

Five

The Earlier Way of Blame

Before investigating the actual historical sources of the people of blame, it may serve us well to summarize the last chapter. J. G. Bennett was convinced that Gurdjieff's greatest influence came from a group of proto-Naqshbandis in Central Asia, a brotherhood later verified by Hasan Şuşud as the Khwajagan, or Masters. As we have also seen, Idries Shah implied that his own perspective was influenced by the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya. Moreover, the father of Idries, Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah, was also known to have contacts among Afghan Sufis, some of whom (according to Robert Darr) were still active members of the Khwajagan.

Hasan Şuşud, a rather enigmatic Sufi in Istanbul, had disguised his former affiliation with the Naqshbandiyya and with another group that referred to itself as the Nuriyya-Malamiyya (in Turkish, *Nuriyye-Melamiye*). As already noted, he had revealed that he had a rather low opinion of Gurdjieff as a "thief of the tradition." It is hard to tell which tradition Şuşud was referring to, although he probably meant the Khwajagan or the malamatiyya, or both of them comingled together.

A common element that tied together Gurdjieff, the Shah family, Bennett, and Şuşud was that all of them referred to the masters of Central Asia. All of them also posited that the Khwajagan had functioned as a rather elite group within greater Sufism; yet all of them, with the exception of Şuşud, seem to have deviated from the central teachings of Sufism, which emphasized the nothingness of human beings next to God. Instead, the followers of Gurdjieff, Bennett, and Idries Shah

would all continue to promote a form of occult elitism that emphasized a hidden hierarchy in Sufism composed of superhumans who operated beyond, behind, or outside of normative Sufism and Islam. And this idea, as we have seen, was inimical to the original teachings of the Khwajagan.

Ibn al-Arabi had also referred to a hierarchy among saints, at the pinnacle of which were the blameworthy (*malamiyya*, or *malamatis*). But rather than promoting a form of elitism, he and other classical Sufis claimed that *malamatis* hid themselves among the common people. A question that remains is whether or not the Khwajagan and the people of blame were somehow associated with each other, and if so whether or not they shared common characteristics. To attempt to answer this question requires a less fantastical examination of the early *malamatis* and the Khwajagan, who appear to be separate. So, to begin with, what was the original “path of blame”?

From recent research, it seems that Islamic mysticism originally included two distinct lines of spiritual development: one centered in Mesopotamia, principally in Baghdad, and the other in Khurasan, a province that once included northeastern Iran, Afghanistan, and parts of Central Asia. These two trends have been referred to as the Mesopotamian and the Khurasanian: the *malamati* and Sufi schools respectively.¹ Hasan Şuşud called these two approaches the northern and southern branches of Islamic mysticism, but these descriptors are a bit too vague to be useful.² We shall now attempt to distinguish between Sufism and *malamatism* while acknowledging how they became intermingled over time.

The first reference to the way of blame can be found in the Qur’an, which refers to those who “struggle in God’s path, fearing not the blame of any blamer” (5:54). In one tradition, the Prophet Muhammad (sa)³ is reported as saying, “Poverty is my pride,” to which he added (in another tradition), “Poverty is to be disgraced in this world and the next.”⁴ Turning to a current encyclopedia of Islam, we find that the *malamiyya* (way of blame) is described as “the designation of a tendency, or

of a psychological category, of people who attract blame to themselves despite their being innocent.”⁵

But why were the *malamatis* reproached and by whom; moreover, how were they held to be innocent? From the example of the Prophet Muhammad, we can deduce that the *malamatis* were held to be innocent by God and not by human beings. As we know, Muhammad was initially reproached for being a false prophet, as well as a social deviant who provoked his Meccan kinsman by opposing their well-established social conventions.

Of course, the Arabic word *malamati* was never directly attributed to Muhammad by pious Muslims. By the second century of Islam (ninth century CE), however, this term was applied to Abu Yazid al-Bistami (804–74), who broke with convention by speaking openly about the state of “essential union” (*ayn al-jam*).⁶ By doing so, Bistami expressed an aspect of unitarian (*wujudi*) belief that some Muslims found acceptable and others would not. At the same time, Bistami acted in ways that challenged parochial understandings of the Shari’a quite openly.

In one example, it is said that Bistami one day was entering a city when its people, who had heard of his renown, ran out to meet him. He noticed that their ministrations were distracting him from his thoughts of God. Arriving at a bazaar, Bistami took out a loaf of bread and began to eat. All of these people fled, for it was the month of Ramadan. Bistami turned to a disciple traveling with him and said, “You see! As soon as I enact a single article of the law they all reject me!”⁷

Bistami’s point was that it is incumbent upon Muslims to fast during Ramadan, but one of the exceptions is when one is traveling; thus, Bayazid (as he was also known) was actually following the Shari’a, and the people surrounding him were both ignorant of sacred law and more concerned about following their own conventions. Bayazid knew the finer points of the law, but his adherence to the internal meaning of the Shari’a marked him as a *malamati*.

By appearing not to excel in the formal obligations of Islam, *malamatis* like Bistami would incur the criticism of those who judged them

strictly from outward appearances. In addition, those who practiced this way were especially critical of their own egoism and pietism, finding that the existence of these traits, in themselves, were blameworthy.

By extension, *malamatis* avoided all forms of religious ostentation and displays of self-righteousness, but, conversely, they never engaged in rebellion as a merely egocentric form of assertion. If they *appeared* to be acting in unethical ways, it was in order to instruct others in the deeper meaning of the *Shari'a* and its essential ethics.

Those who most perfectly incurred blame were those who relinquished outward appearances and focused instead on a path of relentless self-inquiry (*muhasibi*). As noted by Hamid Algar (one of the foremost authorities on the history of the Naqshbandiyya), these attributes would also become associated with the Khwajagan, who became identified as such by the twelfth century.⁸ This was long after the death of the ninth-century Bistami, who was listed as one of their most illustrious forbearers.

Trimingham summarizes: "The true *malamati* conceal[ed] his progress in the spiritual life . . . [and he aspired] to free himself from the world and its passions whilst living in the world."⁹ While the *malamatis* were inwardly driven to eradicate all traces of self-conceit, they were compelled, above all, to eliminate the hypocrisy inherent in having a separate sense of selfhood. Both Schimmel and Trimingham claim that the *malamatis* stressed the ideal of *ikhlas*, "perfect sincerity," as well as "the nothingness of men before God." According to Hamid Algar, almost all these traits could also be attributed to the Khwajagan.¹⁰

Central to Qur'anic teaching was the notion that Allah would forgive all but two sins: that of associating any partners with himself (*shirk*) and that of hypocrisy (*nifaq*). The *malamati* focused on eliminating the latter, especially when it was disguised as false piety. The diminishment of *shirk*, self-idolatry, would then lead to a greater proximity to God that, at times, would approach, but not reach, complete unification.

Such states of unification, however, were not to be expressed outwardly as endowing the mystic with a special form of charisma. Abu

‘Abd al-Rahman Sulami (d. 1021) wrote that the *malamatiyya* “consider it idolatrous to make a display of their acts of devotion; to parade ecstasy is apostasy. . . . They believe that signs and wonders should not be divulged; [instead] they are to be looked upon as possible traps.”¹¹

A precedent was found in the Prophet Muhammad, who indicated that the most pernicious form of idolatry was the worship of oneself. Sufis of all forms were concerned with the eradication of self-conceit, but the *malamatiyya*, in particular, became renowned for accenting the efficacy of “blame,” or relentless self-inquiry, in eradicating all vestiges of egoism. Such inquiry often exposed the subtler form of narcissism that attached itself to formalistic religious observances, including those of the Sufis.

It is important to note that while the way of blame was generally understood to be a form of spiritual disposition or temperament (*mashrab*), it also became known as an organized school of mystics. In Nishapur, the capital of Khurasan, a particular group beginning with Hamdun al-Qassar (d. 883/4) began to define its salient characteristics. “Hamdun al-Qassar was once asked ‘What is the Path of Blame?’ ‘It is to abandon in every situation the desire to smarten up in front of people,’ he said, ‘to renounce in all one’s states and actions the need to please people, and to be at all times beyond blame in fulfilling one’s duties to God.’”¹² Here, we find one of the basics of the *malamati* way: to be continuously mindful of God while forgoing one’s attachment to praise or blame. But there are other equally important aspects.

Abu Uthman al-Hiri, another renowned Khurasanian *malamati* stressed, “No action or state can become perfect unless God brings it about without any wish on the doer’s part and without any awareness of the doing of the action, and without awareness of another’s awareness of the doing of the action.”¹³ Herein, Abu Uthman emphasized the importance of self-abandonment in a single-minded devotion that leads to a closer proximity to God.

Above all, according to Schimmel, the original *malamatis* sought to overcome all vestiges of self-division or hypocrisy through an applied

psychology that could be termed a “science of the self” (*al-ilm bi'l-nafs*).¹⁴ This spiritual approach, as we shall see, would later lead to a more thoroughgoing psychology of states (*ahwal*) and stations (*maqamat*).

Trimingham notes that members of the school of Nishapur exhibited the following characteristics: they rejected all outward show of ritual piety; they worked for their living instead of accepting alms; they wore no distinctive robes that would set them apart from others; they did not submit entirely to spiritual masters, although they did seek guidance; they also did not profess speculative theories of mysticism, but strived, instead, to eradicate all aspects of limiting self-consciousness; and, finally, they sought to live in the world while pursuing the mystical path with the least degree of notability.¹⁵

As part of their practice, and in order to disguise their interior pursuits, most malamatis—as well as the later Khwajagan—belonged to guilds (*akhiyya*). Sviri notes that “many of the malamati teachers and disciples bore epithets indicating crafts and professions.”¹⁶ Thus, rather than secreting themselves away in retreat, the malamatis were usually to be found among the artisans of the bazaar. Along with pursuing normal work, malamatis also espoused a tradition of generosity to strangers, or “spiritual chivalry,” called *futuwwa* and a chivalrous form of *adab* (etiquette), best described by Sulami.¹⁷ This mode of behavior was wedded to daily life, whose conduct was considered by the malamatiyya to be the proving ground of spiritual realization.

The Khwajagan, who also arose in Khurasan, exhibited the same characteristics, although their way spread more extensively throughout Transoxiana in Turkic Central Asia. They became identifiable Sufis while absorbing most of the traits of the Nishapuri malamatis.

Sviri notes that only after the second half of the tenth century did the term *Sufi* come to be used as a comprehensive term identifying all Islamic mystics. Before that, according to Sviri, the term was applied only to mystics schooled in the Baghdadian approach attributed to Junayd al-Baghdadi (830–910).¹⁸ Since the Khwajagan were known as Central

Asians who took after the Persian malamatis, how did they come to be known as Sufis?

Although Junayd's teacher, Sari as-Saqati, is attributed with establishing the school of Baghdad, it was Junayd who became renowned as its greatest expositor. The members of this school, known as Masters of Unification, were most concerned with the inculcation of sobriety (*sahw*). Much like the Nishapuri malamatiyya, with whom they had contact, the Baghdadian Sufis saw sobriety as a necessary balance to mystical "intoxication" (*sukr*)—and also as a way of balancing a mystical gnosis (*ma'rifa*) with strict observance of the Shari'a, the ethical norms of Islam.

Junayd's emphasis on sobriety came from his distaste of Khurasanian mystics such as Bayazid Bistami who openly expressed divine intoxication. A story about the mystic Shibli illustrates Junayd's attitude: Overpowered by ecstasy, Shibli began to preach out loud the "secret." Junayd, as an exponent of lawful restraint, reproached him. "We whisper these words in backrooms," he said. "Now you come out and declare them in public." Shibli replied, "Only I am speaking and only I am listening—in both worlds who exists but I? These words only proceed from God to God. Shibli doesn't exist at all." Upon hearing this answer Junayd relented: "If that is the case, you have my dispensation."¹⁹

From this story we might deduce the following: the unification of self and God (*ittihad*) in Sufism is considered to be a secret; in official Islam such a position might be considered heretical; the utterance of ecstatic utterances (*shathiyat*) in public might be considered unlawful; only the absence of oneself in speaking such words would insure one's innocence through the evident absence of egoistic drives.

Shathiyat were most often expressed in states of divine intoxication. Perhaps the most famous of these is that of Bayazid himself: "He took me up and set me before Him. He said, 'Bayazid! My creatures desire to see You.' I said, 'Array me in Your oneness and clothe me with Your selfhood, and bring me to Your unity, so that when Your creatures see me, they will see You. There will be You, and I will not be there.' . . .

I shed my self as a snake sheds its skin, then I looked at myself, and behold! I was He.”²⁰

The radical submergence of individual identity in Allah and the outpouring of shathiyat was not only a Khurasanian phenomenon but also occurred among Baghdadian Sufis such as Shibli (d. 846) and Nuri (executed in 907). These outpourings caused the ulama to become extremely suspicious of Sufis, a vexing issue for Junayd, who warned that momentary states of divine intoxication must be followed by sobriety. Only in this condition, according to Junayd, could a Sufi return to the worshipful (and lawful) position of a servant of Allah. Here, again, the Baghdadian Sufis mirrored the attitudes of the Nishapuri malamatis, although Junayd also acted out of a sense of political expediency.

As opposed to the Baghdadian orders of Sufism, which were centered closest to the caliphate, Khurasanian Sufis could afford to yield to shathiyat without operating under the immediate threat of official censure by the legalists (*fuqaha*).

Terry Graham notes, “Socio-politically, Baghdad represented a continuation of the authoritarian character [of the earlier Persian Shahs] with an etiquette based on courtly behavior, hierarchy, command and obedience, whereas Khurasan was a region which had constituted the marches of the [Persian] empire.” After Muslim conquest, continues Graham, Khurasan “had served as the seedbed for revolt against both Arabic influence and [Persian-style] despotism, that is, whatever was imposed from the capital in distant Mesopotamia.”²¹

Apart from political expediency, both the Nishapuri malamatis and the Sufis agreed that only in the stage of sobriety could a mystic become fully adept, mentally balanced, and therefore capable of providing a good example to others. It should not be thought, however, that Bistami failed to arrive at the state of sobriety or that Junayd bypassed the experience of intoxication. Instead, Junayd insisted:

I have realized that which is within me
And my tongue has conversed with Thee in secret

And we are united in one respect,
But we are separate in another.²²

The message of psychological stability and societal adjustment, best elaborated by Junayd, informed all of the orthodox Sufi orders thereafter; and, while ecstatic utterances were normally tolerated within the inner confines of Sufism, these expressions were generally discouraged outside such circles. This was not necessarily the case in Khurasan.

Religious legalists continued to condemn ecstatic assertions for both pious and debatable political reasons, and certain ulama began to actively prosecute Sufis for exposing such experiences. In perhaps the most famous case cited in Sufi literature, Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922) refused to heed the warning of the Baghdadian Junayd to restrain himself. While Junayd conversed with Allah in secret, Hallaj felt compelled to make the secret known to the public in several instances, the most famous of which was his exclamation, "Ana al-Haqq" (I am the Truth). For this statement, among others, Hallaj was accused of attributing a Godlike attribute to himself and of therefore being a heretic; through his subsequent persecution he came to be identified as blameworthy. For his religious impropriety, Hallaj was censured by the immediate followers of Junayd, who felt that Hallaj had done a disservice to Sufism as well as to the community at large. With Hallaj, "blame" (*malam*) would begin to take on another connotation.

As noted above, the attribution of any associate or partner to Allah was considered to be the worst of sins in Islam. As the doctrine of essential union spread among Sufis, the subject that most occupied the minds of Islamic legalists was the heresy of *hulul* (indwelling, incarnationism).

In legalistic theology, "a considerable amount of time [was] spent demonstrating that God cannot dwell in a creature because this would mean that: God is not a necessary existent; that there would be two eternal beings; and that a division would be created in God by his infusion into a divisible object." Indeed, it was recorded that Hallaj had

prayed, "Between You and me there is an 'I am' that battles me, so take away, by your grace, this 'I am' from in between."²³

Despite these nuances of interpretation, Hallaj was arrested and accused of "claiming divine lordship and preaching incarnationism."²⁴ As a cause célèbre, his case would haunt the imagination of all later Sufis, some of whom themselves would suffer a similar persecution. Shibli, the direct successor of Junayd, almost met such a fate.

Clearly, Hallaj was not merely a divine madman, although he espoused what *appeared* to be a path of intoxication. According to a contemporary scholar, "Hallaj broke with Junayd precisely on the subject of sobriety and intoxication. Junayd maintained that they were pre-ordained qualities, and that sobriety denoted soundness while intoxication implied excess. Hallaj said that the two were correlative human attributes on the path, both of which must be transcended to reach the goal."²⁵

Hallaj indicated the possibility of a *unio mystica* in which the contraries of sobriety and intoxication were found to be perfectly correlated, or perhaps entirely coexistent. Curiously perhaps, this point of view was consistent with a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (sa): "God has a special wine for His saints; when they imbibe it, they become intoxicated, and when they are intoxicated, they become enraptured, and when they are enraptured, they become euphoric, and when they are euphoric, they become mellow, and when they are mellow, they become purified, and when they are purified, they become conjoined, and when they are conjoined, they come to be in union, and in union, there is no distinction between them and their Beloved."²⁶

Though insane or blasphemous from a formalistic point of view, Hallaj's sayings indicate that the Shari'a as interpreted by legalists could become an obstacle to the realization of an experience deemed essential by the Prophet himself. Unlike Hallaj, however, the Prophet would balance his statements with others indicating the necessary separation of the individual and Allah *both before and after* a union with "no distinction."

