a-256a.

⁵³⁴ These are the seven Christians who are believed to have taken refuge in a cave near Ephesus to escape from the persecutions of the pagan Roman emperor. The emperor upon finding out their hiding place covers up the entrance of the cave so as to let the youngsters die inside. According to the Qu’ranic narrative, they sleep in the cave for three hundred years until they are finally awakened by a divine calling. They are revered as saints and remembered as “Yedi Uyurlar” in Turkish; Bursevi,

Ottoman institutions were established on these two with the virtues of saints, and each institution had an esoteric meaning which connoted the names of God that institution made manifest in the temporal world as has been mentioned previously.⁵³⁵ However Bursevi's approach to the foundations of the empire carried anachronistic tones since he attributed the characteristics of an Ottoman state with a centralized army and administration which took its form as such only in the fifteenth century to the beginnings of the empire in hindsight. It was only in the seventeenth century that the number of viziers who attended divan councils increased up to seven with the expansion of the administrative cadre, and it was only in the fifteenth century that the janissary army was fully institutionalized based on the devshirme system.

For Bursevi, it was Hacı Bektaş Veli who had overseen the establishment of the janissary army whose power came from angels.⁵³⁶ The janissary agha, by virtue of his position as the supervisor of soldiers, resembled the Sufi sheikh who undertook the spiritual training of dervishes. The reason why the head of the order was called agha and not sheikh was his concern for worldly affairs.⁵³⁷ Thus Bursevi fully acknowledged and supported the relationship between the janissaries and the Bektashi order. In *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye*, he started the section on the janissary agha with a poem in which he addressed him as *Hacı Bektaş Ocağının Köçeği*, a title also

"Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 361 /Fol.68a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III", p. 70 /Fol.245a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Aliyye," p.229 /Fol.20a; Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye II," pp. 201-202 /Fol.220a.

⁵³⁵ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Recebiyye," p. 375 /Fol.74a; This issue is further explained in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* in which Bursevi gives separate accounts of each Ottoman institution and the divine names and attributes related to them: Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III."

⁵³⁶ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 69/ Fol. 244a-b, p. 80/ Fol.256b-257a.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 84/ Fol. 260b.

espoused by the janissaries in associating themselves with the Bektashi order.⁵³⁸ A similar title they used was *taife-i Bektaşiyye* (the Bektashi community).⁵³⁹ The relationship between the Bektashis and the janissary army is a much renowned issue which has been constructed with slightly different narratives in the works of early modern Ottomans.⁵⁴⁰ For example fifteenth century historian Aşıkpaşazade claimed that the janissaries were founded during the reign of Murad I with the counsels of a wise Kara Rüstem from the Karaman region and the grand vizier Çandarlı Kara Halil Hayreddin Pasha. Kara Rüstem had supposedly informed the sultan about the latter's right to keep one fifth of the prisoners of war for his own service according to divine law. After that, with the initiatives of the grand vizier and *Gazi Evrenos*, it had become a custom to keep prisoners of war, teach them Turkish and turn them into janissary soldiers.⁵⁴¹ Nowhere in this narrative do we come across a mention of Hacı Bektaş in influencing the formation of this *devshirme* army though. Aşık Paşazade even refused the association of the white headgear of the janissaries (resembling the Bektashi *elifi tac*⁵⁴²) with that of the Bektashi dervishes. He claimed that it was Abdal Musa, a Bektashi dervish who saw and adopted the headgear from the janissaries during a *gaza* campaign he attended. It is clear from Aşık Paşazade's

⁵³⁸ J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, (London: Luzac Oriental, 1937), p. 74.

⁵³⁹ Suraiya Faroqhi, *Anadolu'da Bektaşilik*, (Istanbul: Simurg, 2003) p. 138.

⁵⁴⁰ For a short overview of the chapters related to Bektashis in Mevlana 'İsa's history written after 1543 see: Barbara Flemming, "Mevlana İsa on Bektashis," pp. 159-163.

