

According To Baktashi References the Mutual Perceptions between Muslim Peoples and Other Balkan Peoples in Europe

Omer Faruk Teber

Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey
omerfarukteber@akdeniz.edu.tr

Onder Bilgin

Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey
obilgin@akdeniz.edu.tr

Abstract

Analysis of miscellaneous booklets such as “Vucûd-nâme”, “Ahid-nâme”, “Risâla Âyin-i Cem” which were written in the special Baktashi literature called “Erkannâma” should make a significant contribution to studies on Baktashiyya in Balkans. Baktashiyya tradition is important in the regulation of social and political life in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo and Balkans.

A variety of manuscripts, which are a type of such booklets in the Erkannâmas like “Vücûd-namas” are religious and mystical texts in which earthly elements were correlated to parts of human body and various religious and sufistic conceptions implied on these together with letters. In this study we tried to define how social and political elements reflected on Bektashi References by analyzing Baktashi booklets.

Baktashi Erkannamas, which were recorded by Balim Sultan who was the head of Baktashi order in Dimatoca in the Balkans, are still being read and practiced in this geography. This paper investigates the mutual perceptions between Muslim peoples and other Balkan peoples in Europe. As well as traditions, which is an important social bond between the Balkan communities and one of the problems in the production of social policy has been the center of cultural differences. This issue will be evaluated in terms of socio-political and relations between Balkan peoples and Bektashi communities belonging to the tradition of Bektashi. We will be evaluated historical, social, economic results of socio-political attitudes in this presentation.

Keywords: Balkans, Mystical, Social Life, Baktashi, Culture, Organization

Introduction

Analysis of miscellaneous booklets such as “Vujûd-nâme”, “Ahid-nâme”, “Risâla Âyin Cem” which were written in the special Baktashi literature called “Erkannâma” should make a significant contribution to the studies on Baktashiyya in Balkans. Baktashiyya tradition has an important place in the regulation of social and political life in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo and Balkans.

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1-Bektashiya and References

Bektashiya which was evolved around the identity and personality of Haji Bektash Veli (d. 669/1270-71) and continued to develop under the patronage of Ottoman rule is one of the most remarkable order of Turkish cultural history in terms of its role in gathering religious, social, political and various approaches under the umbrella of tolerance.

In order to better understand the nature of Bektahism, its structure and historical development, and to evaluate it correctly, it is highly important to study on the Bektashi Erkannames which were recorded after Haji Bektah Veli and reflected the nature of his teaching and its practical reflections.

These sources played an active role in transferring the âdâb, erkans and rituals of Bektashi thought to the next generations, which was spread out in a large area of Rumeli and Balkans in terms of beliefs and practices, as well as the tercüman, gülbank and duâs contained in the sources were religious-literary texts. These historical sources not only played a primary role in performing erkân and rituals in dervish lodges, but also they are the most important documents showing the structural features of Bektashi tradition in Anatolia and Balkans and the changes and development it was exposed to until today.

On the assumption that the Bektashi Erkannames emerged by way of Balım Sultan (1462(?)- 1516), we must regard him as the “Second Pîr (Pir Thanî)” of Bektashism after Haji Bektash Veli, its founder and institutionalizer (Dedebaba, 1927).

Balım Sultan is not the founder of Bektashism but the figure who systematized and disciplined the order, gave it a new form, developed its erkân by reorganizing it and made it into a legal institution. With him Bektashism was recognized by the state and adopted by masses.

2-Purpose of Writing Erkânâmes

Every âdâb and teaching was produced to solve completely the questions arisen in a certain field. Since these âdâb and erkân include a certain viewpoint and worldview as to how to see the World and events, they introduce a certain image and picture about the facts and, therefore, emerges around it a certain belief, doctrine and model. If these models and behaviors led by the leader reach the desired result, the beliefs on the basis of experience are adopted by the members and used as a reference (Temren, 2003).

None of forms and practices in the erkânâmes is purposeless. It is undoubtedly that each behavior made during these rituals, each symbol used has a “meaning” symbolized by it.

Description made through a certain form of stance or through a pattern of behavior in which several forms were displayed together in fact contain too information to be put on the record. However, the meaning the ritual aimed to point is made, through the symbolic language, fit into a single shape or behavior. Erkannâmes, *mi'yâr al-tarîqât* or *âdâb al-tarîqât* have been composed to create virtuous societies which consist of the men of perfection aimed by Islamic mysticism. In another words, Bektashi guides, men of perfection composed these works since they knew to obey âdab and usûl as the most important rule of spiritual development and becoming ârif of tawhîd.

3. Geography where Erkannâmes were composed

Academic researches made on Haji Bektahs Velî and Bektashi order showed that he was not himself the founder of Bektashi order which was an Anatolian origin dervish order and spread in particular in Balkans and Albania, but was a source of inspiration of Bektashism (Hasluck, 1991).

Before Haji Bektash Veli, there were many dervishes who had come Anatolia from Khorasan and Iraq and settled there. Among them were three remarkable figures that played a part in the religious-political history of Anatolia: Dede Garkın, Baba İlyas and Baba Ishaq. It is probable that relationship of Haji Bektash with the aforesaid figures whom were assumed to had activities in the region played an important role in the shape of his teaching.¹ Bektashism did not have an effective prestige only in Anatolia and Rumeli but also in Balkan countries and played an important part in the Islamization of the region.² The settled life began in the dervish lodges (tekke) founded in the centers outside the rural regions. Ottoman rule made use particularly of Bektashi tekkes in the colonization of the newly captured Balkan lands.