Junayd would insist, "Unification is the separation of the Eternal (God) from that which originates in time." This statement was meant to confound mystics like Hallaj who insisted instead that "the first step is the annihilation of separation (*tafrid*), so that in unity (*wahdaniyyat*) one affirms nothing other than God."²⁷ After Junayd and Hallaj, all Sufis veered in the direction of a greater degree of intoxication or sobriety, with the *malamatiyya* and the Khwajagan favoring an inner intoxication balanced by an outward sobriety.

After the creation of specific Sufi orders in the eleventh century, the salient features of such schools usually included: (a) the use of a sevenfold map of spiritual development originally developed by Junayd's teacher, as-Saqati; (b) the cultivation of controlled ecstatic states through the practice of repetitive vocal invocation; (c) the use of distinctive clothing and insignia to distinguish Sufis from other people; (d) a structure of teaching that was hierarchical.²⁸ The more formal orthodox orders—many of which still exist today—were greatly influenced by Junayd and his followers.

The later Khwajagan would blend Baghdadi Sufism with Khurasanian *malamatism*, while keeping an accent on the latter. Unlike many other Sufi orders, however, the Khwajagan did not wear distinctive clothing, preferred subvocal *dhikr*, and placed an emphasis on less formalized student-teacher relationships. A later member of the Khwajagan, Bahauddin Naqshband (1318–89) was known to say, "The door of Shaykhhood is closed, [while] the door to spiritual friendship is open."

Algar observes, "The other commonality between the Malamati and the first Naqshbandis is the emphasis on the spiritual efficiency of a virtuous and devotional companionship (*suhbat*), that is, the company of their masters and companions. . . . In another of his definitions of his path Bahauddin describes it as the path of companionship. Some Naqshbandi authors even consider companionship as being more efficient than invocation [*dhikr*]."²⁹ Algar is quite correct; however, the name Naqshbandi, which only came into usage a hundred years after Bahauddin's death, should not be used to designate the earlier

Khwajagan. By that time, many Naqshbandis had adopted the features of the other Sufi orders, which the Khwajagan had largely forgone. In the meantime, another variant of malamatism would soon eclipse its earlier manifestations.

THE QALANDARIYYA

Throughout Khurasan and Transoxiana, and later in Asia Minor, the Hallajian variant of malamatism would exert a far greater influence on the popular imagination than either the Khwajagan or the Nishapuri. This influence was due to the spread of itinerant dervishes throughout the countryside who came to be known as *qalandars* (uncouth or coarse ones) and who upheld the virtues of Mansur al-Hallaj.

Due to the influence of the qalandari tradition, Western orientalists would make Mansur al-Hallaj a leading exemplar of the ideal malamati martyr. Carl Ernst has observed: "As Kraus and Massignon put it, in the path of the elect, 'deification' is not realized except under the appearance of a denial of the law (*kufr*, *zandaqah*), an anathema incurred by love, a momentary ravishment of the intellect."³⁰

As we have seen, however, the title King of the Self-Blamers given to Hallaj by Massignon would not adequately represent the fuller history of the malamatiyya. Neither ecstatic utterances nor divulgements of radical union played a part in the Nishapuri or Khwajagan way. Nevertheless, malamatism after Hallaj would come to be associated with the following characteristics: a preference for intoxication (whether or not it was hidden under the veil of sobriety); a preference for doctrines that expressed the unicity of being; and an emphasis on the virtues of wandering dervishes who were (at least outwardly) heterodox. It is the last characteristic that colored all subsequent expressions of malamatism.

It should be noted that classical Sufis like Abu al-Najib Suhrawardi and Hujwiri (d. 1072/3) took considerable pains to distinguish between true and false forms of malamati activity. Groups of wandering qalandars would act in open defiance against the Shari'a. In the process they

often earned widespread disapproval, and by doing so they thereby threatened the reputation and the legal standing of other Sufis.

Hujwiri noted, "He who abandons the law and commits an irreligious act, and says that he is following the rule of 'blame,' is guilty of manifest wrong and wickedness and self-indulgence. There are many in the present age who seek popularity by this means, forgetting that one must already have gained popularity before deliberately acting in such a way as to make the people reject him; otherwise, his making himself unpopular is a mere pretext for winning popularity."³¹

Through references to principles such as these, many Sufis judged those like Hallaj to be immature practitioners. The most sober *malamatiyya* were not openly antinomian, nor did they desire martyrdom. Instead, they quietly sought to challenge their own hypocrisy. For the Nishapuris the greatest form of hypocrisy was self-righteousness, whether this was enacted through excessive adherence to orthodoxy or through intentionally flaunting the *Shari'a*.

Instead of adopting the more flamboyant behavior of the *qalandar*, the more mature *malamati* attracted blame through understatement: through being less noticeable in undertaking religious commitments and observances. Notwithstanding these differences, however, the Nishapuri and *qalandari* tendencies interfused over time, particularly among more "intoxicated" Sufis, and this would have an enormous affect on the definition of *malamatism* thereafter.

Above all others, it was Abu Sa'id Abi'l-Khayr (967–1049) who gave a new impetus and meaning to the way of blame in Khurasan. It was he who blended the *malamati* with the Sufi and *qalandari* modes of mysticism. Abu Sa'id was a disciple of the Nishapuri *malamati* Sulami, who granted him a license to teach, and along with Sulami, Abu Sa'id extolled Mansur al-Hallaj, of whom he said, "There was no one [in his time] with equal knowledge, east or west."³² We have already shown how the tension between ardent desire (*ishq*) and proper conduct (*adab*) informed all of Sufism, especially in Baghdad. Unlike Junayd and the Nishapuris, however, Abu Sa'id valued the expression of open ecstasy.

“Ascribe nothing to yourself,” he would say. “Let time bring what it will, hell or high water. Live joyfully, delighting in whatever comes your way.”³³

Mirroring Abu Sa’id, the Baghdadian Ahmad al-Ghazali (d. 1126) articulated an entire philosophy based on the stages of *ishq*. Like Abu Sa’id, al-Ghazali wrote most of his works in Persian, and a series of Persian-speaking Sufi poets would succeed him, including such luminaries as Sanai (d. 1131), Attar (d. 1220), and Rumi. All of these mystics brought the theme of ecstatic love together with an exemplification of the lover as a wandering dervish or *qalandar*: one who gambles everything in hopes of winning the Beloved—and with little attachment to exoteric religion.

The literary trope of the *qalandar* included the following: He is a free-spirited vagabond (Pers. *ayyar*) who frequents the *kharabat* (ruins), a term referring to “a tavern, a gambling-house or a brothel.”³⁴ He is an “inspired libertine” (*rind*) and a “gambler” (*kamzan*) who stakes himself on one bet—finding union with God. Sometimes he involves himself in un-Islamic cults such as Zoroastrianism or sports the belt (*zunnar*) of a Christian. In short, the *qalandar* appears to be one who seeks immediate union with an indefinable God above and beyond all outward norms of religion.

All these ideas were obviously repellent to the orthodox, and they were meant to be. Abu Sa’id had written, “Unless to other’s eyes you become an infidel, / In the creed of lovers, you’ll never be Muslim.”³⁵ Statements like this were meant to be a form of shock therapy applied to literalists who had become overly identified with religious formalism. After Abu Sa’id, this form of *malamati* Sufism would predominate in Khurasan and Transoxiana, with the earlier forms of Nishapuri sobriety taking a backseat.

Suhrawardi defined the *qalandariyya* as “people who are governed by the intoxication [engendered by] the tranquility of their hearts to the point of destroying customs and throwing off the bonds of social intercourse.”³⁶ It was this form of *malamatism*, and not the more sober

Nishapuri variety, that would become more prevalent among the less educated people of Khurasan. They had had a long tradition of memorizing and reciting poetry, and for similar reasons this form of malamati Sufism would quickly spread among the Turks who occupied Transoxiana. They, too, were enamored of storytelling, song, and other forms of folk recitation; and their bards (*ashiqs*) spread the lore of the qalandariyya eastward into India and westward into Asia Minor.

Like their cousins the Mongols, the Turks of the steppes worshipped Tangri, "Eternal Heaven," closeness to whom could be found on mountaintops and the wrath of whom was mythologized as thunder. Itinerant shamans, rather than an organized priesthood, served the religious needs of the pre-Islamic Turks, and charismatic holy men (of whatever kind) were given equal reverence. This spiritual predilection opened the way to the influence of Zoroastrian magi, Nestorian monks, Buddhist bhikkus, and (later) Sufi mendicants, all of whom traveled along the Silk Route, which crossed the steppes. Even more cross-fertilization must of course have occurred in this melting pot, and all of this, no doubt, further aided Sufism's syncretic development. Ibn Taymiyya objected to this syncretism as a "Tatar" innovation; yet, despite his objections it was rapidly conveyed like a virus throughout Arabic-speaking lands.

Bernard Lewis observes: "From the early ninth century the caliphs of Islam began to import Turkish slaves from the eastern border, chiefly for service as warriors. These soldiers were known as '*mamluks*'—an Arabic word meaning 'owned.' . . . Though nominally of servile states, they came to form a privileged military caste, recruited by capture and purchase, but held together by strong regimental loyalties. As the armies of Islam became more Turkish, and the governments of Islam more military, the Turks established domination in the lands of Islam that lasted for a thousand years."³⁷

The first Islamicized Turks who ruled Afghanistan and northeastern Persia (Khurasan) were the Ghaznavids (ca. 963–1040). These people, originally mercenaries of the Persians, were defeated by the Seljuks (ca. 1040), who went on to conquer the rest of Iran. As they did so they

adopted the Persian language and culture and became heirs to the Sassanid and (later) Abbasid systems of courtly bureaucracy. They also came into contact with the rich heritage of Persian Sufism through Abu Sa'id Abi'l-Khayr.

In order to strengthen their legitimacy, the Seljuks adopted both Sufism and Sunni orthodoxy as their own form of normative Islam; and along with the consolidation of their power, this did much to assure that many more ulama became Sufis and vice versa. Ironically, perhaps, it was the Seljuks who also aided the rapid spread of the more antinomian ideas of the qalandariyya.

By 1055, the Khan of the Seljuks, Tughril Beg, was invited to conquer Baghdad by the Abbasid caliph, who wished to throw off the yoke of his Shi'a overlords. While successfully doing so, Tughril Beg was recognized as the successor of the Abbasids and as the Sultan of East and West.³⁸

Tughril Beg's nephew and successor, Alp Arslan, defeated the Byzantines at Manzikert (in Eastern Anatolia) in 1071. He also appointed as his chief minister the Persian Nizam al-Mulk, who promoted a combined Sufi-Sunni version of Islam throughout the sultan's realms.

Nizam al-Mulk, whose name literally translates as "order of the realm," consolidated the religious legitimacy of the Seljuks by, among other things, becoming a patron of the Baghdadian Sufi Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. The latter authored the *Revival of the Religious Sciences*, an encyclopedic body of work that further assured Sufism would continue to be accepted as orthodox by traditionalist ulama. In the meantime, Abu Hamid's brother, Ahmad al-Ghazali, was a prime representative of the creed of love, a tradition that closely mirrored the Khurasanian Sufism of Abu Sa'id, another saint patronized by the Seljuks. Because it enjoyed official sanction, the creed of love continued to spread in Persian-speaking areas due to the poetic influence of Sanai, Attar, and Rumi, all of whom wrote in Persian and all of whom lived under the Ghaznavids or Seljuks. Their poetry, as we have seen, lionized the qalandariyya, whether or not they meant to do so as literal antinomians.

Turning back to Anatolia, the Byzantines, unwisely, had invited Seljuk mercenaries to aid them in one of their numerous civil wars. A nephew of Alp Arslan, Suleiman, heeded the call, and the Seljuks were able to sweep through most of Asia Minor with utmost speed. They did so by forming alliances with ambitious Christian notables and by appealing to the landed peasantry, who were overburdened by Byzantine taxation. Within ten years, Arslan established the first Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Iconium, renamed Konya.

Grousset observes, "To prevent them from ravaging their finer Iranian domain, the Seljuk sultans apparently established [Turkmen warriors] by preference in the marches of the sultanate, in Asia Minor." Grousset further adds that "the Anatolian plateau, by its altitude, climate, and vegetation, forms a continuation of the steppe zone of Central Asia." Because of this, these grasslands were more inviting to the nomadic pastoralists. Accordingly, "Persia proper escaped Turkification, while Anatolia became a second Turkestan."³⁹ While this might be so, it is also well established that Asia Minor remained largely Orthodox Christian, and Turkification actually entailed the assimilation of various forms of Christian (and pre-Christian) belief.

While the Seljuks promoted a lenient, but more nominally orthodox, form of Sunni Islam, their ruder cousins, the Turkmens, had adopted a more syncretic form of Islam that could be characterized as neither purely Sunni nor purely Shia. The Turkmen raiders were usually more loyal to their *Babas*, or "fathers," who—in contrast to the urbanized *ulama*—tended toward varying forms of heterodoxy. Because of this, the *malamati* Sufism of Khurasan in its *qalandari* form quickly spread among them, and it was this trope that later spread quite rapidly in Asia Minor, the Balkans, and the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent—all areas ruled by Turkic dynasties (the Seljuks, Ottomans, and Timurid Mughals, who were actually Turkic rather than Mongol).

As de Bruijn notes, "Prior to the beginning of the thirteenth century, all instances of the use of the word *qalandar* which are on record belong to the realm of literature."⁴⁰ This would gradually change under

the Seljuks, who had gained the patronage of the Ayyubid elites. “Sunni Islam rose to political dominance, communities bitterly debated about which school of law was to be the basis of shariah. There was increasing pressure for conformity and considerable overt persecution.”⁴¹ From this time onward (and especially after the twelfth and up to the fifteenth century) tensions between orthodox Sufis and heterodox qalandars increased.

According to Karamustafa, “Sufism gradually became a respectable, and even desirable, vocation among the cultural elites as a whole and emerged as an integral, perhaps, the key, component of Islamic high culture. . . . Having secured more than a firm foothold in upper urban society and its culture, it rapidly permeated all social and cultural strata.”⁴² According to Ewing, the malamatism of the qalandariyya increased because it “signified a counter to the excesses of formalism, where knowledge has been linked to social status and power.”⁴³

Karamustafa would add, “The antinomian rejection of society represented by deviant dervish groups developed alongside with—and primarily in reaction to—the organized Sufism of the socially respectable tariqahs.”⁴⁴ The thesis and antithesis of intoxication and sobriety became more apparent as outwardly sober institutions of orthodox Sufism lent themselves to the further consolidation of political norms and practices. This, of course, was vital to upholding centralizing myths and ideologies of empires such as those of the Seljuks, Il-Khanids, Timurids, and, later, the *Osmanli*, or Ottoman, Dynasty.

The trope of the qalandar had earlier served as an exemplification, a metaphorical embodiment, of the perceptual shift that had occurred to Bayazid Bistami in the station of *ayn al-jam* (the unification of essence). Though desire for union with God colored the outer expression of more ecstatic Sufis like Abu Sa’id, Rumi, and Iraqi, it did not disable them from adjusting their behavior and insights to the nomocentric needs of their society. Mystics such as these were largely legitimized by the Seljuks because they balanced their yearnings for radical union—and

individualistic expression—with their adherence to communal norms embodied in the Shari’a.

Later, from the thirteenth century onward, the trope of the qalandars tended to be literalized as the behavior of deviant wandering dervishes took on a more heterodox form of doctrinal expression. In formerly Hindu and Buddhist areas, the qalandars appeared to be similar to wandering bhikkus and sadhus. Farther west, the qalandari mode of religious expression held greater appeal to the Christianized masses of Anatolia and the Balkans.

These qalandars, who often broke with the Shari’a, organized themselves into larger brotherhoods and began to threaten rulers like the Seljuks with populist forms of rebellion. It was this “folklorish” form of malamatism that became more prevalent in rural areas, especially among the less settled Turkoman hordes and the partly or completely Christianized landed peasantry. This, quite naturally, would soon prove to be a vexing issue to both princely and clerical powers, especially after active rebellions threatened both the Seljuks and, even more so, their later inheritors, the Ottomans. From this time onward, the term *malamati* would convey a quasi-political as well as a religious meaning, the implications of which would only gradually become apparent.

To summarize: There are multiple meanings of the term *malamati*, and there are several dimensions to the way of blame. These include, firstly, an earlier emphasis on interiorized self-examination and adherence to the Shari’a (adopted by the Khwajagan); secondly, a later manifestation of qalandari tendencies (adopted by a number of antinomian dervish groupings); and, thirdly, as we shall see, an amalgam of these forms that attempted to bring them together in a broader synthesis.

Six

The Middle Period of Malamati Activity

In the last chapter, we encountered the influence played by the Seljuks throughout the Middle East, and we saw how this Turkic tribe also spread westward into areas that comprised the heartland of the Eastern Roman Empire, Byzantium. The importance of that region to the later development of malamatism should not be underestimated.