⁵⁴¹ Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğullarının Tarihi*, ed. Kemal Yavuz and M. A. Yekta Saraç (Istanbul: K Kitaplığı, 2003) pp. 382-383.

⁵⁴² According to the *Vilayetname*, the *elifi tac* was given to Prophet Muhammad by God through Gabriel. And from the angel, it passed on to the Caliph Ali, other imams, Ahmet Yesevi and lastly to Hacı Bektaş Veli. A cloak, candle, table, banner and prayer rug were also transmitted. Birge, *Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, p. 37.

account that he regarded the Bektashis as a marginal, antinomian group with rather deviant practices such as smoking opium, wearing earrings and engaging in devilish deeds and worked to disprove the association between them and the centralizing janissary army.⁵⁴³ Indeed his need to refute the Bektashi associations signals the order's increasing popularity at the time. It is curious that among all the saints, Hacı Bektaş Veli was chosen as the patron saint of the janissaries. Küçükyağcı seeks the reasons for the preference for Hacı Bektaş in the Babai Rebellion which took place in 1239/1240 and suggests that "starting with Ertuğrul, the proto-Ottomanids and the early Ottoman sultans were members of a semi-nomadic heterodoxy which was later to be called Bektashism."⁵⁴⁴ It is plausible to argue that a shared belonging to the thirteenth century early Ottoman culture (particularly to the Vefai sect) with its syncretic beliefs yielded an approachment between Hacı Bektaş and the Ottoman sultans who found in his figure an ideal patron saint for their newly forming army.

As opposed to Aşık Paşazade's history, an early seventeenth century (1606) text regarding the janissary codes, *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, associated the formation of the army with Timurtaş Dede (one of the sons of Hacı Bektaş Veli), Emirşah Efendi whose descent reached back to Mevlana and a certain vizier named Bektaş

⁵⁴³ Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğullarının Tarihi*, p. 571-572; Birge, Bektashi Order of Dervishes, p. 46.

⁵⁴⁴ "Via Hacı Bektaş, they were connected to the Baba İlyasid version of Vefai sect and they had fought to protect both their faith and their Sultan against the rebels, and were on the side of Hacı Bektaş." Erdal Küçükyağcı, "Janissary and Samurai: Early Modern Warrior Classes and Religion," (M.A. thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007), pp. 46-47. Karayalçın also provides a detailed analysis of the Babai Rebellion and its relevance for understanding the relationship between the cult of Hacı Bektaş and the janissaries, see pp. 10-47.

Paşa.⁵⁴⁵ The anonymous author of the text (who claimed to be of janissary background) strongly emphasized the influence of the saints in Ottoman conquests.⁵⁴⁶ He suggested that the codes, clothing and practices of the janissaries (such as the reverence for Ali, celibacy and not growing beard until maturity) were also adopted from the abovementioned saints: an argument very much in line with Bursevi's.⁵⁴⁷ The author's extensive accent on the significance of saintly figures may be taken as a sign of the diffusiveness of the cult of saints, particularly that of Hacı Bektaş Veli but not limited to him, among the soldiers. It is also interesting that in this text the army is associated both with Mevlana and Hacı Bektaş. Ocak's analysis shows that in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, starting with Bayezid II the sultans tried to establish a balance between the Mevlevis and Bektashis. On the one hand Bayezid II showed his respect for the Mevlevis by engaging in the reconstruction of Mevlana's tomb in Konya. On the other hand he also provided grants and waqf lands to important Bektashi lodges.⁵⁴⁸ Thus a Mevlevi association with the janissaries in *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân* might be taken as an indicator of the rising influence of Mevlevis in the ruling circles since the sixteenth century.

