

**FROM SURVIVAL TO REVIVAL: TRANSFORMATION OF A KHALIDI COMMUNITY IN TURKEY  
(1925-1970)**

By

Yusuf Selman İnanç

Submitted to Central European University

Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Associate Professor M. Brett Wilson

Second Reader: Visiting Professor Yektan Türkyılmaz

Vienna, Austria

2023

### **Statement of Copyright**

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the transformation of a specific Khalidi community in Turkey by examining various developments from 1925, when an official ban was imposed on Sufism until 1970 when several Sufi groups regained visibility. Despite the strict anti-Sufism policies in the first decades of the early Turkish Republic, many Khalidi communities not only survived but also grew stronger, becoming highly visible and widespread Islamic communities. While most of these communities embraced modernity by adopting various modern tools, such as media, businesses, and schools, the İsmailağa community, the focus of this thesis, chose a fundamentally different path. They rejected the use of technological devices, refused to attend public schools, insisted on a specific attire, and, most importantly, turned Sufism into an integral part of madrasa tradition. Still, this thesis argues that this community has also evolved into a modern one, deviating from its traditional Khalidi identity by utilizing Sufism primarily as a tool to promote Islamic primordialism and to establish a buffer within secular Turkey.

By delving into the history of Khalidiyya in the nineteenth century, one could gain insights into how the Order transformed into a revivalist structure, challenging the Western penetration of the Muslim world. However, this historical context alone cannot fully explain the further transformation and increased politicization of the Khalidi communities in the post-Republic era. Therefore, this paper goes deeper into the reconstruction of these communities and their reactions to Turkey's modernization and secularization efforts.

The findings of this study indicate that while the Khalidi communities partly preserved their ties to the past, they flourished as products of their own time. Their customs, rituals, and understanding of Sufism were reshaped and reinvented in response to changing political

conditions, particularly after 1946 when state pressure on religion eased. Additionally, this thesis reveals the ambivalence of state policies towards religion played a significant role in the flourishing of such communities. In conclusion, the transformation of Khalidi communities from Sufism-derived piety to Sufism-inspired Islamic communities was the result of complex interactions among various factors.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The process of writing this thesis was marked by various difficulties. The escalating global insecurity, resulting in stricter visa policies implemented by European Union countries, the outbreak of an unprecedented pandemic, and the economic downturn in Turkey posed significant challenges in completing this work. However, the relevance of the topic to contemporary political and social issues, as well as my unwavering determination to understand the origins of modern Islamic communities in present-day Turkey, compelled me to see it through.

I am profoundly grateful to Professor Brett Wilson for his invaluable guidance, patience, and deep understanding of the circumstances under which this work was undertaken. Beyond his role as a supervisor, his unwavering support and friendship were instrumental in navigating the complexities of such a complex topic. His encouragement and dedication to keeping me engaged in the world of academia go far beyond a typical supervisor-student relationship. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Yektan Türkyılmaz, whose encouragement played a crucial role in my completion of this thesis. His insights, suggestions, and constructive criticisms were immensely valuable.

The History Department at CEU has been an exceptional environment, thanks to its professors, students, and staff. I would like to thank Aniko Molnar for her efforts in assisting me throughout this process.

I am indebted to Mehmet Erken and Cankat Kaplan for their meticulous examination of my text, valuable feedback, and companionship during this journey.

I am grateful to Professor Hikmet Kırık, who first inspired me to pursue academic studies during my time as a graduate student at Istanbul University. His guidance has been invaluable to me throughout my academic career.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Sümeyra, who shared the same challenges during her time at CEU. Her compassion, understanding, and true friendship during the difficulties we faced together were priceless. Last but not least, I want to extend my gratitude to my son, Ali Agah, who brought immeasurable joy and happiness to my life.

## Table of Contents

<b><i>LIST of ABBREVIATIONS and NOTES on USAGE.....</i></b>	<b><i>8</i></b>
<b><i>INTRODUCTION.....</i></b>	<b><i>9</i></b>
Aim and Problem.....	10
A History of Renewal: Khalid Baghdadi and his Order .....	14
Khalidiyya as a Nineteenth Century Movement .....	18
Sources and Methodology .....	22
<b><i>CHAPTER I ENDURING ANTI-SUFI MEASURES: A HISTORY of SURVIVAL (1925-1946).....</i></b>	<b><i>25</i></b>
Unveiling the Journey Towards the Closure of Sufi Lodges.....	26
Navigating Transformative Times: Revolutions and Sufis (1925-1946) .....	33
A History of Survival: Sheikh Ali Haydar (Gürbüzler).....	43
<b><i>CHAPTER II RECONSTRUCTION OF KHALIDI ORDER: A HISTORY OF REVIVAL (1946-1970).....</i></b>	<b><i>51</i></b>
Initiation of Rapprochement with Religion after 1946 .....	52
A History of Revival: Sheikh Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu .....	56
Diversification of Khalidi Groups after the 1960 Coup .....	64
Emergence of İsmailağa Community (1960-1970) .....	72
<b><i>CONCLUSION.....</i></b>	<b><i>86</i></b>
<b><i>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</i></b>	<b><i>90</i></b>

## LIST of ABBREVIATIONS and NOTES on USAGE

BCA: Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi

BOA: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi

BEO: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Bâbîâli Evrak Odası Evrakı

DİA: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi

Y.PRK.DH: Yıldız Tasnifi Perakende Evrakı Dahiliye Nezareti Maruzatı

n.d.: No Date

n.a.: No Author

trn: Translated

r: reign

- 1) Non-English words, listed in the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and IJMES Word List appear in this thesis non-italic. For example, sharia, tariqa, Quran.
- 2) Arabic and Persian terms, texts, book titles, and names are fully transliterated unless widely used in modern Turkish. For example, Ahmad Faruq al-Serhindi or Al Bughyat whereas vakıf.
- 3) Regarding place names, modern Turkish is used unless an Anglacized version exists. For example, Trabzon whereas Istanbul or Damascus.
- 4) All dates are given according to the Common Era. But lunar dates are accompanied with their conversion to the Common Era.
- 5) All translations belong to the author unless stated otherwise.



## INTRODUCTION

Before returning from the Naqshbandi lodge in Delhi, to his hometown of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq, his sheikh, Abdullah Ali Dehlawi (1743-1824) posed a simple question to Khalid Baghdadi (1779-1827), the founder of the Naqshbandiyya's Khalidiyya order: "what do you want?" Baghdadi's response was ambitious: "I want both the world and the religion (*din-u dunya*)."<sup>1</sup> This expression is widely believed to signify Baghdadi's intention to render his Sufi activities a *tajdidi* (pro-renewal) structure, attempting to merge Sufism-derived piety with politics and worldly affairs on a broader scale.<sup>2</sup> The rapid expansion of his Order, spanning from Caucasia to the Balkans and Egypt, along with the initiation of high-ranking bureaucrats and ulama into the Order in its first few decades, and the involvement of Khalidiyya-affiliated figures in crucial political events within the Ottoman Empire, have all contributed to the controversy and widespread interest surrounding the Khalidiyya.<sup>3</sup> Most significantly, the fact that the lineages

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Fasih Haydarizade, *al-Majdu Talid fi Manakib-i Sheikh Khalid*, (Istanbul: Matbaa-yı Amire, 1291), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Tajdid*, derived from the Arabic language, translates to "renewal," and it encompasses the revival of religious faith and practices. The saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "Allah shall send, at the beginning of every century, someone who will renew the faith for this Ummah," as mentioned in the famous hadith book of Abu Dawood, forms the basis for the concept of seeking a person (*mujaddid*) for this renewal. However, in a modern context, renewal generally refers to efforts aimed at strengthening adherence to Sharia and Sunnah as a means to address the challenges posed by heretics and non-Muslims. For more information, please see; John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32–47. Ella Landau-Tasseron, "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): 79-117.

<sup>3</sup> The studies which establish a direct link between Khalidiyya and politics in the Ottoman era are numerous. Please see; Albert Hourani, "Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order" in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, Vivian Brown, Samuel Miklos Stern, Albert Habib Hourani (eds.) (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1972), 89-103; Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Itzhak Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition*, (London: Routledge, 2007); Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Salafiyya and the Rise of the Khālidiyya in Baghdad in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 43, no. 3, (2003): 349-372. Sean Foley, "Temporal and Spiritual Power in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Politics: Shaykh Khalid, Gürcü Necib Pasha and The Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya," *Türkiyat Araştırmaları*, no. 9 (2008): 223-244; Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis Cheminements et Situation Actuelle d'un Ordre Mystique Musulman*, (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990); Elizabeth Özdalga, *The Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity*, (Istanbul: Routledge, 1999).

(*silsile*) of the most prominent, widespread and visible Sufi groups with their social premises, including schools, madrasas, dormitories, companies, media outlets, charities and foundations in present-day Turkey trace back to Baghdadi has further intensified the debate and made the Khalidiyya a subject of scholarly and popular fascination.

### **Aim and Problem**

This thesis, however, explores the process of the transformation of Khalidi lodges into modern Islamic movements after 1950s in Turkey. Acknowledging that the current Khalidi groups in Turkey do not represent an unbroken, unchanged continuation of what is traditionally understood as Sufism within the legal institutionalized framework of the Ottoman Empire, it examines various factors including the impacts of the 1925-dated official ban on Sufism, the ambivalent state policies towards religion in the timespan of 1925 and 1960, and the portrayal of religion by Sufi groups as an alternative to the societal ideals of the Republican elite. By focusing on a specific Khalidi community, this study concludes that the current Khalidi groups underwent reconstruction as a response to strict secularization policies and that they shifted away from traditional Sufism and transformed into a modern Islamic movement due to the complex and multifaceted political and social circumstances of the era in which they emerged.

To shed light on this transformation, the thesis examines a specific Khalidi community commonly referred to as the *İsmailağa cemaati* (İsmailağa community) for two reasons.<sup>4</sup> Firstly,

---

<sup>4</sup> The literature on this community is small. Please see; Himmet Hülür, "Technology and Naqshbandi Sufism: An Empirical Analysis of İsmail Ağa and İskender Paşa Branches," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Edebiyat Dergisi*, no. 13 (1999): 289-340; Gabriel Pirický, "The İsmailağa Community: Shifting Religious Patterns in Contemporary Turkey," *Archiv Orientální*, 80, (2012): 533-561; Efrat Aviv, "The İsmailağa community and its relationship with the AK party," *Democracy and Security*, Vol. 14, no. 3, (2018): 276-299; Zehra Öğüt, "Sosyolojik Bağlamda İsmailağa Cemaati," Unpublished PhD Thesis, Istanbul University, (2022).

as discussed in Chapter II, this particular community is depicted as the most conservative among the Khalidi groups. They reject attending public schools, using technological devices or wearing any other attire than suggested by their leaders. However, the transformation of this community reveals that even the most conservative and resistant groups, in the face of secularization and modernization in Turkey, ultimately end up unwittingly embracing a modern Islamic movement. An example of this is the integration of Sufism into the madrasa tradition, which serves as an illustration of this modernization or renewal as in the Ottoman era, Sufism as a discipline was not included in the madrasa curriculum.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, the Ottoman-era Lodge with which this community is associated, and the life of its last official sheikh provide valuable resources for highlighting the distinctions between the two eras that are called survival and revival in this text. The shift observed in this community reflects a transition from maintaining the characteristics of a traditional Sufi lodge to the establishment of a Sufism-inspired modern Islamic movement, influenced by state policies and the unique characteristics of its leader, Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu (1929-2022) such as his initial education in a madrasa in the Black Sea region or his loyalty to kinship ties during the establishment of his community.

Accordingly, this thesis seeks to explore the complex interplay between ambivalent state policies and the transformations in Sufi practices and interpretations. For example, despite the ban on Sufism in 1925, some sheikhs were allowed to continue residing in their lodges, thereby enabling them to maintain Sufi activities to some extent. Additionally, the recognition of *ijaza* (authorization) obtained from madrasas provided opportunities for many Sufi leaders to assume

---

<sup>5</sup> For the curriculum of Ottoman era madrasas, please see; Mefail Hızlı, "Osmanlı Medreselerinde Okutulan Dersler ve Eserler," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol: 17, no: 1, (2008): 25-46.

positions within Diyanet. Also, after 1946, a renewed effort to assert a monopoly on religious education such as the establishment of more Quran teaching schools (*Kuran kursu*) and the implementation of a relatively liberal law on founding associations made it possible for Sufis to gather in such schools under the umbrella of an association. Moreover, in response to the communist threat in the 1960s, the state made attempts to incorporate religion into its ideology. By examining these instances of ambivalence in state policies, revealing the lack of state capacity as well as political contingencies, the thesis seeks to shed light on the complex dynamics between the state and Sufi communities, revealing how Sufis navigated the changing political landscape and utilized the opportunities presented to them.

By employing the concept of ambivalence, it highlights the inconsistency in state policies. While measures were implemented to suppress religion, including the specific targeting of Sufism, unintended consequences arose, contradicting the broader ideals pursued by the state.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this ambivalence was marking the nature of Turkey's secularization process. Many scholars attempt to define this process in José Casanova's militant secularism term.<sup>7</sup> It highlights a secularization experience, which not only dismisses religious knowledge and worldviews as pre-scientific and illogical but also equates religion with superstition and ignorance. Consequently, reason and science are seen as the antidote to the perceived darkness of religious ignorance and superstition.<sup>8</sup> This definition is indeed useful regarding the ban on Sufism. For

---

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion on Turkey's ambivalence and in-betweenness regarding positioning itself between the West and the East, please see; Zeynep Gülşah Çapan and Ayşe Zarakol, "Turkey's ambivalent self: ontological insecurity in 'Kemalism' versus 'Erdoğanism'," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, no. 3, (2019): 263-282.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, please see; Feroz Ahmed, "The Islamic Assertion in Turkey: Pressures and State Response," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1/2, (Spring, 1982): 94.

<sup>8</sup> José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 31-32.

instance, Şükrü Hanioğlu argues that the notion that Sufi orders and superstitions hindered Muslim progress emerged as a product of these intellectual trends, primarily embraced within the Ottoman interpretations of materialist/positivist anti-religious criticism.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Binnaz Toprak describes the new Turkey's aim as creating a new citizen, which would not adhere to religion but to reason only.<sup>10</sup> Yet, this term and its connotations remain insufficient to account for why the Republican elite needed to launch a reform program towards religion in 1928 or to assert a monopoly on it through the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, hereafter Diyanet).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, this thesis avoids adopting such a definition but uses the concept of ambivalence, regarding state policies towards religion.

Additionally, this thesis aims to emphasize the significance of intricate personal relationships and the multi-dimensional structure involved in the establishment of a modern Sufi community. In other words, by recounting the anti-Sufi policies in a chronological order in concurrence with the developments within Sufi circles, it highlights the complex nature of such transformation. Therefore, this study avoids reductionist terms, explanations, and dichotomies that are prevalent in the existing literature such as orthodoxy-heterodoxy. The term of orthodoxy, which is generally used to emphasize on Khalidis' adherence to Sharia, implicitly rendering it a distinguished position among other Sufi orders. For instance, Itzhak Weismann argues that Baghdadi's letters to his disciples "constituted the discursive field of orthodoxy and

---

<sup>9</sup> Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>10</sup> Binnaz Toprak, "Secularism and Islam: The Building of Modern Turkey," *Macalester International*, Vol. 15, (2005): 30.

<sup>11</sup> For the attempts to reform Islam by a group of Islamic scholars, chosen by the government please see; İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, Vol. 2, (İstanbul: Dergah Publications, 2019), 124-156.

activism around which the Naqshbandi tradition revolved.”<sup>12</sup> Besides failing to account for the existence of non-politicized or inward Khalidi communities, this approach neglects the vernacularity of different Khalidi communities, treats the Order as if it were an institution with a headquarter and organization scheme that applies to its all disciples across the globe, and harms the scholarly approach to the Order as a socio-religious phenomena for implying a division between true and wrong Islam as discussed among Muslim ulama or theologians.<sup>13</sup>

Instead, it endeavors to explain the transformation by delving into the dynamics of the specific timeframe that encompasses the period from the closure of Sufi lodges by the Republic to the point when Khalidi communities had regained their visibility, and into the idiosyncrasies of its *dramatis personae* involved. Behind the selection of such timeframe lays the idea that the transformation and the emergence of contemporary Khalidi groups in Turkey are facilitated by its own conditions. Also, as discussed in the second chapter, the outcomes of community building processes by different Khalidi sheikhs were not identical due to an array of reasons, including the sheikhs’ own choices of means for building their communities. Therefore, this study avoids relying on oversimplified statements such as the notion that Khalidi communities inherited an intrinsically politicized understanding of Sufism.

### **A History of Renewal: Khalid Baghdadi and his Order**

In spite of this attempt to avoid reductionism, it is important to acknowledge the distinctive position of the Khalidi order in the history of Sufism. It is evident that Baghdadi

---

<sup>12</sup> Itzhak Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> For a criticism of the orthodoxy term in Islamic studies, please see; M. Brett Wilson, “The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of Orthodoxy in the Study of Islam,” *Comparative Islamic Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 2, (2009): 169-194.

revitalized the Order by applying changes to its practices such as facilitating the initiation into the Order as well as receiving an *ijaza* to become eligible for spreading Baghdadi's word. By doing so, Baghdadi enabled the Order's rapid expansion, sending deputies to each corner of the Muslim world, from Indonesia to the Balkans. Also, in his letters, he was repeatedly underlining the importance of returning to the *salaf* by which he meant the early period of Islam, and of full adherence to Sharia, which was the source of providing justice in the society, leading to prosperity.<sup>14</sup> This laid the foundation for the Order to serve as a framework, as previously mentioned with the concept of *din-u dunya*, to which modern Khalidi groups build their legacy as Islamic communities. However, it should be noted that this *din-u dunya* concept does not necessarily imply the politicization of the Order under every sheikh, nor does it require all Khalidis to take a stance on political matters. Nevertheless, the life story of Baghdadi reveals that the emergence of Khalidiyya, much like that of other nineteenth century Islamic movements whether it be Sufism-affiliated or not, was directly influenced by the political and social circumstances of his time.

Khalid Baghdadi, whose full name was Sheikh Abu al-Baha' Diy'a al-Din Khalid al-Shahrizuri al-Naqshbandi bin Ahmad, was born in 1776 in Qaradagh, a village located in the Shahrizur district of Kurdistan. He received his early education in Qaradagh and Sulaymaniyah. Later, Baghdadi left his hometown to pursue further studies in Baghdad. After completing his education, he returned to Qaradagh around 1798.<sup>15</sup> For approximately seven years, he dedicated himself to teaching Islamic sciences, with no apparent involvement in Sufi or political

---

<sup>14</sup> Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century," *Die Welt des Islams*, 22, no 1, (1982): 13-14.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Khani, *Bahjat al-Saniyya* (Cairo: al-Matbaat al-Maymaniyya, 1319), 83.

activities. However, the fact that he sent his brother to Hejaz to await the emergence of the Mahdi suggests a possible dissatisfaction with the socio-political situation in his hometown. According to Islamic sources, the Mahdi is believed to appear when Muslims face a loss of power against non-believers. During the early nineteenth century, the region of Hejaz experienced frequent raids by the Wahhabis, the Ottoman Empire was losing territories in the West, non-Muslim subjects within the Empire were rebelling, and Serbia and Greece were on the verge of gaining independence. These circumstances may have contributed to Baghdadi's concerns about the prevailing state of affairs.

Baghdadi began to seek for spiritual training, but not in Kurdistan nor in Baghdad.<sup>16</sup> Seeking spiritual guidance, he embarked on a journey to fulfill the sacred duty of Hajj. In 1805, he left his position in the madrasa and commenced his journey to Mecca, which was under Wahhabi occupation during that period.<sup>17</sup> In Mecca, he was asked by a mystic to go to India, where he would find the true sheikh.<sup>18</sup> In addition to the mystical explanation, according to Butrus Abu-Manneh, another factor that may have influenced Baghdadi's decision to travel to India was the Wahhabi occupation of Hejaz. The Wahhabis vehemently opposed Sufism and regarded its followers as heretics. This hostile stance towards Sufism could have played a role in Baghdadi's choice to seek refuge and further his spiritual journey in India.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Muhammed Esad Sahibzade, *Bughyat al-Wajid fi Mektubat Mawlana Khalid* (Damascus: Matbaat al-Taraqqi, 1334), 190.

<sup>17</sup> David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> Haydarizade, *al-Majdu Talid*, 27-36.

<sup>19</sup> Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," 3.



During his journey to India, Khalid Baghdadi made a stop in Iran, where he had the opportunity to meet Shiite scholars in Mashhad. During his stay, he composed a lengthy poem dedicated to Imam Riza, a descendant of the Prophet. Additionally, Baghdadi composed another poem in which he presented challenges to certain Shiite beliefs.<sup>20</sup> His correspondence reveals that this encounter with Shiites had a profound influence on his initial views regarding this sect. Baghdadi contended that Shiites should be regarded as heretics due to their perspective on the issue of succession that arose following the death of Prophet Muhammad.<sup>21</sup> The anti-Wahhabi and anti-Shiite sentiments have been widely passed down to the present-day Khalidi community, with many of its members writing refutations against these two sects.<sup>22</sup>

Upon his arrival in India in 1810, Baghdadi began his service in the lodge of Abdullah Ali Dehlavi (also known as Gulam Ali) from the Naqshbandi order in Delhi. The Naqshbandiyya order originated in the oases of Central Asia in the twelfth century and later adopted the name Naqshbandiyya after Bahauddin Naqshband (d. 1389) formalized the order.<sup>23</sup> Around 1813, Baghdadi returned to Iraq; however, due to disputes with the sheikhs of the Qadiri order, he was compelled to go to Damascus.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, little is known about Baghdadi's time spent in India, which could shed further light on his specific ideas against Shiites, the increasing Western influence, and the debates surrounding renewal. However, it is known that the lodge in Delhi

---

<sup>20</sup> Mawlana Khalid Baghdadi, *Divan*, (Istanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı, Osman Ergin Kitapları, no. 105, n.d.), 20b-21.