It should be said that in the early part of the fourth century CE the Roman emperor Constantine had adopted Christianity and had moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). By the mid-sixth century, the entire Roman Empire had become officially Christian under Emperor Justinian, and as the church solidified its power base in Byzantium, the Italic peninsula was ravaged by Vandals, Goths, and Huns. As a consequence, the center of Christendom moved east with the establishment of a “Second Rome,” or, as it would later be called by Muslims, *Rum*.

From Justinian onward, the capital of Christendom remained in Asia Minor for approximately five hundred years until the Great Schism of 1054 when a wedge was driven between Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. By this time the citizens of Byzantium were arguably more thoroughly Christianized than their brethren in the West, but despite that, various schismatic sects continued to exist in Byzantium; and these divisions were never fully overcome by the monolithic form of Orthodoxy that was officially sanctioned by the emperor.

Less than fifty years after the Great Schism, the Seljuk Turks arrived in Anatolia, and, taking advantage of the split between the Latinized West and the Hellenized East, they consumed most of the former eastern provinces of the Roman Empire rather quickly. Although little has been detailed about this phenomenon, it can be safely assumed that these Muslim raiders (*ghazis*) encountered and absorbed the remnants of heterodox forms of Christianity.

During the Middle Ages the remnants of the classical Hellenistic tradition still survived in Byzantium, and the peasantry of Anatolia still clung to many of their more ancient beliefs, among them Manichaeism, Hermeticism, and the Christian Paulician and Marcionite heresies. The Seljuks would have been adequately prepared for this encounter since Hellenistic philosophers had begun to be persecuted in Byzantium by the sixth century CE, and many had fled to Persia, where they had contributed greatly to the foundations of Islamic thought.

As in all other periods of history, Islamic understandings encountered and partly assimilated earlier traditions, and it is highly improbable that this would have ceased with the Turkic invasions of Asia Minor. Instead, as proposed by certain scholars, Islamic malamatism, in particular, may have been influenced by other sources, such as the Cynics and the Syriac Christians.

Few, if any, of these developments seem to have affected the orthodox Sunni Sufi orders directly, yet they may have predisposed the Christian populations of Anatolia to accept the qalandari form of malamatism that spread through the influence of the more heterodox Turkmen Babas (as a political grouping, the *Baba'i*). Some of the Babas banded together and revolted against the Seljuk state in the mid-thirteenth century, but these particular religio-political groupings were roundly defeated, and many of their kinsmen were massacred. No doubt these events left a lasting impression on the ruling Seljuks, who wished to control their sometimes-restive populations, and the threat of similar religio-political revolts would later emerge again during the Ottoman period.

By the close of the thirteenth century one of the few surviving Baba'i named Shaykh Edebalı migrated to the north of Anatolia and married his daughter to the chieftain of a relatively minor branch of the Oqhuz Turks. This *bey* (Turkish for *emir*) would come to be known as Osman the First, and he established the beginnings of the Osmanlı Dynasty in northwestern Anatolia. Interestingly, and quite unlike the Seljuks, Osman and his immediate descendants embraced a form of Islam that was neither Sunni nor Shia, a form that was shaped instead by the qalandari Sufism of the Baba'i.

Harvard historian Cemal Kafadar remarks, "Muslims living in the frontier areas of the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries should be conceptualized in terms of a 'metadoxy,' a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naïve and not being doxy-minded, as well as the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy."¹ This religious malleability meshed well with the melting-pot culture that characterized Anatolia.

From Osman onward, frequent intermarriage took place between the Greek and the Turkish nobility, so that the Osmanlı Dynasty quickly formed a new type of ethnicity that can accurately be described as Greco-Turkish. Kafadar notes that this period witnessed a "liquidity and fluidity of identities . . . hard to imagine in the National Age."² This had earlier been the case in Seljuk times, but it became even more pronounced in the first hundred and fifty years or so of Ottoman ascendancy.

Kafadar's comments leave us with the impression that the Islam of this period was multivalent, fed by a number of converts who may not have left behind their former beliefs entirely, whether such beliefs were animistic, Gnostic, or Christian and quasi-Christian. To this already varied mixture were added the syncretic beliefs of Turkmen tribesmen whose kinsmen along the Silk Route had earlier absorbed the influences of Manichaeism, Taoism, Buddhism, and various forms of Shi'ism.

The religious glue that enabled Ottoman rulers to legitimate these beliefs as properly Islamic was the wujudi doctrine of the Akbaris (the

followers of Ibn al-Arabi). Wujudi doctrine was heavily based on a Neoplatonic substructure, which was easily absorbed by those whose religious concepts were shaped similarly by late Hellenistic thought (whether Jewish, Christian, or quasi-pagan).³

The Akbari doctrine of unicity (*wujud*) was well elaborated by numerous Muslim scholars, and it was eventually sanctioned by the state as orthodox. At the same time, the less-educated populace was disposed to a qalandari form of mysticism that mirrored (and at times exaggerated) wujudi concepts in a more eclectic—as well as increasingly elastic—fashion, resulting in a new form of malamatism: one that was far more controversial and, at times, more explicitly political.

Osman's son, Orhan, began his reign in 1326, and he rapidly expanded Osmanli territory so that the boundaries of Byzantium shrank back close to the walls of Constantinople. Having established his capital in Iznik (the former Nicaea), Orhan invited a scholar from central Anatolia to establish the first Ottoman university (*madrasa*) there. The rector of this madrasa, Daud al-Qaysari was the disciple of al-Qashani, himself a primary student of al-Jandi, who studied with al-Qunawi, the direct successor of Ibn al-Arabi. Thus, the wujudi doctrine of the unicity of being became a widespread doctrine with official sanction, and it was soon taught in other madrasas throughout the Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, the more popular Hallajian variety of wujudi belief predominated among the less-educated classes in the countryside, which was frequented by the qalandariyya.

During the second half of the fourteenth century, as Murad I conquered Thrace and Macedonia, more Christian feudal lords become vassals to the Turkish state. Many converted to Islam, though some did not, but these developments added further coherence to a newly emerging nation that was multiethnic and multireligious, yet still uniquely Osmanli.

Meanwhile, a fifth of all prisoners taken by the Ottoman armies were assigned to the sultan as “slaves of the gate” (*kapi kullari*). Some of them were trained as new troops, the *yeni cheri* or “Janissaries,” and others

were assigned to be court administrators. This innovation further secured the loyalty of civil servants and the palace guard by minimizing Turkish intertribal rivalries. More importantly for the subject at hand, this provision occasioned the creation of a radically different class in a society that was rapidly swelling. It surrounded the sultan with non-Turkic Muslims who were former Christians and owed their loyalty solely to him.

Further consolidating this special social class, the next sultan, Bayazid I ("the Thunderbolt"), imposed a new form of child taxation as he rapidly expanded into Bulgaria and Serbia. This levy, called the *devshirme*, or "collection," required that Balkan Christian subjects hand over the best of their newborn sons to him, and they were then taken to the imperial court where they were converted to Islam and raised as *kapi kullari*. It was a cruel but effective tactic. After a period of re-education—and as they proved their competence and loyalty—these slaves were sent out to be governors and commanders in the provinces; and thus, the conquered began to serve as their own conquerors and overseers.

The Janissaries, who functioned as a praetorian guard for the sultan, came to be closely affiliated with the Bektashi Order, which originally had been only one of many *qalandari* groups from central Anatolia. As the contemporary scholar Ahmet Karamustafa points out, the Bektashiyya emerged as an order that carried on the legacy of earlier, more antinomian, *qalandari* groups, but in a form that lent itself to greater state control.⁴ In fact, as it became a large standing army, the Janissary corps was largely instrumental in conquering and controlling the Balkans—and with them went Bektashi missionaries.

Much as in the earlier period in Anatolia, the gradual conversion of Christian subjects (besides the *kapi kullari*) was facilitated by the heterodox nature of *qalandari* Sufism with its liberal interpretation of Islam and its preference for mystical intoxication over sobriety. The Bektashiyya was quite compatible with indigenous Christians because it placed far less emphasis on the legalistic observances of Islam.

Muhammad Mufaku observes that the Bektashiyya “excused . . . its members from performing the [Islamic] canonic observances—prayer, fasting, and the like—just as it allowed them to drink wine, lawfully, and so too make use of other things that were prohibited.”⁵ In addition to relaxing certain ritual observances, the Bektashiyya assimilated the earlier beliefs of the *ghulat*, extremist Shiites, and these ideas mirrored some concepts already present in Christianity.

Like Christians, many of the *ghulat* espoused a Trinitarian concept of the Godhead. In their case, however, the Christian concept of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was replaced with the triune formula of Allah, Muhammad, and Ali. In addition to their unorthodox cosmological doctrines, Bektashis also revered the Christlike martyrdom of Mansur al-Hallaj, who had been killed by the orthodox ulama. These innovations must have struck a resonant, mythological chord with Christianized populations in the Balkans and Anatolia, thus facilitating their conversion to Islam. This, in turn, aided the gradual coalescence of a distinctive Osmanli identity, which was further eased by the permeability of ethnic boundaries.

During this period, it should not be imagined that the peoples who inhabited the Balkans were organized into separate nations—no more so than in Anatolia. Until the late eighteenth century, the only marker of ethnic difference was religion, whether Christian Orthodox, Jewish, Roman Catholic, or Muslim.

For centuries, centralized Byzantine control had been undermined by large-scale Slavic invasions and a succession of lesser kingdoms such as those of the Avars, Serbians, and Bulgarians, and the barriers created by language and ethnicity were relatively porous. Religious beliefs were similarly permeable, and adherence to Christian orthodoxy was marked by correct ritual observance more than by doctrinal conviction.

In the largely coastal cities of the Balkans, Greek predominated as a language of religion, governance, and trade. On the other hand, the interior was largely populated by groups that spoke Slavic, Romanian, Albanian, and various other languages. Of course, Turkish-speaking

settlers were also among these people, but rather than the Turkish language spreading throughout the Balkans, the Sublime Porte (Ottoman government) began adopting Slavic and Greek as court languages alongside Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. Twenty percent of the total population of the Balkans converted to Islam, and these converts usually retained the use of their original Balkan dialects. This process hastened the melting-pot character of Ottoman discourse, and it extended into religion as well.

Although the Bektashiyya represented only one of several Sufi orders in the Balkans, its attitudes toward dogmatic Islam were representative of most of the population. Orthodox Sufi orders predominated in the larger cities, but more heterodox attitudes persisted in the smaller townships and villages of the countryside.

According to Mufaku, the Bektashi “establishment for the members was the tekke, which was devoid of any niche for prayer towards Mecca [*qibla*]. The gatherings for the dhikr and the recitation of it in séances . . . took the place of statutory prayers, and the form of a circle was adopted so that each man faced another.” In this way the Bektashis “protested against the facing of any specific direction in order to pray.” Instead, the Bektashiyya sanctified individual human beings, as evidenced in their saying, “There is nothing better for you than to face, or turn your person towards, another human being.”⁶ As we shall see, this form of spiritual humanism became the hallmark of the Bektashiyya and of other qalandari groups that bore the specific name of *melamiye* (the Turkified version of the Arabic *malamiyya*).

These malamati groupings, like the Bektashiyya, had their original homeland in central and eastern Anatolia. However, due to the threat of newly invading Mongol hordes they had quickly moved westward. When Bayazid I laid siege to Constantinople in 1394, the city was saved by a massive assault from the east initiated by Tamerlane, the Turco-Mongol conqueror who sought to rebuild the former empire of Genghis Khan. Much of eastern and central Anatolia came under Tamerlane’s control, and as a result, Ottoman strategic concerns turned eastward.

CHAPTER SIX

While invading eastern and central Anatolia, Tamerlane allied himself with Turkish beys. These included remnants of the Seljuks, who were opposed to Ottoman supremacy, and the defeat and subsequent capture of Bayazid in 1402 shattered Ottoman dominance in central Anatolia and ushered in the period of the Interregnum (1402–13).

During that period—and while already reeling from the loss of Bayazid—the Ottoman court was further undermined by a series of civil wars initiated by Bayazid's four surviving sons. One of these sons, Mehmet Chelebi, emerged victorious. Nonetheless, three years later an additional threat appeared, this time from a rebellious group of qalandariyya in the western coastal regions. The principal figure representing this threat was Shaykh Badruddin (alt. Bedrettin) of Simawna (1358–1420); and as we shall see it was his qalandari representatives who actually promoted an open revolt against the newly reemerging—and more centralized—Ottoman state.

Badruddin himself could not be characterized as a qalandar. Instead, he was a highly educated member of the ulama class and a staunch Akbari, and he came from an aristocratic ruling family. His grandfather was a nephew of the Seljuk sultan Alauddin and a former disciple of Jalaluddin Rumi. Badruddin's father was Gazi Israel, a commander under Suleyman Pasha and the conqueror of Simawna, a fortified town near Edirne in Thrace, which formed a land bridge with the Balkans. Also a trusted Islamic scholar and jurist, Israel became the chief judge (*qadi*) as well as the governor of that region. Badruddin's mother was the daughter of a Greek Orthodox priest, and her influence, as well as the fact that he also married a Greek wife (and married his son to another one) might explain why he extended respect to observant Christians.⁷ Exceeding mere tolerance, Badruddin would later propose that Muslims and Christians should live in conditions of greater social, as well as religious, equality. These ideas (among others) led to Badruddin's eventual execution as a malamati heretic and an apostate from Islam. Harmonious relations between different "People of the Book" were certainly acceptable to the ulama, but social equality, as yet, was not.

In order to comprehend how Badruddin moved from being a notable Sufi scholar to being a political martyr, one must investigate his biographical details. In his youth he was trained in Islamic law by a trusted colleague of his father and was then sent to Bursa, the capital of the Ottomans. There, he studied with a disciple (twice-removed) of Sadruddin al-Qunawi in a madrasa where Ibn al-Arabi's influence was strong. After his studies in Bursa, Badruddin went on to study logic and astronomy in Konya, and then, at the age of twenty-five, traveled to Cairo to study logic at the intellectual center of *dar al-Islam* (the domain of Islam).⁸

In Cairo, Badruddin joined other Turks such as Molla Fenari, whose father had been a student of al-Qunawi. Although he attempted to remain a simple student, Badruddin's reputation as the "Light of Rum" preceded him, and he was quickly introduced to the royal court. Shortly after that, in a meteoric fashion, Badruddin was appointed by the Egyptian Mamluk sultan Barkuk to be his son's religious preceptor.⁹

Although rough-hewn dervishes were not to his liking, Badruddin was introduced to one of them favored by Sultan Barkuk. In a sudden reversal, the young scholar decided to become a disciple of this seemingly outlandish qalandari shaykh. Friends of the family became quite alarmed at this development, and they wrote a letter of warning to Badruddin's father. They were much surprised to find that he actually welcomed this change, and when Badruddin refused to come home to Thrace, his father prayed to God to make Badruddin "the Bistami of his time." Badruddin's Sufi mentor, Husseyn Ahlati (from the town of Ahlat in Eastern Anatolia), had initially traveled to Cairo on foot via Aleppo and Damascus. Although appearing to be a simple, wandering Turkic dervish, Ahlati was quite literate and gifted in medicine, and because of this he was invited to the Mamluk court to take care of Barkuk's son, who had taken ill. The resulting treatment was successful and, thoroughly gratified, the Egyptian sultan appointed Ahlati as his spiritual advisor.¹⁰

Given the ensuing power and wealth that accrued to him, however, Ahlati came under attack by rivals at the court, who accused him of

practicing various occult sciences, of conjuring demons, and also of being a crypto-Christian. All of this may be attributed to scandal mongering, but it is also clear from literary sources that Ahlati was probably a malamati of dubious orthodoxy.¹¹

After Badruddin completed his studies with his mentor, he was sent by Ahlati to act as his chief representative in Tabriz, the principal city of Azerbaijan. There Badruddin met with Tamerlane, who wished to retain him as his spiritual advisor, but, having learned of the Mongol emperor's desire, Badruddin secretly took to the road and quickly returned to Cairo.¹²

There Badruddin discovered the Mamluk court was in chaos and much of the land lay in famine. Worse yet, Ahlati was terminally ill. Yet despite these difficulties, Badruddin left Egypt only after Ahlati had appointed him as his successor and the other dervishes in Ahlati's circle had contested his appointment.