Mevlana and Hacı Bektaş were indeed represented as seemingly two rival figures in *Menakibü'l-Arifin*. Here one comes across a frequent attempt at portraying

⁵⁴⁵ *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyân*, Tayfun Toroser (ed.) (Istanbul: İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011) p. 12.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 57.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 15, p. 56, p. 58; For a detailed discussion about the Bektashi practices prevalent among the Janissaries see Küçükyağcı, "Janissary and Samurai," pp. 87-149.

⁵⁴⁸ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Türkiye Tarihinde Merkezi İktidar ve Mevleviler Meselesine Kısa Bir Bakış, 13.-18. Yüzyıllar," in *Yeniçağlar Anadolu'sunda İslam'ın Ayak İzleri: Osmanlı Dönemi* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011) p. 69.

Mevlana as superior to Hacı Bektaş Veli while the latter is depicted as a deviant who neither abided by the rules of the sharia nor the Sunna.⁵⁴⁹ Indeed this depiction seems to be in line with that of Aşık Paşazade who claimed Hacı Bektaş to be a *mezcub* and regarded the Bektashis as heretics.⁵⁵⁰ According to Irene Melikoff, Bektashis were indeed associated with many antinomian groups inter alia the Kalenderis, Rafizis and Hurufis and influenced by Shia groups such as the *Kızılbaş* making the composition of the brotherhood rather syncretic and sometimes suspicious in the eyes of the state.⁵⁵¹

A detailed study on late seventeenth and eighteenth century Bektashi relations with the central administration and the changing nature of their beliefs and practices is beyond the scope of this chapter but would provide beneficial in shedding light on how a sharia-abiding sunna-minded Sufi sheikh like Bursevi managed to adopt the figure of Hacı Bektaş associated with the controversial Bektashis openly in his texts.⁵⁵² It is highly likely that Bursevi handled Hacı Bektaş Veli separately from the later Bektashis who were one of the groups still being tagged as deviant Sufis during the seventeenth century religious discussions based on a discourse of piety and religious innovation. For example in 1665, a Bektashi lodge near Edirne was

⁵⁴⁹ Aflaki, *The Feats of the Knowers*, pp. 263-264, pp. 343-344.

⁵⁵⁰ Aşık Paşazade, *Osmanoğullarının Tarihi*, pp. 571-572.

⁵⁵¹ Irene Melikoff, *Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli: Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 1998), pp. 89-91, p. 169, 173, p. 178; On the relationship between Kalenderis and Bektashis see: Ocak, *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar*, pp. 120-132; On Bektashi-Kızılbaş associations see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Bektashis: Report on Current Research," in *Bektachiyya: Etudes sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (eds.) Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: Isis, 1995) pp. 15-21.

⁵⁵² For the relationship between the janissary army, the central administration and the Bektashi lodges in the seventeenth and eighteenth century see: Faroqhi, *Anadoluda Bektaşilik*, pp. 121-156.

destroyed by the fervent Kadızadeli followers.⁵⁵³ But in his *tuhfes*, Bursevi neither criticized the janissaries for their incessant uprisings nor their Bektashi affiliations. Since in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the strength of the Bektashi order was based more in the provincial towns in Rumelia and Anatolia (rather than in Istanbul or Bursa where Bursevi spent the majority of his life) it is also possible that he did not conceive them as an immediate threat.⁵⁵⁴ Suraiya Faroqhi claims that since the later part of the sixteenth century the sheikhs of the central Bektashi lodge Hacı Bektaş were granted privileges for acting “as an agent of assimilation and acculturation” hence mediating between the state and the provincial Bektashi lodges and Kızılbaş sympathizers.⁵⁵⁵ If this is true then by the time of Bursevi, it is plausible to believe that the relationship between the central state and the order had become rather stabilized. This could explain Bursevi’s favorable approach towards the Bektashi order and its affiliation with the janissaries as well.

Selim I and Ibn ‘Arabi

Selim I was one of the sultans who was revered by Bursevi for paying homage to Ibn ‘Arabi by cleaning his grave upon entering Damascus as anticipated by his famous oracle about the sultan’s conquests in the Near East described in a book attributed to

⁵⁵³ Zilfi, “Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth,” p. 263-4.