<sup>21</sup> Sahibzade, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, 171.

<sup>22</sup> For instance, please see; Hüseyin Hilmi Işık, *Vehhabilere ve Mezhebsizlere karşı Vesikalar*, (Istanbul: Işık Kitabevi, 1971).

<sup>23</sup> Necdet Tosun, *Bahaeddin Nakşband, Hayatı, Görüşleri, Tarikatı*, (Istanbul: İnsan Publications, 2002); Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica*, 44: 123-152; Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism, Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 34-36.

served as a hub for generating arguments against Shiites and promoting the purification of Sufism from practices deemed as *bid'a* (innovation) and ecstatic ideas that were seen as contradictory to Sharia.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, scholars such as Abu-Manneh and Hamid Algar rightly suggest that Baghdadi was greatly influenced by the pro-renewal, anti-Shiite, and anti-colonial ideas and discussions within this lodge. It is believed that these influences shaped his later anti-Western stance during his time in Damascus.<sup>26</sup>

### **Khalidiyya as a Nineteenth Century Movement**

However, Khalidiyya as a Sufi order or movement in the nineteenth century was not unique in its assumed pro-renewal endeavors. It was a period that witnessed the emergence of various reformist Islamic currents and influential figures who grappled with modernity and the influence of the West. For instance, renowned Egyptian scholar Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) was a prominent figure in the reformist movement. Additionally, within the Sufi tradition, there were other pro-renewal figures such as Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817) of the Qadiri order in Nigeria, who waged war against remnants of paganism within the Muslim community, and Umar al Futi of the Tijaniyya order, who launched a jihad against French forces in Senegal. Furthermore, new Sufi orders like the Sammaniyya, an offshoot of the Khalwatiyya order, played a significant role in the resistance against Dutch colonial powers in Indonesia. Another notable

<sup>25</sup> Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shariah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism*, (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986), 18-21. On this particular lodge and its pro-renewal sheikhs, please see; S. A. Abbas, *Shah Waliullah and his Times, A Study of Eighteenth Century of Islam, Politics and Society in India*, (Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1980); Muhammad al-Ghazali, *The Socio-Political Thoughts of Shah Wali Allah*, (Islamabad: Adam Publishers, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya."; Hamid Algar, "Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History," in *Naqshbandis Cheminements et Situation Actuelle d'un Ordre Mystique Musulman*, Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990). For instance, it is largely quoted that Baghdadi ordered his disciples to pray for the victory of the Empire during the Greek Revolt in 1821. Please see Sahibzade, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, 79.

pro-renewal Sufi order was the Senusiyye, which originated in Algeria and expanded across North Africa. This order was actively involved in the struggles against colonial powers, including the French and the Italians.<sup>27</sup> Almost all these Sufi orders shared a common objective, which was to liberate Muslims from the influences of *bid'a* and colonialism. These Sufi currents can be seen as responses to the encounters with non-Islamic external powers, specifically the West and its expanding influence. They emerged as a means to counteract the perceived negative effects of Western ideologies and colonial domination on Muslim societies.

Such a pro-renewal stance was also evident among certain leaders of the Khalidi order within the Ottoman Empire. Many of them emphasized the urgent need to save the Empire by returning to the fundamental Islamic sources, namely the Quran and Sunnah. They believed that the key to this rescue operation was through education, aiming to eliminate societal backwardness. One notable figure, Ahmed Hüsameddin Dağıstani (1848-1925), reached out to a wide range of people in Eskişehir and Ankara, teaching Islam. Unlike an ordinary madrasa teacher, he emphasized that Islamic knowledge should not be limited to madrasa students but should be accessible to ordinary individuals as well, as they believed that the Quran and Sunnah held the potential for the Empire's salvation.<sup>28</sup> Another influential figure within the Naqshbandi order who strongly believed in the necessity of societal transformation to overcome the decline was Ahmed Hilmi Ankaravi (1852-1916), a disciple of Ahmed Ziyaeddin Gümüşhanevi (1813-1893). Ankaravi, as the author of several books that aimed to present the essentials of Islam in

---

<sup>27</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, "Sufism, 'Popular' Islam and the Encounter with Modernity," in *Islam and Modernity Key Issues and Debates*, Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore and Martin van Bruinessen (eds.), (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 129-131.

<sup>28</sup> Musa Kazım Öztürk, *İslam Felsefesine Işık Veren Seyyidler*, (Ankara: Yenigün Publications, 1969): 160-161.

a simple language, advocated for reform. However, his idea of reform was centered around a return to the primary sources of Islam, namely the Quran and Sunnah. In his book titled *“Muhibb’ul Fiqh li Hifzi’d Din”* (The Necessity of Fiqh for the Protection of Religion), he expressed concern about the widespread ignorance among Muslims, to the extent that some were unaware that the Prophet’s name was Muhammad. Ankaravi lamented the prevalence of ignorance in that era, the neglect of Islamic knowledge, and the close proximity between ignorance and disbelief (*kufur*), comparing it to the proximity of the white and black sides of an eye.<sup>29</sup> He criticized the exploitation of religion by imams and sheikhs for their personal gains, pointing out that the people were engaging in un-Islamic practices like shrine visitations. Ankaravi emphasized that the revitalization of Islam was crucial for achieving success and progress in society.<sup>30</sup>

It is unclear whether Dağıstani or Ankaravi were directly influenced by Baghdadi, as there is no mention of Baghdadi’s works in their books. Therefore, it is challenging to establish a direct link between their societal approaches and their affiliation with Khalidiyya. Additionally, such ideas were widespread among intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, regardless of their Sufi affiliations.<sup>31</sup> But some studies in the present literature tend to attribute this “return to Quran and Sunna” approach to only Khalidiyya. For instance, Itzchak Weissman states two main pillars for this Order that are “adherence to the Sharia and active

---

<sup>29</sup> Ahmed Hilmi Ankaravi, *Muhibb’ul Fiqh li Hifzi’d Din*, (Istanbul: Mahmutbey Matbaası, 1912), 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion on “return to self” (*özüne dönmek*) in the late Ottoman Empire among non-Sufi circles, please see; Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2022), 9-49.

involvement in society and state.”<sup>32</sup> After giving examples from different Khalidi sheikhs who advocated Sharia over Western laws, Weismann concludes that Khalidis “represented the progressive socio-spatial adaptation of Sufi spirituality to the new realities of modernity and globalization.”<sup>33</sup> Some other scholars, such as Şerif Mardin, extend this tendency of perceiving Khalidiyya as a unified entity to the Republican era. Mardin describes Khalidiyya as the preserver of the Islamic canon and identifies it as the main body of Islamic fundamentalism in modern Turkey.<sup>34</sup>

However, such generalizations overlook the diversity of conservative and Islamic currents in Turkey and within Khalidiyya and fail to account for the existence of inward and ecstatic Khalidi groups in the late Ottoman era as well as “non-politicized” Khalidis in the Republican era.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the perception of Khalidiyya as uniformly politicized Sufism has largely been influenced by the the Republican elite’s portrayal of Khalidiyya as a unified, reactionary, and anti-modern movement. Yet, studies conducted by Algar, Zarcone, Hakan Yavuz, and Brian Silverstein reveal that the Khalidi communities actually emerged as modern movements, sharing similarities with the Republican elite.<sup>36</sup> The essence of this similarity can be summarized as a shared objective of

---

<sup>32</sup> Itzhak Weismann, “The Entire Land is My Lodge: Naqshbandi Responses to the Challenges of Modernity and Globalization,” in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes Emplacements of Spiritual Power across Time and Place*, Daphna Ephrat et al. (eds.), (London: Brill: 2021), 421.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 431.

<sup>34</sup> Şerif Mardin, “The Nakshibendi Order of Turkey,” in *Fundamentalisms and the State Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 205.

<sup>35</sup> A notable example is Küçük Hüseyin Efendi (1832-1930), who stood out for his strong spiritual inclination and lack of involvement with the madrasa tradition. Furthermore, his community continued its activities in the post-1925 era under the leadership of renowned musicians such as Cahit Gözkan, Nezih Uzel, and Abdülkadir Töre. For Küçük Hüseyin Efendi and his community, please see; Ekrem Ark, *Mevlânâ Küçük Hüseyin Efendi*, (Istanbul: Eskin Matbaası, 1988).

<sup>36</sup> Thierry Zarcone, “Nakşibendiler ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti: Zulümden, Yeniden Dini Siyasi ve Toplumsal Mevkiye Ulaşma (1925-1991),” *Türkiye Günlüğü* 23 (Summer 1993), quoted in Mustafa Kara, *Metinlerle Günümüz Tasavvuf Hareketleri* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014); Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (London: Palgrave

reforming or reorganizing the state and society, while the crux of the disagreement lay in the inability to reach a consensus on the sources and methods of this reform. Yet, these studies mostly focus on the post-1980 era, neglecting how the first steps of this path, taken to a modern structure were taken.

### Sources and Methodology

This thesis aims to contribute to the literature by exploring the first steps, taken by the Khalidi leaders in the 1950s and 1960s towards becoming a modern movement. It also argues for the necessity of conducting separate research on specific Khalidi communities, taking into account their unique circumstances. In order to move away from a state-centered approach to Khalidiyya during the Republican era, this thesis draws upon a range of sources, including newspapers, legal codes, parliamentary speeches, and state archives, while also incorporating the sources of Sufis, such as their books, publications, compilation of *sohbets* (conversations) and interviews conducted with family members of sheikhs. To gain insight into the mindset of the İsmailağa community, the works of Ustaosmanoğlu have been extensively utilized. A primary source for this study is a compilation of his conversations, known as *Sohbetler* (Conversations), which he held from the early 1960s to the late 1990s in Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque. This compilation offers his ideas on various topics, ranging from *fiqh*-related matters to Sufi practices and relations with state authorities. Through this three-volume book, the transformation of the Order can be observed, as it sheds light on foundational characteristics such as the rejection of technology or the attendance of public schools. Another compilation of Ustaosmanoğlu's

---

Macmillan, 2011); Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hamid Algar, "Political Aspects."

*sohbets* is the *Hikmetli Sözler* (Wise Words), which provides guidance on how disciples should organize their private lives and interact with society. Additionally, the books *Tembihat* (Monitions) and *İrşad'ül Müridin* (Guidance for Disciples) by Ustaosmanoğlu are important sources for understanding how Sufi practices were maintained within the community. Furthermore, the biography of Ustaosmanoğlu, titled *Hazrat-ü Mevlânâ eş-Şeyh Mahmut en-Nakşibendî el-Müceddidi el-Hâlidi el-Ufî*, written by a council of his own disciples, offers valuable information about significant events in his life as well as the community's perception of him, often featuring miraculous events. Thus, this biography highlights the spiritual dimension and the strong adherence to the sheikh within the community. Finally, the book *Mahmud Efendi Hazretleri (Kuddise Sirruhu) Hayatı & Fotoğraf Albümü*, also written by a council, provides archival documents related to his life, such as his authorization to become a *vaiz* (preacher) or his appointment as an imam.

To trace the evolution of the İsmailağa community, this thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the “tale of survival” from two perspectives. It examines how the increasing bureaucratization of the Ottoman Empire and the adoption of pro-Western ideas marginalized Sufis and ultimately led to the cessation of their activities within the legal framework. Simultaneously, state interference in the İsmet Baba Lodge, with which Ustaosmanoğlu is associated, was on the rise. The chapter aims to demonstrate that Khalidi lodges were not immune to state interference and did not hold a distinguished position, regarding the relations with the state. Furthermore, the chapter explores the root causes of the dispute between the Republican elite and certain Khalidi sheikhs, including Ali Haydar Gürbüzler (1871-1960), regarding the sources and methods for reforming the state and society.

Additionally, through an interview with the Gürbüzler family, insights into the culture and lifestyle within this Lodge are provided. The chapter concludes by highlighting that the ambivalent state policies allowed Gürbüzler to continue his Sufi activities and pass down his lineage to Ustaosmanoğlu.

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on the “tale of revival,” which explores the reconstruction of the Order under the leadership of Ustaosmanoğlu. The chapter begins by providing insights into how Ustaosmanoğlu assumed the roles of a preacher and imam, -again- highlighting the ambivalent nature of state policies. It further investigates the transformation of the İsmailağa Lodge into what this thesis terms a Sufism-inspired Islamic community. The chapter delves into the changing religious landscape that occurred after 1946, particularly the relaxation of anti-religious policies, which is supported by primary sources such as archival documents. Concurrently, it traces Ustaosmanoğlu’s activities and his efforts to establish a community that combines elements of the madrasa tradition with Sufism. Concurrently, the chapter traces Ustaosmanoğlu’s activities and his endeavors to establish a community that synthesizes aspects of the madrasa tradition with Sufism. It also includes a brief comparison with another notable Khalidi group, the İskenderpaşa community. This comparison aims to highlight the divergent outcomes that can arise from the same Sufi order, concerning the concepts of secularism and modernism. The chapter concludes that the pursuit of an alternative to the state-imposed secularism led to an Islamic primordialism and the relegation of Sufism to an ideology, ultimately resulting in the emergence of a reconstructed version of Khalidiyya within the İsmailağa community.



## **CHAPTER I**

### **ENDURING ANTI-SUFI MEASURES: A HISTORY of SURVIVAL (1925-1946)**

This chapter delves into the intricate relationship between the survival of the Khalidi Sufi order and the amalgamation of madrasa education with Sufism. The Khalidi sheikhs, who successfully passed down their lineages, benefited from their association with the mosques, which the new Turkish regime recognized as the sole legitimate Islamic spaces. While the conflict between the Republican elite and the madrasa-educated Khalidis emerged from differing perspectives on the path to overcome societal backwardness, this chapter aims to present a comprehensive historical account of the impasse between the state and Sufis, with Khalidis serving as a notable example.

To achieve this objective, the chapter begins by providing a historical backdrop, spanning from the late Ottoman era to the early years of the Republic. This context sheds light on the roots of the standoff between the state and Sufis, in which the growing Ottoman bureaucracy curbed the autonomy of Sufis and finally the new regime of Turkish Republic criminalized them. Also, by giving examples from gradually emerging anti-Sufi ideas among the late Ottoman intellectuals, this chapter shows both bureaucratic and ideological continuity in the combat against Sufis.

Subsequently, the chapter turns its attention to Sheikh Ali Haydar Gürbüzler, offering a brief biography of his life for giving a sense about the Ottoman era lodge. It also highlights his perspective on the closure of Sufi lodges and his ability to navigate the changing circumstances while sustaining his Sufi activities. Utilizing sources from the private archive of his Lodge, which

is now a foundation, the chapter attempts to mark the differences between the survival and revival eras, latter of which will be explained in the second chapter.

### **Unveiling the Journey Towards the Closure of Sufi Lodges**

In his famous speech in Kastamonu on August 30, 1925, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk delivered a clear message that the new Turkey would not accommodate Sufis: “The Turkish Republic is not a country for sheikhs, dervishes, disciples, or lunatics.” He further emphasized, “the presence of individuals engaging in primitive practices, seeking happiness under the guidance of a sheikh, is not acceptable in a civilized Turkish society.”<sup>37</sup> This powerful statement directly addressed the Sufi leaders who were present among his audience in Kastamonu. Three days later, a ministerial decree was issued, ordering the closure of all Sufi lodges and the elimination of titles associated with Sufism, such as sheikh, dervish, or baba. While the decree allowed current sheikhs to reside in the residential areas of the lodges until their death, it mandated the confiscation of all Sufi buildings for alternative use. The restrictive measures did not end with the lodges alone; all Sufi tombs were also sealed.<sup>38</sup> On October 11 of the same year, an ordinance was enacted, designating a group of officials in each city and district to inspect and seal the doors of every lodge. Furthermore, any items deemed worthy of exhibition in a museum were to be confiscated.<sup>39</sup> A law, numbered 677 (hereafter law 677) was approved in the Parliament on November 30, 1925, which prohibited the opening of lodges, conducting Sufi ceremonies, wearing Sufi attire, and maintaining Sufism-related titles.<sup>40</sup> In December 1925, the government

<sup>37</sup> *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1989), 217-218.

<sup>38</sup> *Official Gazette*, [Ceride-i Resmîye], 5 September 1341, No 168.

<sup>39</sup> *Son Saat*, 11 October 1925, quoted in Rüya Kılıç, “1925: Tekkelerin Kapanış Güncesi,” in *Ötekilerin Peşinde Ahmet Yaşar Ocak’a Armağan*, Mehmet Öz and Fatih Yeşil (eds.), (İstanbul: Timaş Publications, 2015), 750.

<sup>40</sup> *Official Gazette*, [Ceride-i Resmîye], 2 December 1341, No 243.

decided to turn the Mevlana lodge in Konya into a museum.<sup>41</sup> This decision conveyed the message that Sufism belonged to the past rather than the present. It symbolized a shift in societal attitudes, suggesting that Sufi practices were seen as relics of history rather than relevant to contemporary times.

This law sparked a controversy that continues to this day, as it marked the end of institutionalized Sufism, which had been an integral part of the Ottoman religious landscape. However, it's important to note that this decision was not made hastily but had a historical context. In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire implemented various measures aimed at exerting control over the Sufis. In pursuit of this objective, Selim III established an assembly in 1793, tasked with examining Sufi lodges to ensure their compliance with Sharia law. Building upon these efforts, Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) issued a regulatory decree in 1836, and later, Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) established the *Meclis-i Meşâyih* (Council of Sheikhs), or the council of sheikhs, to further govern Sufi activities.<sup>42</sup> The establishment of the *Meclis* marked a significant turning point in the reorganization of the relationship between the state and the Sufi orders. The Empire had previously experienced varying degrees of interaction with Sufis throughout different periods, ranging from peaceful to tumultuous. However, Muharrem Varol argues convincingly that the establishment of the *Meclis* signified the state's recognition of the Sufi orders as formal institutions.<sup>43</sup> Varol's assertion holds weight as the *Meclis* required each Sufi

---

<sup>41</sup> Hüseyin Karaduman, "Belgelerle Konya Mevlânâ Müzesi'nin Kuruluşu," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, Vol. XXIX (2005), 136-161.

<sup>42</sup> İsmail Kara, *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*, (İstanbul: Dergah Publications, 2005), 326-327.

<sup>43</sup> Muharrem Varol, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikatları Denetleme Siyaseti ve Meclis-i Meşâyih'in Bilinen; Ancak Bulunamayan İki Nizamnâmesi," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 23, (2010): 41.

order to designate a central lodge (*merkez tekke*), which held the responsibility of overseeing the financial and ecclesiastical matters of other lodges within the order. Furthermore, the appointment of sheikhs in these lodges was subject to the approval of both the central lodge and the *Meclis-i Meşayih*.<sup>44</sup> This hierarchical structure institutionalized the Sufi orders and integrated them into the increasing bureaucratization efforts of the state.

During the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1908), state-Sufi relations experienced a significant shift. The state provided patronage to various Sufi leaders in an attempt to mobilize civil resistance against the increasing influence of Western powers within the Empire. Notable among these Sufis were Sheikh Abu'l-Huda Sayyadi in Syria, Sheikh Muhammad Zafir in Tunisia, Huseyin el-Cisr in Egypt, and Sheikh Muhammed Mehdi es-Sunusi in Libya. The Sultan favored these non-Turkish sheikhs as they played a crucial role in maintaining Ottoman control over the Arab regions.<sup>45</sup> Abdulhamid II displayed generosity by fulfilling numerous requests from different lodges, including the Khalidiyya lodge in Damascus that Baghdadi had founded.<sup>46</sup> However, the state control over Sufi lodges were tightened. The Sultan assigned spies to monitor the activities of the sheikhs, resulting in the persecution and exile of several individuals, including those affiliated with the Khalidiyya order.<sup>47</sup>

After the removal of Abdulhamid II, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) implemented a series of measures aimed at strengthening state control. In 1917, a new decree

---

<sup>44</sup> Bilgin Aydın, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tekkeler Reformu ve Meclis-i Meşayih'in Şeyhülislâmlık'a Bağlı Olarak Kuruluşu, Faaliyetleri ve Arşivi," *İstanbul Araştırmaları*, No. 7, (1998): 96.

<sup>45</sup> Muharrem Varol, "Yıldız Sarayı'nın Tekkeleri ve II. Abdülhamid'in Tarikat Siyaseti," in *II. Abdülhamid Modernleşme Sürecinde İstanbul*, ed. Coşkun Yılmaz, (İstanbul: Avrupa Kültür Başkenti, 2010: 212-215.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 208.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 219.

was issued, designating the urban Sufi sheikhs under the authority of the *Şeyhülislam*, while those in rural areas fell under the jurisdiction of the muftis. The decree also addressed important matters such as sheikh succession, lodge incomes, and the education of prospective sheikhs. The following year, the *Meclis-i Meşâyih* requested all sheikhs to submit reports containing information about the number of their disciples, ceremonial practices, income sources, and potential successors. These measures were implemented as part of the broader efforts to centralize and regulate the activities of the Sufi orders. State interference reached such levels that a subsequent decree went as far as instructing sheikhs to direct their disciples to open windows after smoking tobacco indoors or keep their kitchens clean.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, the *Meclis-i Meşâyih* urged sheikhs to confine their ceremonies within the boundaries of their lodges, refrain from displaying their objects outside, and closely monitor their disciples to ensure their adherence to *Sharia* principles.<sup>49</sup> The state was treating Sufi lodges as if they were part of the bureaucratic system of the state.

In the Parliament, between the years of 1920 and 1923, the future of Sufi lodges was repeatedly questioned. Many propounded the idea of reforming these lodges but many of them doubted whether these institutions could undergo a solid reform or transformation, referring to the *vakıf* revenues, transfer of sheikhdom from father to son, and their excessive number across the country.<sup>50</sup> The government made the final attempt to bring the Sufi lodges under state

---

<sup>48</sup> Bilgin Aydın, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde," 92-96.