Leaving Egypt, Badruddin took considerable time returning to Thrace. After living in Konya for a while, the Shaykh migrated to the western coast of Asia Minor to the province of Aydin (the ancient Ionia), where between 1411 and 1413, he served as the chief justice of its capital, Tire. It was in that city that Badruddin also hired a steward who would soon become his principal disciple. This man, Borkluce Mustafa, may have been of Greek descent, since it is clear in most records that he was fluent in that language.¹³

After Badruddin departed for Edirne, and between the years 1413 and 1416, Borkluce and another of Badruddin's disciples, Torlak Kamal, preached certain ideas (with or without the blessing of Badruddin). The ambition of these key disciples was to replace the Ottoman state with a form of spiritual communism that expunged the social and religious differences between Christians and Muslims, and their preaching soon resulted in a peasant revolt that became a full-blown insurrection.¹⁴

Over a three-year period, Borkluce continually sent missionaries to Chios (then under Genovese rule), and he lived for a while on the Greek island of Samos, where according to some chroniclers a number

of Turks had fled after Tamerlane's conquests. Some say that Borkluce's ideas inspired both Muslim and Christian peasants as far away as Crete (then under Venetian rule) to revolt. There, wandering preachers promoted a similar message: freedom from serfdom, eradication of religious discrimination, and equal distribution of wealth. After these events, other malamatis in Ottoman domains would occasionally be suspected of entertaining similar concepts of spiritual communism and anthropocentrism.¹⁵

According to the Byzantine chronicler Doukas, "This man preached poverty to the Turks and encouraged them to put all in common, except women: food, clothes, herds and lands. . . . He was insisting that if a Turk says that all the Christians are infidels, it is he [the Turk] who proves his infidelity."¹⁶

Borkluce frequently sent his apostles to the Greek island of Chios to preach that there was no possible salvation except through a Muslim realignment with Christianity. As evidence of this, Borkluce sent this message to an old hermit in a monastery on that island: "I am your companion in *ascesis*, worshiping the God you worship. I, too, prostrate myself in front of Him, and I am with you at night, when I silently walk across the sea."¹⁷

The French scholar Michel Balivet concludes that Borkluce upheld a "supraconfessional conviction" that surpassed orthodox Islam or Christianity, and it is important to note that this was far removed from earlier forms of malamatism. According to Balivet, "We can see the Isawi, or Christ-like, character of Borkluce, such as his walking on water and death on a cross, as well as his deliberate will to have practices identical to the Christians, went further by proclaiming the unity of the two religions, the worship of the same God, and their necessary convergence."¹⁸ If Balivet is correct, then the religious ideas of Badruddin's followers would have been as threatening to the Ottoman state as the earlier Baba'i revolts had been to the Seljuks—even more so, since Borkluce adopted a supraconfessional approach in a land still largely populated by Greek-speaking Christians.

In 1416 the newly crowned Mehmet the First dispatched his general, Bayazid Pasha, with a sizable army to quash an open rebellion in the vicinity of Mount Styliarion. To emphasize the importance of this event, Mehmet sent along his twelve-year-old son, the future Sultan Murad II. Having gathered reinforcements along the way, the armies of Bayazid penetrated the peninsula of Karaburun, which extends into the Aegean Sea opposite Chios; and, there, they slaughtered most of the civilian population indiscriminately of the beliefs they held.

Arriving at the dervish mountain stronghold, the sultan's armies fought Borkluce's troops while huge losses accumulated on both sides. When the rebels finally surrendered, the qalandars were tied up in chains and brought to Ephesus (the modern town of Seljuk). There Borkluce was executed in a manner recommended by the ulama to the state. For his acts of seditious apostasy and for "spreading corruption throughout the land" (*haraba*), Borkluce was first tortured to recant and then crucified. With the cross still attached to his body he was stretched out on a camel, which was led throughout the town; those of his followers who did not disclaim him were killed before his eyes. Reportedly neither Borkluce nor any of his followers renounced their faith; and thus the insurrection ended in an act of collective martyrdom.¹⁹

In the meantime, Badruddin, who had been held captive in Iznik, escaped. A year later, he was caught in Serres (a town near Salonika), where he was tried and hung. His supporters said he had not endorsed Borkluce's rebellion, but Badruddin had nevertheless incurred the wrath of the ulama, who declared him an apostate. Whether or not Badruddin had endorsed an open rebellion, it seems obvious that his ideas threatened an increasingly uniform Ottoman Empire—one that relied upon increasing religious conformity. But we might ask, which of Badruddin's ideas most provoked the ulama in particular, and why was he so adamantly declared an apostate of Islam?

Two hundred years after his trial, Badruddin was still a subject of controversy. Shaykh Aziz Mahmud Huda'i (d. 1623) is known to have written to the sultan of his time that Badruddin was "a heretic and

a libertine who tried to make unlawful into lawful, and in his book, *Inspirations*, [he] decried the signs of the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection.”²⁰ If Badruddin was a “free thinker” (*zindiq*), then which of his ideas threatened the orthodoxy so readily?

According to Tosun Bayrak, a modern Jerrahi shaykh, Badruddin had disclaimed a literal understanding of the Day of Judgment and the Resurrection, positing instead that “the signs of the imminent end of the world both did not and will not happen, and/or are always happening.”²¹ According to Bayrak, Badruddin believed that the return of Jesus and the Mahdi at the end of times was a metaphor for the rebirth of the spirit of humanity itself.

Indeed, Badruddin had openly celebrated that “the appearance of Mahdi, the last imam, is the realization of what Allah says [in the Qur’an, 15:29], ‘I have breathed into man from My own spirit.’” The Shaykh further elaborated: “This is the growth of the seed of Muhammad in the perfect human being. The seed will grow into the causal mind, the all-encompassing mercy, and the Divine essence.”²² As indicated above, the heresy of Badruddin began with the proposal that events in the Qur’an were metaphorical and not to be taken literally. Of course, these ideas paralleled those of other qalandariyya and the Bektashiyya, but Badruddin went further. Building upon that ground assumption, the Shaykh also declared that these metaphors pointed to the deliverance of human beings from any form of earthly bondage. Moreover, although they focused on an “inner” form of deliverance, these ideas could easily be linked to an “outer” rebellion against the state, especially one that depended upon religious conformity.²³

After the rebellion of Borkluce, it became increasingly apparent to the Ottomans that heretical ideas threatened the centralization of state power. Intoxicated mystical ideas that eschewed a more sober and legalistic definition of Islam were inimical to the cohesion of society. As a consequence the Ottomans adopted a policy of appeasing—and then gradually absorbing—various other antinomian qalandari groups while gradually promoting a more orthodox form of Sunni Islam.

The tension between the qalandariyya and orthodox Sufis, however, was never fully resolved. Even before the revolts inspired by Badruddin and Borkluce had started, another stream of potentially vexing malamatism had also entered the Ottoman fold—again, from the eastern provinces.

At the close of the fourteenth century, an unassuming baker named Somuncu Baba (d. 1408) immigrated to the city of Bursa from Azerbaijan. According to the Ottoman scholar Victoria Holbrook, this Sufi of malamati temperament was sent to Anatolia by a Shaykh “Erdebili,” also known as Safiyyadin al-Ardabali (d. 1334).²⁴ It seems more probable that Somuncu Baba was sent by and owed allegiance to the son of Ardabali, Sadr-ad-din, who, as would be expected, became the shaykh after his father’s death.²⁵

While Ardabali was a member of the strictly Sunni Suhrawardi lineage, his son, Sadr-ad-din, was closely associated with Turkic *akhiyya* (Sufi guilds) and the *futuwwa* (Sufi-inspired chivalric orders).²⁶ Both of these, as we have noted, were heavily influenced by the Khurasanian malamatiyya, as well as by the Akbariyya; and later, as we shall see, the Safawiyya Order (named after Safiyyadin) would mutate into a far more menacing political form.

At this point, however, the loosely organized Safawiyya were not considered a threat, and Somuncu Baba was greeted with great respect by a leading member of the ulama, Molla Fenari (d. 1430/31). Fenari had once been a fellow student of Badruddin of Simawna in Cairo and would later become the first official Ottoman Shaykh al-Islam. Like many other scholars at the time, he was a staunch Akbari,²⁷ and he also greatly praised Somuncu Baba’s discourses, indicating that not only the malamatiyya, but also the Akbariyya were probably compatible with Somuncu Baba’s teaching.

As a result of this compatibility, Somuncu Baba was invited to attend the court of Mehmet the First in Bursa. At that point, as befitting a malamati qalandar, he quickly disappeared from Bursa, never to be heard from again. Before his departure, however, the Baba left behind

an important successor, Hadji Bayram Wali (d. 1429/30), a notable scholar who was more outwardly orthodox.

Hadji Bayram of Ankara was a mystic well versed in Ibn al-Arabi's thought through his formal theological training.²⁸ He combined his training as a Naqshbandi with the malamati teachings of Somuncu Baba and by doing so spawned a new Sufi order called the Bayramiyya. By the time of the Hadji's death, however, this new order would split into two factions, one of which would inaugurate a new phase of malamatism.²⁹ The split occurred between two leading disciples of Hadji Bayram. The first was Hamza 'Aq Shams al-Din (d. 1459), a religious scholar, and the second was Umar Sikkini (d. 1475/76), a senior dervish of Hadji Bayram. While 'Aq Shams al-Din (alt. Aksemseddin) preserved the more formally orthodox character of the Bayramiyya, Sikkini Baba favored the qalandari malamatism that was more openly expressed in the poetic works of Hadji Bayram, which, in turn, were influenced by Hallaj. These differences in emphasis were soon to be expressed in a hagiographical account of the split between the two disciples. Holbrook translates the Ottoman classicist Golpinarli's rendering of the event as follows:

After Hadji Bayram died . . . and Aksemseddin was recognized as his successor, the brotherhood gathered mornings and evenings for meditation; but Sikkini would sit alone in a corner of the mosque, not participating. One day Aksemseddin told Sikkini that if he did not join in, he would take the [shaykh's dervish] crown away from him. Sikkini replied that Aksemseddin might come to his house the following Friday after prayers; he would surrender robe and crown to Aksemseddin then. On the promised day Sikkini lit a great fire in the courtyard of his house; Aksemseddin and his followers came after the prayers. Sikkini danced ("waving and clapping his hands") into the fire and emerged unharmed, only his robe and crown having burned.³⁰

It is said, thereafter, that the malamati followers of Sikkini no longer wore distinguishing dervish caps and robes, preferring instead to blend

with the common people, but as we have seen this was also a characteristic of the earlier malamatiyya in Khurasan. The renowned Ottoman scholar C. H. Imber speculates otherwise: “The real reason why the Malamatiyya [in Ottoman domains] wore no distinguishing clothing must, in fact, have been because their heretical beliefs led to occasional persecutions, and their survival could depend on concealing their identities from the authorities.”³¹

No doubt, malamatis were persecuted heavily during the following century for posing a continuing threat to the state, but the causes must be investigated later in this chapter. Before that, it is important to address the symbolic elements in Sikkini’s hagiography, which Imber does seem to consider—and these elements reflect the beliefs of all Sufis who have identified themselves as “malamati.” Among those beliefs we find the following: all outward signs of Sufi affiliation may themselves become hindrances to a deeper realization. This is especially the case for one who has passed through the fire of purgation that constitutes *fana* (annihilation). This purgation reveals individuals in their nakedness (unadorned simplicity). In returning to a normal state while subsisting in proximity to God (*baqa*), the malamatis often choose to eliminate class distinctions with their fellow human beings.

From what we have learned earlier, Sikkini’s attitude was fully in accord with both the Nishapuri malamatis and the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi, but these are facts that Imber does not choose to investigate.³² For now, it is important to note that the Bayramiyya diverged into two streams or forms: the first, clearly compatible with orthodox Sufism, was represented by ‘Aq Shams al-Din, a scholar well accepted by the court; the second, which represented a recognizable lineage, if not a tariqa in the normal sense, was the Bayrami-Malamiyya founded by Umar Sikkini. Both of these forms may have represented the fuller path of Hadji Bayram, each presenting the outer and inner faces of his teaching.

The more orthodox branch of the Bayrami tariqa achieved broader acceptance in 1453 when Constantinople was conquered by Mehmet II, an event that sent shock waves throughout the Christian world. Before,

during, and after the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmet II was often accompanied by his foremost spiritual advisor, none other than 'Aq Shams al-Din himself.

Byzantium had been the last representative of Christian power in the Near East, and with the fall of its key city, a Muslim inherited the title of Sultan of Rum (the Arabized rendering of Emperor of Rome).³³ In the ensuing centuries, the Ottomans would expand their domains further into southeast Europe, aided by the orthodox Sufi orders, including the Bayramiyya.

Under the guidance of 'Aq Shams al-Din, Sultan Mehmet established a remarkably modern palace school for future members of the administrative and military services. Students of the school were drawn solely from the kapi kullari, and after graduating they were promoted to key administrative positions; as a consequence the kapi kullari class was further consolidated and empowered.

From the conquest of Constantinople until 1623, according to one scholar, only five of the forty-seven grand viziers were of Turkish origin.³⁴ With the further spread of the Ottomans into Europe, the latter were becoming further "Balkanized," and this cultural heritage continued to seep into Turkish Sufism.

This seepage was only partly contained by the more orthodox Sufis who had allied themselves with the uppermost strata of the administration. As generations passed, and as Ottoman bureaucrats became more assimilated to a more purely Turkish identity, they came to favor the more officially sanctioned expressions of Islam; and this, of course, further embellished their social status. Membership in the more clearly Sunni-oriented Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Mawlawiyya (Turk. *Mevleviye*) helped in the process, but only partly so. Later these orders were influenced by those who held a dual affiliation with the malamatiyya (a subject to be explored in the next chapter).

In the meantime, the son of Mehmet the Conqueror, Bayazid II, became much attracted to the Khalwati (Turk. *Halveti*) Order of Sufism,

which like the Bektashiyya harbored pro-Alid (or Shi'i) sympathizers. Bayazid II (r. 1481–1512) was noted as a deeply spiritual man, and he strove hard to avoid too many conflicts, preferring instead to strengthen the infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire. He was, nevertheless, hard-pressed to avoid an open conflict with a new threat that arose in the east with the breakdown of Timurid power.

The Safawi Order, which had preceded the Bayramiyya, had become politicized by the descendants of Shaykh Ardabili and had gradually transformed itself into an extremist sect. Although originally Sunni, the later Safawiyya came to worship their spiritual leaders as literal reincarnations of Ali—and later as embodiments of Allah Himself.

The Safavids (as the later Safawiyya came to be known) formed political alliances united behind a Mahdi-like figure named Shaykh Haydar Ibn Junayd (d. 1488). As their distinctive insignia, Junayd's followers adopted a red cap symbolizing the blood of Husayn, the martyred grandson of the Prophet. The caps were also shaped into twelve gores (symbolizing the twelve Imams). After Junayd's grandson Ismail took power, these *kizilbash*, "redheads," became a large and formidable military force allied closely with a number of Turkoman and Kurdish tribes in eastern Anatolia and western Iran.

The contemporary scholar Shahzad Bashir has said, "On a socio-political level, the greater social viability of messianic ideologies stemmed from a weakening of the paradigm of universal rule, the deterioration of social order in the wake of Mongol and Timurid conquests, and the rise of genealogical groups such as the sayyids and Sufi shaykhs and their hereditary heirs as prominent social actors throughout the Islamic East."³⁵

By 1501 Ismail had conquered Tabriz (in Azerbaijan) and declared himself shah, and over the next eight years he conquered much of Iran, Iraq, and Transoxiana. Kizilbash missionaries succeeded in converting much of the population of eastern Anatolia, and they even managed to draw to them a few surviving followers of Badruddin of Simawna. Bayazid II needed to counter the threat of the qalandariyya joining

forces with the Safavids, and he attempted to do this by strengthening the power of the Bektashiyya.

In 1501, Bayazid appointed a particular Bektashi shaykh named Balim Sultan (d. 1516) to head the entire order. In exchange, the sultan expected the Bektashis to tame their unruly kinsmen in the east and to wean them away from the Safavids.³⁶ Unfortunately, this attempt at conciliation only partly succeeded. As current or former kizilbash became members of the Bektashiyya, the latter itself was changed by absorbing more of these irregular (*ghulat*) ideas. Bayazid also deported some of the more unrelenting kizilbash to Morea (Peloponnese), which had the effect of reinvigorating heterodoxy in the southern Balkans.

Selim I overthrew his father, Bayazid II, in 1512 and declared war against the Safavids. As his army marched to the eastern provinces to do battle, forty thousand Anatolian kizilbash were slaughtered, and open advocates of these or similar ideas throughout the empire faced inquisitorial proceedings. Even after Selim defeated Shah Ismail at the battle of Chaldiran in 1514, kizilbash uprisings continued to erupt periodically in Anatolia, and inquisitions against heretics continued until the 1620s with only short periods of respite.

Complicating this issue, Selim expanded Ottoman territory into the Arabic-speaking Middle East after containing the Safavid threat. Conquering Syria, Egypt, and then the Hijaz, Selim I inherited the position of "Caliph of Islam." As a consequence, the Ottomans became the protectors of Mecca and Medina, which in turn cemented a tighter alliance with the official Sunni ulama. This alliance was to continue throughout the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent (1520–66) and after, and the solidified power of the ulama would inspire further persecutions of free thinkers (*zindiqs*). The latter term began to be applied to the malamatiyya because they were thought of as extremists of *wahdat al-wujud* (the doctrine of the Akbaris). Some reasoned, in addition, that the malamatiyya might harbor similar ideas to the kizilbash and thus pose an additional threat to the state.

During the first few years of Suleyman's reign the teachings of Umar Sikkini received a fresh impetus from a third-generation Bayrami-Malamati shaykh named Oghlan Shaykh (d. 1529). Oghlan, who resided in Ankara, seemed to embrace a form of heresy called Hurufism that had originated in the eastern provinces (a site uncomfortably close to the kizilbash heartlands) under Timurid rule in the late fourteenth century.