⁵⁵⁴ Faroqhi, “Bektashis: Report on Current,” p. 21.

⁵⁵⁵ Faroqhi, "Conflict, Accommodation and Long-term Survival: The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State" in *Bektachiyya, Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektash*, eds. Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: ISIS Publications, 1995), pp. 171-184. p. 180.

him: *Shajarat al Nu'maniyyah fi Dawlat al-Uthmaniyyah*. Although this book was believed to describe the formation of the Ottoman Empire long before it existed, the earliest copy dates back to sixteenth century. It thus seems like a dubious attribution to Ibn 'Arabi.⁵⁵⁶ Still when Selim I arrived in Damascus, he located Ibn 'Arabi's grave and ordered the execution of necessary renovations which would materialize the great sheikh's famous prophecy which supposedly indicated that when the letter "s" entered the letter "ş", Ibn 'Arabi's grave would be discovered. The Ottoman ulema believed this to be a sign of Sultan Selim's (signified by the letter "s") conquest of Damascus (*Şam*, hence the letter "ş"). Furthermore, the sultan not only ordered Sheikh Mekki (d. 1519) to write a book about Ibn 'Arabi but also commissioned authors to write commentaries on *Füsusu'l-Hikem*. The defense book *el-Canibü'l Garbi fi halli müşkilatı Şeyh Muhyiddin İbnü'l-Arabi* which was written in Persian by Mekki was later on translated into Turkish by the chief judge and poet Ahmed Neyli Efendi (d. 1748) in the eighteenth century with the title *el-Fazlu'l-Vehbi fi tercemeti'l-Canibi'l-Garbi*.⁵⁵⁷ There seems to be a conscious effort on behalf of the sultan to claim the heritage of Ibn 'Arabi in the Ottoman context as a patron of literary works. The Ibn 'Arabi prophecy not only legitimized the expansionist policies of the Ottoman sultan at the time but also created a mystical aura around his rule by associating him with a famous saint. This was one of the reasons why

⁵⁵⁶ In an interview published online, Mahmud Erol Kılıç, a scholar on Sufism (particularly the thought of Ibn 'Arabi), has refuted the claims regarding Ibn 'Arabi's authorship of this text. He argues that *Shajarat al Nu'maniyye* is not listed among the two hundred and fifty titles which Ibn 'Arabi provided as his books during his stay in Aleppo. "Ibn 'Arabi Kahin Değil" <http://www.ibnul'Arabi.com/mak04.htm>. Accessed on 29 September 2011.

⁵⁵⁷ Şeyh Mekki Efendi, *İbn Arabi Müdafası*, transl. Ahmed Neyli Efendi, (ed.) Halil Baltacı (Istanbul: Gelenek, 2004) p. 17.

subsequent Sufi sheikhs revered Selim I as the protector of Sufi teachings and regarded his reign as an ideal period. According to Bursevi Selim I had received the eternal protection of the saint and hence was remembered as a glorious sultan even decades after his death.⁵⁵⁸

In *Tuhfe-i Recebiyye*, Bursevi also provided the example of how Ibn ‘Arabi advised the sultan of Aleppo on many issues just in one day and how the sultan obediently listened to his words and did not regard his advice as burden.⁵⁵⁹ This for Bursevi was the ideal form of interaction between a saint and a ruler and the fact that it lacked in his times was the reason of disorder. He bemoaned that unlike previous times, in his age both the rulers and common people were unaware of the virtues of being in the presence of *erbab-i kulub* (literally meaning people of the heart, indicating the sheikhs/saints) and listening to their words. Hence without the presence of competent people to guide them, they were receiving neither divine benediction nor protection.⁵⁶⁰

Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi and Ahmed I

It is plausible to think that while making these comments, Bursevi mostly had in mind Hüdayi’s rather extensive influence in politics as a Sufi sheikh. More than once he referred to the reign of Ahmed I who, in the face of rising Celali rebellions in the

⁵⁵⁸ Bursevi, “Tuhfe-i Recebiyye,” pp. 389-390 /Fol.80a-80b.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 354 /Fol. 65a.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 357/ Fol.66a.

lands of Anatolia, had resorted to Hüdaiyi to ask for advice. Upon this request, Hüdaiyi, with his extensive spiritual capacities acted as an exemplary advisor and pointed to Kuyucu Murad Paşa as the man who would resolve the issue.⁵⁶¹ Ahmed I did not merely treat Hüdaiyi as a mentor, he had also enjoined the Sufi path under his guidance to correct himself. On account of their allegiance to Hüdaiyi both Ahmed I and the grand vizier Halil Paşa were still remembered well by the people; particularly Halil Paşa, by virtue of his tomb's proximity to that of Hüdaiyi was receiving continued blessings.⁵⁶² The histories of the period shed light on Hüdaiyi's role as a negotiator between different power groups in the early seventeenth century; it was not uncommon for disgraced statesmen like Halil Paşa (for his unsuccessful campaigns in the east) to take refuge in Hüdaiyi's lodge after being dismissed from office.⁵⁶³

Hüdaiyi's relationship with Ahmed I constituted the climactic point in the history of Ottoman Sufism for Bursevi who explicitly resented the increasing distance between Sufi sheikhs and the sultans after Ahmed I.⁵⁶⁴ He also made very brief references to the conversations between Sultan Ibrahim and the Celveti sheikh Cennet Efendi and the counsels of Osman Fazlı to Sultan Mehmed IV. Neither sultan had followed the Sufi path to improve their religious morality and piety, but at least

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 386/ Fol.79a.

⁵⁶² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 55 /Fol.228a.

⁵⁶³ Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, p. 448.

⁵⁶⁴ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 53/ Fol.226a, pp. 55-56/ Fol.229a.

they had not denied the significance of saints.⁵⁶⁵ It is very clear in *Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye* that Bursevi regarded the ruling elite after Mehmed IV as *minkirs* (deniers of saints and Sufism) since he suggested that until his time there were no sultans who were deniers of sheikhs while after his reign particularly the viziers and religious scholars had lost their souls and become sinners who felt enmity towards the saints.⁵⁶⁶

İsmail Hakkı Bursevi and the Sufi-State Relations

By providing a short history of the relationship between Sufis and the state, Bursevi not only highlighted the constitutive nature of Sufis in the establishment of the empire but also made a comment about the state of contemporary Ottoman politics which according to him marginalized Sufi sheikhs. If one is to speculate on the historical plausibility of such resentment, the fact that actors such as the Kadızadeli preachers gained increasing visibility in the public and political spheres in the seventeenth century may be regarded as one of the reasons for the perceived decline in the direct association of Celveti sheikhs with the rulers.⁵⁶⁷ From the mid-sixteenth century until their suppression and exile, figures like Üstüvani Mehmed and Vani Efendi who occupied the post of the sultan's preceptor, exerted incredible amount of influence both on the sultan and in the palace circle. During this period, the Celveti sheikhs seem to have relegated to the background in terms of their relationship with

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55/ Fol.228b.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 55-56/ Fol. 228b- 229b.