<sup>49</sup> For further information about *Meclis* and its assertive power on lodges, please see; Osman Sacid Arı, "Meclis-i Meşâyih Arşivi'ne Göre Hicrî 1296–1307 (Miladî 1879–1890) Yılları Arasında Osmanlı Tekkelerinde Ortaya Çıkan Problemler," Unpublished MA Thesis, Istanbul University, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> For the discussion over Sufi lodges in the Parliament, please see; Ayşe Yanardağ, "Atatürk Devrimleri ve Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (1924-1938), Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University: 2012, 134-143.

control before their dissolution. On March 3, 1924, coinciding with the abolition of the Caliphate, a bill granted sole authority to Diyanet for the appointment of imams in mosques and sheikhs in Sufi lodges.<sup>51</sup> This regulation severely curtailed the autonomy of Sufi lodges, even in the selection process for the position of sheikh, and aimed to confine the activities of Sufis in their lodges, limit their excessive influence, and serve as a reminder that the state was closely monitoring their actions. In essence, the state sought to integrate the Sufis into the modern system by formalizing their existence. However, this process came at a cost, as Sufis had to sacrifice their autonomy and become dependent on the rapidly expanding and centralizing state bureaucracy.

On the other hand, a growing displeasure with Sufis among Ottoman intellectuals was evident. Accusations of debauchery, the propagation of superstitious beliefs, and hindering social progress led both anti-religious and Islamist thinkers to criticize Sufis. One of the staunchest opponents of the lodges was Kılıçzade İsmail Hakkı, who served in various ranks of the Ottoman army. As early as 1912, he urged the government to close Sufi lodges, viewing them as “sources of indolence” that wasted income resources by diverting them to sheikhs instead of utilizing them for the country’s progress.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Zülfizade Ömer Adil, in his book titled “Sufi Lodges Must Be Destroyed,” argued that Sufism was “the root of degradation, bigotry, hypocrisy, and an enemy of Islam and civilization.”<sup>53</sup> Another writer, Haşim Nahid from Iraq, claimed that Sufi lodges were exploitative and drained the revenue of foundations, urging the government to

---

<sup>51</sup> *Official Gazette*, [Ceride-i Resmîye], 07 April 1924, No: 68.

<sup>52</sup> Kılıçzade İsmail Hakkı, “Pek Uyanık bir Uyku,” *İçtiḥad*, No. 55, 57.

<sup>53</sup> Zülfizade Ömer Adil, *Tekyeler Yıkılmalıdır*, (İstanbul: İstikbal Matbaası, 1925).

cease funding these institutions.<sup>54</sup> Despite his strong objection to positivist ideology and the adoption of Western values, the renowned Islamist poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy also criticized Sufism. In one of his poems, he described Sufism as a wine that lured Muslims away from reality.<sup>55</sup> According to his perspective, the Sufi doctrine, which regarded the material world as insignificant, instilled lethargy among Muslims. On the other hand, Şeyh Hüsnü Efendi, while acknowledging the issues within the lodges, argued against blaming all lodges. Instead, he called for increased authority of the *Meclis-i Meşayih*, particularly in matters related to finance, over the lodges.<sup>56</sup> The discussions over the future of Sufi lodges as well as the legitimacy of their existences from both pro-Western and Islamist points were questioned whereas Sufis attempted to defend themselves but admitted the need for a reform.

The discussions surrounding the closure of Sufi lodges in the late Ottoman Empire highlight the historical context that influenced Atatürk's decision. Despite his collaboration with various Sufi leaders during the National Struggle (1919-1922) and his continued friendships with many of them in the post-1925 period, Atatürk envisioned a different Turkey—one in which Sufi leaders were not permitted to maintain their material, financial, and spiritual influence. He was determined to bring about fundamental changes to the country. Additionally, a series of rebellions, some of which involved Sufis, contributed to his decision to not simply reform these long-standing institutions, but to eradicate them entirely. The Khalidiyya order did not have an impunity against the process that ended up with the closure of Sufi lodges. Despite being a relatively young order, initially facing challenges in justifying its presence in Istanbul, the

<sup>54</sup> Haşim Nahid, *Türkiye için Necat ve İtila Yolları*, (İstanbul: Şems Matbaası, n.d.).

<sup>55</sup> Mehmet Demirci, Yahya Kemal ve Mehmet Akif'te Tasavvuf, (İstanbul: Akademi Kitabevi, 1993), 67.

<sup>56</sup> Şeyh Hüsnü, "Tarikat Mesâili: Lüzûm-ı Islâhât", *Hikmet*, 26 Mayıs 1920.

expanding state bureaucracy successfully exerted its authority over Khalidi sheikhs and lodges. While several Khalidi lodges received state funding, certain Khalidi sheikhs were subjected to surveillance. Some of them were even appointed to the *Meclis-i Meşayih* and given leadership roles. Similar to other Sufi lodges, the *Meclis-i Meşayih* played a role in the appointment of sheikhs within the Khalidi order.

The İsmet Baba Lodge, with which the İsmailağa community associates itself, for instance, maintained close ties with the state, which resulted in both financial support and intervention. For instance, in 1897, Sheikh Ahmet Hilmi of the lodge appealed to the Sublime Porte to increase state funding due to economic hardships faced by himself and his disciples. His request was promptly accepted, leading to an immediate increase in the monthly payment.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, despite objections from İsmet Baba's heirs, the *Meclis-i Meşayih* deemed it more appropriate to appoint Mustafa Haki (?-1920) as the sheikh in 1919.<sup>58</sup> The appointment of Mustafa Haki disregarded the objections raised by İsmet Baba's successors. Similarly, the appointment of Sheikh Ali Haydar followed a series of meetings with high-level politicians and effectively resulted in the removal of Mustafa Haki from his position.<sup>59</sup> Contrary to the assumption that Khalidiyya was a peripheral order with limited interaction with bureaucracy, it was equally affected by state-Sufi relations both in positive and negative ways.<sup>60</sup> Still, it should

---

<sup>57</sup> BOA, Y.PRK.DH, 10-63, 06-02-1316.

<sup>58</sup> BOA, BEO, 4564-342257, 05-07-1337.

<sup>59</sup> BOA, BEO, 4685-351308, 04-08s-1339.

<sup>60</sup> Many researchers, who focus on modern Khalidi communities tend to extend these groups' peculiarities to pre-Republican era of the Order. For instance, Fulya Atacan and Nur Vergin conclude that Khalidiyya was strong in the periphery for its ability to mobilize uneducated people, who were feeling excluded by the Republic. This approach fails to reveal the transformation of this Order under the leadership of certain sheikhs. Fulya Atacan, *Cerrahiler*, (Istanbul: Hil Publications, 1990); Nur Vergin, "Toplumsal Değişme ve Dinsellikte Artış," *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 30, (1985): 20.



be acknowledged that Khalidiyya's role in these relations took a different trajectory after the Republican elite stigmatized the Order due to the involvement of some of its members in anti-Republic activities.

### **Navigating Transformative Times: Revolutions and Sufis (1925-1946)**

During the initial years of the young Republic, a period marked by intense Westernization, a series of reforms were implemented to curtail the role of Islam in society. Islam and Islamic groups were seen as hindrances to the revolutionary efforts. As part of these reforms, religious institutions, including *evkaf* (foundations) and madrasas, were closed down. The Arabic script was replaced by the Latin alphabet, and the Turkish language underwent significant purification, shedding Arabic and Persian influences. The requirement for men to wear Western-style hats was enforced, while women were granted equal rights, including the right to vote and hold public office. The traditional day-off on Friday was replaced by Sunday, the Muslim prayer transitioned from Arabic to Turkish recitation, Western legal codes supplanted Sharia law, and the recognition of Islam as the state religion was removed from the constitution in 1928.<sup>61</sup> These revolutionary changes aimed to dismantle any authority based on religion that could challenge the newly defined role and perception of Islam. To this end, a religious directorate known as the Diyanet was established in 1924 and underwent reforms in 1935 to ensure that religion remained under state control.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Binnaz Toprak, "Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey," in *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, edited by Said Amir Arjomand (London: SUNY Press, 1984), 120-121.

<sup>62</sup> İsmail Kara, "Din ile Devlet Arasına Sıkışmış Bir Kurum: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı," *Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, No. 18 (2000): 29-55.

The closure of Sufi lodges had a crucial position for implementing this secularization program since Sufism, which was based on the spiritual power of saints and their representatives, sheikhs, was seen as incompatible with the modern Republic. According to the perspective of the Republic's main cadre, Sufism symbolized the old regime, backwardness, uncivilized practices, and superstitious beliefs, which were considered as manifestations of "false Islam." On September 5, 1925, the *Cumhuriyet* daily celebrated the closure of Sufi lodges, proclaiming that the only path to follow was the "tariqa of civilization." The article stated "gone are the shadowy and obscure *semahanes* [where dhikr ceremonies are held] of the lodges, the rituals that diminish reason and intellect, the sheikhs who deceive and misguide rather than enlighten and guide, and the dusty tombs that undermine people's determination and willpower by advocating apathy and quietism... Just like the era of sultans and caliphs, the moral and material authority of these sheikhs, orders, tombs, and the deceased now belong to the past."<sup>63</sup>

The state sought to cultivate a model citizen who could maintain their religious beliefs unless they attempted to introduce religion into the political sphere. In this context, 'politics' had a broader definition than just partisan politics; any form of incompatibility with the Republican elite's so-called revolutionary ideals was deemed politicization and reactionary (*irtica*). The overarching mission and objective were to achieve a level of modernity and contemporaneity in line with other civilizations.<sup>64</sup> Alev Çınar astutely observes that the terms modern (*çağdaş*) and secular came to be used interchangeably, serving as a political alliance

---

<sup>63</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, "Batıl İtikatlara Paydos," 5 September 1925.

<sup>64</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk delivered a famous speech in 1933 for the tenth anniversary of the Republic. He summarized the Republic's mission and objective with this sentence (*muasır medeniyetler seviyesine ulaşmak*).

against reactionary movements<sup>65</sup>. Hikmet Kırık views Turkish secularization as a process of “rationalization of life” imposed from the center to the periphery.<sup>66</sup> In other words, the Republican elite embarked on a comprehensive secularization process that encompassed both the state and society, including individual citizens.

In a similar vein, Zafer Toprak perceives “the Republican revolutions as an endeavor to not only reorganize the public sphere but also the private sphere.” Toprak exemplifies this argument with marriage officiations: “Irrespective of an individual’s religious beliefs, ceremonies such as marriages would be officiated through civil authorities.” He concludes that the replacement of Sharia with Western-influenced civil law demonstrated how secularism emerged as a regulatory framework for private matters.<sup>67</sup> As a matter of fact, Atatürk’s emphasis on the civil code paralleled his justification for the closure of lodges, as he envisioned that “the path we will follow in the realms of family and civil law will be that of civilization.” Additionally, Atatürk believed that Sharia law no longer aligned with the requirements of the modern era.<sup>68</sup> In essence, the Republican elite firmly believed that this approach was the only way to civilize, Westernize, and liberate society from the perceived influence of religion.

Contrary to Atatürk’s approach to the law, on the other hand, Sheikh Ali Haydar strongly believed that Islamic law was unaffected by changing circumstances, capable of addressing contemporary needs, and the sole legitimate means of delivering justice and maintaining order.

---

<sup>65</sup> Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey Bodies, Places and Time*, (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>66</sup> Hikmet Kırık and Oya Morva, *Cumhuriyet ve Pragmatizm Yazılmamış Kuram*, (Istanbul: Doruk Yayınları, 2016), 7.

<sup>67</sup> Zafer Toprak, *Atatürk Kurucu Felsefenin Evrimi*, (Istanbul: İş Bankası Publications, 2019), 75.

<sup>68</sup> *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III*, 347.

In one of his correspondences with Talat Pasha during the CPU era, he staunchly defended the Sharia-based *Mecelle* (a compilation of obligations law, law of things, and law of civil procedure) by asserting that with a few revisions, it could adapt to the necessities of the present time.<sup>69</sup> Sheikh Ali Haydar held a viewpoint that directly contradicted the governing elite's vision of civilization and progress. He and many late Ottoman era Islamist thinkers as well as some other Khalidi sheikhs believed that a return to the fundamental sources of Islam would enable progress. For example, in one of his letters to a disciple, entitled as "progress is enabled by Islam" another renowned Khalidi sheikh, Esad Erbili (1847-1931), expressed his belief that the salvation of Muslims from backwardness and defeats against Western powers could only be achieved through a proper application of the Quran and Sunnah.<sup>70</sup> However, this approach, seeking a return to original sources of Islam failed to gain power or captivate the minds of the Republican elite. State pressure and media attacks against Sufis intensified. Sheikh Ali Haydar like many others complied with the closure of Sufi lodges, but his primary concern was the closure of Islamic teaching centers, particularly madrasas, as discussed further in this chapter.

Indeed, many Sufi leaders silently acquiesced to Atatürk's decision to close their lodges, recognizing that their era had come to an end. However, there were a few dissenting voices, and one such voice was that of Abdülkadir Baykara (1883-1935), the sheikh of Yenikapı Mevlevi Lodge. Through his poems, he criticized the revolutions for being contrary to the essence of Islam and Turkish culture. He also emphasized that Sufism did not require a designated physical space to sustain its existence. On the other hand, prominent Sufi figures in influential positions,

---

<sup>69</sup> İsmet Efendi Vakfı, Private Archive, n.d.

<sup>70</sup> Muhammed Es'ad Erbili, *Mektûbat - Muhammed Esad Erbili*, (Istanbul: Erkam Publications, 2005), 391-399.

such as Veled İzbudak (1869-1953), a parliamentary deputy and the last recognized sheikh of the Mevlana Lodge in Konya, and Yahya Galip Kargı (1874-1942), the governor of Ankara, a close associate of Atatürk and the heir to sheikhdom in Umme Sinan lodge in Istanbul, did not express any objections. Kenan Büyükkaksoy (1867-1950), a well-known figure among Sufi circles, argued that it was imperative to submit to the will of Allah and accept the necessity for change in these institutions that had become incompatible with the demands of the contemporary era.<sup>71</sup>

In fact, the Khalidi sheikhs also remained largely silent during this period. Some even expressed the belief that the Sufis deserved the consequences they were facing. For instance, Abdülaziz Bekkine (1895-1952) argued that there were only a few sheikhs who truly provided guidance. Similarly, Abdülhakim Arvasi (1865-1943) suggested that the lodges had already deviated from Islamic principles, implying that their closure was deserved.<sup>72</sup> However, for the Khalidis, the closure of the lodges represented the triumph of pro-Western ideologies and the defeat of Islamic thought that advocated a return to Islamic sources for salvation. For numerous Khalidi sheikhs, the cultural aspects of Sufism held secondary or negligible importance. Instead, their focus was on transmitting knowledge of Islamic teachings. Yet, they soon faced harsher state repression following rebellions against the young Republic, most of which allegedly involved Khalidi figures.

Among these rebellions was the Sheikh Said uprising, which indeed resulted in the closure of Sufi lodges. It was an armed uprising led by Sheikh Said of the Khalidi order in 1925

---

<sup>71</sup> Samiha Ayverdi, Nezihe Araz, Safiye Erol, and Sofi Huri, *Ken'an Rifâi ve Yirminci Asrın Işığında Müslümanlık*, (Istanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyat, 2003), s. 120.

<sup>72</sup> İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, Vol. 1, (Istanbul: Dergah Publications, 2019), 260-67.

against the Republic. The rebellion took place primarily in the southeastern region of Turkey, centered around the city of Diyarbakir. Sheikh Said, a prominent religious leader, organized the rebellion in response to the secular reforms and centralization policies of the state. Sheikh Said's opposition to these reforms stemmed from his belief that they undermined traditional Islamic values and authority as well as the unity between Turks and Kurds for imposing Turkish nationalism. The government quickly blamed him and his followers with attempting to create an independent Kurdistan. The rebellion began on 13 February 1925, when Sheikh Said and his followers seized control of Diyarbakir and proclaimed the restoration of the Caliphate and Sharia law. The rebellion quickly spread to other nearby towns and villages, gaining support from various religious and tribal groups. The government, with an order from Ataturk, responded swiftly and decisively to suppress the rebellion. Despite initial successes, the Sheikh Said rebellion was ultimately crushed by the government. By the end of March 1925, Turkish forces had regained control of Diyarbakir and successfully suppressed the uprising in other areas. Sheikh Said and many of his followers were captured, and he was later executed. The Sheikh Said rebellion had significant implications for the Turkish Republic. It highlighted the challenges faced by the government in integrating religious and conservative segments of society into the secular state structure. The rebellion also contributed to the consolidation of state control and the promotion of nationalist and secular policies in Turkey.<sup>73</sup>

This rebellion was swiftly characterized as a Sufi uprising, specifically attributed to the Naqshbandi order. Şemsettin Günaltay (1883-1961), a madrasa graduate and future prime

---

<sup>73</sup> For more information, please see; Robert Olson and William F. Tucker, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925*, (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989).

minister, pronounced that the era of Sufis had come to an end, stating “these violent deeds carried out by Sheikh Said and his followers, with the intention of extinguishing the light with darkness, clearly illustrate that these so-called *tekkes*, which have already lost their original essence, are no more than festering sores, serving as breeding grounds for harmful elements. [...] *Tekkes* must be consigned to history.”<sup>74</sup> According to the perspective of the Republican elite, the primary target of their criticism was the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, which they regarded as the “most extreme, conservative, bigoted, and supportive of the ummah” compared to other orders.<sup>75</sup> Notably, in his inaugural address following the quelling of the rebellion, Atatürk insinuated that the uprising had a distinct ideological basis. He stated “the events and circumstances that unfolded in the past year have once again demonstrated that this rebellion was of a reactionary nature, stemming from a premeditated and interconnected ideological agenda.”<sup>76</sup>

The *Cumhuriyet* daily newspaper published a cartoon depicting a scene where Atatürk, dressed in Western attire, pointed his finger at a group of men wearing Sufi garments and sporting long beards, declaring “sentenced!”<sup>77</sup> Sheikh Said and his followers were executed, and Sufi lodges throughout Kurdistan were closed based on a court ruling that paradoxically asserted Sufism to be contrary to Islam.<sup>78</sup> This was a sign that the state wanted to decide what is compatible with Islam and what is not. Although the verdict was initially limited to Kurdistan

---

<sup>74</sup> M. Şemseddin [Günaltay], *Zulmetten Nura*, Third Edition, (Istanbul: Evkaf-ı İslamiye Matbaası, 1341), 153.

<sup>75</sup> Mahmut Goloğlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkiler I Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi 1924–1930*, (Istanbul: İş Bankası Publications, 2017), 118.

<sup>76</sup> *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 19, 7, 1 November 1925.

<sup>77</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, “Hüküm Verildi” 30 June 1925.

<sup>78</sup> *Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi (Kararlar ve Mahkeme Zabıtları)*, (Ankara: TBMM Kütüphane ve Arşiv Hizmetleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, Vol. 6/1, Verdict No: 69), 2016, 83.

and lacked evidence implicating other Sufi orders, the newly founded regime recognized the potential threat posed by Sufi leaders, who asserted control over both material and spiritual realms. Driven by a desire to consolidate state power and advance the process of civilization, Atatürk made the decision to shut down Sufi lodges, outlaw Sufism, and even negate the existence of Sufis.

Meanwhile, Atatürk introduced on 25 November 1925 one of the most controversial laws, the hat law. This law required all men in public positions, including government employees, students, and military personnel, to wear Western-style hats instead of the fez or other traditional head coverings. Being aware of the reactions he could face, Atatürk allegedly asked Veled İzbudak to be the first person to wear the hat outside.<sup>79</sup> In this way, Atatürk was planning to make people accept the Western hat. İzbudak was heavily criticized by his Mevlevi fellows and had to defend himself by writing a poem, in which he claimed a hat would not make anybody Muslim or infidel. However, the country faced anti-hat uprisings. Allegedly, Khalidi sheikhs or disciples were somehow involved. In Kayseri, Sheikh Ahmet, a Khalidi sheikh, urged people to retain their traditional clothing instead of wearing the hat. In his campaign, Sheikh Ahmet cautioned that the hijab could potentially face prohibition as well. As a result of the protests, over 300 individuals were subsequently arrested. In Erzurum, a large crowd assembled in front of the governorate building, protesting against both the hat law and the closure of Sufi lodges. Thousands of people participated in the demonstration. *Cumhuriyet* daily reported that a Khalidi sheikh had rallied people by alleging that the Republic intended to lead them astray from their

---

<sup>79</sup> İlknur Güntürkün Kalıpçı, *Esrileri ile İçimizden Biri Atatürk*, (İstanbul: Epsilon Publications, 2007), 24.



faith. Similarly, in Giresun, Sheikh Muharrem, belonging to the Khalidi order, was leading the protests and inciting the public against the government regarding the hat law.<sup>80</sup> However, it is challenging to establish the affiliation of these individuals with Khalidiyya since there is no evidence regarding their lineage.<sup>81</sup>

At this time, Sheikh Ali Haydar was also detained and taken to a court on the grounds that he was opposing the hat law by distributing the book of *Frenk Mukallitliği* (Imitating the Frank and Islam), penned by İskilipli Atıf Hoca, who was executed for his objection to the National Struggle. However, in Turkey many conservative historians believe that the main reason for his execution was his book, in which he opposed wearing a Western style hat.<sup>82</sup> However, Ali Haydar displayed a disdainful attitude towards İskilipli Atıf Hoca during the trial and was released after a short while.<sup>83</sup> Their differences indeed extended beyond the issue of the hat law to include the latter's rejection of Sufism.<sup>84</sup>

Five years later, on 23 December 1930, the Menemen incident happened and became a turning point for demonizing Khalidiyya. A group of people who were allegedly the disciples of Khalidi sheikh, Esad Erbili, gathered in the town of Menemen, chanting slogans against the

<sup>80</sup> Selâmi Kılıç, "Şapka Meselesi ve Kılık Kıyafet İnkılabı," *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Vol. 4, no. 16, (1995): 544-545.