The Hurufi movement, which derived its name from the Arabic word for letters (*huruf*), promoted an esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an based upon a numerical science of letters called *abjad*. While developing a kabalistic-type form of divination, Hurufis came to believe that the letters composing the names Allah, Muhammad, and Ali could also be discerned in the structure of the human face, therefore in all individual human beings.³⁷

Reflecting the earlier views of Hallaj, Hurufis proposed that the human being is the most perfect representation of God in physical form—a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm. This theory was not unlike that proposed earlier by Ibn al-Arabi, but it had been given a more concrete political expression in the peasant revolt of Borkluce.

Making matters worse, the founder of Hurufism, Fazlallah Astarbadi (d. 1394), had claimed to be the Mahdi and had attempted to enlist Tamerlane to his cause. The attempt failed, and Astarbadi was executed as an apostate by the Timurids, but his surviving followers continued to expect his imminent resurrection. As a close follower of Umar Sikkini, Oghlan Shaykh was highly unlikely to have assimilated these Mahdist beliefs, but nevertheless he borrowed heavily from Hurufi concepts in articulating his own view that the human being is the mirror of God. What was once true of Muhammad (sa) and Ali was potentially true for all human beings—providing, of course, that they realized it fully.

Unlike mainstream Shia, Hurufis emphasized that *all* human beings are manifestations of the prototypes of Muhammad (sa) and Ali, a teaching readily absorbed by groups such as the Bektashiyya and the Bayrami-Malamatiyya. This assured that these movements would be

persecuted by both Sunnis and orthodox Shia alike, but it also helped to promote the supraconfessional humanism that had already emerged in the thought of Badruddin of Simawna.

As the Ottomans had learned, doctrines like these—more centered on the sanctity and sovereignty of the individual—could undermine orthodoxy and lead to open rebellions against the state, especially one that had vested its power in an absolute monarchy. As in the case of the kizilbash, beliefs like these could also lead to the ascendance of Mahdi-like figures who could lay claim to the title of Perfected Human Being (*Insan al-Kamil*). Once again, these extremist interpretations of Akbari theories threatened the power of a centralized Sultanate.

As a result, Oghlan Shaykh was arrested and executed after he had established the movement in Istanbul and had successfully converted a number of disciples. Notable among them was Ahmed the Cameleer (d. 1546), who escaped persecution and spread malamati teachings in Thrace. Ahmed was known for saying “The Mirror of Man is the outward form of God,” and soon that idea would spread throughout the European part of the Ottoman Empire, which the Turks called *Rumelia*, the remaining “Land of the Romans.” This area continued to expand beyond Thrace, and by the end of the fourteenth century it came to include Bulgaria, Wallachia (Romania), Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and much of modern-day Greece (Epirus, Thebes, Thessaly, and Euboea). It was a rather large and restive area.

In certain ways Rumelia was similar to Khurasan or the earlier marches of Anatolia. All of these areas were at a greater remove from caliphal authority and equally distant from the religious institutions that had sanctified that power. For this reason, as we have seen, not only the Bektashiyya but later the malamatiyya were able to promote their ideas with greater impunity in those regions.

While orthodox Sufis had strengthened their alliance with the Ottoman bureaucracy, some members of the mercantile class were drawn to the Bayrami-Malamatiyya; and as they crossed the land bridge of Thrace, they met with local *ayans* (notables) who ruled semiautonomous

regions of the Balkans. Many of these notables were former Christians who, after serving as knighted cavalrymen (*sipahis*), had been given land grants called *timars*; others were former Janissaries, a number of whom retained their links with the Bektashiyya. Given a more generally heterodox population in the Balkans, partly supported by the local gentry, the malamatiyya were more able to evade heresiologists—at least temporarily. Inquisitorial trails against potential kizilbash fifth columnists continued until the 1620s, and several malamatis were caught in the dragnet, although it is doubtful that they were supporters of the Safavids.

Malamati teachings had deeply penetrated Bosnia by 1560, but when one of these Bosnians, Hamza Bali, returned to Istanbul to teach openly he became a cause célèbre; he was tried and executed as an apostate in 1562. Again the reasons given were tenuous at best. Thereafter, the Bayrami-Malamatiyya became known as the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya (Turk. *Hamzeviye*), and the order reached Serbia and Bulgaria (part of the widening region of Rumelia), due to the efforts of the Hidden Idris (d. 1615), a successful merchant and the nephew of a tailor to the grand vizier.

By the time that another malamati martyr, Beshir Aga, was executed in Istanbul in 1663, a majority of those who belonged to the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya had begun to resemble a more orthodox tariqa by declaring that they adhered to the Hanafi branch of Sunni Islam. As a result the group attracted to itself a number of intelligentsia, as well as high government officials, including the Shaykh al-Islam (or Grand Mufti) and the grand vizier who served directly under the Sultan.³⁸

In addition to their support of the Shari'a, the Hamzawiyya continued to stress the wujudi approach of Ibn al-Arabi. As a result they became well known for putting the teachings of the Greatest Shaykh ahead of all others. Since study of Ibn al-Arabi was usually relegated to more advanced practitioners of Sufism, the shaykhs of other tariqas were attracted to the Hamzawiyya as a form of "supraorder," an advanced curriculum of study and practice. Thus, a number of rather well-placed

Mawlawis, Khalwatis, and Naqshbandis gravitated to the Hamzawīyya, and malamati ideas began to have a greater influence within these other tariqas.

The Bektashis, in the meantime, had thoroughly absorbed Hurufi concepts and the influence of the kizilbash (now acquiring the less polemical name Alevis). As a result, a further differentiation between Alevi-Bektashis and the malamatiyya became clearer. As the Bektashiyya clung to the semidivine status of the Twelve Imams and their own Babas, the Hamzawī-Malamatiyya did not do so; nor did the malamatiyya support the rise of Mahdi-like figures who could challenge the state (as had been the case with the kizilbash). The malamatiyya, by contrast, quietly upheld the idea that every person was potentially a Mahdi (lit. “rightly guided”)—but they held these ideas in a way far less politically controversial than had been the case earlier in the reign of Süleyman.

For malamatis, only mystical realization guaranteed entrance into the spiritual Imamate, and this idea, rather than being extremist, could be found in the earlier teachings of Ibn al-Arabi. Since these ideas were congruent with the wujudi rendering of Sunni Islam, rather than with Shi’ism, the Hamzawī-Malamatiyya remained affiliated with the former, which eased their eventual acceptance by the ulama and the state.

Earlier, some of the malamatiyya had elicited suspicion by using Ottoman imperial titles such as Sultan and Vizier in addressing one another. Imber surmises that this group “regard[ed] itself as self-governing and beyond the authority of the Ottoman state, whose titles and organization it mimicked.”³⁹ Holbrook finds this conclusion questionable. Instead, she proposes that this order manifested a “para-state consciousness” that prompted the state to persecute a number of malamatis for their “revolutionary bids for an alternative future of Islamic ideology.”⁴⁰

These attempts to reshape Islamic thought had to be carefully framed. Official Islam and the orthodox Sufi orders played a vital part

in maintaining the internal cohesion of the Ottoman Empire. They also helped to legitimize the expansion of the imperium as a civilizing mission. In a reciprocal manner, the success of the Ottoman Empire further consolidated the power of the ulama and the orthodox Sufis who worked in tandem with them.

Wandering qalandars had played an important part in the process of earlier conversions to Islam. Their usefulness, however, was being outlived as the Ottoman state became progressively centralized and bureaucratized. What Holbrook calls “radical bids for an alternative Islamic ideology” could be shared only with a highly sophisticated audience, and this audience—made up increasingly of the military, administrative, and ulama classes—needed to be reassured that the malamatiyya would no longer be associated with either Mahdist ideas or rebellious plots.

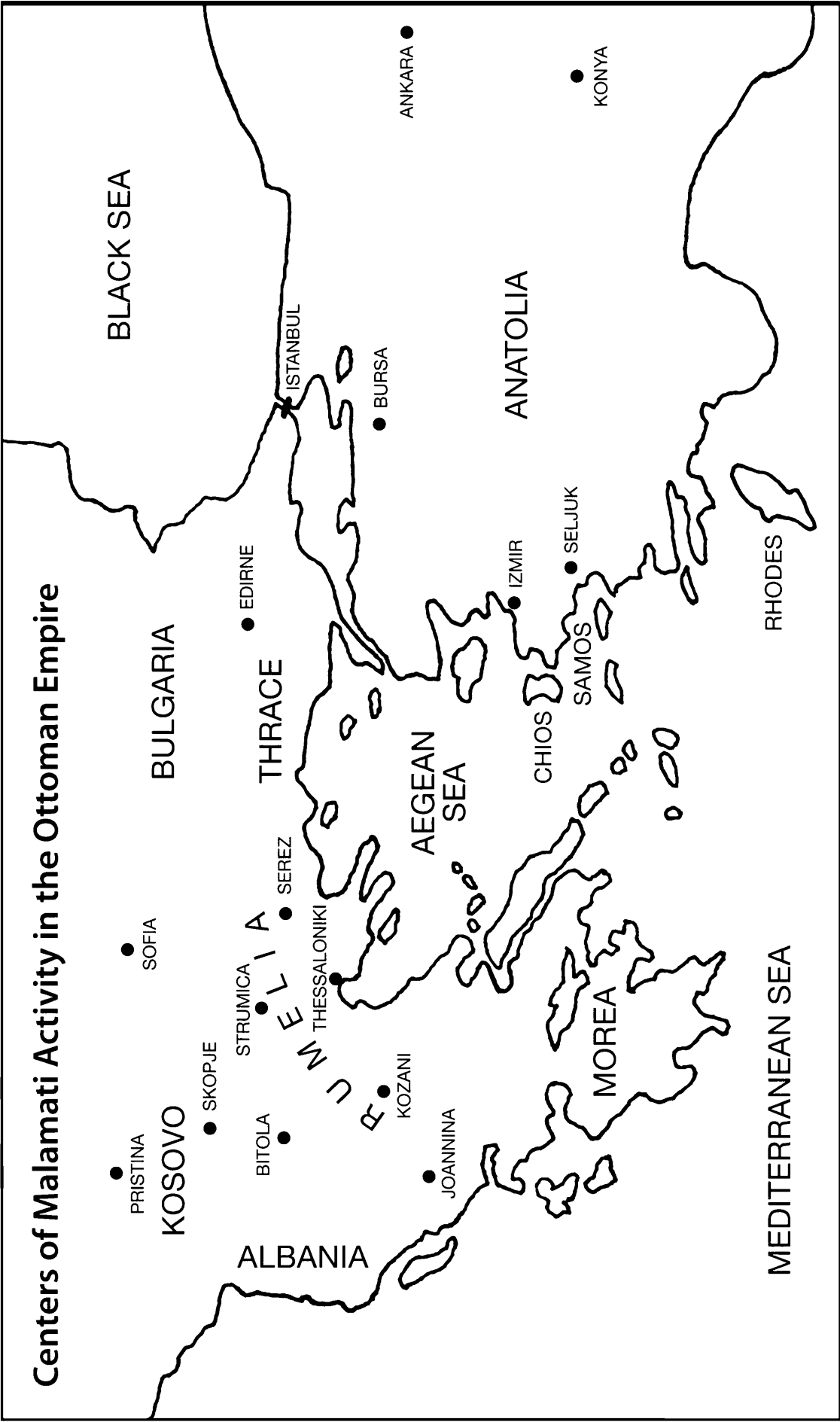
It should not be imagined, however, that these developments depoliticized the malamatiyya entirely, but a new bid for political influence would only take place several centuries later—and only as the Ottoman Empire suffered a considerable decline in its power. As we shall see in the next chapter, a new and more subtle approach was taken by repoliticized malamatis in the nineteenth century.

In the meantime, Suleyman the Magnificent would extend Ottoman territory even farther into the domains of the Hapsburgs in Austria-Hungary and storm Vienna. The Turks dominated the entire Mediterranean Sea until their defeat by combined Christian powers at the naval battle of Lepanto (1571). For the next hundred years, the Ottoman Empire would struggle with the Hapsburgs and their allies. At the same time, a new foe appeared to the north in the person of Peter the Great of Russia (r. 1682–1725).

Czar Peter planned to expand Imperial Russia, to the detriment of the Tatars and their suzerains, the Ottomans. An alliance of the Russians, the Poles, and the Hapsburgs made great gains by defeating the Ottomans, who had once again attacked Vienna. For the “Third Rome,” the Czars and the Holy Roman Empire of the Hapsburgs joined forces

THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF MALAMATI ACTIVITY

temporarily, and after the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699), the Ottoman Empire began to lose some of its European holdings. Hungary and Transylvania were ceded to Austria, the Ukraine to Poland, and islands in the Aegean, the Dalmatian coast, and the Morea (Peloponnese) went to the Venetians. These developments marked the zenith of the Ottoman Empire, and its gradual decline prepared the ground for a new wave of malamati activity.



Seven

The Later Malamatiyya

As we have seen, prior to the modern age the Ottomans were confident they were destined to war with others in order to encompass them in a universal order—a confidence bolstered by their pragmatic achievements at imperial expansion. At the height of Ottoman preeminence in the seventeenth century, the flag of the empire was emblazoned with three crescents, each representing one of the domains under imperial control: Asia Minor, whose landmass encompassed present-day Turkey; the European provinces, including most of the Balkans as well as much of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Crimea; and almost all of the Arabic-speaking Middle East and North Africa. The internal cohesion of these vast territorial domains necessitated a belief system that enhanced citizen conformity and compliance.

During the reign of Suleyman, and for the next three hundred years, the Ottoman Empire remained in a state of accelerated conflict with the West, further accentuating the need for a cohesive and comprehensive metaphysical rationale that backed the sultanate's expanded bids for power. Because of this, earlier forms of the malamatiyya were forced to undergo changes, including (as we have seen) the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya reaffirming their allegiance to the orthodox (Hanafi) Shari'a.

The political stakes were high, and they extended well beyond the boundaries of the empire. Ottoman domains bridged Europe and the Orient, and all of the major trade routes for spices and silk passed

through its territories.¹ It was because of this that the Spaniards sought an alternative overseas route to the East Indies, and after the discovery of the New World the treasuries of Charles V were swollen by massive amounts of silver mined in Latin America. These riches allowed Charles to conduct massive military offensives against the Ottomans by land and by sea—and not only as the king of Spain, but also as the Holy Roman Emperor, blessed by the Pope.

Returning to the Ottoman Empire, political exigencies, as always, dictated tighter restrictions on antinomian expressions of Sufism, and most of the ulama and the Sufi orders continued to conform to state requirements. As we have seen, demands for religious conformity could wax and wane, but they would always increase whenever a struggle for centralization of state power dictated such a need. This was the case in the late Ottoman period when the empire continued to be assailed by the Western powers.

After the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire experienced a slow but steady decline. By the close of the eighteenth century, the military prowess of the sultanate, its territorial integrity, and its vision of Islam were increasingly challenged by a gradually unified Christian Europe, resulting by the mid-nineteenth century in the cataclysmic breakup of the European half of the empire and the subsequent rise of separate nation-states in the Balkans.

As this breakup occurred, a “third wave” of malamati activity arose that repoliticized the movement in ways far more subtle than the malamatiyya involvement in politics in the middle period. These changes were initiated—almost single-handedly—by Pir Nur al-Arabi (1813–88/89).² As we shall see, the Pir attempted to soften the effects of Ottoman decline by exemplifying the adaptability of Sufism and Islam to contemporary conditions.

Nur al-Arabi was a member of the ulama, a Naqshbandi shaykh, and a dedicated follower of Ibn al-Arabi. All of these attributes would have suited him well for a conservative role in Sufism, were it not for the rapid and destabilizing historical changes. These changes necessitated

a more radical approach to Islam, but one that was diplomatically tempered in order to be rendered acceptable to more conservative and reactionary traditionalists.

Because he came from a long line of *Sayyids*, lineal descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, it was easier for the Pir to gain an initial acceptance among the official ulama. Adding to his status, both sides of his family had been active in orthodox Sufism for several generations. Nur al-Arabi's father, Sayyid Ibrahim Qudsi, was the son of a Sufi shaykh, Badrul Wali, who came from a long line of Sayyids and had directed a lodge outside of Jerusalem,³ and no doubt the family's prestige eased their way into Egypt shortly before the Pir's birth.

Sayyid Ibrahim died when Nur was four years old, and he was subsequently raised by a maternal uncle for three years. At seven years old he became the pupil of Shaykh Hasan al-Quwaysini (d. 1838), a well-known Ashariite scholar and exemplar of Sunni orthodoxy who was later to become rector of al-Azhar in Cairo. The early patronage of a theologian like Quwaysini would later lend the Pir a still greater aura of authority among the Ottoman ulama class.

Although Quwaysini is not known to have had a particular tariqa affiliation, he educated the future Pir in classical Sufism as well as teaching him the Qur'anic sciences and principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*). All of these skills served his student well when he emigrated to the Balkans from Egypt, and especially so when he later attempted to influence leading members of the ruling Ottoman ulama and military and state bureaucracies.