⁵⁶⁷ Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*, pp. 129-181.

the sultan. Interestingly they have not composed any known tracts of advice to the sultans unlike their contemporary Halvetis either. However, this shall not imply an immediate fall in the influence of Celvetis in the political milieu; association with political authority had already started to take different forms in the seventeenth century with the increasing economic and political power of different factions. In that respect, Bursevi's sheikh Osman Fazlı's relationship with the grand viziers of his time and his respectable position as a counselor on political issues (as has been discussed in the chapter on Bursevi's life) indicates the rising significance of the grand vizier. According to Tezcan, in the eighteenth century, the ruling elites had reached a political consensus regarding the nature of the state as a separate institution from the dynasty of the sultan. This was a form of governance whose direction was very much shaped by the operation of vizieral families, with the influence of sultans, preceptors and jurists (except for the grand mufti Feyzullah) stabilized if not minimalized.⁵⁶⁸

Indeed Feyzullah's monopoly on both the office of the grand mufti and the preceptor which lasted until 1703 must have been one of the factors why Bursevi found his opportunity to relate with the sultan extremely limited. And after Feyzullah the office of the preceptor/mentor gradually lost its significance. The grand mufti's association with the Naqshbandi order through the sheikh Murad-ı Buhari (d. 1720), the spread of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidis in the empire and the increasing integration of Bayrami-Melamis into the ruling elites (along with their approachment to the Naqshbandis) are also issues which point to a diffusion of power and the changing

⁵⁶⁸ Tezcan, "Politics of Early Modern," pp. 195-196.

equilibrium among different Sufi orders.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, when trying to contextualize Bursevi's resentments regarding the estrangement of spiritual and political authority, we should take into consideration also the changing alliances between different Sufi orders and political milieus.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there was an expansion in the forms of association with power groups both within and outside the palace circle through patronage. Particularly the court (with an increasing importance attached to the positions of the palace staff such as the chief eunuch, chief gardener, etc.) had emerged as a locus of political power to suppress the influence of the vizierial households.⁵⁷⁰ Therefore, although Bursevi did not operate as the personal sheikh or the mentor of a sultan, he managed to relate with different networks of power and patronage not only through association with the grand vizier Çorlulu Ali Paşa but also with members of the palace staff who by the early eighteenth century had become quite visible not only in politics but also in the public sphere through different forms of artistic and architectural patronage.

Bursevi did not necessarily attribute a particular period in history a homogeneous golden age although he conceived continuity in the period starting from the early Ottoman beginnings since the time of Osman II. For example once he dated the beginnings of decline after the reign of Murad I. It was after him that alcohol and bribery started to become widespread since during his time Murad I

⁵⁶⁹ Şimşek, *Osmanlı'da Müceddidilik*, p. 112, pp. 120-121, pp. 142-143.

⁵⁷⁰ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 93-108.

would immediately dismiss any governor or judge who oppressed the people.⁵⁷¹ Still until the early seventeenth century there was order and stability because the sultans had paid heed to the guidance of the sheikhs. After Ahmed I, there is a perceived rupture in the position of the Sufi sheikh vis-à-vis political authority. The timing of this rupture is indeed very much in line with the views of Ottoman authors who were commenting at an unprecedented rate particularly since the late sixteenth century on an Ottoman decline. Bursevi's vision regarding the estrangement of political authority from spiritual authority (represented by the saintly Sufi sheikhs) hence shall not be regarded merely as a reflection of the ageless cliché of the "disorder of the times" (*ihtilal-i zaman*)⁵⁷², but as a discourse which very much reflected the way in which Bursevi perceived a historical decline in the relationship of the Sufi sheikh with political authority and its implications for social and political order. It was within the language of Sufism that Bursevi defined decline, a better past, the problems of contemporary Ottoman governance and the necessary actions to establish order back again. Howard emphasized the literary aspect of this focus on order and disorder as "a nearly universal metaphor of creation" for it was used by writers in different periods and contexts. It connoted a shared mythical understanding of the order of the world and creation which was rooted in a common reservoir of stories, images and concepts handed down from generation to generation.⁵⁷³ For the historian, the way in which such literary tropes of mythical quality were manipulated

⁵⁷¹ Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, II," p. 189/ Fol. 209b.

⁵⁷² Bursevi, "Tuhfe-i Hasekiyye, III," p. 74 /Fol.250b.

⁵⁷³ Howard, "Genre and Myth," pp. 163-164.

by authors of diverse backgrounds in different historical contexts is still an essential aspect of analysis.