<sup>81</sup> There is no record or mention of them in pertinent archival documents. The most reasonable explanation could be that Khalidiyya did not adhere to stringent regulations when granting *ijaza*, resulting in the representation of numerous sheikhs across Anatolia.

<sup>82</sup> Please see; Sadık Albayrak, "İskilipli Atıf Hoca," *DİA*, Vol. 22, (İstanbul: 2000): 583-584.

<sup>83</sup> Ahmet Nedim, *Ankara İstiklal Mahkemesi Zabıtları 1926*, (İstanbul: İşaret Publications, 1993), 116-118.

<sup>84</sup> It is worth noting that Khalidiyya was not a unified entity regarding its sheikhs' attitudes towards the revolutions. For instance, Fehmi Efendi of the Khalidi order, who served as a teacher at Galatasaray High School, one of the early modern schools in the Ottoman Empire, was the sheikh of Kaptan Pasha Lodge. When faced with the requirement to wear a Western-style hat, he willingly complied. In response to inquiries about the permissibility of this act, his remarkable statement was as follows: "Not only wearing a hat, if it were necessary for the well-being of the people, the country, and for adaptation to the world, we would place our heads on an idol, and it would not undermine our faith." Mustafa Koç, *Revnakoğlu'nun İstanbul'u İstanbul'un İç Tarihi, Fatih*, Vol. 1, (İstanbul: Fatih Belediyesi Kültür Publications), 57.

Republic. They beheaded a soldier, named Mustafa Fehmi Kubilay and killed two watchmen. Although court verdicts demonstrate that the rioters were drug-addicts and not directly linked with any Sufi leader, Esad Erbili and his son Ali were detained. Both were sentenced to death but due to his age Erbili was prisoned while his son was executed. A few months later, Erbili died at a military hospital.<sup>85</sup> However, the relationship between Erbili and the Menemen incident has never been clearly proven.<sup>86</sup>

Even so, this incident marked the demonization of Sufism and particularly Naqshbandiyya in Turkey. The new regime was not primarily shocked with the emergence of such an uprising but also with the support of people, which indicated that the revolutions had not been truly adopted. Atatürk was frustrated: "This is a shameful incident for all Republicans and patriots because some of the people of Menemen applauded and encouraged the savagery of the reactionaries."<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, Goloğlu quotes Atatürk as saying "the commanders must know that this Order [Naqshbandiyya] shall be destroyed," Kazım Karabekir, an influential commander during the First World War and National Struggle as saying "this Order is a snake, which must be extinguished."<sup>88</sup> In fact, the Menemen incident was the beginning point of the struggle for survival.

Until the Menemen incident, sheikhs were even used to legitimize the revolutions as seen in the case of Veled İzbudak, wearing a hat. For instance, Sadık Bektaş Baba, a Bektaşî

---

<sup>85</sup> Kemal Üstün, *Menemen Olayı ve Kubilay*, (İstanbul: Çağdaş Publications, 1981), 20-25.

<sup>86</sup> Eyüp Öz, "Yasak Bir Hafızayla Yüzleşmek: Menemen Olayı İrtica mı, Komplo mu?" *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 5, (Spring, 2015): 409-440.

<sup>87</sup> Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması 1923-1931*, (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Publications, 2010), 127.

<sup>88</sup> Goloğlu, *Devrimler ve Tepkiler*, 280-281.

sheikh in Mersin was interviewed by *Akşam* daily. In the interview, this sheikh was underlining the aptness of the decision to close the lodges and the Islamic legitimacy of wearing a hat: “I have failed to reform the lodge that I inherited from my father. A life in a lodge is not a wasted life. We, the sheikhs were not useful for anybody.” The newspaper was also reporting that Sadık Baba asked his disciples to take off their Sufi clothing and get a hat for themselves.<sup>89</sup> In another newspaper article, the former Sufi craftsmen, who used to sew Sufi clothes were reported to be applying their art for manufacturing hats. In this way, they were “earning their lives by working, not by drowsing in lodges.”<sup>90</sup> These reports demonstrate that the statements of sheikhs were still of significance for justifying the revolutions, including the most contested, hat law. However, after 1930, sheiks were under strict surveillance and any gathering, which would be a Sufi one was facing police repercussion.<sup>91</sup>

### **A History of Survival: Sheikh Ali Haydar (Gürbüzler)**

The continued existence of Sheikh Ali Haydar’s Sufi lineage despite state pressure holds significant importance in highlighting two key aspects. Firstly, this survival can be attributed to the ambivalent policies of the regime. Specifically, the provision outlined in law 677 allowed the last recognized sheikhs to remain in their lodges, which enabled Ali Haydar to continue his Sufi activities discreetly. Secondly, similar to many prominent Khalidi sheikhs, Ali Haydar skillfully combined teachings from both madrasas and Sufi traditions, enjoying mosques that were the sole legally recognized spaces for disseminating Islam’s fundamental concepts.

<sup>89</sup> *Akşam*, 19 Eylül 1341, quoted in Rüya Kılıç, “1925,” 752.

<sup>90</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, 12 Eylül 1341, quoted in *ibid*, 753.

<sup>91</sup> For the increasing pressure on and arrests of Sufis, please see; Sabit Dokuyan, “Tekkelerin Kapatılması ve Tasfiye Süreci (1925-1938),” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, No. 98, (Summer, 2021): 217-244.

Ali Haydar, born in 1871 in Batum, present-day Georgia, migrated to the Ottoman territories where he pursued his education. Initially known for his strong opposition to Sufi orders, his perception shifted after meeting Ali Rıza Bezzaz in Balıkesir at the beginning of the 20th century. Through his ascent in the ulama hierarchy, he was entrusted with the religious education of sultans. Establishing close ties with officials at the Palace, he gained their support as well as that of anti-CUP officials in the *Meclis-i Meşayih* during a dispute over assuming the position of sheikh in the Ismet Baba Lodge.<sup>92</sup> Mustafa İsmet Garibullah Yanyevî [of Ioannina], who was initiated by Abdullah Mekki, the deputy of Khalid Baghdadi to Khalidiyya founded this lodge in 1854 in Istanbul's Fatih district. Throughout its existence, the lodge received substantial support from the state, particularly during the reign of Abdülmecid II.<sup>93</sup>

Upon assuming the role of sheikh in 1920, Sheikh Ali Haydar actively engaged in Sufi practices while concurrently holding a position in *Fetvahane*, the department of fatwa. Within *Fetvahane*, he served as the head of *Heyet-i Telifiyye*, responsible for legislative matters. His primary duty involved contributing to the formulation of new laws based on Sharia principles, tailored to address the evolving needs of the era.<sup>94</sup> His tenure in this department primarily focused on compiling the fatwas of renowned Hanafi scholars across various disciplines.<sup>95</sup> However, it remains unknown whether he held any pro-renewal ideas such as seeking a reform

<sup>92</sup> Ahmet Açıkgöz, "Tekkesi İşgal Edilen Şeyh", *İnkışaf Dergisi*, no.2 (İstanbul: 2005), 70.

<sup>93</sup> Contemporary community members contend that the deliberate choice of location for this lodge, coupled with the suspiciously low sale price facilitated by an Ottoman bureaucrat, suggests a calculated move by the Palace to counter the increasing influence of the nearby Greek Patriarchate. However, no existing archival documentation substantiates this claim. Please see; İhsan Şenocak, *Kudemâ Meclisi*, (İstanbul: Hüküm Kitap, 2016), 163.

<sup>94</sup> İslam Demirci, "Osmanlı Şeyhülislâmlık Kurumunun Bir Birimi Olarak "Te'lif-i Mesâil Şubesi,"" *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 9, (İstanbul: 2007), 143-170.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

in the state and society. His professional journey originated as an Islamic scholar, where his expertise in Islamic *fiqh* garnered more recognition than his affiliation with Sufism. For instance, Cemaleddin Server Revnakoğlu introduces him as a *hoca* (mullah), hailing him for his unprecedented jurisprudence knowledge: “Hoca Haydar Efendi was one of the oldest members of the old teachers of our time who represented the classical madrasa culture with the full capacity and authority.”<sup>96</sup> Yet, Revnakoğlu’s only mention of his Sufi side was restricted to stating his official position in İsmet Baba Lodge.

Following the closure of the lodges, Sheikh Ali Haydar continued to reside in the residential area of his lodge, as permitted by the law. While the law permitted certain lodges to be converted into mosques, it was a prerequisite for a lodge to have been utilized as a mosque prior to the enactment of the law. Contrary to the decree suggesting its transformation into a school or any other purpose, the İsmet Baba Lodge remained abandoned until 1958. It was during this year that Sheikh Ali Haydar’s son-in-law and deputy, Osman Nuri Saraç, obtained the necessary permissions from the High Council of Immovable Monuments and Antiquities to convert it into a mosque.<sup>97</sup>

Sheikh Ali Haydar was among the sheikhs who silently acquiesced to the closure of the lodges. Apart from his trial mentioned earlier, the only known case involving him occurred in 1939 when the mufti of Bursa reported him to the police for organizing a Sufi ceremony in a mosque. During his defense in court, Sheikh Ali Haydar expressed his views on the closure of

---

<sup>96</sup> Mustafa Koç, *Revnakoğlu’nun İstanbul’u*, Vol 2., 569.

<sup>97</sup> Mehmet Akif Köseoğlu, “Suriçi İstanbul’un Tekkeleri ve Son Şeyhleri,” Unpublished PhD Thesis, (Ankara University, 2022): 167.

lodges and other Sufi orders, shedding light on his perspective. In 1939, he traveled to Bursa to seek relief for his physical ailments by staying at a thermal spring. During a visit to a mosque, he caught the attention of some attendees when he remained silent after the recitation of a verse from the Quran. This was significant because the verse is typically recited at the beginning of a Sufi dhikr, leading to speculation about Sheikh Ali Haydar's involvement in Sufi practices.<sup>98</sup> Upon the complaint lodged by the mufti, Sheikh Ali Haydar was arrested in Bursa on the grounds of attempting to revive his Sufi order. During the court proceedings, he briefly recounted his personal history and then stated: "I silently recited tawhid, which has no connection to vocal dhikr. Khalidiyya already disapproves vocal dhikr. The law 677 does not prohibit Islam. In fact, I complied with this law before anyone else because I believed that Sufism had fallen into the hands of ignorant and incompetent individuals. [...] This law prohibits the establishment of specific places like lodges for Sufi orders, the adoption of distinct attire, and the use of specific titles. These practices are considered *bid'a* in the Khalidiyya order, to which I am initiated."<sup>99</sup>

One could argue that Sheikh Ali Haydar's plea was influenced by the intimidating atmosphere and the fear of imprisonment. However, an interview with Sheikh Ali Haydar's grandchildren, one of whom spent her childhood with him, conducted to gain insights into the thoughts of this Khalidi sheikh, revealed that his statements in court reflected his genuine beliefs. During the interview, family members highlighted their grandfather's strong adherence to *Sharia*, his aversion to the ecstatic aspects of Sufism, and his disdain for non-Khalidi Sufi

---

<sup>98</sup> "So know that." This verse is recited before starting the dhikr of *la ilaha illallah* (there is no God but Allah).

<sup>99</sup> İsmet Efendi Vakfı, Private Archive, 1939.

orders for deviating from the principles of Ahl-i Sunna. They also emphasized that Sheikh Ali Haydar never wore Sufi attire and never possessed one.<sup>100</sup>

However, Sheikh Ali Haydar did not abandon his Sufi activities. Taking advantage of state policies, he managed to find a platform to spread his teachings and attract new followers. Due to his previous position as a *dersiâm* (madrasa official) before the establishment of the Republic, Diyanet permitted him to become a preacher.<sup>101</sup> He was assigned as a preacher in various mosques, including Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque, among others. In the meantime, he used his resident as the new lodge, holding Khalidi rituals despite strict police surveillance. As he was a respected member of ulama, his explanation for the crowds at his house would be the demand from people to learn their religion. Sheikh Ali Haydar's madrasa background played a significant role in his ability to pass on his Sufi lineage. He advised his disciples, who were imams at different mosques, to read books such as *Mektubat-ı Rabbani*, a collection of letters by the renowned Indian Naqshbandi Ahmad Faruq al-Serhendi, and *Risale-i Kudsiyye*, a poetry book penned by Mustafa İsmet Garibullah that explains the pillars of Khalidiyya.<sup>102</sup> In doing so, his aim was to preserve the essence of Sufism and expand its reach among more people.

Indeed, the surviving lineages adeptly merged madrasa education with lodge practices, allowing them to adapt and thrive within the changing landscape of Republican-era mosques. Since its emergence, Khalidiyya was successful at combining madrasa and Sufi lodge. In its first century, according to Hamid Algar, the ideal fusion of *fiqh* and Sufism by Baghdadi played a

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Ayşe Hümeysra Saraç and Mehmet Saraç on 25 February 2021.

<sup>101</sup> Mehmet İpşirli, "Dersiâm," *DİA*, Vol. 9, (Istanbul: 1994), 185-86; Ayşe Yanardağ, "Atatürk Devrimleri ve Diyanet," 205.

<sup>102</sup> İhsan Şenocak, *İki Devrin Ulu Hocası Ali Haydar Efendi*, (Istanbul: Hüküm Kitap, 2016), 73.

significant role in drawing ulama to the Order, which rendered this new off-shoot of Naqshbandiyya legitimacy.<sup>103</sup> Zarcone also argues that Khalidi sheikhs maintained this blend in the Republican era, therefore successfully gaining positions within Diyanet as imam.<sup>104</sup> The two authors see the madrasa tradition key to the Order's survival together with its particular Sufi practices such as silent dhikr or *rabita*.<sup>105</sup> It remains controversial whether these practices played the main role in the survival process given the fact that different orders like Cerrahis as well as some Khalidi lodges which practice vocal dhikr like the Adıyaman-based Menzil community also managed to continue their existences.<sup>106</sup>

Still, the madrasa background and the use of mosques were crucially important for continuance. A notable example is Sami Ramazanoğlu (1892-1984), a disciple of Esad Erbili, who utilized his madrasa diploma to secure a preaching position in his hometown of Adana. In a similar fashion, Ramazanoğlu leveraged the mosques as a platform to impart fundamental Islamic knowledge and attract new disciples to his teachings.<sup>107</sup> His involvement in the mosques played a pivotal role in the establishment of one of the most extensive Sufi communities in Turkey. This unique characteristic also benefited other Sufi orders. Muzaffer Ozak (1916-1985) of the Cerrahi order, for instance, utilized his legitimate religious title as a preacher in various mosques in Istanbul to propel his lodge's growth and influence, particularly during the 1960s.<sup>108</sup> On the other hand, a few Sufi lineages that did not rely on mosque participation managed to

---

<sup>103</sup> Hamid Algar, "Political Aspects," 151.

<sup>104</sup> Thierry Zarcone, "Remarques sur le Rôle Socio-Politique et la Filliation Historique des Şeyh Nakşbendi Dans la Turquie Contemporaine," in *Naqshbandis Cheminements*, 412-415.

<sup>105</sup> Thierry Zarcone, "Nakşibendiler ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti"; Hamid Algar, "Political Aspects," 152.

<sup>106</sup> For the Menzil community, please see; Niyazi Usta, *Menzil Nakşiliği*, (Ankara: Töre Publications, 1997).

<sup>107</sup> Necdet Tosun, "Mahmut Sami Ramazanoğlu," *DiA*, Vol. 34, (İstanbul: 2007), 442.

<sup>108</sup> For a study on Cerrahis, please see; Fulya Atacan, *Cerrahiler*.



endure despite the state's anti-Sufi policies. Yet, the number of their followers remained limited. For example, Özbekler Tekkesi, a renowned Khalidi lodge in Istanbul that played a strategic role in transferring arms to Anatolia during the National Struggle, did not recruit a larger following and had to restrict its Sufi activities to a limited number of individuals.<sup>109</sup>

Despite his strict adherence to Sharia, Sheikh Ali Haydar was not considered a bigoted person, according to his family members. He held a more open-minded view, considering music permissible and allowing his son to marry a French woman, for instance. Unlike some other religious scholars, he did not insist on women covering their faces or wearing a full-body hijab. Instead, he was seen as part of the Istanbul elite, and had a courtly upbringing as he had spent much of his life in state institutions, including the Palace itself. Such emphasis by the family members were indicative of class difference or urban-rural tensions, which will be seen below. According to his grandchildren, he rarely engaged in political discussions and focused mainly on providing Islamic education, particularly in *fiqh* and the principles of Islamic faith. His main sources for Sufism were the *Maktubat-ı Rabbani*, and the *Risale-i Kudsiyye*, a poetry book belonging to the lodge's founder, İsmet Garibullah. Sheikh Ali Haydar passed away in 1960 following the military coup. Despite having obtained permission from the Council of Ministers in 1957, the military junta denied his family and disciples the right to bury him in the cemetery of Fatih Mosque.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Baha Tanman, "Özbekler Tekkesi," *DİA*, Vol. 34, (Istanbul: 2007), 123-124.

<sup>110</sup> Köseoğlu, "Suriçi İstanbul'un," 175. During his funeral, the presence of thousands of people in the garden of Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque compelled the police and the junta to take notice. The ceremony was led by another distinguished Khalidi sheikh, Mahmut Sami Ramazanoğlu. *Son Havadis*, "Efendinin yerine yeni bir efendi seçilecek," 2 August 1960.

In conclusion, the İsmet Baba lodge, since its establishment, has been closely linked to the Palace and experienced the growing state pressure faced by Sufi lodges. It shared the same challenges as other Sufi orders, such as interference in the succession of sheikhs. Yet, it also enjoyed financial support from the state. This indicates that the lodge was acknowledged as a legitimate representative of its order. The last official sheikh, Ali Haydar, was able to sustain his Sufi activities due to contradictory laws and the permission granted for him to become a preacher. The practice of silent *dhikr* and other Khalidi customs, like *rabıta*, allowed the order to continue its activities discreetly without drawing much attention from security forces. However, the specific characteristics of Khalidi practices do not fully explain the survival or demise of various Khalidi lodges, nor do they clarify why other Sufi lodges like Cerrahiyye managed to survive despite their vocal *dhikr* ceremonies. Furthermore, Sheikh Ali Haydar's plea, along with the statements from his family members, reveal that he had no political ambitions but rather focused on the transmission of Islamic knowledge, which was already his area of expertise. Similar to other Sufi lodges, the İsmet Baba lodge also endured the consequences of anti-Sufi measures but managed to persevere due to the unique qualities of its last sheikh.

Indeed, the meeting between Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu and Sheikh Ali Haydar was made possible by the sheikh's residence in the lodge, his background in madrasa education, and the use of mosques. However, Ustaosmanoğlu was poised to bring about significant changes in the direction and practices of the Khalidi lodge. His upbringing, education, social background, and understanding of Islam differed fundamentally from that of his sheikh. These differences, coupled with the shifting religious and political landscape in Turkey after 1946, were destined to reshape the order and transform it into a Sufism-inspired Islamic community.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **RECONSTRUCTION OF KHALIDI ORDER: A HISTORY OF REVIVAL (1946-1970)**

This chapter delves into the complex interplay between the changing sociopolitical landscape, the state's approach to religion, and the transformation of the İsmet Baba Lodge in post-1946 Turkey. By attempting to explore the transformative dynamics within Sufism during this era, with a specific focus on the influential figure of Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu and his role in founding the İsmailağa Community, this chapter shows how the İsmet Baba Lodge was transformed into a Sufism-inspired modern community.

It begins with explaining the significant changes in the state's approach towards religion, characterized by a notable easing of suppression in the post-1946 era such as the establishment of state-controlled Imam Hatip schools and Theology Faculties or increase of the number of Quran teaching institutions. By explaining these changes, this chapter attempts to show how this relaxation paved the way for utilizing this ambivalence by Ustaosmanoğlu for his own purposes. However, despite this relaxation, it notes that the Turkish state continued to exert control over Sufism, implementing new anti-Sufi measures in its quest to monopolize religious education. Yet, Sufis managed to discreetly maintain their activities, albeit with limited visibility and influence.

Ustaosmanoğlu, with his background in traditional madrasa education, emerged as a prominent figure within the Khalidi tradition in Turkey's religious landscape during the last century. After becoming an imam at the İsmailağa Mosque in 1953, he utilized his position to establish madrasas for the transmission of Islamic knowledge, where Sufi practices and teachings played an indispensable role. Ustaosmanoğlu adopted a staunchly anti-secular and

anti-modernist stance, vehemently rejecting the use of modern methods. By embracing this uncompromising position, Ustaosmanoğlu redefined the identity and purpose of the İsmailağa Community, transforming it into a reified ideology that stood in opposition to secularism. This transformation had significant implications, including the suppression of diverse interpretations of Islam and the establishment of a unified community with a shared attire and madrasa curriculum. This chapter also draws a comparison with the İskenderpaşa community, which adopted a fundamentally different method in its encounter with the secular state. By examining the ideological and practical shifts within this context, the chapter aims to shed light on the evolving nature of Sufism and its relationship with state power, religious education, and broader societal dynamics during this critical period in Turkish history. In conclusion, it is argued that Ustaosmanoğlu's efforts to create a Sufism-based madrasa tradition, which served as the foundation for his community's development, inadvertently led to the re-interpretation of Sufism as a source for Islamic primordialism, resulting in an unwittingly modern Khalidiyya-inspired social movement.

### **Initiation of Rapprochement with Religion after 1946**

Turkey underwent a significant shift in its religious landscape after the death of Atatürk, with a retreat from strict anti-religion policies. This shift gained momentum with the transition to a multi-party system in 1946 as conservative parties emerged as challengers to the ruling Republican People's Party (CHP). The anti-religious policies of the one-party rule faced growing discontent among people, while the impacts of World War II further exacerbated the country's economic challenges, undermining the industrialization efforts of the Atatürk era and agricultural investments. Recognizing the significance of the rural population, which constituted

80 percent of the total population at that time, the founding members of the Democrat Party (DP) in 1946 identified it as a crucial constituency for their electoral success.<sup>111</sup> This constituency was unhappy with both ongoing austerity and anti-religious policies. Another significant reason for this retreat was the imminent threat of communism. As communist ideas began to infiltrate universities, the CHP believed that disregarding religion would further amplify the influence of this looming danger.<sup>112</sup> Yet, the anti-Sufi stance would remain the same.