In 1829, when Nur al-Arabi was sixteen years old, Quwaysini delivered his protégé to a Naqshbandi shaykh known simply as Yusuf Efendi, who took Nur al-Arabi to Yanya (present-day Ioannina, Greece). As the capital of the westernmost province of the Ottoman Empire, this metropolis of two hundred thousand citizens funneled trade between the western Ottoman Empire and Europe via a canal linking it to Arta, a port on the Adriatic Sea. Nur al-Arabi resided in Yanya for nine months while he pursued further studies in Sufism under the direction

of Yusuf Effendi's son-in-law, Talat Effendi. We do not know for certain why such a young pupil was sent there by Quwaysini, although it seems plausible that fully qualified Islamic teachers were needed by the Sunni Naqshbandiyya in order to teach the more largely heterodox populations of the Balkans. These people, as we have seen, were greatly influenced by the Bektashiyya, which had (once again) fallen into official disfavor. Perhaps Quwaysini had also sent his student to these frontier regions to test his general spiritual fortitude, but this we will never know for certain.

Less than a decade before Nur's arrival, the Pashalik of Yanya had been left in disarray by wars conducted by a despot named Ali Pasha Tepelen as he attempted to become the independent sultan of Rumelia. During this period, any hope of unity and reform was challenged by Bektashi excesses on the one hand and by the reactionary ulama on the other. The Janissary corps played a part in bridging these factions, thereby creating a triumvirate that became increasingly troublesome to the sultanate.

At the close of the eighteenth century the Janissaries and the ulama, united to depose Selim II, the first of a series of modernizing sultans. Though they succeeded in assassinating Selim, they failed to prevent his successor, Mahmud II from carrying forward reforms with ruthless efficiency.

Mahmud II (r. 1808–39) disbanded the Janissaries and closed down the tekkes of the Bektashiyya, who were the former's religious allies. These moves, however, were merely a prelude to Mahmud instituting laws aimed at preventing corruption and also at fostering a greater centralization of state power by limiting the power of the local notables (*ayans*) in the Balkans, among other measures. All of these developments gave rise to the period called the Tanzimat (reorganization), which took place between 1839 and 1876.

The entire restive Pashalik of Rumelia was subjugated by Sultan Mahmud II in 1820, and the Bektashiyya were officially abolished, along with the Janissaries, in 1826. Since the infamous Ali Pasha was a

patron of the Bektashiyya, and since he had also supported ethnic Albanian claims to independence, Bektashi lodges were turned over to more conservative tariqas such as the Naqshbandiyya, which were viewed as allies of the Sublime Porte.

Two years before Nur al-Arabi took up residence in Yanya, the Egypto-Turkish fleet was destroyed by a European alliance at Navarino (1827). French forces under Napoleon invaded Egypt and marched on Syria. British control spread rapidly in India, and the contest between the czarists and the English for influence in Central Asia initiated “the Great Game.” Farther west, the Austrians and imperial Russia made significant progress in containing, and then diminishing, Ottoman holdings. It was a time of great crisis for Islamic civilization as a whole, and especially so for the Ottomans as the last exemplars of Muslim temporal power.

Spurred on by territorial losses, and given its need to compete with Europe’s obvious military and economic superiority, the sultanate began to move toward limited modernization by the close of the eighteenth century. Because of this, the Great Powers were able to intervene in Ottoman affairs indirectly, but adroitly, by exporting European-style education.

The adoption of new technologies by the Ottomans required that they import European instructors to teach in their academies. These teachers normally taught in French (and, to a lesser extent, in German); and this necessitated that the educated Ottoman classes also learn those languages. Since fluency was accomplished more efficiently through an exposure to general literature, authors like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu came to be read; and thus Enlightenment ideas entered Ottoman discourse.

As an outcome, a few Muslim reformers promoted the alignment of Islamic thought with Western philosophy and science—and, in varying degrees, with the political ideas of postrevolutionary Europe. Nur al-Arabi—although he can hardly be called a rationalist—supported modernization, and one can only speculate that he did so because he

believed a number of Enlightenment ideals were compatible with Islam. Certainly that would not be out of character for him.

Where the Pir, like others, saw a danger in the liberal Enlightenment was that it supported the rise of nationalist revolutions throughout the Ottoman Empire. Nur al-Arabi did not appear to oppose nationalism, as such, but he did act to dampen the violence that sprang from its ethno-religious divisions.

As already noted, a hundred years earlier the Ottomans had ceded much of their Balkan territories to the Holy League, a coalition of European powers. This development took place around the same time the Russian Empire began a period of ascendancy under Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725). The beginnings of the Tanzimat coincided with a further consolidation of the Russian Empire initiated by Catherine the Great (r. 1762–96), and after Catherine became czarina she made it a personal cause to undermine Ottoman supremacy.

Originally a German Catholic influenced by the Enlightenment, the future empress had spent many hours reading Montesquieu and Voltaire. Before ascending the throne, however, Catherine converted to Orthodox Christianity, and like Peter the Great—whom she admired and tried to surpass—she subsequently sent Russian agents into the Balkans to fuel indigenous uprisings among the Christian population.

At the end of the first Russo-Turkish War (1768–74), the Treaty of Kuchuk Kaynarji included a stipulation allowing Russia to represent Orthodox Christians in Moldavia, Walachia, and the Aegean Islands. After this treaty, Russia interpreted its oversight as extending to all Orthodox Christian subjects in the Ottoman domain, and as a result Russia came to support the Serbian and Greek uprisings that took place between 1804 and 1829.

Simultaneously, some indigenous Balkan revolutionaries were inspired by French republican and Enlightenment ideals to secede from the Ottoman Empire and establish a number of separate nation-states. Since ethnicity in the Balkans was determined predominantly by religion, the form of nationalism that resulted was dominated (in the main)

by Orthodox Christians. As an unfortunate by-product, this contributed to a breakdown of relatively stable (and more peaceful) intercommunal relations among Christians, Jews, and Muslims.⁴

All of these developments aided the further dissolution of the European third of the Ottoman Empire—aided and abetted by the Great Powers—and dramatized the need to continue the Ottoman Reorganization. A group called the Young Ottomans came to believe that the only way to fully secure the gains of the Tanzimat was to embrace the European Enlightenment, to reinvigorate Islam, and to promote a parliamentary form of monarchy. Some of them also believed that a new and more inclusive model of Ottoman citizenship, irrespective of religion, could stave off divisive nationalist aspirations.

The modern scholar Serif Mardin describes this movement as follows: “Among the Young Ottomans existed at least four categories of reformers.” The first included “those most attuned to the liberal ideal of progress through emancipation from all remnants of a bygone age. They were the most universal, the closest to starting from the basic postulate of the brotherhood of humanity.” The second tendency was one of “nationalism,” and the third category included those who advocated “reason in the solution of political problems.” Finally, the fourth category included those who felt close to common people, who felt “the bewilderment of those who were left stranded, materially and spiritually.”⁵ As we shall see, anecdotal evidence indicates that Pir Nur al-Arabi played a small yet significant part in inspiring these constitutional reformers. The part that Nur al-Arabi played, however, was largely motivated by his desire to reform Sufism and Islamic understanding. Because of this, the “third wave” movement that was named after him, the Nuriyya-Malamiyya, must be properly viewed within that context. Like the Young Ottomans, the Pir seemed to be convinced that “the political theory of the Koran and its interpreters provided the strongest guarantees of individual freedom.”⁶

While similar reformers of Sufism the Pir most greatly admired, such as Ahmad Ibn Idris (d. 1837), exerted considerable influence in Arabic-

speaking areas, Nur al-Arabi made further moves toward modernizing Sufism in accord with changes taking place in the Ottoman Empire itself.⁷ As we have seen, the Pir's mission seemed to be focused differently from that of other reformers in the larger Islamic world. His influence was focused on the westernmost regions of the sultanate where (among other things) he sought to defuse the religious extremism accompanying the rise of ethnic nationalism.

While doing so, the Pir discarded what he considered to be the essentials of Sufism while attempting to revive more enduring Islamic values. Nur al-Arabi used the phrase "the profession of Muhammad" (in Ottoman Turkish, *Maslaq Muhammedi*) to describe his approach. This phrase was analogous in many ways to "the Muhammadan Way" (in Arabic, *Al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyah*, and in Ottoman Turkish, *Tariqat i-Muhammedi*), a term adopted by a number of Sufis after it was originally coined by Ibn al-Arabi. The meaning of that term varied considerably among Sufi reformers, although most of them promoted a return to earlier Islamic norms.⁸

Unlike Nur al-Arabi, who adopted a more pacific approach, most Sufi reformers were united by their armed resistance to the encroachments of European colonialists throughout the "abode of Islam" (*dar al-Islam*). In India, Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi (d. 1831) organized armed resistance against the British Raj; in Algeria, Amir Abd al-Qadir (d. 1883) fought the French; and Czarist advances into the Caucasus were countered by Ghazi Muhammad (d. 1831) and Shah Ismail (d. 1871).⁹

Notably, all these reformers had multiple Sufi affiliations, yet none of them privileged one religious order above the rest. Instead, they sought to reform Sufism by returning to what some of them envisioned as an original Muhammadan Way. It is doubtful that they actually met with one another, yet in most cases these activists shared a definite spiritual affinity, and many of them used Ibn al-Arabi as their primary point of reference. This remained the case even though quite a number of them remained critical of the Greatest Shaykh.¹⁰

Pir Nur al-Arabi was a devout Akbari, and like Ibn al-Arabi he equated the Way of Muhammad with the malamatiyya; and he did not believe that the position of the Seal of Muhammadan Sanctity had terminated with the Greatest Shaykh himself. Instead, the Pir believed that Ottoman Sufis like Badruddin of Simawna had later inherited the position of the Seal. The Pir also came to believe that reformers like him could occupy a similar status in the future. As we shall see, this belief was strengthened when Nur al-Arabi became an initiated Akbari and a direct inheritor of the Akbari lineage that descended from Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi.

In 1830, after Nur al-Arabi had spent nine months in Yanya, Quway-sini wrote to him there and instructed him to go to Mecca. Whatever effect the Naqshbandi Shaykhs Yusuf and Talat Effendi had upon the young Pir we will never know since he didn't mention them in his writings.¹¹ During his stay in Mecca, which lasted one year, Nur al-Arabi met another shaykh, Ibrahim al-Shamariki who initiated him into the Shabani-Khalwati as well as the combined Uwaysi-Akbari lines of ascription.¹² It was the Akbariyya that carried forward the teachings of Ibn al-Arabi—and it was this spiritual lineage that was most important to the Pir.

The Uwaysi-Akbari chain passed through Daud Abd al-Ghani Nablusi (d. 1733), one of the most important revivers of Ibn al-Arabi's legacy in the late Ottoman period. Nablusi was known to be an "Uwaysi," a Sufi who received instruction directly through the spiritual presence of a departed shaykh; in Nablusi's case this form of communication took place through the medium of contact with the ethereal presence (*ruhaniyya*) of Ibn al-Arabi. Nablusi's lineal successors apparently also possessed the Uwaysi aptitude, and thus the Pir experienced a direct spiritual connection with the Prophet Muhammad—as is evident from his journal entries.

During his first visit to Mecca, Nur al-Arabi had a significant dream in which the Prophet draped his cloak (*khirqā*) upon his shoulders.

Muhammad (sa) then wrote three lines on a piece of paper and handed it to the Pir. One of the Prophet's closest companions, Abu Bakr as-Sadiq, who was hovering nearby, commented that this was an initiation into the mystical stations (*maqamat*) of the effacement of the divine actions, qualities, and essence, and the Pir would continue to contemplate these stations until he arrived at their completion. This was later confirmed by Quwaysini through another vision presented to him by the Pir.

An initiation into the divine actions, qualities, and essence indicated that Nur al-Arabi had arrived at the position of "annihilation in God" (*fana fi-Allah*). According to classical Sufism, however, this acquirement required further refinement. Self-annihilation was only one part of what many Sufis described as the ascending arc on the journey *to* God. Once having arrived at the apex of this arc, one would continue to journey *within* God for an indeterminate period of time. Then, in a descending arc, one would return to the world "from and by" God in order to instruct others. All of this, for the Pir, would take some further time and maturation. For the time being, it seemed that Nur al-Arabi's experience of *fana* had taken him to a point where Quwaysini's practical knowledge had effectively ended. Quwaysini's tutelage, it seemed, was no longer sufficient to aid his student's progress along the path.

A more direct form of guidance from the Prophet Muhammad himself was deemed necessary by many traditional Sufis, so Quwaysini suggested that Nur al-Arabi visit the Husayni Mosque in Cairo. When the Pir went there—and as he walked toward the tomb of Imam Husayn—he saw the apparition of a person sitting there. He later related, "I was inspired that he was Habibullah [lit. "the Beloved of God," one of the names given to Muhammad]. I had a feeling of fear, but I walked over to Him and kissed His knee. He prayed for me, he touched my back, and He then permitted me to leave. I walked to the main entrance where I turned around and looked back to the huge space of the mosque, and it was still empty. I walked back again to the Sublime Station, but I could no longer find [Him there]."¹³

When he related this incident to Quwaysini, the latter responded that Nur al-Arabi had gained the spiritual approval of the Prophet directly, and thus the Pir could now return to Rumelia and teach there. Taking his leave, the Pir left by way of Alexandria and landed in Antalya (in Turkey); after traveling through many towns in Anatolia, he crossed by sea to Salonika, then proceeded to Serrez (present-day Serrai in Greece). Perhaps it was there that the Pir became acquainted with—and was later inspired to write his famous commentary on—Badraddin of Simawna; indeed, it was in the city of Serrez that Badruddin was tried and executed on charges of heresy.

By 1833, upon the request of certain notables, the Pir went to Kocani (Macedonia), where he was appointed a professor at its local madrasa. The year before, the lower half of the Balkans had broken away when the sultan had signed a treaty recognizing the Kingdom of Greece. As a result, Macedonia became even more important as a center of Ottoman control, especially so since it contained the largest trade city in the Balkans, Salonika. The governor of Macedonia, Hifzi Pasha, came to know about this twenty-year-old prodigy and invited him to the capital of the province, Uskup (present-day Skopje).

In 1839, while in Uskup, the Pir (now age twenty-six) received another initiation into the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi Order, this time by Shaykh Abdulhalik Kazani, a grand shaykh from Istanbul. Evident from this event is that Nur al-Arabi considered it important to continue his formal connection to the Naqshbandiyya even though he believed that the Uwaysi-Akbari approach was far more essential.

These events coincided with the ascension of a new sultan, Abdul Majid (1839–61), and the formal beginnings of the Tanzimat with the declaration of the *Hatti-Sharif* (Noble Edict) of Gulhane. Kinross would later observe, “The earliest constitutional document in any Islamic country, it was in effect a charter of legal, social, and political rights, a Magna Carta for the subjects of the Empire.”¹⁴ Due to the reactions of the conservative ulama, however, Rashid Pasha, who had drafted it,

was dismissed and exiled to the embassy in Paris (1841)—and thus the reforms of the *Hatti-Sharif* were greatly delayed.

At the time, none of these events affected the Pir directly, although they would do so somewhat later. More pressingly, Grand Shaykh Kazani's initiation did not satisfy Nur al-Arabi's desire for deeper spiritual realization, and in 1843 (at the age of thirty) the Pir journeyed back to Mecca. According to his son, Sharif Effendi, the Pir had said, "Our present knowledge is not enough for us, the sacred Mecca and Medina can never be without the presence of a perfect Murshid, this is a chance for us; so we must look for one." Sharif Effendi added that the Pir found a seeming qalandar named Darwish Muhammad (alt. Dervish Mehmet) in Mecca and later described their meeting:

After circumambulating the Ka'bah I sat to meditate. A person who appeared to be a madman came and sat next to me, his body touching mine. There were lice on him, which I feared would come onto me. But they came toward me, then turned back and stayed on him! He said to me, "I educate my lice. They will never leave me." I asked his name. "Darwish Muhammad," he said. And he told me that he had sat with me nineteen years ago, on my first Pilgrimage, and remembered my fancy blue coat. He had not addressed me then on account of my youth.¹⁵

According to Sharif Effendi, at the suggestion of Darwish Muhammad, Nur al-Arabi went into a retreat for the traditional period of forty days, during which time he was initiated into the stations of *baqa-jam*, *hadrhat al-jam*, and *jam al-jam*—by the spiritual presence of the Prophet. Returning from Mecca to Uskup, the Pir was authorized, on the recommendation of Darwish Muhammad, to act as a completed Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi shaykh by Mustafa Trabzoni, the representative of Grand Shaykh Abdulhalik Kazani.

It is curious that a qalandar like Darwish Muhammad could exert an influence on a Naqshbandi shaykh, unless of course he belonged to

the same order, but that has not been recorded. Nur al-Arabi reported, instead, that Darwish Muhammad, when asked what order he belonged to, had simply responded he belonged to the *Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*. This term indicated that Darwish Muhammad might have belonged to a particular branch of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandiyya, some of whom, though originating in India, had come to live in Mecca. Some of these itinerant dervishes adhered to the ideas of Khwaja Mir Dard (b. 1721), a mystical poet who had begun to propagate a new branch of the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandiyya also called the Way of Muhammad.