To sum it up, Bursevi regarded the alienation of political authority (of which the sultan was the main source) from spiritual authorities (represented by the competent Sufi sheikh) as the main cause of what he reflected as Ottoman decay. Therefore, he incepted a Sufi layer and interpretation to all the existing discussions on Ottoman decline, proving that there is not a homogenous decline paradigm. The conditions of the Sufi sheikh as the perfect merger of spiritual and temporal worlds and their requirements constituted an example for the ideal form of government which Bursevi resented did not exist in his time. Therefore the sultan and all the other representatives of political authority were expected to submit to the will of the Sufi sheikh and receive his guidance. This was necessary not only to organize their self-governance but also the way in which they exercised power in the governing of the empire. Indeed these two forms of government were perceived as being intricately linked both to one another and to the cosmic order of things. Bursevi thus projected his conceptualization of a perfect Sufi equilibrium based on a sharia abiding Sunni morality onto the organization of political authority as an ideal vision of imperial governance.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study proposes first and foremost that the changes in the structure of the Ottoman state and the expansion of the “political nation” were reflected in the way in which Sufi sheikhs affiliated with political authority in the eighteenth century. By the time of İsmail Hakkı Bursevi, the sultan had retreated to the background as a mere symbol of imperial power. Thus sufi-state relationships started to focus more on actors such as the grand viziers, governors and people from the palace circle who formed different loci of power and had influence in the decision making processes more than before.

This changing relationship with the state was a result of the separation of the state from the person of the sultan and the increasing importance of viziers and bureaucrats in the governance of the empire. Although Bursevi perceived this novel form of sufi-state association as a sign of decline in the position of the sufi sheikh vis-a-vis political authority, indeed this was only a reflection of the historical realities of the period. For Bursevi, an absolutist centralized state headed by the sultan continued to be the ideal form of rule since he continuously emphasized the centrality of sultan-sufi relations for a better government. Hence he regretted the transformation in the organization of the state to a more decentralized form whereas this was not necessarily a decline but indicated a different form of association with political power.

The change was reflected also in the way patronage relations were formulated. None of Bursevi's *tuhfes* were dedicated to a sultan but to other actors in the political sphere such as the grand vizier, the governor of Damascus, janissary and people from the palace staff. While in the previous centuries, these people came from devshirme background and were trained to be loyal only to the sultan. In the seventeenth century, they started to come more from the ranks of wealthy commoners who established their own networks of loyalties apart from the sultan. Particularly the early eighteenth century, the era recalled as the Tulip Age, witnessed a rise in the visibility of previously under-represented groups in literary works (i.e. the rise in the biographies of grand viziers) and architectural and artistic production through patronage. Since the act of writing is a political action itself, by writing *tuhfes* for these people Bursevi entered into the prevailing forms of association with socio-economic and political power groups as well.

Bursevi's prolific *tuhfe* writing and inclusion of his religio-political discussions and the mystical theory of rulership in his texts which did not necessarily address the sultan or high-ranking statesmen implied also a wider circulation of these notions among diverse groups. The fact that Bursevi composed his texts in simple Turkish with a conscious effort to reach audiences beyond the Sufi circles was also an indicator of this process. While the most important sources for political thought have been regarded as treatises of advice, *tuhfe* as a form beyond genres yields the way for an analysis of the circulation, and diffusion of representations of political authority in different textual forms which address different audiences.