The shady 1946 elections, although won by the CHP, highlighted the need to engage with the rural population. The rural communities expressed their discontent not only with the economic conditions but also with the suppression of religion as they faced difficulties in teaching Islam to their children and finding imams to perform essential religious rituals such as bathing the deceased. In 1947, during the seventh congress of the CHP, heated debates regarding religion took place. The congress began with the following statement: “[...] Since religion is a matter of conscience, it is free from all kinds of attack and interference. No citizen shall be interfered with for worship and rituals, unless prohibited by law.”<sup>113</sup> The last part was a sign that the stance towards Sufism would not change. However, within the CHP, many members argued for the necessity of providing religious education under state control to prevent it from being influenced by “unregulated individuals or groups.”<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> For a study, revealing the links between the rural and center in terms of multi-party era, please see; Michael Danielson and Ruşen Keleş, *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization in Turkey*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985).

<sup>112</sup> *CHP Yedinci Büyük Kurultay Tutanağı*, (Ankara, 1948), 458.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 448-452.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, 452-458.

These individuals or groups were presumably the Sufis. From 1946 to 1950, the CHP had relaxed restrictions on religious practices by establishing Imam Hatip schools, introducing optional religion classes in primary school curriculums, facilitating pilgrimages to Mecca, and even opening the tombs of esteemed Turkish figures, such as previous sultans.<sup>115</sup> However, in 1949, the anti-Sufi measures intensified with the passage of a bill that prescribed monetary fines and exile for the leaders of Sufi communities.<sup>116</sup> The decision to introduce additional punishments for Sufis was indeed motivated by the concerns expressed by CHP deputies regarding the rising number of Sufis. Recai Güreli, a deputy, was complaining about the failure of security forces to identify Sufis: “Following them has become more challenging than in the past. In the past, there were *tekkes* [lodges], specific places of worship, and *zawiyas* where they would gather to perform rituals. However, it seems that the number of *tariqa* members has significantly increased. Nowadays, they are constantly dividing themselves into smaller districts, with each district having its own leader. [...] This phenomenon seems to be on the rise in many regions.”<sup>117</sup> Once again, the focus turned towards the Naqshbandis. “The Naqshbandis are increasing their number of followers, including women who are now being initiated into this Order... We must recall the Sheikh Said rebellion and the assassination of Kubilay, both orchestrated by members of this very Order,” remarked Ahmet Remzi Yüreğir, a CHP deputy.<sup>118</sup> The same year, Diyanet instructed local authorities to investigate instances of illicit Sufi practices and particularly whether women are initiated into any Order, underscoring the ongoing concern and surveillance surrounding such activities. Diyanet had to issue such a warning as the reports

---

<sup>115</sup> Şaban Sitembölükbaşı, “Aspects of Islamic Revival in Turkey,” PhD Thesis, Manchester University, 1990, 52.

<sup>116</sup> *Official Gazette*, [Resmî Gazete], 10 June 1949, no. 7229.

<sup>117</sup> *TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, 10 June 1949, no. 289, 710.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 708-709.

from courts and police were suggesting a remarkable increase in the number of Sufis or Sufi activities.<sup>119</sup>

The transition to a multi-party system, the rise of numerous uncontrolled religious groups and individual figures, and the looming threat of communism forced the CHP to adopt a more lenient stance towards religion in order to meet the demands of the people. However, in 1950, the DP achieved a resounding victory in the elections, shifting the responsibility of addressing calls for religious freedom to their party. In 1951, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes celebrated his party's triumph as a pivotal moment for emancipating religion from the oppressive grip of what he derogatorily referred to as "*revolution softas*" - a term used by the Republican elite to criticize Islamic scholars.<sup>120</sup> In line with securing the votes of religious people, DP government, indeed maintain the opening towards religion, launched by CHP and took some further steps.

The amendment to abolish the provision in the 1932-dated penal code that prohibited the Arabic adhan was enabled by the DP. The Quran recitation in its original language was allowed on the radio for the first time. Changes were made to the procedure for voluntary religion courses in secondary education institutions. The number of Imam Hatip schools as well as Quranic schools increased, and there was a noticeable rise in religious publications and activities. Some DP members voiced demands such as expanding religious education in public schools, further increasing the number of Imam Hatip schools, allocating more resources to the

---

<sup>119</sup> BOA, 4-30-23, Diyanet İşleri Reisliği, 12 July 1947.

<sup>120</sup> *Büyük Doğu*, No. 47, 9 February 1951, 16.

Diyanet, improving the socio-economic conditions of *hocas*, and implementing special provisions to protect Islam and the Prophet.<sup>121</sup>

However, Sufis still found themselves without legal recognition or protection. An example of this was the case of Fehmi Ustaoglu, a DP member who was expelled from the party for advocating the abolition of the law 677. A circular note, sent by the party center to its branches, stated: “[...] any ideas that advocate for the revival of Sufi lodges or target the principles of the revolution are unequivocally in violation of the party constitution.”<sup>122</sup> However, the ambivalent policies concerning religious practices and the religious sphere persisted, ultimately leading to the gradual re-emergence of Khalidi lodges as modern Islamic movement. Following the 1950s, many of the contemporary Turkish Khalidi groups underwent a process of transformation, redefining their understanding and practices of Sufism within a comparatively more relaxed atmosphere. The case of Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu whose madrasa background became intertwined with Khalidi heritage, serves as a notable example, highlighting how legal boundaries were circumvented, particularly regarding the use of mosque, again, as the only legal religious space, and were later exploited in favor of building and expanding an Islamic community.

### **A History of Revival: Sheikh Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu**

Ustaosmanoğlu, born in 1929<sup>123</sup> in the conservative town of Of in Trabzon, had the privilege of being raised in an environment renowned for nurturing Islamic scholars since the

<sup>121</sup> Tanel Demirel, *Türkiye’nin Uzun On Yılı Demokrat Parti İktidarı ve 27 Mayıs Darbesi*, (Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2021), 138-139.

<sup>122</sup> *Vatan*, “Başbakan Adnan Menderes Adana’da Mühim bir Nutuk Söyledi,” 25 December 1952.

<sup>123</sup> His official birth year was 1931.



Ottoman era.<sup>124</sup> His early religious education began at the age of six when he memorized the Quran. Despite the illegality of madrasas at the time, he attended one in his village, where he delved into classical Islamic disciplines like tafsir and *fiqh*. Seeking further knowledge, he traveled to Kayseri to study Arabic and obtained an *ijaza* in Islamic teachings from a former member of ulama as early as 1945. Little did Ustaosmanoğlu know that this *ijaza* would shape his destiny.

His hometown was renowned for its strict conservatism and its resistance against the modernizing and secularizing policies of the government. It became a focal point for mass protests against the compulsory hat-wearing rule. The town also experienced conflicts between local officials and traditional elites who were reluctant to acknowledge the authority of the central government. The establishment of a theater in the town, aimed at educating young men and women on civilized behavior, led to incidents as some individuals objected to perceived flirtation, smoking, and even drinking among boys and girls within the premises.<sup>125</sup> Despite its small size, the town was able to raise a considerable number of *hocas*. Although its madrasas continued to operate, *hocas* were no longer receiving salaries from the state unless they joined the ranks of Diyanet.<sup>126</sup> As a result, Of became renowned as a significant exporter of Islamic

---

<sup>124</sup> According to a *salname* (annual) in 1869, 350 out of 377 madrasas in the province of Trabzon were situated in Of and its neighboring town, Çaykara. Quoted in Mustafa Tunçer, "Ofllu Hocaların Yetiştikleri Medreseler, Talebe ve Medrese Sayılarına İlişkin Bazı Rivayetlerin Analizi," *Karadeniz Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 9, (2017), 26.

<sup>125</sup> Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 306-307.

<sup>126</sup> It is worth noting that madrasas in Lazistan and Kurdistan experienced relatively less pressure from the state due to their challenging geographical conditions, which kept them secluded and away from close scrutiny. For instance, Haşim Albayrak notes that the traditional *ijaza* ceremonies for madrasa students continued incessantly until today. Haşim Albayrak, *Ofllu Hoca*, 77. Indeed, Zeynelabidin Tatlılıoğlu (b. 1934), a *hoca* from Çorum's Sungurlu town told me in a conversation on 16 May 2022 that following the graduation from primary school, which was lasting three years, students were asked by prominent figures of the town to decide whether they would continue their education in a state school or in a madrasa. For the madrasa tradition in the post-Republic

scholars throughout Turkey.<sup>127</sup> During the 1960s, Meeker noted that a significant majority of imams, who had received their education in the madrasa of Of, held opposing views towards the reforms implemented by the government.<sup>128</sup> The unique character of Of and its deep-rooted connection with the madrasa had already shaped Ustaosmanoğlu's anti-secular and anti-Republican perspective long before he arrived in Istanbul. Despite his dissatisfaction with the policies towards religion, Ustaosmanoğlu fulfilled his mandatory military service between 1950 and 1952. He referred to his conscription as "service to the homeland," reflecting the belief that the fundamental issue lay not with the state itself, but with its governing authorities.<sup>129</sup> In his later career as a preacher and sheikh, he would propagate this perspective, exalting the Ottoman past and the National Struggle, while expressing deep regret over the direction the country had taken since 1923.

During his military service, he coincidentally found himself in Balıkesir, where a former Khalidi Sufi lodge had been converted into a mosque.<sup>130</sup> Engaging in a brief conversation with those present, he was advised to seek out Sheikh Ali Haydar in Istanbul, who carried on the lineage of the Khalidi order. However, fate intervened when Sheikh Ali Haydar also decided to

---

era and the implementation of revolutions in the rural, please see; Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 48; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, (London: Zed Books, 1992); Kadri Yıldırım, *Kürt Medreseleri ve Alimleri*, (Istanbul: Avesta Publications, 2008).

<sup>127</sup> Kimberly Hart, *And Then We Work for God, Rural Sunni Islam in Turkey*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 237.

<sup>128</sup> Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire*, 58.

<sup>129</sup> Haşim Albayrak, *Oflu Hoca Kavramını Oluşturan Din Adamları*, (Istanbul: Sahaflar Kitap Sarayı, 2008), 248.

<sup>130</sup> Ali Öztaylan, also known as Tatlıcı Ali Efendi, served as the leader of the Khalidi community in Balıkesir during that period. While he held the position of deputy to Sheikh Ali Haydar, he did not actively focus on expanding the community or significantly growing his followers. This was primarily due to the fact that he did not possess the credentials of a *hoca* and did not conduct his Sufi activities within a mosque setting. Instead, he continued to pursue his profession as a confectioner until his passing. Please see; Necdet Tosun, *Derviş Keşkülü*, (Istanbul: Erkam Publications, 2012), 189-196.

visit the tombs in the Balıkesir Khalidi lodge. It was through this fortuitous encounter that the successor and predecessor finally met.<sup>131</sup> Subsequently, Ustaosmanoğlu's military assignment unexpectedly shifted to Istanbul, facilitating his initiation to the Order by Sheikh Ali Haydar. He was also going to meet a circle of former ulama who, disguised as a *cemiyet* (association), worked to maintain madrasa activities.<sup>132</sup> Following the fulfillment of military service, he decided to stay in Istanbul.

As early as 1955, Ustaosmanoğlu began calling his colleagues from Of to come to Istanbul, mentioning the presence of Sheikh Ali Haydar and a madrasa circle. In tandem with the observations of Meeker, Of had begun exporting a considerable number of *hoca* to Istanbul's Çarşamba neighborhood where Sheikh Ali Haydar's lodge and the madrasa circle was situated. Thanks to the strong kinship ties in Of, the newcomers were not alone but together with their extended families.<sup>133</sup> This migration to a particular neighborhood was going to change its outlook and put the first bricks for the community building.

Before Ustaosmanoğlu's arrival, a group of former madrasa teachers had established an Islamic teaching school, operating under the guise of a *cemiyet* (association), taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the 1938-dated *Cemiyetler Kanunu* (Law of Associations).<sup>134</sup> In the early 1950s, Eşref Osmanağaoğlu, member of an esteemed wealthy family and a disciple of

---

<sup>131</sup> Accounts of this meeting vary and present contradictory information in the available sources. Ustaosmanoğlu's disciples tend to describe this encounter in a mystical manner, attributing it to the influence of dreams and other miraculous incidents. However, it is generally believed that their initial meeting likely took place in Balıkesir in 1951, with their relationship deepening after Ustaosmanoğlu relocated to Istanbul around 1952.

<sup>132</sup> Ahıska Yayınevi, *Hazrat-ü Mevlânâ eş-Şeyh Mahmut en-Nakşibendî el-Müceddidi el-Hâlidî el-Ufî*, (Istanbul: Ahıska Publications, 2010), 38 passim.

<sup>133</sup> For the kinship ties in rural and their impacts on urbanization, please see; Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>134</sup> *Official Gazette*, [Resmî Gazete], 14 July 1938, no. 3956.

another Khalidi sheikh Abdülaziz Bekkine, established a *cemiyet* (later *dernek*) called “*Cami ve Hayrat*” (Mosque and Charity) with the aim of renovating neglected mosques or madrasas.<sup>135</sup> This *cemiyet* renovated the madrasa of İsmailağa in 1951 as it was ruined in an earthquake in 1894.<sup>136</sup> The madrasa later became the center of another *cemiyet*, named *Dar’ul Kuran* (house of Quran).<sup>137</sup> This *cemiyet* later became a Quranic school, beginning to give Islamic education openly.<sup>138</sup> This was made possible due to a regulation that permitted Diyanet to establish Quran teaching institutions, effectively providing a legal framework for the unofficial continuation of religious education.<sup>139</sup> The *Kuran kursu* provided housing for students who came from rural areas, enabling them to pursue their formal education in state schools while also accommodating several teachers who held varying perspectives on the Republic and Islam itself.

<sup>135</sup> The possession of mosques belonged to *vakıflar* (foundations) at that time, and it was 1965 when Diyanet was tasked with dealing with mosque properties as well as their caring. However, appointment of imams was under Diyanet’s responsibility as of 1950. Please see; Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi*, (Ankara: Türk Diyanet Vakfı Publications, 1995), 473-485; *Official Gazette*, [Resmî Gazete], 2 July 1965, no. 12038; Ahmet Onay, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Camilerin Finansmanı,” *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, Vol. 7, No. 18, (December 2009), 63.

<sup>136</sup> It was consisted of two parts: madrasa and mosque. The mosque was later renovated in 1952.

<sup>137</sup> Recep Çelik, *Geçmişten Günümüze İsmailağa Taş Medrese -1 (1748-1969)*, (İstanbul: Reşadiye Publications, 2021), 153-156. İbrahim Erden and Yusuf Gök, *Ömrünü İlme ve Hayra Adayan Eşref Osmanağaoğlu*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İlmî, İçtimai Hizmetler Vakfı Neşriyatı, 1987), 13-16.

<sup>138</sup> At this juncture, personal relationships likely played a significant role in both sustaining religious activities and securing necessary permissions. For example, the founders of the Kuran kursu emphasized the assistance provided by İbrahim Rükneddin Nasuhioğlu (1891-1973), who served as the first interior minister during Menderes’ prime ministry. Nasuhioğlu happened to be the son of Kerameddin Nasuhioğlu, the former official sheikh of Nasuhi Lodge in Üsküdar, İstanbul. Similarly, Eşref Osmanağaoğlu’s friendship with an official at *Vakıflar İdaresi* (the presidency of foundations) proved beneficial throughout the process. Furthermore, Zeynelabidin Tatlılıoğlu mentioned that one of Osmanağaoğlu’s brothers, a judge, provided assistance on multiple occasions during official inspections. These inspections were frequently conducted based on claims that the *Kuran kursu* was not adhering to the legal boundaries established by Diyanet for such institutions. Please see; Recep Çelik, *Geçmişten Günümüze*, 149-150.

<sup>139</sup> In fact, these institutions were never closed. But teaching of Quran and basic religious information was confined to mosques with an authorization from Diyanet. Once again, the ambivalence had emerged as education with Arabic letters was banned. Please see; Doğan Duman, “Çok Partili Dönemde Türkiye’de İslamcılık,” Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 1996, 172; Zeki Salih Zengin, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye’de Kur’an Kurslarının Kurulması ve Gelişimi,” *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 11, no. 2, (2011), 15.

Ustaosmanoğlu had entered a religious landscape, containing both a Sufi lodge and a madrasa, which was uncommon in urban centers during that period. This presented a unique opportunity as his fellow countrymen were not only graduates of madrasas but also well-acquainted with the Khalidi order, which was widely practiced in the Black Sea region and embraced within madrasas.<sup>140</sup> His appeal to these individuals was therefore enticing, given their existing familiarity with the order.<sup>141</sup> However, this aspect was not well-received by many within the immediate circle in Istanbul. Osmanağaoğlu, with his “modern” appearance, wearing a Western-style hat and being clean-shaven, apparently found it displeasing to see the *hocas* who insisted on wearing a *sarık* (turban), *cübbe* (robe), and growing long beards. Additionally, Osmanağaoğlu’s madrasa included individuals from various Sufi orders such as Cerrahiye, which faced strong criticism from newcomers due to their differing views on certain Islamic matters, such as their unfavorable opinions of Muawiya, the founder of the Umayyad state.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, Ustaosmanoğlu’s advice to madrasa students not to attend state schools led to a disagreement

---

<sup>140</sup> Mustafa Tunçer, “Ofllu Hocaların,” 37.

<sup>141</sup> It appears that Sufi activities continued to thrive in rural areas even after the establishment of the Republic. İlbey Özdemirci notes that Sufis were seldom taken to court and subjected to punishment. He suggests that the state lacked the necessary resources for effective law enforcement in rural regions, allowing Sufi orders to maintain a strong presence in the daily lives of the people. İlbey Özdemirci, *Fötr Şapkalı Şih Cumhuriyet Sekülerleşmesi ve Taşra*, (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2022), 181.

<sup>142</sup> Recep Çelik, *Geçmişten Günümüze*, 230, note 87. The differing views on Ahl-i Bait and Muawiya between Khalidis as well as madrasa circles and other Sufi orders have been a source for dispute in the Ottoman era. The discussions continued after the foundation of the Republic. Please see; Yeşiloğlu Mehmet Salih, *İlme, Ülemaya Ait Açık Mektup*, (Istanbul: Tecelli Matbaası, 1947). It is also noteworthy that Revnakoğlu, after praising Sheikh Ali Haydar and his knowledge on Islam writes the following sentences in the mid-1950s that obviously target Ustaosmanoğlu and other *hocas* from rural: “When I talk about the *hocas* who frequently visit him [Sheikh Ali Haydar], I mean the real ones not the others who wear a colorful skullcap, carried the scent of hajji oil [*hacı yağ*], and sported a youthful feathered beard along with a neatly trimmed mustache in the mosque, with their clean-shaven heads at top of which instead of a hat, a worn-out yarn beret that resembles a discolored lemon peel, distorted by dirt, and wear a fitted Muawiya robe, a departure from the old overcoat, and *şalvar* [a traditional loose trousers], who come out with this unconventional appearance in this modern society, who are the pitiable laughingstock and an embodiment of backwardness, who represent someone who rejects the norms of civilization, someone who stands as a symbol of unconventional thinking.” Mustafa Koç, *Revnakoğlu'nun İstanbul'u*, Vol. 2, 570.

with Osmanağaoğlu.<sup>143</sup> However, Ustaosmanoğlu was determined to implement his own methods.<sup>144</sup>

In 1952, the mosque underwent renovations with the assistance of neighborhood residents, responding to an appeal made by Sheikh Ali Haydar.<sup>145</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu's unofficial *ijaza* and Sheikh Ali Haydar's personal connections with Diyanet officials played a crucial role in his appointment as an imam. Among his deputies was Ali Yekta Sundu, who served as the mufti of Fatih district, while Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen, the mufti of Istanbul, collaborated with Sheikh Ali Haydar in the *Heyet-i Telifiyye* and also taught at the İsmailağa madrasa. After undergoing a brief examination by a commission, Ustaosmanoğlu received authorization to become an imam in 1953 and obtained his official documents from Diyanet the following year.<sup>146</sup> In the 1950s, the shortage of imams and the absence of a formal mechanism for imam appointments resulted in de facto solutions, including the recognition of unofficial *ijazas* and oral examinations.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, 295.

<sup>144</sup> The other madrasa had to close its doors in 1969 due to lack of funding and to the growth of the İsmailağa community. Recep Çelik, *Geçmişten Günümüze*, 10.

<sup>145</sup> Mustafa Koç, *Revnakoğlu'nun İstanbul'u*, Vol. 2, 568. The İsmailağa community's current members assert that the mosque underwent renovations following a spiritual sign from the former *Şeyhülislam*, whose burial site is in the mosque's cemetery. They attribute the renovation efforts to Ustaosmanoğlu. However, this account appears to be inaccurate, as Revnakoğlu presented a relevant archival document in his book. Nonetheless, this narrative holds significance in highlighting the community's belief in the influential role of dreams.

<sup>146</sup> The following source contains the official Diyanet documents, given to Ustaosmanoğlu: Furkan Kandemir et. al. *Mahmud Efendi Hazretleri (Kuddise Sirruhu) Hayatı & Fotoğraf Albümü*, (Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, n.d.), 86-87.