Among Khwaja Mir Dard's tenets were the following: the *Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya* should not be considered a new sect; all Muslims should love Ali and the *Ahl-al-Bayt* (descendants of Muhammad), although the Shi'i had taken this love to an extreme; the Imamate continued through the Twelve Imams and then descended through Sayyids, who were divinely appointed; among the Sayyids, God would appoint a renewer every one hundred years. According to Mir Dard, perfect Sufis made no distinction between *wahdat al-wujud* and *wahdat al-shuhud*; true Muhammadis substituted the word *nur* for *wujud*, because the latter term was not to be found in the Qur'an; moreover, a state of political peace stimulated the practice of Islam, and, as a consequence, members of the *Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya* could visit the powerful in order to encourage them to rule by the principles of justice.

Interestingly, Nur al-Arabi would later adopt almost all of the principles listed by Mir Dard although he never mentioned the latter by name. Instead, after his pilgrimage to Mecca, the Pir began loosening his formal ties with the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandiyya. Despite his appointment as a shaykh of this (almost purely) Sunni order, the Pir—not unlike many other Turkish Sufis—manifested a great love for Ali and the Twelve Imams. Himself a Sayyid, Nur al-Arabi increasingly saw himself as a reviver of both Sufism and Islam. The Pir made little distinction between wujudis and shuhudis, while still giving preference to Ibn al-Arabi. There can be no doubt that the Pir also supported a state

of continuing political peace, and (as we shall see) he made a concerted effort to promote the principle of justice among those who ruled in positions of authority.

In all these respects, Nur al-Arabi was in full agreement with the concepts articulated by Mir Dard, although the question of whether or not Darwish Muhammad had been a Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi can never be settled due to the lack of written evidence. It is fairly certain, however, that the dervish was not an Indian because (according to the Pir) he spoke a middle-Anatolian dialect. This region, as we have seen, had been influenced by malamatis of all types for centuries, and Ankara had been the home of Hadji Bayram. Suffice to say, Darwish Muhammad chose not to reveal himself as the member of any particular tariqa, although he insisted on the Pir's refinement of the stations of *baqa* (continuance after annihilation), which were hallmarks of *both* the Naqshbandiyya and the malamatiyya. What is more important is that Darwish Muhammad opened the door for Nur al-Arabi's experience of a state considered of primary importance to Akbaris as well as to the Naqshbandiyya and the malamatiyya in general. (The state in question will be detailed in the next chapter).

On his way back to Macedonia from Mecca after leaving Darwish Muhammad, the Pir stopped in Yanbu, the closest port to Medina. There, he sacrificed a ram, and the meat was cooked with rice and served to the poor. The next day, he claimed to have been initiated into *ahadiyyat al-jam*, the station of *khatm* (seal of the saints): "While taking a nap, I entered through the Bab al-Salam [Gate of Peace] and met with Rasululah (sa). This occurred while he presented me with his face of Divine Light, not with his corporeal face. It appeared as a ray of shining light, much stronger than the sun. He opened his palms and told me to walk. As I walked, the ray of light pulled me in. I was held there and squeezed, and he initiated me into the station of Ahadiyya [nondelimited Oneness]."¹⁶

It was common for Sufis to believe that someone initiated in this way had achieved at least a taste (*dhawq*) of the station of the *Qutb al-*

Zaman (Axis of the Time), but the Pir did not immediately assume this position. Instead, Nur al-Arabi grew more certain that he had a special function to perform as a reformer of Sufism, although in a way that was still unclear to him.¹⁷

Returning to Rumelia via Egypt, the Pir visited Quwaysini for the last time to secure his approval. Once back in Uskup, Nur al-Arabi learned that the governor, Hifzi Pasha, had been replaced by Selim Pasha, who became the Pir's disciple. After Selim Pasha was reassigned to Istanbul as the commander of the interior security forces, he invited Nur al-Arabi (then age thirty-seven) to visit him for six months in 1849–50. While staying in Istanbul, the Pir is reported to have met with many shaykhs and members of the ulama, but this was only the beginning of his mission to expand his influence among more influential members of the Ottoman bureaucracy.

During 1850, the Pir returned to Macedonia and traveled to the city of Prizren, in neighboring Kosovo province. After arriving there, according to his journals, he experienced an inner directive to begin initiating people into the stations of annihilation and continuance (*fana wa-baqa*). The next day, he extended an invitation to two imams and a small number of junior officers in the army battalion protecting the city, and for the next two years, the Pir's reputation continued to expand.

By 1852 Nur al-Arabi was invited by Ismail Pasha, then a field marshal and Chief of Staff of the Army of Macedonia, to deliver a series of lectures at the military academy in Monastir. The Pir's acceptance of this invitation was to prove decisive. War clouds were gathering over the Crimea, and within two years a disastrous three-year conflict would ensue between imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

Nur al-Arabi stayed in Monastir for three months in 1852, during which time he lectured on "Subtle Research with Commentary on the Inspirations of Shaykh Badruddin of Simawna" (*Lataif al Tahkikat fi Sharhi al Waridat*). His audience included military cadets and an influential group of politicians and ulama, and the Pir's choice of his topic may have been prescient, for Badruddin of Simawna was well known

for promoting a supraconfessional order that united Muslims and Christians.

One of the causes of the ensuing Crimean War was that Czar Nicholas's ambassador had presented a demand to the Ottoman sultanate in 1853 that Russia should acquire the right to act as a protectorate to the Ottoman Empire's twelve million Orthodox Christian subjects. One wonders if the Pir, by introducing the topic of Shaykh Badruddin a year earlier, was attempting to circumvent the possibility of Russia's taking advantage of the religious divisions that increasingly divided the empire.

In any case, it is clear from a reading of his commentaries that the Pir agreed with Badruddin of Simawna that every person had to arrive at an interior realization of Islam and that each Muslim was potentially his or her own Jesus, Muhammad, and Mahdi. These ideas, as they had before, supported an intrinsically democratic view of Islam, one that (at least implicitly) supported the movement among Tanzimat reformers to curb the power of the sultanate and the official ulama. In a possible nod to members of the audience who later joined the Young Ottomans, one portion of the lecture's title, "Subtle Research," may have hinted at the Pir's deeper intention in presenting his topic to them rather than to members of the brotherhoods or the ulama.

A major turning point, the Crimean War lasted from 1853 to 1856, and only after its conclusion was a royal proclamation declared, called the *Hatti-Humayun*, that secured equal rights for all Ottoman subjects irrespective of religion. Meanwhile, the Muslim populations of the Balkans were further enlarged by massive numbers of Tatar refugees from the Crimea, and tensions between local Muslims and Christians became further enflamed.

In 1861 Sultan Abdul Majid's reign was succeeded by Abdulaziz (r. 1861–76), of whom Kinross has declared: "Reactionary in his outlook and unrestrained by any liberal principles, he ruled as an absolute despot."¹⁸

While the sultan's court tried to restrain the more liberal reforms of the Tanzimat, by 1865 the Young Ottomans attempted to offset these responses by joining together in a secret organization called The Patriotic Alliance. Three years later, reactionaries in the general vicinity of Uskup filed a petition with the Sublime Porte complaining that Pir Nur al-Arabi was spreading heretical as well as subversive teachings. Sultan Abdulaziz ordered the Shaykh al-Islam to investigate.

The Pir's old student and patron, Husayni Husni Pasha, acting as the minister in charge of interior security forces, prevented the case from going forward, and he then invited Nur al-Arabi to Istanbul as his personal guest. As a result, the Pir and his son Sharif Effendi came to Istanbul for a third time and stayed in the residence of Husni Pasha in 1868–69; during that time Nur al-Arabi met again with a number of well-known (but unnamed) Sufi shaykhs and ulama. Most importantly, through the direct intercession of Husni Pasha, the Pir was saved from the fate of Badruddin of Simawna, whose radical teachings had become utterly enmeshed with those of his more militant representative Borkluce.

Once Nur al-Arabi had successfully eluded prosecution, it became increasingly apparent that he was more of a moderate, incrementalist reformer than a violent revolutionary, and as a result his reputation as a loyal and dependable citizen caught the attention of well-placed members of the bureaucracy who could now afford to associate with him more openly.

In 1871, the Pir (now fifty-eight) visited Istanbul for a fourth time at the invitation of the newly appointed Shaykh al-Islam, Mir Ahmad Muhtar Effendi, also known as Molla Bey (d. 1882/83).

During this stay in Istanbul, Nur al-Arabi initiated a number of dignitaries, including the treasurer of the Ottoman army; the chief inspector of religious nonprofits (*wakifs*); a leading mullah of Egypt; and three Rifa'i shaykhs, one of whom, Haririzade Kemalettin Effendi (1851–81), would later become the Pir's primary representative in Istanbul.

The year before, while traveling to Monastir for a circumcision ceremony, Nur al-Arabi had stopped in a town called Tikwash for a few days. During that period, the Pir openly declared that he had arrived at the position of being a “Pole,” or *Qutb*. No doubt, this spiritual appointment would play a part in his attempt to unify all of the malamatiyya under his own direction. On the way to Istanbul, Nur al-Arabi had stopped in Thrace to visit the tomb of the Hidden Idris, the seventeenth-century representative of the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya. Having met with the spiritual presence of Idris, Nur al-Arabi became further convinced that he should issue an appeal to the present head of the Hamzawis in Istanbul, Sayyid Abdulkaadir Effendi, to join him under his leadership. Much to the Pir’s disappointment, Sayyid Abdulkaadir declined.

Victoria Holbrook writes: “Seyyit Abdulkaadir el-Belhi (d. 1922) . . . was the first Melami Axis to enjoy as public a following as that of Beshir Aga, martyred in 1663. . . . He traveled with his father [from Afghanistan] to Bursa in 1863–4, and by invitation of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulaziz’s father, they moved to Istanbul.”¹⁹ As a Naqshbandi shaykh, Abdulkaadir also headed a tekke dedicated to that order in the Eyyup district of Istanbul, and it was in that city that he became the successor of Seyyit Bekir Reshat Effendi (d. 1875), a leading malamati saint. Despite meeting with Abdulkaadir several times, Nur al-Arabi failed to convince him to join forces, and the Hamzawiyya continued to operate separately under Abdulkaadir’s direction. The last known Axis of the Hamzawiyya was reported by Holbrook as passing away in the early 1950s, and a number of those attached to the Hamzawiyya in Turkey and the Balkans were gradually absorbed by the Nuriyya-Malamiyya, although a number of others preferred to remain a distinctly different group that operated in a more secretive manner.

After his fourth trip to Istanbul, Nur al-Arabi came back to Uskup. Four years later (1875), he returned for the fifth time to stay with his Murid, the Shaykh al-Islam Molla Bey for five months. Shortly after that trip Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) ascended to the throne, and the Pir would never visit Istanbul again. The dictatorial policies of

Abdul Hamid made it impossible. Mardin notes that the new sultan “distrusted the alliances between liberal bureaucrats and ulema [ulama].” As a result, Abdul Hamid persecuted the liberals and “actively encouraged obscurantism in the medresses [madrasas].”²⁰

In 1877 a new war broke out between Turkey and Russia. This conflict ended in defeat for the Ottomans, but their unexpected resistance allowed other European powers, led by Britain, to intervene and broker a peace, the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878). The treaty stipulated that the Ottomans had to recognize the independence of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro, much to the satisfaction of Russia. In addition, the Sublime Porte had to cede territory to these new nations and to relinquish control over the newly founded state of Bulgaria. As a further insult, the sultanate also had to pay war reparations to Russia.

As the empire weakened, Abdul Hamid sought to strengthen his hand by dissolving the parliament. In the process, many Tanzimat reformers were exiled, and some, like Midhat Pasha, were eventually put to death. The result of this abrogation of the constitution was that Abdul Hamid launched a veritable reign of terror against liberalizing reformers and their allies among the ulama.

Lord Kinross would later write, “Pale, silent, and melancholy, with a ‘sinister and scrutinizing’ look that belied his polite manners, Abdul Hamid scented danger on every side and suspected all those around him. He surrounded himself with an army of spies, *agents provocateurs*, secret police, and unofficial informers who provided him with daily reports. It thus came to be said that one-half of the population of Istanbul was employed spying on the other half.”²¹ This was hardly an atmosphere that supported reformers like Nur al-Arabi, and he retired into relative obscurity in Macedonia.

The year 1878 marked another turning point in the fortunes of the Sublime Porte. Britain invaded Cyprus, and Austria-Hungary conquered Bosnia and Herzegovina, while France seized the province of Tunisia. The Congress of Berlin reduced Ottoman territories in Europe to Macedonia, Albania, and Thrace. More importantly, as a result of

the Decree of Muharram in 1881, the Ottomans were forced to accept new financial restraints by the European powers. According to the decree, the Ottoman public debt was reduced from £191,000,000 to £106,000,000, while certain revenues were assigned to debt service and a European-controlled organization was set up to collect the payments. This organization subsequently played an important role in most Ottoman financial affairs, and it also acted as an intermediary for European companies seeking to improve their Turkish investments. As a result, and already in steady decline, the Ottoman Empire came to be known as “the sick man of Europe.”

In 1879, Nur al-Arabi made another pilgrimage to Mecca with 110 of his disciples. When he came back, he saw that a rebellion for Albanian independence was taking place in Kosovo. Seeking to keep aloof, he encouraged his disciples to stay out of the conflict and remain neutral.

In 1884, four years before his death, the Pir made his last pilgrimage to Mecca with 130 of his murids. His son-in-law and designated successor, Abdurrahim Fedai Effendi, and his grandson Kemal Effendi were with him on this trip. On the way back, while passing through the Suez Canal (now under the control of the British), Abdurrahim Fedai Effendi died on board the ship.

In 1888, Nur al-Arabi died from a bladder disease at the approximate age of seventy-six and was buried in a tomb in Struminca, in Macedonia. The liberalizing reforms of the Tanzimat had failed by then, but fortunately for others, the Pir left behind a number of representatives in the Balkans and (more significantly for this study) in Istanbul. Some of these, it seems, played a part in inspiring progressive reforms in the next phase of Turkish history, which witnessed the demise of the sultanate and reforms that eventuated in the formation of the Republic of Turkey.

The historian and specialist in Naqshbandi tradition Hamid Algar makes three assertions about Pir Nur al-Arabi. Firstly, that the Pir’s teachings “had very little to do with Naqshbandi teachings”; secondly, that “he was initiatically linked to the malamatiyya second period”

(that of the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya); and, thirdly, that he was “a dedicated partisan of the *wahdat al-wujud* for whom order affiliation did not matter much.”²² Since Algar does not cite any evidence to support his assertions, we must consider some of them somewhat speculative and possibly partly misleading.

To begin with, Algar’s assertion that the Pir’s teaching “had very little to do with Naqshbandi teachings” is contradicted by the beliefs of Hulusi, Şuşud, Bilginer, and Öziç, all of whom were convinced that Pir Nur al-Arabi’s work reflected the earlier Khwajagan (this will be detailed in the next chapter). Hulusi’s successor, Hasan Lütü Şuşud, may have been inspired by his teacher to further research the parallels between the Khwajagan and the malamatiyya. Those parallel teachings certainly influenced Şuşud’s successors.

Scholars other than Algar, such as Golpinarli, Zarcone, and Xavier, do not cite Nur al-Arabi as being initiatically linked to any malamati group of the “second period,” including the Hamzawi-Malamatiyya. In fact, Golpinarli published the pir’s chains of succession (*isnad*), and they directly contradict Algar’s assertion.²³ Lastly, there can be no doubt that Nur al-Arabi was a “dedicated partisan of the *wahdat al-wujud*,” but, even more so, the Pir was a direct successor of the Akbarian lineage that passed through Daud al-Nablusi. It is true, however, that the Pir departed from the later teachings of the Mujaddidi and Khalidi branches of the Naqshbandiyya, both of which have been studied extensively by Algar.

As for the assertion that one’s affiliation to the Sufi orders didn’t “matter much” to Nur al-Arabi one should note the following caveat. Most of the members of the Pir’s “supra-order” were already members of normative tariqas such as the Rifa’iyya, Khalwatiyya, Mawlawiyya, and Naqshbandiyya. In addition, in his *Risala* the Pir advised the following: “You should strive to learn continuous remembrance [*al-dhikr al-daim*], which is a secret practice of the gnostic order [*tariqa*] because heedlessness is removed through continuous remembrance. The learning of continuous remembrance requires initiation and instruction

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by an individual of the ‘people of remembrance.’”²⁴ The latter phrase is widely recognized as referring to those who belong to an organized tariqa.

While it is true that the Sufi orders to which others belonged did not “matter much” for Nur al-Arabi, his work must be viewed within the context of Sufi tradition as a whole. Although the Pir reorganized this teaching and attempted to streamline the essentials of the Way, he was not at variance with its classical teachings, which extended back over a thousand years. Instead, he reorganized certain concepts and principles, and reoriented certain Sufi practices to fit with contemporary conditions.

In his particular articulation of the Way, Nur al-Arabi also redefined its pedagogy and curriculum by slightly altering its basic map—whose facets we will examine in chapter 9.