As a Sufi sheikh, Bursevi's view of political authority was very much shaped by his religious sensibilities. In the eighteenth century, against a state apparatus

formed by relatively secular administrators coming from bureaucratic backgrounds, Bursevi still pursued the ideal of a political authority that worked hand in hand with spiritual authority. Indeed his perception of an estrangement between these two authorities represented by the sultan on the one hand and the Sufi sheikh on the other can be taken as a reaction against the early modern historical process in which the state was demystified and rationalized. Thus in his texts, Bursevi was indeed responding to the process albeit in a rather conservative manner. Bursevi conceptualized not only the sultan but the entire state organization as the manifestation of the names of God. Thus we can speak of a diffusion of the novel conceptualization of the state as a mechanism consisting of institutions apart from the dynastic household of the sultan to the writings of Bursevi. In many of his writings, Bursevi not only addressed the sultan but also other actors within the state apparatus such as administrators, judges, muftis and statesmen in directing his advices for a better governance, acknowledging the significance of their positions. However, it is difficult to suggest that his propositions targeted institutional reform, rather his focus continued to be on the morality and religiosity of the people occupying these posts.

Bursevi's views regarding the ideal form of governance were shaped very much by an understanding which saw in the organization of political authority a manifestation of cosmic order. The state was sacred for it replicated the cosmic organization in the temporal world and maintained order in the society. Any deviation or imbalance in the state which arose from religious misguidance in the form of extremities ended up in a return to disorder and chaos. The concepts used by Bursevi in formulating his political thoughts were already existent in the Perso-

Islamic traditions and elaborated by Ottoman scholars from diverse backgrounds mostly in *nasihatnames*. However, Bursevi further elaborated on the existing imagery, concepts, motifs and conventions by articulating Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical interpretations of political authority in his writings. Thus, the religio-political discourse he entered into was fed by diverse traditions of political thought.

As a Sufi sheikh Bursevi projected his ideal form of self-governance represented by the balance established by strict adherence to the sharia and to the Sufi knowledge of the divine truth onto the ideal form of imperial governance. This ideal was not only influenced by the ideas proposed by Ibn ‘Arabi in his writings but also a broader current of piety which spread in the Ottoman Empire since the seventeenth century.

It is difficult to suggest from a limited selection of Bursevi’s writings that his propositions to establish order were part of a larger reform agenda with clear outlines. However, when they are handled with his life story, his commitment to the formula “commanding right and forbidding wrong” and his conceptualization of the pole as an active participant in social and political life as a guide, it becomes clear that he indeed tried to give the Sufi sheikh agency. It was the Sufi sheikh as the pole who was to intervene in the process of decline for the restoration of order. And although it was only him who could change the existing situation by establishing the balance between spiritual and political authorities, the intervention of the pole was limited to guidance and training. Since Bursevi did pronounce his Polehood in several of his texts with an unfettered self-confidence, it would not be far-fetched to suggest that in a way he was trying to claim that agency for himself. He was to guide both the common people and the sultan and show them the right path in religion.

Thus, through a discussion about sainthood and polehood in particular, Bursevi legitimized the position of the competent Sufi sheikhs whom he equated with saints *vis-à-vis* different power groups including the sultan. In juristic terms, by virtue of being the inheritors of the prophet, Sufi sheikhs as saints had the right to interpret the sharia. In political terms, all of the sultan's decisions were bound to the pole even though the sultan was not aware of it. And to establish order it was necessary that sultan as the symbolic head of the state recognize and bow down to the authority of the pole. In social terms, the Sufi sheikh as the saint had the capacity and responsibility to educate people and lead them towards the right path by virtue of his claim to religious orthodoxy.

Therefore, I propose that Bursevi's religio-political commentaries and discussions on sainthood were to a certain extent ideologically driven. Bursevi did not open up space for direct or oppositional political action on behalf of the pole though, his role was only indirect. Rather, he used the concept of the Pole as a discursive tool to negotiate his position within the existing power relations. In this regard, Bursevi's pro-state comments which counseled obedience to authority figures at all times is a strong indicator not only of his conformist stance but also of the integration of the Sufis into the political culture of the ruling elites by the eighteenth century. This can be taken as an example of the impacts that the process of Sunnitization and institutionalization under the roof of the Ottoman state had on Sufi groups: a process which had a long history going back to more than two centuries.

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