<sup>147</sup> Thierry Zarcone also points out this ambivalence in state policies, noting that numerous sheikhs were allowed to be buried in the cemetery of their lodges even if they had received their Sufi *ijaza* following the ban on Sufism. Thierry Zarcone, "Nakşibendiler ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti," 531. In fact, this weird situation appeared again in 2011 when Diyanet appointed around 1000 imams and preachers with insufficient official educational background but with *ijaza*. The İsmailağa madrasa's *ijaza* was also recognized for the appointments. *Odatv*, "Diyanet 1000 molla atadı," 22 June 2011, <https://www.odatv4.com/guncel/diyanet-1000-molla-atadi-2206121200-24446#-guncel-diyanet-1000-molla-atadi-2206121200-24446> [Last Access: 09 June 2023].

When Sheikh Ali Haydar died, Ustaosmanoğlu declared that he was succeeding him as sheikh. To this day, many family members of Sheikh Ali Haydar do not accept Ustaosmanoğlu's claim since the former had not issued a traditional *ijaza* that would legitimize his Sufi activities.<sup>148</sup> As pointed out above, the family and Ustaosmanoğlu's community, which is usually referred as İsmailağa community remained at odds over their approaches to the practices of religion and in particular Sufism. Osman Nuri Saraç, Sheikh Ali Haydar's son-in-law remained in the İsmet Baba Lodge as an imam and head of an association and continued to succeed the lineage of his father-in-law.<sup>149</sup> During the interviews, current family members implied a class difference with Ustaosmanoğlu and his community, basically referring to his Of background.<sup>150</sup> However, Ustaosmanoğlu's disciples claim that Sheikh Ali Haydar orally authorized Ustaosmanoğlu shortly before his death.<sup>151</sup> This dispute is of significance for demonstrating how the same lodge produced two fundamentally different approaches to Islam. While one of them remains as a small lodge with limited outreach to people, the other one produced an Islamic community through redefining Sufism as will be shown below.

---

<sup>148</sup> For the importance of *ijaza* in Sufism, please see; Derya Baş, "Bir Bedeviyye İcâzetnamesi ve Tarikat İcâzetnamelerine Dair Bazı Meseleler," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 36, (2017), 7-44.

<sup>149</sup> According to family members, Osman Nuri Saraç did not designate a successor before his passing. As a result, the association now functions primarily as a charitable organization, providing assistance to migrants from Ahıska, which is the birthplace of Sheikh Ali Haydar.

<sup>150</sup> Through my discussions with individuals belonging to various Sufi orders in Istanbul, including those less impacted by rural migration and the madrasa tradition, the İsmailağa community is often referred to as the "*köylü tarikatı*" (order of peasants.) These individuals commonly emphasize that the old Naqshbandi sheikhs of Istanbul were fundamentally distinct from this community. However, the examination of class dynamics or tensions between rural and urban contexts within Sufism during the Republican era remains largely unexplored. For an account of center-periphery dichotomy in the context of religion, please see; Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus*, Vol. 102, No. 1, (Winter, 1973), 169-190

<sup>151</sup> Kamil Şenocak, "Kadim Duruşlu bir Halidi Şeyhi: Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu," *Demokrasi Platformu*, No. 6, (Spring, 2006), 138.

The ambivalent stance of the state regarding religious services and education allowed Ustaosmanoğlu to assume the role of an imam at a mosque, which he intended to use as a base for community development. His primary focus in this endeavor was to transmit Islamic knowledge, drawing from the madrasa tradition inherited from Of, while utilizing Khalidiyya as a means to legitimize his leadership and as the core of his community. In the 1960s, various Khalidi groups emerged, yet Ustaosmanoğlu's approach to modernism and its methods stood apart from the rest. While many other Khalidi groups swiftly embraced modern tools such as press houses, audio materials like cassettes, schools, or companies to engage with contemporary politics, disseminate their ideas, and strengthen their presence, Ustaosmanoğlu sought to establish an isolated community through a stalemate with the state and by circumventing laws. This fusion ultimately led to the application of a puritan Islam understanding and the transformation of this particular Khalidi lineage into an anti-secular movement.

### **Diversification of Khalidi Groups after the 1960 Coup**

By 1960, the majority of the Khalidi sheikhs, who had obtained their official titles during the pre-Republican era, had passed away. In place of these ailing sheikhs, many of whom were born under Ottoman rule and struggled to adapt to Turkey's rapidly changing landscape, a new generation of dynamic sheikhs emerged, actively seeking ways to spread their ideas. This shift in sheikhs paralleled the evolving nature of Turkey itself.

Following the military coup on May 27, 1960, the state's efforts to reform Islam and exert greater control over religion grew more pronounced. However, compared to the pre-1946 era, the state adopted a more moderate stance. As an example, Cemal Gürsel, the head of the



interim government (who later became president in 1961), visited Imam Hatip schools. He commended the education provided by these schools and stated, “Religion must be safeguarded as a freedom for the people.” However, he also added that the adhan and the recitation of the Quran should be done in Turkish. This was because Gürsel believed that unless religious practices were carried out in Turkish, Turks would be susceptible to adopting unfounded and deviant beliefs, thereby hindering their religious development.<sup>152</sup> The debate surrounding the Turkification of Islam remained a contentious issue, but the recognition of religion’s significance for society and the renewed desire to assert state control over religious matters resulted in the expansion of the Diyanet’s influence, organizational structure, and workforce.<sup>153</sup> In 1965, Mehmet Altınsoy, the minister of state, expressed admiration for the role of Diyanet in Turkey’s progress by harnessing the moral element. He emphasized that his ministry of state was “fully prepared to provide all necessary resources for cultivating religious individuals who would be well-suited to the modernization efforts of twentieth-century Turkey.”<sup>154</sup>

According to Cemal Gürsel, the “second Republic” aimed to promote greater freedom, allowing for the existence of unions and student associations. However, there was a caveat. Article 19 of the Constitution stated that “every individual is entitled to follow the dictates of his conscience, to choose his own religious faith, and to have his own opinions.” The article further elaborated, “forms of worship and religious ceremonies and rites are free,” but it added a

---

<sup>152</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, “Ezan Türkçe, Kuran Türkçe Okunmalı,” 6 October 1960.

<sup>153</sup> İştâar Gözaydın, *Diyanet, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nde Dinin Tanzimi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 164.

<sup>154</sup> BCA, 4-35-21, 06 April 1965.

condition, stating that these practices should not contradict public order, morals, or the laws enacted to uphold them.

This provision was deemed insufficient in preventing demands for the freedom of Sufi ceremonies. Article 153 explicitly stated that reform laws, including the abolition of Sufi lodges, would be upheld.<sup>155</sup> While reports of Sufis being arrested across Turkey were still common after the coup, the notable difference concerning Sufism was the recognition and commemoration of historical Sufi figures such as Rumi, Yunus Emre, and Hacı Bektaş. They were praised and celebrated for being pioneers of Turkish humanism.<sup>156</sup> This was in line with the Turkification attempt of religion.

However, Islamic movements, including the Khalidi groups, benefited from the relaxation of state pressure on social groups during this time. New cadres, who involved in politics following the coup, according to Feroz Ahmad “felt quite comfortable with Islam which had remained a living tradition in their daily lives” as “militant secularism of one-party rule” had failed.<sup>157</sup> In the aftermath of the coup, Khalidi groups seized the opportunity to establish their communities under the leadership of new and dynamic sheikhs, although they pursued different approaches in doing so. One notable Khalidi group that emerged during this period was the İskenderpaşa community, which deserves an examination for following a different path than Ustaosmanoğlu’s İsmailağa community in its engagement with the state and society. The İskenderpaşa community

---

<sup>155</sup> Kemal Karpat et al. (trn.), *Constitution of the Turkish Republic*, Ankara, 1961.

<sup>156</sup> Mustafa Kara, “Türkiye’de Tarikatların Yasaklanması ve Mahkumiyeti,” in *Doğuşundan Günümüze Tasavvufa Dair Tartışmalar On Üç Asırlık İhtilaflar ve Mücadele*, Salih Çift et al. (eds.), (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Publications, 2020), 505.

<sup>157</sup> Feroz Ahmad, “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, no. 1 (January, 1991), 12. For my criticism on the term of “militant secularism” please see Introduction of this thesis.

inherited the Khalidi tradition from the Gümüşhanevi lodge, which had a reputation for its ambiguous relationship with the Ottoman Palace.<sup>158</sup> Despite the challenges posed by the one-party rule under Abdülaziz Bekkine, this Khalidi lineage managed to survive and thrive. Similar to Sheikh Ali Haydar, Bekkine maintained his standing within the ulama and utilized a mosque as a hub for his Sufi activities.

Bekkine's influence extended to numerous conservative figures, whom he engaged with through his *sohbets* (conversations) held prior to Friday sermons in a mosque. He emphasized the importance of raising engineers and highlighted engineering as a suitable field for upholding conservative values. This perspective aimed to ensure the preservation of conservative principles in society.<sup>159</sup> Numerous authors attribute this mindset to the concept of adopting Western technology while concurrently preserving religious and traditional values. Several influential Khalidi figures, such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu, subscribed to this approach. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, a devotee of Abdülhakim Arvasi, and Nurettin Topçu, a disciple of Bekkine, were among the notable Khalidi figures who embraced this formula for Turkey's development. They believed in the integration of Western technological advancements into society while upholding religious and traditional principles. By promoting this perspective, Kısakürek and Topçu aimed to strike a balance between progress and the preservation of

---

<sup>158</sup> For Gümüşhanevi Lodge's History and relations with the Ottoman palace, please see; İrfan Gündüz, *Gümüşhânevi Ahmed Ziyâüddin Hayatı, Eserleri, Tarikat Anlayışı ve Hâlidîyye Tarikatı*, (İstanbul: Seha Neşriyat, 1984).

<sup>159</sup> For more information, please see; Nihat Azamat, "Abdülaziz Bekkine," *DîA*, Vol. 5, (İstanbul: 1992), 365.

Turkey's cultural identity. They recognized the value of Western technology but also emphasized the significance of maintaining the nation's religious and traditional heritage.<sup>160</sup>

Mehmet Zahit Kotku (1897-1980), who succeeded Abdülaziz Bekkine and founded the İskenderpaşa community in 1952, also held a positive view of engineering. During his tenure, the process of community building reflected his favorable stance towards this field. Kotku, like many other sheikhs who successfully maintained their Sufi lineages, had a background in madrasa education. In the 1940s, he initially served as an imam in a village in Bursa before moving to Istanbul following Bekkine's passing in 1952. Kotku continued to use the İskenderpaşa Mosque as the center for the community's activities. Madrasa background contributed to his understanding of religious teachings and enabled him to guide and inspire his followers in their spiritual and communal endeavors.<sup>161</sup>

According to Brian Silverstein, Kotku "encouraged his initiated followers to be active in worldly affairs, specifically in capacities that would enable Turkey and the Muslim world to stand up to cultural, political, and economic domination by the West."<sup>162</sup> For Nazif Gürdoğan, one of the key objectives for Mehmet Zahit Kotku was to establish a balanced approach. This approach involved adopting the West's utilization of technology and sciences for the purpose of development and re-establishing the prominence of Muslims. However, Kotku emphasized the

---

<sup>160</sup> Fırat Mollaer, *Tekno Muhafazakârlığın Eleştirisi Politik Denemeler*, (Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2016), 137-155.

<sup>161</sup> For more information about his life, please see; Mahmut Esat Coşan, "Mehmet Zahit Kotku," *DİA*, Vol. 26, (Istanbul: 2002), 227-228.

<sup>162</sup> Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity*, 102.

importance of preserving the traditional structure of Islam and its essential elements, such as the institution of family, interest-free trade, and piety.<sup>163</sup>

Likewise, Kotku encouraged his followers to strive for economic independence, recognizing it as the key to Turkey and the Muslim community's ability to navigate Western dominance. While emphasizing that a lavish lifestyle was not befitting of a true believer, he advocated for a focus on production and industrialization. Kotku understood that economic self-sufficiency was vital for Muslims to assert themselves in the face of Western domination. He believed that by fostering a culture of productivity and embracing industrialization, Turkey and the Muslim community could strengthen themselves both economically and socially. This emphasis on self-reliance aligned with his vision of preserving Islamic values while adapting to the changing world. While cautioning against materialism and excessive wealth, Kotku's counsel aimed to inspire his followers to actively contribute to society through productive endeavors. He encouraged a balance between economic progress and maintaining a humble and pious lifestyle, reflecting the teachings of Islam.<sup>164</sup>

Indeed, Kotku's words came to fruition when he advocated for the establishment of the Gümüş Motor Company, with Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011) who served as Turkey's prime minister from 1996 to 1997, serving as its director in 1960.<sup>165</sup> The Gümüş Motor Company represented a tangible step towards fulfilling Kotku's vision of economic development and self-sufficiency. It demonstrated the potential for Muslims in Turkey to actively participate in

---

<sup>163</sup> Ersin Nazif Gürdoğan, *Görünmeyen Üniversite*, (Istanbul: İz Publications, 2021), 83-95.

<sup>164</sup> Mehmed Zahid Kotku, *Tasavvufi Ahlak 4* (Istanbul: Seha Neşriyat, 1982), 197-201.

<sup>165</sup> Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity*, 103.

industrial endeavors and reduce reliance on imports. Additionally, Kotku recognized the significance of publications as a means of reaching out to people and actively supported his disciples' endeavors in publishing books and magazines. As a prolific writer in his own right, Kotku authored over 30 books. Understanding the power of written communication, Kotku encouraged his followers to engage in literary pursuits, facilitating the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and teachings. By promoting the publication of books and magazines, Kotku aimed to expand the reach of his message and the broader principles he advocated for. According to Hakan Yavuz, in most of these books, he sought an answer for “how to close the gap between daily human exigencies and practices and traditional Islamic morality.” Yavuz concludes that in Kotku’s opinion “the high Islamic tradition was flexible and enlightened enough to address contemporary needs.”<sup>166</sup> In conclusion, Kotku embraced a methodology that involved utilizing modern methods while adapting Sufism and madrasa traditions to the contemporary context.

His aim was twofold: to expand his sphere of influence and to promote the idea that Muslims could achieve outmaneuver Westerners by both embracing technology and adhering to their religious principles. As a result, the İskenderpaşa community emerged as the most influential Khalidi group in the realm of practical politics, establishing direct relationships with former President Turgut Özal (1927-1993) and Erbakan. Kotku's approach encompassed both intellectual and political dimensions. By combining the modern tools of communication and technology with the traditional teachings of Sufism and the madrasa system, he sought to position Muslims on equal footing with the Western world.<sup>167</sup> In Kotku’s perspective, religion

---

<sup>166</sup> Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity*, 142.

<sup>167</sup> Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity*, 103-104.

and development were not mutually exclusive but rather interconnected and essential. He believed that Sufism played a crucial role in this dynamic by keeping believers within the boundaries of Sharia, providing a moral foundation for self-discipline, and fulfilling the spiritual needs of the soul.<sup>168</sup>

Silverstein argues that the Khalidiyya's own Sufi practices, such as *sohbet* (spiritual conversations), which were used by Kotku as the primary means to connect with people, served as the foundation for the continuation of this Khalidi lineage. Sufism also provided the sheikh with legitimacy in inheriting a centuries-old lineage and upholding traditions. However, Silverstein concludes that due to the prohibition of Sufi orders and changes in governance, Sufis had to adapt their discourses and practices. As a result, the İskenderpaşa community became a redefined Sufi movement rather than simply inheriting the Gümüşhanevi Lodge.<sup>169</sup> Yavuz further argues that the case of İskenderpaşa demonstrates that Islamic social movements were not always a direct reaction against modernism but rather an opportunistic effort by the middle class to benefit from the new possibilities and opportunities presented by modernization.<sup>170</sup> In this way, these communities "gradually transformed themselves from strictly religious associations into competing informal educational and cultural associations with religious underpinnings."<sup>171</sup> Yavuz also discusses that the Khalidi groups, primarily İskenderpaşa were not "deprived" but

---

<sup>168</sup> Kotku, *Nefsin Terbiyesi*, (Istanbul: Vuslat Publications, 2010), 21, 76.

<sup>169</sup> Brian Silverstein, "Sufism and Modernity in Turkey: From the Authenticity of Experience to the Practice of Discipline," in *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (eds.), (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 58.

<sup>170</sup> Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity*, 143.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

rather “enabled” “people who want to bring about change rather than passively react to socio-economic forces.”<sup>172</sup>

Other Khalidi groups, such as the successors of Esad Erbili, known as the Erenköy community, more or less adopted a similar attitude in their relationship with modernity. They continued Sufi practices, disseminated Islam through various publication means, and promoted the emergence of a religious bourgeoisie by founding companies. However, Ustaosmanoğlu’s method was completely different. His community stands out as a distinctive example among other Khalidi groups for rejecting not only Western ideas but also modern methods. In this regard, this Khalidi community embraced an uncompromising position towards modernism and secularism by establishing an alternative educational and social system.

### **Emergence of İsmailağa Community (1960-1970)**

Ustaosmanoğlu played a central role in physically building his community. After being appointed as an imam, he would visit shops to preach about Islam, give talks in different mosques despite warnings from Diyanet, and encourage people to send their children as well as themselves come to İsmailağa Mosque for religious education. He also received assistance from other *hocas*, primarily from Of, to raise more students and engage in *emr-i bi’l maruf ve nehy-i an’il münker* (enjoining the truth and forbidding the wrong) by visiting towns and villages across Anatolia.<sup>173</sup> As his followers increased in number, he needed more space. Consequently, he began delivering sermons in several other mosques, although the lack of authorization from

<sup>172</sup> Hakan Yavuz, “The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order,” in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia Change and Continuity*, Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.), (Istanbul: Routledge, 1999), 136-37.

<sup>173</sup> Ahıska Yayınevi, *Hazrat-ü Mevlânâ*, 16-18.



Diyanet sometimes required him to use houses, depending on the pressure exerted by the higher authorities.<sup>174</sup>

Despite the fact that it was illegal, Ustaosmanoğlu vehemently advocated for the opening of madrasas, seeing it as a means to resist the secularism's attempt to destroy Ahl-i Sunna, while defying Imam Hatip schools.<sup>175</sup> His solution to restore Islam in Turkey was straightforward: "We must open a madrasa in each neighborhood, separate for boys and girls. Without establishing madrasas and studying Islam, we cannot demonstrate the necessity of Islam. I am proposing something that is quite simple. For instance, five people can come together, rent an apartment, furnish it, and then, you have a madrasa."<sup>176</sup> According to him, the madrasa would play a pivotal role in restoring the glory of the Ottoman Empire. He stated: "We must teach the exact same curriculum as during the era of Sultan Fatih [Mehmet II]. By reopening the madrasas, we can return to the illustrious era of Sultan Selim [Selim I]. It would only take 2-3 years to experience this revival."<sup>177</sup>

To achieve this objective, he implemented an identical curriculum in his madrasas, mirroring the one in his madrasa in Of. The students were encouraged to memorize the Quran, and then proceed with studying Arabic using language teaching books from the Ottoman era. However, learning Arabic was seen as an integral part of religious studies, as the ultimate aim was to comprehend the Quran. In his perspective, acquiring proficiency in Arabic was

<sup>174</sup> Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 1, (Istanbul: Sıraç Kitabevi, 2010), 3.

<sup>175</sup> Şefik Kocaman, "Ne Olacak Bu İmam-Hatiplerin Hali", *Marifet Dergisi*, (2016), 42.

<sup>176</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 3, 143.

<sup>177</sup> Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu, *Hikmetli Sözler*, (Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2013), 22.

synonymous with advancing in the *tariqa*, the spiritual path.<sup>178</sup> After gaining a grasp of the fundamental Arabic principles, students would then delve into the study of *usul* (methodology) for *tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), *hadith* (Prophet's sayings), and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). Additionally, *aqaid* held significant importance in teaching the fundamental tenets of Ahl-i Sunna and in examining non-Sunni sects.<sup>179</sup>

Such an education would be received in a madrasa only. Labeling state schools as “a path to Hell,” Ustaosmanoğlu vehemently objected to the idea of sending children to state schools or universities. He advocated for the opening of one million madrasas in Istanbul alone, with separate facilities for boys and girls. According to him, state schools were intentionally designed to undermine Islam by endorsing co-educational settings, non-Islamic curriculum, and disregarding the illustrious heritage of Turkey during the Ottoman era.<sup>180</sup> He cautioned his followers about the potential repercussions of sending their children to secular schools: “Unless you enroll your children in madrasas, uphold Sharia, and fulfill your duties within the *tariqa* (order), you will increasingly encounter calamities.”<sup>181</sup> On the other hand, the path to salvation for both individuals and society was straightforward: “By adhering to Sharia and the *tariqa*, you will be protected from calamities, and you will experience a peaceful death. However, if you

---

<sup>178</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 2, 66-67.

<sup>179</sup> Nimetullah Akın, “Resmi Din Öğretimi ve Gayri Resmi Din Öğretiminin Neden Olduğu Problemler”, *Kuran ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Hayati Hökelekli and Vejdi Bilgin (eds.), (Bursa: Bursa Büyük Şehir Belediyesi Kuran Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2015,) 626-28.

<sup>180</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 2, 100 passim.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, 346-8.

disregard these principles, you will have to face numerous *bela* (calamities) and endure the torment in the *ahiret* (afterlife).<sup>182</sup>

His most distinct and notable perspective was his rejection of technology. For instance, he considered television to be incompatible with an Islamic way of life, stating, “If you do not aspire to be a virtuous person, you may choose to remain in comfort, indulge in excess, listen to music, and watch television. However, our primary goal is to practice Allah’s religion ourselves and encourage others to do the same.”<sup>183</sup> His stance was unequivocal: “If you purchase a television, your *iman* (faith) will depart from you.” This belief stemmed from the fact that television broadcasts often violated Islamic principles, such as the concept of *tesettür* (hijab) and other related guidelines.<sup>184</sup> Nevertheless, Ustaosmanoğlu believed that technological devices could be aligned with Islamic principles depending on their purpose of use. He emphasized, “If a woman utilizes a washing machine to free up time for excessive makeup, it is forbidden. However, if a woman uses a washing machine to devote more time to reading the Quran, then it is encouraged.” Similarly, he acknowledged that planes, for instance, could be beneficial for facilitating visits to Mecca for pilgrimage. On the other hand, he regarded game technology as time-wasting and thus prohibited its use.<sup>185</sup>

In Ustaosmanoğlu’s perspective, life and its various activities were categorized into two domains: Islamic and non-Islamic. For instance, Sharia did not prohibit women from learning and practicing handicrafts. However, if a woman excessively devoted her time to such activities

---

<sup>182</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 1, 11-13.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 56-8.