NOTES

20. Ibid.
21. Omar Ali Shah, *The Course of the Seeker* (Los Angeles: Tale Weaver Publishing, 1988); *The Sufi Tradition in the West* (New York: Alif Publishing, 1994), 20.
22. Quoted in Moore, “Neo-Sufism: The Case of Idries Shah.”
23. Bennett, *Witness*, 362 (see chap. 3, n. 21).
24. Ibid., 366.
25. Bennett, *Gurdjieff: A Very Great Enigma*, 57–60 (see chap. 3, n. 7).
26. Bennett, *Witness*, 366–67 (see chap. 3, n. 21).
27. Ibid., 366.
28. Ibid., 368–69.
29. Hasan Lütü Shushud, *The Masters of Wisdom of Central Asia* (Coombe Springs Press, 1983), 157.
30. These quotes were supplied to me in translation by Dr. Nevit O. Ergin, a long-term student of Hasan Şuşud and founder of the Society for Understanding Mevlana in San Mateo, California.
31. Quoted in Shushud, *Masters of Wisdom*, 89.
32. Rumi, *Divan*, Quatrain 395, trans. Ibrahim Gamard, published on website of the Divan ‘I Masnavi of the Mevlevi Order, http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/corrections_popular.html.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).
2. Shushud, *Masters of Wisdom* (see chap. 4, n. 31).
3. After the Prophet Muhammad’s name, it is customary in Islamic usage to include the greeting *salla allahu ‘alayhi was salam* (peace and blessings be upon him), often abbreviated as sa.
4. Quoted in Javad Nurbaksh, *Traditions of the Prophet: Ahadith* (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1981), 39.
5. Cyril Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 249.
6. Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 265.
7. Ali B. Uthman al-Jullabi Hujwiri, *The Kashf Al-Mahjub of Al Hujwiri: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1976), 65.
8. Hamid Algar, “Elements de provenance malamati dans la tradition primitive Naqshbandi” (translated into English for the present work by Dr. Annick

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- Safken), in *Melamis-Bayramis: Etudes sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans* (Malamis-Bayrami: Studies of Three Muslim Mystical Movements), ed. Athalie Clayer, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1998).
9. Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 265.
 10. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 86 (see chapter 2, n. 12); Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 265; Algar, "Elements de provenance malamati."
 11. Morris S. Seale, "The Ethics of Malamiyya Sufism and the Sermon on the Mount," *Muslim World*, 58 no. 1 (1968).
 12. Quote from Sulami's *The Malamatiyya Epistle*, in Sara Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi and the Malamati Movement in Early Sufism," in *Classical Persian Sufism: from its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1994), 607.
 13. Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi," 599.
 14. This term is used by Tirmidhi (d. 908) to describe malamati activity. See Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi," 612.
 15. Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 265–66.
 16. Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi," 603
 17. See Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Sulami, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry*, trans. Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al Halveti (London: East West Publications, 1983).
 18. Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi," 589.
 19. This anecdote was related to me by a Sufi who had received it as an oral transmission. Other anecdotes of a similar spirit can be found in Farud Al-Din Attar, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Arkana, 1966).
 20. Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1985), 26–27.
 21. Terry Graham, "Abu Sai'd ibn Abi'l-Khayr and the School of Khurasan," in *Classical Persian Sufism: From Its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993), 108–9.
 22. Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality, and Writings of Al-Junayd* (London: Luzac & Co., 1976), 91.
 23. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 20, 28.
 24. Ibid., 103.
 25. Ibid., 50

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26. A hadith (traditional saying) of the Prophet Muhammad, in Javad Nur-baksh, *Traditions of the Prophet*, vol. 2 (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1983), 50.
27. Herbert Mason, "Hallaj and the Baghdad School of Sufism," in Lewisohn, *Classical Persian Sufism*, 72.
28. See Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, and Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1994), 88.
29. Algar, "Elements de provenance malamati," 3.
30. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 71, referring to Paul Kraus and Louis Massignon, eds., *Akbar al-Hallaj, Texte ancien relatif a la predication et au supplice du mystique musulman al-Hosayn b. Mansour al-Hallaj*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1936), 50–51.
31. Reynold A. Nicholson, trans., *Kashf Al-Majub of Al Hujwiri: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism* (London: Luzac and Co., 1976), 65.
32. Graham, "Abu Sa'id," 96.
33. Ibid.
34. J. T. P. de Bruijn, "The Qalandariyyat in Persian Mystical Poetry, from Sana'i Onwards," in *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1992), 79.
35. Graham, "Abu Sa'id," 104.
36. Suhrawardi, quoted in Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 32.
37. Bernard Lewis, *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 11.
38. René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 147.
39. Ibid., 154, 155.
40. de Bruijn, "The Qalandariyyat," 77.
41. Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 214.
42. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Servants*, 90.
43. Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood*, 235.
44. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Servants*, 86.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 76.

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2. Kafadar adds: "A new 'race' was born—that of the Osmanlis—out of the mixture of ex-pagan Turks and ex-Christian Greeks" (*Between Two Worlds*, 33). This view is supported by Lord Kinross, who states, "Intermarriage became common between Greeks and Turks, contributing to the birth and the growth of a new mixed society" (J. P. Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* [New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1977], 26).
3. William C. Chittick notes, "Ibn al-Arabi made use of Neoplatonic terminology in expounding the metaphysical and cosmological doctrines that [his successor] al-Qunawi accepts and develops" ("The Circle of Spiritual Ascent According to Al-Qunawi," in *Neoplatonism and Islamic Thought*, ed. Parviz Morewedge [Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992], 1179–80).
4. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 83–84 (see chap. 5, n. 28).
5. Quoted in H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 136.
6. *Ibid.*, 136.
7. Michel Balivet, *Islam Mystique et Révolution Armée dans les Balkans Ottomans: Vie du Cheikh Bedreddin le "Hallâj des Turcs" (1358/59–1416)* (Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1995), 38–41. Balivet uses the name Bedreddin instead of Badruddin to transliterate the Turkish inflection commonly used.
8. *Ibid.*, 41, 42, 43.
9. *Ibid.*, 42.
10. *Ibid.*, 46, 47, 49.
11. *Ibid.*, 50.
12. *Ibid.*, 52–53.
13. *Ibid.*, 63.
14. *Ibid.*, 78–79.
15. *Ibid.*, 78.
16. *Ibid.*, 72.
17. *Ibid.*, 73.
18. *Ibid.*, 79.
19. *Ibid.*, 73.
20. Shaikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti, commentary and trans., *Inspirations on the Path of Blame by Shaikh Badruddin of Simawna* (Putney, VT: Threshold Books, 1993), 38.
21. *Ibid.*, 39.

22. Ibid., 150.
23. Balivet, *Islam Mystique*, 73.
24. Victoria R. Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melami Supra-Order," part 2, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* 12 (1993). Holbrook's dating seems unlikely since the Ardabali's death preceded that of Somuncu Baba's by some seventy-four years, and Ardabali was known to be an avid critic of Ibn al-Arabi's theories. This did not seem to be the case with Somuncu Baba.
25. According to Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Gulat Sects* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 4, Erdebeli's discourses to his son are collected in a book called *Kitab al-Manaqib* (The Book of Exemplary Acts).
26. Ibid., 25.
27. Victoria R. Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melami Supra-Order," part 1, *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* 9 (1992), 23.
28. This is suggested by Holbrook, *ibid.*, 25.
29. Abulbaki Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler* (The Malamati Way and Malamatis) (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaasi, 1931/1992). (Unfortunately, this work has not been translated into English.)
30. Holbrook's translation ("Ibn 'Arabi," part 1, 26) of Abulbaki Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler* (Istanbul: Devlet Matbaasi, 1931), 41.
31. C. H. Imber, "Malamatiyya: In Ottoman Turkey (3)," CD-ROM edition v. 10 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 1999).
32. See Imber, *ibid.* Given an absence of writings from the fifteenth century, Imber focuses on surviving documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—and these documents, largely compiled by heresiologists, indicate the malamatiyya in Ottoman Turkey had largely departed from Sunni Islam. Whether or not this was the case will be investigated later in the present chapter.
33. The Ottomans, who used a variety of names for their new capital continued, at times, to call it *Kostaniyye*. After the fall of the city, however, it was also referred to as *Islambol*, meaning filled with many Muslims. The most common term used in common Turkish was, nevertheless, *Istanbul*, and most scholars agree that this term was a rendering of the Greek phrase *eis tin polis*, "into the city." For purposes of simplicity, I will use the name Istanbul throughout this text to refer to the capital of the Ottomans (after 1453). For further references to the various names used, see Philip

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- Mansel, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 20.
34. Lefton S. Stavrianos, *The Ottoman Empire: Was It the Sick Man of Europe?* (New York: Rhinehart, 1957).
35. Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakshiya between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, Press, 2004), 41.
36. According to Suraiya Faruqi, who summarizes the theory of Irene Melikof, "Sultan Bayazid, who was known for his generous donations to many [tekkes], including the Bektashi sanctuary of Koyun Baba, in return expected the dervishes to wean the [Turcoman] tribesmen away from the mixture of folk Islam and Shi'i beliefs which they had espoused up to that time. . . . However, in order to communicate with their flock, the Bektashi missionaries had to adapt to the culture of the tribesmen, and as a result were assimilated to the heterodox milieu they had been sent out to change" ("Conflict, Accommodation and Long Term Survival of The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State," in Alexandre Popovic and Giles Veinstein, eds., *Bektachiyya: Etudes sur l'ordre mystique des Betkachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* [Istanbul: Les Editions Isis, 1995], 16).
37. For further information on the history of the Hurufi movement, see Hamid Algar, "The Hurufi Influence on Bektashism," in Popovic and Veinstein, *Bektachiyya*, 39–53.
38. Holbrook, "Ibn Arabi," part 2, 31.
39. Imber, "Malamatiyya," (end of article).
40. Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi," part 2, 15.

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1. Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 132–33.
2. Also known as Sayyid Muhammad Nur al-din al-Husayni and (in the Balkans) Arap Hodja. A paucity of studies on Pir Nur al-Arabi needs to be noted. While the legacy of Pir Nur al-Arabi is unique, little (if anything) is known of him in the West apart from some recent articles (in French) by Xavier Jacob and Thierry Zarcone in *Melamis-Bayramis* (see chap. 5, n. 8). Some details are also furnished in H. T. Norris's *Islam in the Balkans* (1993). With the notable exception of Abdalbaki Golpinarli, who wrote in the thirties, no other Turkish scholar has researched the life and thought

of Nur al-Arabi in detail. An unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Pir's life can be found at the University of Belgrade (in Serbo-Croatian), but this is difficult to access. An entry in English by Colin Imber on the malamiyya in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* fails to mention the Pir at all.

Apart from a few scholarly works, a small number of hagiographies have been written by successors of the Pir such as Mahmut Sadettin Bilginer (1991, 1994) and Yusuf Ziya Inan (1971, 1976). Until recently the senior shaykhs of predominantly Turkish Sufi orders such as the Jerrahiyya and Mevleviyya, were well aware of Nur al-Arabi and his continuing tradition, but other Sufis remained less informed. A Jerrahi shaykh residing in the United States, Tosun Bayrak, offers a short biography of Nur al-Arabi in his *Inspirations on the Path of Blame* (see chap. 6, n. 20), a book largely based on an earlier work by Mahmud Sadettin Bilginer that was published posthumously in 1991.

3. Badrul Wali came from a long line of Sayyids, and his lineage is cited by Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 231 (see chap. 6, n. 29). The line of ascription (*isnad*) is given as follows: "Sayyid Muhammed Nurul Misriyyul Mahalleviyyul Bedriyyul Huseyni-Sayyid Ibrahimul Kudsi- Seyyid Bedrul Veli- Seyyid Muhammed- Seyyid Yusuf-Seyyid Bedr- Seyyid Yakub- Seyyid Mutahhar- Seyyid Salim- Seyyid Muhammed- Seyyid Zeyd- Seyyid Ali- Seyyid Hasanul Arizul Akbar- Seyyid Zeyd- Imam Zeynel Abidin Ali- Imam Huseyn- Imam Ali abu Talib."
4. Over the next one hundred years, with the advent of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans, massive ethnic cleansing would ensue, and millions of Muslims would eventually be expelled to the mainland of Anatolia, which was later to become a Turkish state. Christians suffered similarly during Muslim reprisals throughout territories that remained more firmly under Ottoman control.
5. Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 78–79.
6. *Ibid*, 82.
7. During his own time, Nur al-Arabi's sphere of influence spread throughout Kossovo, Bosnia, and Macedonia, as well as in certain cities of Anatolia, including Istanbul, but the Pir never achieved prominence beyond these places.
8. Among the most renowned reformers of this period, we find the following: in sub-Saharan Africa, Ahmad al-Tijani (d. 1815) and Usman dan Fodio (d. 1817); in the Maghrib, Ahmad Ibn Idris (d. 1837) and Amir Abdl

- Qadir; in India, Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi. See Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking, and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (London: Curzon Press, 1998).
9. Also nearly contemporary with Pir Nur al-Arabi were reformers like Shah Wali Allah of Delhi (d. 1762), Ahmad al-Tijani of Algeria (d. 1815), Ahmad Ibn Idris (d. 1837) in Arabia, Muhammad al-Sanusi in Libya (d. 1859), and Usman dan Fodio (d. 1817) in Niger and Nigeria.
 10. We should also include among them Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi and Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi, even though the latter, as we have seen was a major critic not only of Ibn al-Arabi, but even more so of those who followed him such as Qunawi.
 11. What we do know is that he never mentions them in his paper *Risala Mamba'un nur fi Ru'yatil Rasul* (Source of the Light through the Prophet's Vision). In that paper he respectfully praises Quwaysini and Dervish Mehmet, whom he met later, but, strikingly, he omits any mention of Shaykh Yusuf.
 12. Ibrahim al-Shamariki (lit. "Ibrahim of Damascus") carried the transmission of the Uwaysi-Akbariyya from his shaykh, Muhammad Abu Najaba. Ibrahim had also inherited the Shabani-Halveti lineage from another (possibly less important or earlier) shaykh, Abdullah al-Halabi. Clearly the two main lines of ascription (Uwaysi-Akbari) had been merged for six generations preceding Shaykh Ibrahim. Ibrahim al-Shamariki's Uwaysi lineage passes back through Abd al-Ghani Nablusi (d. 1731), who was also a member of the Qadiri and Naqshbandi Orders. Al-Ghani Nablusi, a well-known commentator on Ibn al-Arabi, lived and died near Shaykh al-Akbar's mausoleum in Damascus. Several of his commentaries are preserved (in Arabic). For more information on Nablusi, see Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: Abdul al-Ghani al-Nablusi, 1641–1731* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).
 13. Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 234 (see chap. 6, n. 29).
 14. Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries*, 474 (see chap. 6, n. 2).
 15. Bayrak, *Inspirations on the Path of Blame*, 63 (see chap. 6, n. 20).
 16. Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 237 (see chap. 6, n. 29).
 17. Qualities of the *Qutb* are given in chapter 10.
 18. Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries*, 504 (see chap. 6, n. 2).
 19. Holbrook, "Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions," part 2, 25 (see chap. 6, n. 24).
 20. Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 408.

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21. Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries*, 534 (see chap. 6, n. 2).
22. The complete relevant quote reads, "Sayyid Muhammad Nur al'Arabi (d. 887), while calling himself a Malamati, had a Naqshbandi spiritual descent. However, this Egyptian Sufi's teachings, which were established in Macedonia, had very little to do with the Naqshbandi traditions. Regarding his Malamati obedience it seems that he was initiatically linked to the Malamatiya second period. We must not see in him a Naqshbandi with Malamati tendencies, but rather, as a dedicated partisan of the *wahdat al-wajud* for whom order affiliation did not matter much" (Algar, "Elements de provenance malamati," 36 [see chap. 5, n. 8]).
23. Pir Nur al-Arabi's chains of transmission mentioned can be found in Golpinarli, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 241–42 (see chap. 6, n. 29).
24. See appendix, *Risala i Salihyya* (The Testament of the Righteous) of Pir Nur al-Arabi, translated by Mehmet Selim Öziç with the assistance of Robert A. H. Darr, 2007.

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1. Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 232 (see chap. 7, n. 5).
2. For a summary of Hartman's observations see Jacob Xavier, "Les renseignements de Martin Hartman sur les Melamis (1909)," in *Melamis-Bayramis* (see chap. 5, n. 8).
3. Thierry Zarcone, "Mehmet Ali Ayni et les cercles melami d'Istanbul au debut du XX siècle," in *Melamis-Bayramis*, 246 (see chap. 5, n. 8).
4. Xavier, "Les renseignements de Martin Hartman," 214.
5. Kinross, *Ottoman Centuries*, 576 (see chap. 6, n. 2).
6. Zarcone, "Mehmet Ali Ayni," 244.
7. For exact figures, see McCarthy, *Death and Exile* (see chap. 7, n. 1).
8. The following section largely depends upon the details of Atatürk's biography as provided by Andrew Mango, *Atatürk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2002).
9. Ibid., 323.
10. Ibid., 437.
11. For fuller details about the life of Hasan Şuşud, see *An Excursion into the Depths of Tasawuf: Discourses by Hasan Shushud*, compiled Mehlih Yansel, trans. Refik Algan (privately published and limited to 86 copies, 2004).
12. Ibid., 524.
13. Bennett, *Witness*, 368 (see chap. 3, n. 21).

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SACRED PSYCHOLOGY

Yannis Toussulis, Ph.D.



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