The 16th century was a leap period in the spread of Bektashi order in Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Yugoslavia. This leap started with the fact that Seyyid Ali Sultan (Timurtaş / Hızır Lala / Kızıl Deli) (1310-1402) founded his tekke near Dimatoca in Greece, who was argued to be born from Kadın Anacık. Seyyid Ali Sultan began his duty Bektashi missionary. Later on, in this tekke Balım Sultan, Vahdeti Dede, Seyyid Mustafa Dede, Kara Ali Dede, Sadık Abdullah and many Bektashi Dedes were brought up and involved in missionary activities. As a result of these intense activities, peoples, apart from the Turks, of Greek, Albanian and Slavic origin entered this order. Bektashi orderis also widely spread among Albanians. Bektashis played a decisive role in the formation of religio-political and cultural life of peoples in the republic of Macedonia, Autonomous Province of Kosovo and today Albania.

On the other hand, these tekkes which had the state support caused the groups living in the various regions of Anatolia such as Abdal, Torlaks, Işıks and Kalenderis to stop to support the Safavids and became an important shelter for the groups looking for a place for themselves in the central organization of Ottoman state(Sarikaya, 2003).

Dervishes whom Ottoman supported and gave many privileges and led through Bektashi order to adopt its official ideology remained as the real addressee of the Bektashi thought.

¹ Gündoğdu, Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî, s.122.

² On the geographical distribution of Bektashism see also Ö. Lütfi Barkan, "İstila Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Zaviyeler", Vakıflar Dergisi, II, Ankara 1942, pp .253-279; Hasluck, ibid, pp.22-25, 35; Hüseyin Özcan, "Bektâşîliğin Sosyo-Kültürel Çevresi", HBVAD, year: 8, 22 (Summer 2002), p. 144; Suraiya Faroqhi, Anadolu'da Bektâşîlik, Simurg Yay. İstanbul 2003, pp.191-193; Hamza Aksüt, Anadolu Alevîliğinin Sosyal ve Coğrafi Kökenleri, Art Yay., Ankara 2002; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Kalenderler, Abdallar, Hayderiler: 16. Yüzyılda Bektâşîliğin Oluşumu", trans. Derya Öcal, HBVAD, 11 (1999), p. 62.

Bektashis who were full of humanity and were a distinguished group settled in the central regions of Anatolia and Balkans and maintained the Bektashi tradition which was supported by the Ottoman officials.

Consequently, Bektashi approach which served to the environment of tolerance, embracing all people with deep tolerance was used in the purification and education of dervishes in the Bektashi tekkes which were patronized and controlled by the Ottoman rule.

4. The Socio-Political Condition of the Erkannames' Addressees

The way to better understand the Bektashi order which reached its message going beyond its formative period is to understand the *âdâbs* and *erkans* of this dervish order. Contents analysis of *Erkannamas* also gives us clues about the social and political conditions of the addressee of *Erkannamas*. Accordingly, we can say that *Erkannamas* address to the urbanized people rather than nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples. As was the case in the *Dört Kapı- Kırk Makam*, it is seen that the composers or authors of *Erkannamas* avoided using statements conflicting with the Sunnite approach (Gölpınarlı, 1952). We must say that *Erkannamas* do not include statements about the Pro-Safavid figures. But we must also say that *Khalwatiyya* which was attributed to İbrahim Zahid al-Gilani and *Safawiyya* order produced from the common tradition of mysticism were of the Kubrawi-Khalwati tradition of mysticism.³ *Khalwatiyya* order whose chain/silsila goes back to Ali as was in the *Safavid* order units in the same origin, that is, in *Zahidiyya*. However, though in *Khalwatiyya* love of *Ahl al-Bait* came to the fore from the very beginning, it did not deviate from the traditional Sunnite line. *Khalwati* sheikhs adopted the Sunnite policy of Ottoman state, even it led struggle against the *Safavid-Shiite* propagation (Kucukdaga, 2005). Indeed, we know that *Bayramiyya* was the branch of *Safawiyya* represented in Anatolia (Abbasli, 1976). It is also known that, apart from the political acceptances of the *Kubrawi-Khalwati Sufi* tradition, acceptances about Ali were not much different from the *safavid* tradition (Kucukdaga, 2002). Nevertheless, we know that *Erkannamas* composed after Balım Sultan whom Bayezid II brought from Dimatoca and appointed Bektashi as sheikh (postnişin). On the basis of historical information, it is almost certain that this period was a period during which *Safavid-Shiite* propagation carried out particularly through nomadic or semi-nomadic Turkoman population in Anatolia was much intensive.⁴ *Buyruks* reflecting the differentiations in the acceptances about Ali in the milieu where *Safavid-Shiite* propagation was intensive were composed for Turkoman groups and spread out in Anatolia. In the same period, *Erkannamas* in question were also composed in the Bektashi *dergahs* under the protection of Ottoman state.

Bektashi *Erkannamas*, in fact, are one of the precautions taken by the Ottomans against the political and propagations and Shiitization attempts carried out by the Safavids through *Kizilbash* Turkoman groups. Consequently, it may be argued that while *Kizilbash* adhered to the narratives in which legends blended with local folklore, Bektashis sided with the Ottoman Sunnite thought by pursuing, through *Erkannamas*, certain rules and conventions (*usûl-erkân*).

³ Onat, "Kızılbaşlık Farklılaşması Üzerine", *İslamiyat* pp.113-114; Seyyid Hüseyin İbn Seyyid Gaybî, *Şerhu Hutbeti'l-Beyân*, Ed. M. Saffet Sarıkaya, p.xiii.

⁴ It is known that the penetration of Shiite inclinations infiltrated into Bektashi lodges. See Orhan Türkdoğan, *Alevî Bektâşî Kimliği –Sosyo-Antropolojik Araştırma-*, Timaş Yay., İstanbul 1995, pp.239-240.

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