<sup>184</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Hikmetli Sözlür*, 99.

<sup>185</sup> Himmet Hülür, “Technology and Naqshbandi,” 311-12.

instead of learning and teaching Islam, it would be deemed impermissible. The emphasis was placed on prioritizing religious knowledge and practice over other pursuits.<sup>186</sup> Every social or personal activity had to adhere to Islamic principles and, more importantly, serve an Islamic purpose. Ustaosmanoğlu believed that technology, primarily developed by the West, was being utilized to infiltrate Muslim societies and steer them away from Islam. However, he cautioned that employing technology for Islamic purposes could potentially be counterproductive and compared it to “arming oneself with the weapons of the enemy.”<sup>187</sup> However, Ustaosmanoğlu’s foremost concern was to ensure the transmission of Islamic knowledge by reviving and expanding the tradition of madrasas.

According to Ustaosmanoğlu, Sufism played a crucial and complementary role within the framework of the madrasa. Every student in the madrasa was required to be initiated into the *tariqa*, adhere to the rules of the *tariqa*, maintain a spiritual connection with the sheikh through *rabita*, participate in the *hatm-i haccan* (silent dhikr), and study the books of *Mektubat-ı Rabbani* and *Risale-i Kudsiyye*, which held significant importance within the Sufi tradition.<sup>188</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu firmly believed that Sufism was the essential path for truly practicing Islam. In one of his letters, he expressed, “In an era filled with ignorance and sins like a flood, this *tariqa* (Sufi order) is the only way that can help us, and the world remain steadfast on the path of this divine order (*nizam, Islam*). Liberating Sharia from superficiality and guiding it towards the ultimate truth (*hakikat*) relies on this path (*tariqa*).” However, he emphasized that the practice of Sufism was contingent upon the practice of Sharia, highlighting the interconnectedness

<sup>186</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Hikmetli Sözler*, 51-52.

<sup>187</sup> This is a reference to a hadith. Zehra Ögüt, “Sosyolojik Bağlamda,” 323.

<sup>188</sup> Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu, *Tembihat*, (Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2019), 20-21.

between the two.<sup>189</sup> He held the belief that both he and his disciples were incredibly fortunate to have been initiated into the Khalidiyya order during a time when people had strayed from the teachings of the Sunnah, succumbed to *bid'a*, and neglected *ilim* (knowledge).<sup>190</sup>

While incorporating Sufism into the madrasa, Ustaosmanoğlu placed great importance on the practice of *rabıta*. *Rabıta* refers to the act of a disciple envisioning their sheikh in order to establish a spiritual connection between their hearts. According to Ustaosmanoğlu, this practice was deemed indispensable in the pursuit of the spiritual path.<sup>191</sup> Through the practice of *rabıta*, disciples are believed to maintain a spiritual connection with their sheikhs regardless of physical proximity. This controversial Sufi practice serves to strengthen the sheikh's legitimacy and spiritual influence over the disciple. Ustaosmanoğlu viewed *rabıta* as the sole method through which a disciple could attain a connection with Allah, emphasizing its significance in the disciple's spiritual journey.<sup>192</sup> After providing an explanation on the permissibility of *rabıta* in Islam and tracing its historical roots back to the Prophet Muhammad, Ustaosmanoğlu asserts that *rabıta* is crucial for maintaining the unity of the community and distinguishing the disciples from those who have not been initiated into Sufism. He believes that through this practice, the disciples establish a special bond and spiritual connection that sets them apart from others who have not embarked on the Sufi path.<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu, *Mektubat-ı Mahmudiyye*, Vol. 1, (Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2021), 132.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, 138.

<sup>191</sup> For *rabıta* please see, Brett Wilson, "Binding with a Perfect Sufi Master: Naqshbandi Defenses of Rābiṭa from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 60, no. 1, (2020), 56-78.

<sup>192</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Hikmetli Sözlər*, 405.

<sup>193</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *İrşad'ül Müridin*, (Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2010), 97-108.

However, according to Ustaosmanoğlu, if even one rule of Sharia or Sunna is abandoned, Sufism becomes meaningless. He viewed religion as a comprehensive system of doctrines and rules that should be observed, permeating every aspect of life, and making itself visible to others. In contrast to many other Sufi sheikhs from various orders who kept their Sufi activities discreet and hidden, Ustaosmanoğlu actively promoted the visibility of Islam. Clothing played a significant role in this regard, as it signified adherence to Sharia. Therefore, it was considered obligatory for women to wear a *çarşaf* (a black hijab that covers the entire body) and for men to wear a *sarık* (turban), rope, and loose trousers, along with growing long beards and having clean-shaven heads and mustaches. Ustaosmanoğlu believed that adopting other clothing styles introduced by Atatürk, which resembled European fashion, was strictly prohibited (haram) and would lead to calamities.<sup>194</sup>

Unlike other Khalidi groups, the distinctive attire and the concentration of the community and its madrasas around İsmailağa Mosque had a transformative effect on the neighborhood, effectively creating an enclave or a “ghetto of Islam.”<sup>195</sup> In essence, the visibility of the community reached its peak due to the belief that Sharia should be observed not only in private life but also in the public sphere. This stance contradicted the goals of the Republican elite, which aimed to confine Islam to the individual's personal life and establish a monopoly over its teachings.

Similar to the efforts of Republic's cadres to create an ideal citizen who was modern, secular, and enlightened, the İsmailağa community offered an alternative approach in raising an

---

<sup>194</sup> Ustaosmanoğlu, *Sohbetler*, Vol. 1, 191 passim.

<sup>195</sup> Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2014), 61.

ideal Muslim who adheres to Sharia, attire, technology use, and historical perspective. At first glance, the goals and methods of the Republican elite look fundamentally different from those of Ustaosmanoğlu. However, both approaches aimed to impose their own version of true Islam and an ideal individual. While the regime attempted to assert a monopoly on religion and define its borders within the public sphere by using the mosques and Imam Hatip schools, Ustaosmanoğlu, similarly, proposed his understanding of Islam as the path to salvation, creating a curriculum akin to that of a state for his madrasas. Thus, it can be concluded that Ustaosmanoğlu's community was a continuation of the madrasa tradition, infused with elements of Sufism, while also being shaped by the unique circumstances of its time.

By doing so, a disciple was expected to solely build his/her life on the strict rules of this community. The dichotomy was clear: either them or us. This bifurcation and relegating Islam to a set of rules, in which, in fact, a disciple was bounded by what is accepted within or outside Islam, the puritanism or what we may call Islamic primordialism appears. At this point, puritanism refers to the process by which Islam, as a complex and multifaceted religious tradition, is reduced to a simplistic and rigid ideology. It involves treating Islam as a fixed and concrete entity, detached from its large historical, cultural, artistic, and interpretive dimensions with a sole focus on creating an alternative individual and community through a stalemate with the state. In Ustaosmanoğlu's Islam understanding, the centuries-old elements of Sufism such as traditional arts or music were disapproved on the grounds that the sole goal for a disciple had

to be studying and teaching Islam within the strict borders, drawn by Ustaosmanoğlu, and his main sources such as *Mektubat-ı Rabbani*.<sup>196</sup>

It results in the limitation of Islam's dynamic and diverse nature, potentially leading to the exclusion of alternative interpretations and stifling intellectual and cultural development within the religion. In fact, Ustaosmanoğlu firmly defended the idea that the door of *içtihad* (re-interpretation of main sources of Islam) was closed, and he strongly challenged the ideas of modernist Islamic scholars such as Muhammad Abduh or the legacy of non-Khalidi Ottoman Sufism, using Ahl-i Sunna as a buffered zone.<sup>197</sup> This stance, indeed, exemplifies Charles Taylor's argument that religion in the modern period has been influenced by the process of secularization, which resulted in the formation of a "buffered self."<sup>198</sup> For the İsmailağa community, this buffer was mostly Ahl-i Sunna as well as redefined version of Sufism as integral part of the madrasa. Marshall Hodgson further argues that modern Islamic movements have treated Islam as a blueprint for an alternative social order, one that can be contrasted with capitalism or communism as competing systems rather than emphasizing it as a personal faith. "Rather than as a personal posture of faith or as loyalty to a historical community, it now was thought of as a complete pattern of ideal life, subsisting in itself apart from the community which might embody it," Hodgson explains.<sup>199</sup> In the case of İsmailağa community, this competition

<sup>196</sup> The impact of Indian Naqshbandis or reformist thought on Turkish Sufi circles remains yet to be explored.

<sup>197</sup> For the community's views on modernist Islam, please see; Mesut Ergün, *Modernist Zihniyete Karşı Ehl-i Sünnet Müdafaası*, (Istanbul: Dirayet Publications, 2017).

<sup>198</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 270.

<sup>199</sup> Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. 3, (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 389.



was held with secular Republic, relying on the widespread idea that the state, which, once upon a time, was Islamic, had to be re-Islamized through a down to top effort.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith similarly posits that the process of secularization involves transforming religion into a system of beliefs and practices. He argues that Islamic groups, after the reification of Islam resulting from the systematization of its faith and doctrines, became mundane.<sup>200</sup> The word mundane seems problematic in the case of the İsmailiyya community since certain supernatural or occult perspectives of Sufism like dreams, *zuhurat* (the appearance of a vision in the state of half-awake and half asleep), *rabita*, *murakaba* (a kind of meditation for purifying the soul and mind from worldly affairs), or *istimdad* (seeking help from saints). Even so, these practices were utilized as means to differentiate members of the community from non-members, to preserve a connection with the past, and to counter the influence of modernist Islamic ideas. These modernist perspectives often rejected Sufism altogether or criticized these practices as borrowed from other religious traditions, particularly from India.<sup>201</sup> Thus, the success of Islam, as defined by the reimagined Khalidiyya fused with the madrasa tradition, was intimately tied to the spiritual realm and the pursuit of the otherworldly.

Prominent scholars such as Hakan Yavuz, Şerif Mardin, and Thierry Zarcone have posited that the resistance of the Khalidiyya against reformist Islamic thought in Turkey distinguishes Turkish Islamism as an exceptional phenomenon, setting it apart from other forms of Islamism

---

<sup>200</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 43, 109 and 118.

<sup>201</sup> For the modernist or reformist Islamic thought, please see; Basheer M. Nafi, "The Rise of Islamic Reformist Thought and its Challenge to Traditional Islam," in *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, Suha Taji-Farouki and Basheer M. Nafi (eds.), (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 28-61. Also, for the use of Sufism, especially its lineage for linking the present with the past, please see; Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity*, 111.

that emerged in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world. In this context, Islamic movements in Turkey successfully prevented the infiltration of radical ideologies and maintained the emphasis on the integration of religion and the state, a legacy inherited from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>202</sup> However, it is important to acknowledge that contemporary Khalidi communities, including the İsmailağa Community, should not be viewed solely as uninterrupted extensions of the past. These communities in the Republican era were influenced by the prevailing ideologies of their time, both by embracing and challenging them. They can be seen as responding to the contemporary challenges and threats faced by Muslims, whether it be colonialism as experienced by Indian and Egyptian Muslims or the secular Republic in the case of Turkey.<sup>203</sup> In this sense, they share a common inclination with modernist movements to reify and assert the importance of religion in the face of perceived threats.

Katerina Dalacoura argues that the concept of Islamic civilization, which gained traction among Islamist thinkers in Turkey during the late Ottoman era, served as a means to challenge the perceived superiority of the West. This concept was closely intertwined with Turkey's process of secularization, which prompted religious defenders to present an alternative civilization that could incorporate technology and the rule of law. In contrast, the Republic of Turkey fostered a dichotomy between tradition and modernity, framing Islamic thought and

---

<sup>202</sup> Şerif Mardin, "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes," *Turkish Studies* Vol. 6, no. 2 (January, 2005): 145-165; M. Hakan Yavuz, "Is There a Turkish Islam? The Emergence of Convergence and Consensus," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* Vol. 24, no. 2 (October 2004): 213-232; Michelangelo Guida, "The New Islamists' Understanding of Democracy in Turkey: The Examples of Ali Bulaç and Hayreddin Karaman," *Turkish Studies* Vol. 11, no. 3 (September, 2010): 347-370; Thierry Zarcone, "Nakşibendiler ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti."

<sup>203</sup> For a discussion on the reification of Islam by modernist Muslim thinkers, please see; Safdar Ahmed, *Reform and Modernity in Islam the Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses among Muslim Reformers*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 43-75.

practices as regressive. The Republic-imposed secularism understanding, according to Katerina Dalacoura, associated any Islamic theme or the country's Islamic past with backwardness and viewed progressive and reactionary elements as mutually exclusive.<sup>204</sup> The challenge to such conviction was echoed in Kısakürek's lines as following: "you are a stranger at your own home, a pariah in your own country."<sup>205</sup> Based on the concept of becoming a stranger, as described by Dalacoura, Islamist thinkers embraced the notion of Islamic civilization as the true and virtuous civilization, rooted in the principles of justice and rights provided by the Quran.<sup>206</sup> Intentionally or unintentionally, Ustaosmanoğlu and his community adopted this approach to the past, glorifying the Ottoman era and its institutions, while simultaneously redefining and even reconstructing its inherited legacy.

By 1970, Islamist or conservative groups had gathered under a political party, named *Milli Nizam Partisi* (National Order Party). While Kotku has been strongly influential in the foundation of this party, Ustaosmanoğlu, once again, continued implementing his own method that was to expand the number of madrasas. During the 1970s, Turkey was confronted with various internal challenges, including nationalist, Islamist, and leftist movements, which raised concerns about the potential for civil unrest. Amidst this turbulent backdrop, Ustaosmanoğlu had already laid the foundations for his community. He dispatched deputies to various regions of Anatolia, inaugurated numerous madrasas in Istanbul, Of, and other parts of the country, and persistently challenged the state's authority. Despite facing multiple trials, including a death

---

<sup>204</sup> Katerina Dalacoura, "'Islamic Civilization' as an Aspect of Secularization in Turkish Islamic Thought," *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (169), 137.

<sup>205</sup> Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, *Çile*, (Istanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 2004), 399.

<sup>206</sup> Dalacoura, "'Islamic Civilization'," 138.

penalty request for his alleged involvement in the assassination of a progressive-minded mufti, as well as a life imprisonment sentence for attempting to undermine Turkey's constitutional order, Ustaosmanoğlu successfully cultivated a community that reflected his interpretation of Islam.<sup>207</sup> Today, the İsmailağa community is widely regarded as one of the largest Khalidi communities globally. Their activities encompass a wide range of endeavors, including madrasa education, social aid initiatives, and their influence extends from Germany to Senegal, India and to former Soviet countries like Uzbekistan.

In conclusion, the emergence of the İsmailağa community led by Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu represents a complex interplay between the changing sociopolitical landscape, state control over religion, and the transformation of Khalidiyya in post-1945 Turkey. Ustaosmanoğlu's staunch anti-secular and anti-modernist stance, rooted in traditional madrasa education, redefined the identity and purpose of the Sufi order within the community. The community's emphasis on strict adherence to Sharia, distinctive attire, and rejection of technology or Islamizing the purpose of its use, helped maintain the unity of its members and differentiate them from others. However, this Islamic primordialism and the narrowing of its interpretation turned the community into a response to the regime's efforts to impose a modern, secular, and enlightened version of citizenship. In parallel with the secular Republic, Ustaosmanoğlu's endeavors aimed to shape both the ideal individual (Muslim) and the broader society or community (*cemaat*) marked a shift from the past of the İsmet Baba Lodge, as this community was a product of its own time.

---

<sup>207</sup> Zehra Öğüt, "Sosyolojik Bağlamda," 113.

Overall, the İsmailağa community and its evolution under the leadership of Ustaosmanoğlu exemplify the intricate relationship between religion, state power, societal dynamics, and the evolving nature of Sufism in post-1945 Turkey. It sheds light on the challenges and adaptations faced by religious movements in the face of state control and societal changes, and the ways in which they reinterpreted and redefined their religious traditions.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to shed light on the transformation process of a traditional Khalidi lodge into a Sufism-inspired Islamic movement. It argues that the emergence of the İsmailağa community is the result of a complex and multifaceted process involving various factors, including ambivalent state policies towards religion, the fusion of madrasa tradition with Sufism, personal and kinship connections, and the redefinition of Sufism to create an alternative society that stands in opposition to Republican ideals. By engaging with the discourse surrounding state and societal renewal in the late Ottoman Empire and early Republican era, this study departs from existing literature by challenging the notion that Khalidiyya is inherently a politicized Sufi order. Instead, it views Khalidiyya as a manifestation of nineteenth-century Sufism, which views Islam as a means for the collective salvation of the state and society. Furthermore, this thesis asserts that each modern Khalidi community should be examined within the context of its birth, considering the distinct processes that each surviving group has undergone.

In pursuit of a comprehensive understanding, this thesis adopts a chronological approach that examines events from the perspectives of both the state and the Khalidis, thereby avoiding a solely state-centered analysis. By delving into the political developments of the time, the thesis also dedicates significant attention to the lives of the sheikhs and their experiences. Furthermore, in order to present a nuanced portrayal of the encounter between Khalidi communities and the secular state, this study goes beyond relying solely on state sources and incorporates diverse sources from both sides, highlighting the conflicting and overlapping aspects of their interactions.

The first chapter of this thesis elucidates how the growing bureaucratization of the Ottoman Empire led to increased interference in Sufi lodges, gradually eroding their autonomy through new legislations. This trend reached its culmination in 1925 when Atatürk took the decisive step of closing Sufi lodges and imposing bans on their attire, rituals, and titles. This decision was rooted in the belief that Sufism had no place in the new Turkey, which aspired to achieve Western standards through a rapid modernization program that aimed to restructure the state and society. The Republican elite inherited the perception from the late Ottoman era that Sufism was one of the factors perpetuating backwardness, and they implemented a collective punishment on Sufis following the involvement of Khalidi figures in certain incidents or riots opposing the imposition of a Westernized way of life. Consequently, the Naqshbandi or Khalidi order became a primary target of demonization by the Republic, seen as the alleged source of reactionary movements.

Despite the stringent measures aimed at eradicating Sufism, its ambivalent policies inadvertently allowed certain Sufi circles to persist. One such policy was the permission granted to former official sheikhs to reside in the residential quarters of their lodges until their passing, enabling them to attract new disciples. Additionally, the government authorized former sheikhs to assume positions as imams and former ulama members to become preachers, thus offering them a sanctioned role within the state institution of Diyanet. As the government attempted to restructure the religious landscape around mosques and asserted its monopoly over the definition and practice of Islam, disregarding diverse interpretations and implementations of Islamic sources, the surviving lineage sheikhs, many of whom were already former members of the ulama, found a discreet refuge to disseminate their ideas and sustain their Sufi activities.

The second chapter delves into the evolution of the İsmet Baba Lodge, which inadvertently transformed into a modern community known as İsmailağa under the guidance of Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu. The state's failure or reluctance to fully enforce its anti-religious policies played a significant role in this transformation. Ustaosmanoğlu, who received a madrasa education in his hometown, leveraged his knowledge to become an imam in the İsmailağa mosque. The ambiguous laws pertaining to mosque ownership and the authorization for renovations provided him with a foundation to establish his community. Taking advantage of the more lenient conditions that emerged after 1946, Ustaosmanoğlu stepped into a religious environment where a disguised association functioned as a madrasa and a sheik assumed the role of a preacher. In essence, he had the necessary circumstances to revive the Order and form a modern community.

During the process of transformation, this thesis uncovers that the madrasa tradition, inherited from Ustaosmanoğlu's hometown Of, exerted a dominant influence over Sufism as it was integrated into the curriculum. However, as evidenced by the community's own works, Sufi practices such as *rabıta* and the emphasis on adherence to the sheikh were not abandoned. Instead, Ustaosmanoğlu redefined Sufism, utilizing it as a framework to imbue his community with distinct characteristics that were anti-modern and anti-secular in nature. Nevertheless, the community's structure and its inheritance of ideas from the late Ottoman era, such as the glorification of the past and the belief in a return to Islamic sources as a means of salvation, led to the re-interpretation of Sufism. In other words, this community sought to establish an alternative to the Republic's ideals concerning the state and society. For example, while the Republican elite emphasized the importance of a modern, secular education for the country's



progress, the community offered a replication of Ottoman-era madrasas, positing that the key to the Ottomans' success lay in their educational institutions. Consequently, rather than remaining a mere Sufi lodge perpetuating the Ottoman-era version, this community evolved into a modern movement inspired by Sufism.

The examination of this transformation, focusing on two distinct eras of a specific Khalidi lineage under different sheikhs, makes a valuable contribution to the existing literature by offering a critical perspective on the assumption that contemporary Khalidi communities are simply unchanged extensions of their Ottoman-era counterparts. Furthermore, by emphasizing the ambivalence and inconsistency of legislations as well as the significance of personal and kinship ties, this thesis highlights the interdependent relationship between the emergence of a modern Khalidi community and its immediate contextual circumstances. This challenges the notion that these communities inherit the pro-renewal ideas of Khalid Baghdadi, underscoring the complex and multifaceted nature of their development.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Unpublished Primary Sources

BCA, Folder, 4-35-21  
BOA, Folder 4-30-23  
BOA, BEO, Folder 4564-4568  
BOA, Y.PRK.DH, Folder, 10-63  
İsmet Efendi Vakfı Private Archive

### Published Primary Sources

Ahıska Yayınevi. *Hazrat-ü Mevlânâ eş-Şeyh Mahmut en-Nakşibendî el-Müceddidi el-Hâlidî el-Ufî*. Istanbul: Ahıska Publications, 2010.

al-Khani, Muhammad bin Abdullah. *Bahjat al-Saniyya*. Cairo: al-Matbaat al-Maymaniyya, 1319.

Ankaravi, Ahmed Hilmi Ankaravi. *Muhibb'ul Fiqh li Hifzi'd Din*. Istanbul: Mahmutbey Matbaası, 1328 [1912].

Baghdadi, Mawlana Khalid. *Divan*. İstanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı Library, Nr. 105.

*Cumhuriyet*. "Batıl İtikatlara Paydos." 5 September 1925.

*Cumhuriyet*. "Hüküm Verildi." 30 June 1925.

*Cumhuriyet*, "Ezan Türkçe, Kuran Türkçe Okunmalı." 6 October 1960.

Günaltay, M. Şemseddin. *Zulmetten Nura*, Third Edition, Istanbul: Evkaf-ı İslamiye Matbaası, 1341 [1925].

Haydarzade, Ibrahim Fasih. *al-Majdu Talid fi Manakib-i Sheikh Khalid*. Istanbul: Matbaa-yı Amire, 1291.

İsmail Hakkı, Kılıçzade. "Pek Uyanık bir Uyku." *İçtihad*, no. 55.

Nahid, Haşim. *Türkiye için İ'tila Yolları*. Istanbul: Şems Matbaası, n.d.

Ömer Adil, Zülfizade. *Tekyeler Yıkılmalıdır*. Istanbul: İstiklal Matbaası, 1925.

*Official Gazette* [Resmî Gazete]. no. 68, 168, 243, 3956, 7229, 12038.

Sahibzade, Muhammed Esad. *Bughyat al-Wajid fi Mektubat Mawlana Khalid*. Damascus: Matbaat al-Taraqqi, 1334.

Şeyh Hüsnü, "Tarikat Mesâilî: Lüzûm-ı Islâhât", *Hikmet*, no. 20, 1327 [1920].

*Son Havadis*. "Efendinin yerine yeni bir efendi seçilecek." 2 August 1960.

*TBMM Tutanak Dergisi*, Vol. 19 no. 7 and 289, 1925 and 1949.

Ustaosmanoğlu, Mahmud. *Hikmetli Sözler*. Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2013.

Ustaosmanoğlu, Mahmud. *Mektubat-ı Mahmudiyye*. Two Volumes. Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2021.

Ustaosmanoğlu, Mahmud. *Sohbetler*. Three Volumes. Istanbul: Sıraç Kitabevi, 2010.

Ustaosmanoğlu, Mahmud. *Tembihat*. Istanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, 2019.

*Vatan*. "Başbakan Adnan Menderes Adana'da Mühim bir Nutuk Söyledi." 25 December 1952.

### Secondary Sources

Abu-Manneh, Butrus. "A New Look at the Rise and Expansion of the Khalidi Sub-Order." In *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society*, edited by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, 279-314. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2005.

—. "Salafiyya and the Rise of Khalidiyya in Baghdad in Early Nineteenth Century." *Die Welt Des Islams* 43, no. 3 (2003): 349-372.

- . “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century.” *Die Welt des Islams* 22, no. 1 (1982): 1-36.
- Açıkgöz, Ahmet. “Tekkesi İşgal Edilen Şeyh”, *İnkışaf Dergisi*. no.2 (2005): 65-73.
- Ahmad, Feroz. “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey.” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, no. 1 (January, 1991): 3-21.
- Ahmed, Safdar. *Reform and Modernity in Islam the Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses among Muslim Reformers*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2013.
- Akın, Nimetullah. “Resmi Din Öğretimi ve Gayrı Resmi Din Öğretiminin Neden Olduğu Problemler.” in *Kuran ve Toplumsal Bütünleşme*, Hayati Hökelekli and Vejdi Bilgin (eds.) Bursa: Bursa Büyük Şehir Belediyesi Kuran Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2015: 623-634.
- al-Ghazali, Muhammad. *The Socio-Political Thoughts of Shah Wali Allah*. Islamabad: Adam Publishers, 2000.
- Albayrak, Haşim. *Oflu Hoca Kavramını Oluşturan Din Adamları*. Istanbul: Sahaflar Kitap Sarayı, 2008.
- Albayrak, Sadık. “İskilipli Atf Hoca.” *DİA*. Vol. 22, (2000): 583-584.
- Algar, Hamid. “Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History.” In *Naqshbandis Cheminements et Situation Actuelle d’un Ordre Mystique Musulman*, edited by Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone, 123-152. Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990.
- . “The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance.” *Studia Islamica*, no. 44: 123-152.
- Ansari, Muhammad Abdul Haq. *Sufism and Shariah: a Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi’s Effort to Reform Sufism*. London: The Islamic Foundation, 1986.
- Arı, Osman Sacid. “Meclis-i Meşâyih Arşivi’ne göre Hicrî 1296–1307 (Miladî 1879–1890) Yılları arasında Osmanlı Tekkelerinde Ortaya Çıkan Problemler,” Unpublished MA thesis, Istanbul University, 2005.
- Ark, Ekrem. *Mevlânâ Küçük Hüseyin Efendi*. Istanbul: Eskin Matbaası, 1988.
- Atacan, Fulya. *Cerrahiler*. Istanbul: Hil Publications, 1990.
- Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri I-III. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1989.
- Aviv, Efrat. “The İsmailâğa Community and its Relationship with the AK Party,” *Democracy and Security*, Vol. 14, no. 3, (2018): 276-299.
- Aydın, Bilgin. “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Tekkeler Reformu ve Meclis-i Meşâyih’in Şeyhülislâmlık’a Bağlı Olarak Kuruluşu, Faaliyetleri ve Arşivi,” *İstanbul Araştırmaları*, No. 7, (1998): 93-109.
- Ayverdi, Samiha, Nezihe Araz, Safiye Erol and Sofi Huri. *Ken’an Rifâi ve Yirminci Asrın Işığında Müslümanlık* Istanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyat, 2003.
- Azamat, Nihat. “Abdülaziz Bekkine,” *DİA*, Vol. 5, (1992): 365.
- Baş, Derya. “Bir Bedeviyye İcâzetnamesi ve Tarikat İcâzetnamelerine Dair Bazı Meseleler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 36, (2017): 7-44.
- Büyük Doğu*, no. 47, 9 February 1951.
- Çakır, Ruşen. *Ayet ve Slogan*. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2014.
- Çapan, Zeynep Gülşah and Ayşe Zarakol. “Turkey’s ambivalent self: ontological insecurity in ‘Kemalism’ versus ‘Erdoğanism’,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, no. 3, (2019): 263-282.

- Casanova, José. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Çelik, Recep. *Geçmişten Günümüze İsmailiğe Taş Medrese -1 (1748-1969)*. Istanbul: Reşadiye Publications, 2021.
- Çınar, Alev. *Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey Bodies, Places and Time*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Commins, David. *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Coşan, Mahmut Esat. "Mehmet Zahit Kotku." *DİA*, Vol. 26 (2002): 227-228.
- Dalacoura, Katerina. "'Islamic Civilization' as an Aspect of Secularization in Turkish Islamic Thought." *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung* Vol. 44, no. 3 (2019): 133-156.
- Danielson, Michael, and Ruşen Keleş. *The Politics of Rapid Urbanization in Turkey*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985.
- Demirci, İslam. "Osmanlı Şeyhülislâmlık Kurumunun Bir Birimi Olarak "Te'lif-i Mesâil Şubesi,"" *İslam Hukuku Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 9. (Istanbul: 2007): 143-170.
- Demirci, Mehmet. *Yahya Kemal ve Mehmet Akif'te Tasavvuf*, Istanbul: Akademi Kitabevi, 1993.
- Demirel, Tanel. *Türkiye'nin Uzun On Yılı Demokrat Parti İktidarı ve 27 Mayıs Darbesi*. Istanbul: Bilgi University Press, 2021.
- Dokuyan, Sabit. "Tekkelerin Kapatılması ve Tasfiye Süreci (1925-1938)." *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, no. 98. (Summer: 2021): 217-244.
- Duman, Doğan. "Çok Partili Dönemde Türkiye'de İslamcılık." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, 1996.
- Eligür, Banu. *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Erden, İbrahim and Yusuf Gök. *Ömrünü İlme ve Hayra Adayan Eşref Osmanağaoğlu*. Istanbul: Türkiye İlmî, İçtimai Hizmetler Vakfı Neşriyatı, 1987.
- Ergün, Mesut. *Modernist Zihniyete Karşı Ehl-i Sünnet Müdafası*. Istanbul: Dirayet Publications, 2017.
- Foley, Sean. "Temporal And Spiritual Power In Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Politics: Shaykh Khalid, Gürcü Necib Pasha And The Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya." *Türkiyat Araştırmaları*, no. 9 (2008): 223-244.
- Gaborieau, Marc, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone. *Naqshbandis Cheminements et Situation Actuelle d'un Ordre Mystique Musulman*. Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990.
- Gabriel Pirický, "The İsmaili Community: Shifting Religious Patterns in Contemporary Turkey," *Archiv Orientální*, no. 80, (2012): 533-561.
- Goloğlu, Mahmut. *Devrimler ve Tepkiler I Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi 1924-1930*. Istanbul: İş Bankası Publications, 2017.
- Gözaydın, İhtar. *Diyanet, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009.
- Guida, Michelangelo. "The New Islamists' Understanding of Democracy in Turkey: The Examples of Ali Bulaç and Hayreddin Karaman." *Turkish Studies* Vol. 11, no. 3 (September, 2010): 347-370
- Gündüz, İrfan. *Gümüşhânevi Ahmed Ziyâüddîn (K.S.) Hayatı-Eserleri-Tarikât Anlayışı ve Hâlidîyye, Tarikatı*. Istanbul: Seha Publications, 1984.
- Gürdoğan, Ersin Nazif. *Görünmeyen Üniversite*. Istanbul: İz Publications, 2021.

- Hanioğlu, Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Hart, Kimberly. *And Then We Work for God, Rural Sunni Islam in Turkey*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013.
- Hızlı, Mefail. "Osmanlı Medreselerinde Okutulan Dersler ve Eserler," *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol: 17, no: 1, (2008): 25-46.
- Hodgson, Marshall. *The Venture of Islam*, Three Volumes, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Hourani, Albert. "Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order" in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, Vivian Brown, Samuel Miklos Stern, Albert Habib Hourani (eds.) (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1972), 89-103.
- Hülür, Himmet. "Technology and Naqshbandi Sufism: An Empirical Analysis of İsmail Ağa and İskender Paşa Branches," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Edebiyat Dergisi*, no. 13 (1999): 289-340.
- İpşirli, Mehmet. "Dersiâm," *DİA*, Vol. 9, (İstanbul: 1994): 185-186.
- İşık, Hüseyin Hilmi. *Vehhabilere ve Mezhebsizlere karşı Vesikalar*. İstanbul: İşık Kitabevi, 1971.
- Kalıpçı, İlknur Güntürkün. *Esprileri ile İçimizden Biri Atatürk*, İstanbul: Epsilon Publications, 2007.
- Kandemir, Furkan. *Mahmud Efendi Hazretleri (Kuddise Sirruhu) Hayatı & Fotoğraf Albümü*. İstanbul: Ahıska Neşriyat, n.d.
- Kara, İsmail. *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, Two Volumes. İstanbul: Dergah Publications, 2019.
- . "Din ile Devlet Arasına Sıkışmış Bir Kurum: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı." *Marmara University İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*. No. 18 (2000): 29-55.
- . *Din ile Modernleşme Arasında Çağdaş Türk Düşüncesinin Meseleleri*. İstanbul: Dergah Publications, 2005.
- Kara, Mustafa. *Metinlerle Günümüz Tasavvuf Hareketleri*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014.
- . "Türkiye'de Tarikatların Yasaklanması ve Mahkumiyeti," in *Doğuşundan Günümüze Tasavvufa Dair Tartışmalar On Üç Asırlık İhtilaflar ve Mücadele*. Salih Çift (ed.) Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Publications, 2020: 491-507.
- Karaduman, Hüseyin. "Belgelerle Konya Mevlânâ Müzesi'nin Kuruluşu," *Vakıflar Dergisi*, Vol. 29. (2005): 136-161.
- Karpat, Kemal. *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . (trn.) *Constitution of the Turkish Republic*, Ankara, 1961.
- Kılıç, Rüya. "1925: Tekkelerin Kapanış Güncesi," in *Ötekilerin Peşinde Ahmet Yaşar Ocak'a Armağan*, Mehmet Öz and Fatih Yeşil (eds.), İstanbul: Timaş Publications, 2015: 749-762.
- Kılıç, Selâmi. "Şapka Meselesi ve Kılık Kıyafet İnkılabı," *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Vol. 4, no. 16, (1995): 529-547.
- Kırık, Hikmet, and Oya Morva. *Cumhuriyet ve Pragmatizm Yazılmamış Kuram*. İstanbul: Doruk Yayınları, 2016.
- Kısakürek, Necip Fazıl. *Çile*. İstanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları, 2004.
- Koç, Mustafa. *Revnakoğlu'nun İstanbul'u İstanbul'un İç Tarihi*, İstanbul: Fatih Belediyesi Kültür Publications, 2022.
- Kocaman, Şefik. "Ne Olacak Bu İmam-Hatiplerin Hali." *Marifet Dergisi*, (2016): 38-49.

- Köseoğlu, Mehmet Akif. "Suriçi İstanbul'un Tekkeleri ve Son Şeyhleri." Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University, 2022.
- Kotku, Mehmed Zahid. *Nefsin Terbiyesi*. Istanbul: Vuslat Publications, 2010.
- Tasavvufi Ahlak 4*. Istanbul: Seha Neşriyat, 1982.
- Landau-Tasseron, Ella. "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the Mujaddid Tradition." *Studia Islamica*, no. 70: 79-117.
- Le Gall, Dina. *A Culture of Sufism, Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700*. New York: SUNY Press, 2005.
- Mardin, Şerif. "The Nakshibendi Order of Turkey." in *Fundamentalisms and the State Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993: 204-232.
- . "Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes," *Turkish Studies* Vol. 6, no. 2 (January, 2005): 145-165.
- . "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus*, Vol. 102, No. 1 (Winter, 1973): 169-190.
- Meeker, Michael E. *A Nation of Empire the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Mollaer, Fırat. *Tekno Muhafazakârlığın Eleştirisi Politik Denemeler*. Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2016.
- Nedim, Ahmet. *Ankara İstiklal Mahkemesi Zabıtları 1926*. Istanbul: İşaret Publications, 1993.
- Odatv. "Diyanet 1000 molla atadı." 22 June 2011. Accessed 9 June 2023. <https://www.odatv4.com/guncel/diyanet-1000-molla-atadi-2206121200-24446#-guncel-diyanet-1000-molla-atadi-2206121200-24446>.
- Öğüt, Zehra. "Sosyolojik Bağlamda İsmailî Cemaati," Unpublished PhD Thesis, Istanbul University, (2022).
- Olson, Robert and William F. Tucker. *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989.
- Onay, Ahmet. "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Camilerin Finansmanı," *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*. Vol. 7, no. 18, (December, 2009): 43-80.
- Öz, Eyüp. "Yasak Bir Hafızayla Yüzleşmek: Menemen Olayı İrtica mı, Komplo mu?" *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, no. 5, (2015): 409-440.
- Özdalga, Elizabeth. (ed.) *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia Continuity and Change*. Istanbul: Routledge, 1999.
- Özdemirci, İlbey. *Fötr Şapkalı Şih Cumhuriyet Sekülerleşmesi ve Taşra*. Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2022.
- Öztürk, Musa Kazım. *İslam Felsefesine Işık Veren Seyyidler*. Ankara: Yenigün Publications, 1969.
- Öztürk, Nazif. *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi*. Ankara: Türk Diyanet Vakfı Publications, 1995.
- Parla, Jale. *Babalar ve Oğullar Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, Istanbul: İletişim Publications, 2022.
- Rizvi, S. A. Abbas. *Shah Waliullah and his Times, A Study of Eighteenth Century of Islam, Politics and Society in India*. Canberra: Ma'rifat Publishing House, 1980.
- Şark İstiklal Mahkemesi (Kararlar ve Mahkeme Zabıtları)*: Ankara: TBMM Kütüphanesi ve Arşiv Hizmetleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, Vol. 6/1, 2016.

- Şenocak, İhsan. *Kudemâ Meclisi*. İstanbul: Hüküm Kitap, 2016.
- . *İki Devrin Ulu Hocası Ali Haydar Efendi*. İstanbul: Hüküm Kitap, 2016
- Şenocak, Kamil. "Kadim Duruşlu bir Halidi Şeyhi: Mahmut Ustaosmanoğlu." *Demokrasi Platformu*, No. 6 (Spring, 2006): 123-158.
- Silverstein, Brian. *Islam and Modernity in Turkey*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Sitembölükbaşı, Şaban. "Aspects of Islamic Revival in Turkey," Unpublished PhD Thesis, Manchester University, 1990.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*, New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
- Taji-Farouki, Suha, and Basheer M. Nafi (eds.) *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.
- Tanman, Baha. "Özbekler Tekkesi," *DİA*. Vol. 34. (2007): 123-124.
- Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Toprak, Binnaz. "Politicisation of Islam in a Secular State: The National Salvation Party in Turkey." In *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam*, Said Amir Arjomand (ed.) London: SUNY Press, 1984: 119-133.
- . "Secularism and Islam: The Building of Modern Turkey," *Macalester International*, Vol. 15, (2005): 26-43.
- Toprak, Zafer. *Atatürk Kurucu Felsefenin Evrimi*. İstanbul: İş Bankası Publications, 2019.
- Tosun, Necdet. *Bahaeddin Nakşibend, Hayatı, Görüşleri, Tarikatı*. İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2002.
- . "Mahmut Sami Ramazanoğlu." *DİA*, Vol. 34, (2007): 442.
- . *Derviş Keşkülü*. İstanbul: Erkam Publications, 2012.
- Tunçay, Mete. *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Tek Parti Yönetimi'nin Kurulması 1923-1931*, Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Publications, 2010.
- Tunçer, Mustafa. "Ofllu Hocaların Yetiştikleri Medreseler, Talebe ve Medrese Sayılarına İlişkin Bazı Rivayetlerin Analizi," *Karadeniz Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Vol. 9, no. 16, (2017): 25-46.
- Usta, Niyazi. *Menzil Nakşiliği*. Ankara: Töre Publications, 1997.
- Üstün, Kemal. *Menemen Olayı ve Kubilay*. İstanbul: Çağdaş Publications, 1981.
- Van Bruinessen, Martin. "Sufism, 'Popular' Islam and the Encounter with Modernity," in *Islam and Modernity Key Issues and Debates*, Muhammad Khalid Masud, Armando Salvatore and Martin van Bruinessen (eds.), Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009: 125-158.
- . "Sufism and Modernity in Turkey: From the Authenticity of Experience to the Practice of Discipline," in *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam*, Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (eds.), New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007: 39-61.
- . *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed Books, 1992.
- Varol, Muharrem. "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikatları Denetleme Siyaseti ve Meclis-i Meşâyih'in Bilinen; Ancak Bulunamayan İki Nizamnâmesi. *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 23, (2010): 39-68.
- . "Yıldız Sarayı'nın Tekkeleri ve II. Abdülhamid'in Tarikat Siyaseti." in *II. Abdülhamid Modernleşme Sürecinde İstanbul*, Coşkun Yılmaz (ed.) İstanbul: Avrupa Kültür Başkenti, 2010: 203-221.
- Vergin, Nur. "Toplumsal Değişme ve Dinsellikte Artış." *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 30, (1985): 9-28.
- Voll, John. "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: Tajdid and Islah." in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, edited by John Esposito, 32-47. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

- Weismann, Itzhak. *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafism, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001.
- . “The Entire Land is My Lodge: Naqshbandi Responses to the Challenges of Modernity and Globalization,” in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes Emplacements of Spiritual Power across Time and Place*, Daphna Ephrat Ethel Sara Wolper, and Paulo G. Pinto. (eds.). London: Brill: 2021: 417-436.
- . *The Naqshbandiyya, Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Wilson, Brett M. “The Failure of Nomenclature: The Concept of Orthodoxy in the Study of Islam,” *Comparative Islamic Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 2, (2009): 169-194.
- . “Binding with a Perfect Sufi Master: Naqshbandi Defenses of Rābiṭa from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic.” *Die Welt des Islams* Vol. 60, no. 1 (2020): 38-64.
- Yanardağ, Ayşe. “Atatürk Devrimleri ve Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (1924-1938).” Unpublished PhD thesis, Ankara University, 2012.
- Yavuz, Hakan. *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . “The Matrix of Modern Turkish Islamic Movements: the Naqshbandi Sufi Order,” in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia Change and Continuity*, Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.) Istanbul: Routledge, 1999: 126-149.
- . “Is There a Turkish Islam? The Emergence of Convergence and Consensus,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* Vol. 24, no. 2 (October 2004): 213-232.
- Yeşiloğlu Mehmet Salih. *İlme, Ülemaya Ait Açık Mektup*. Istanbul: Tecelli Matbaası, 1947.
- Yıldırım, Kadri. *Kürt Medreseleri ve Alimleri*. Istanbul: Avesta Publications, 2008.
- Zarcone, Thierry. “Nakşibendiler ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti: Zulümden, Yeniden Dini Siyasi ve Toplumsal Mevkiye Ulaşma (1925-1991).” *Türkiye Günlüğü*. no. 23 (Summer 1993): 99-107.
- . “Remarques sur le Rôle Socio-Politique et la Filliation Historique des Şeyh Nakşbendi Dans la Turquie Contemporaine,” in *Naqshbandis Cheminements et Situation Actuelle d’un Ordre Mystique Musulman*. Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990: 399-411.
- Zengin, Zeki Salih. “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye’de Kur’an Kurslarının Kurulması ve Gelişimi.” *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, Vol. 11, no. 2 (2011): 1-24.