Spiritual surrender: from companionship to hierarchy in the history of Bektashism

Albert Doja

SPIRITUAL SURRENDER: FROM COMPANIONSHIP TO HIERARCHY IN THE HISTORY OF BEKTASHISM

ALBERT DOJA

Summary

The system of beliefs and practices related to Bektashism seems to have corresponded to a kind of liberation theology, whereas the structure of Bektashi groups corresponded more or less to the type of religious organization conventionally known as charismatic groups. It becomes understandable therefore that their spiritual tendency could at times connect with and meet social, cultural and national perspectives. In turn, when members of the previously persecuted religious minority will acquire a degree of religious and political respectability within society at large, the doctrines of heterodoxy and liberation theology fade into the background. In the end, the heirs of the heterodox promoters of spiritual reform and social movement turn into followers and faithful defenders of a legitimate authority. They become the spokespeople for an institutionalized orthodoxy whose support is sought by the political regime.

Introduction

Religious studies specialized in Bektashism, being largely the domain of either Orientalists or religious scholars, remain stuck somewhere between ethnocentrism, empiricism, historicism and literalism, and have thereby brought little distinctive anthropological and sociological analysis to bear successfully on the practical realities and political ideologies of its religious projects. They tend to be affected by what Roland Barthes (1993) called the "virus of essence," very much oriented towards a folklorist paradigm of *Reliktforschung* (Bausinger 1993), concerned with a search for the remains of ancient times. The main interest of such an unanalytical approach, which often piles up uncritically all kinds of trite evidence, seems only to be in correcting either the mistakes of Western specialists or the presumptions of local scholars on one or another point of detail.

This is clearly visible in recent years with the spate of books published in Turkish and in Western languages about Bektashism and Alevism, many of them by Bektashis or sympathizers of Bektashism, for which an approach will remain comprehensible and legitimate as long as it reproduces an apologetic discourse or aims at revealing the essence or the origins of Bektashism. Some may offer new interpretations and political slants which could provide material for lively debates, but their insufficiency is evident, since they obscure the properly political dimensions of the phenomenon and are accompanied by a double naturalization.

To begin with, the Bektashis are usually taken for granted as a community once and for all. After umpteen "preliminary" accounts of studies regarding Bektashism (e.g., Kressing 2002), suggestions for further research are still advocated on the single account of the mutual influences between the everlasting Bektashi and the different religions present in Anatolia or in the Balkans and their development in the course of time. A supposed substratum of folk religion, the highly syncretistic character, or the exclusive heterodox nature of Bektashism are unquestionably assumed, and seen as the continuous reactions to centuries of foreign dominance and hostile outside influences, leading to an immutable inertness and preservation of archaic features deemed to characterize the Bektashis' cultural and religious life. So it is that most specialist studies intend nothing more than to "convey a reasonable general impression that most Bektashis could accept" (Norton 2001).

Moreover, many works regard Bektashism as self-explanatory, expressing "academically" what the Bektashis themselves claim "religiously." They are always declared victims par excellence, systematically oppressed by political or religious authoritarian regimes. On the other hand, they are constantly made out to be the best preservers of both local cultural and universal moral values.

If Islamic brotherhoods have always occupied an important place in social, economic, and political life from the old Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey, throughout Turkish history, the Bektashi have never failed to claim their foundations as exclusive centres of culture and

education. In this way, the Bektashis and other dervishes have come to be seen as the providers of many things. They converted nomads from shamanism to Islam, extended social and emotional support to new converts, particularly the Janissaries, provided food and shelter to travellers, proposed concrete saints for popular piety to focus on, and at the end of the nineteenth century, constituted a source of support to the Young Turks and Turkish nationalism. Many painstaking efforts have been made to show that certain Bektashis "could provide a source of legitimation against an established government" or even "prove the existence of a civil society in the Ottoman Empire" (Faroqhi 1995).

In present days, in most situations, the Bektashis, defined against Sunni Islam, present themselves as essentially modern and democrat, overall defenders of human rights and gender equality. Tolerance, love, and respect for all men and women created in God's image and in whom God manifests himself, regardless of race, religion, or nation, as well as hatred of hypocrisy and inner religion of the heart, help for those in need, kindness, honesty, solidarity, equality, fraternity, freedom, democracy, and the like, all are frequent messages that Bektashis seek to convey as unique humanistic traits of their ideology.

Certain scholars on Bektashism have given their support to or reproduced these essentializing identity and ideological discourses without questioning them. At first, the relative benevolence of Western scholarship towards the Bektashis is partly explained by the sympathy they may inspire because of their politically correct character. The Bektashis answer especially well to certain academic or political as well as cosmopolitan or nationalist expectations, to the point of their claims being largely considered, if not progressive, at least legitimate. Moreover, the example of the Bektashis seems to pertinently illustrate the meeting of Western academic projections with the political interests of a religious movement, a shortcoming denounced with accuracy by Elise Massicard in the case of Alevism in contemporary Turkey (Massicard 2005). Western aca-

demia has often reproduced the Bektashi historical vulgate, making of its protagonists successively the promoters of the nation, the allies of secularity or the spearheads of democracy, perhaps for the same political or ideological reasons as their fellow Bektashis.

Consequently, we must reverse the question and precisely get rid of that apologetic vision of the origin and essence on which many are so enthusiastic, in order to be able to explain why at a given time the community of a religious identity becomes a relevant medium for spiritual, cultural, social, or political mobilization. What the Bektashis hold for their identity and their history must be treated as a discursive ideological construction, for we can reveal their possible situational relevance or their sociological and political determinants. To build a relatively autonomous analysis of Bektashi discourses, it is necessary to study the context that produces such ritualized discourses and practices, to convert the interpretations of the actors into data to be interpreted, and to incorporate in the subject of study their attempts to organize a memory and their strategies to balance or reverse power relationships. Against most available research on Bektashism, it is time to move from the historical account of the dervish units and their symbolic practices towards the analysis of the political and sociological dynamics of their production and reproduction. Far from politicizing and ethnicizing Bektashi issues, a critical and analytical approach must reveal and de-essentialize the hidden ideological undercurrents of discourses mobilizing around religious identity and political projects.

A different picture may result, indeed, from the basic assumption that different types of social organisation and ways of thinking are compatible with the political establishment to varying degrees and react to it in different ways. Within the social sciences, Max Weber already made the difference in worldly success between the Catholic and the Protestant world-view central to his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 2002), whereas anthropology has been constantly interested in the ways that social organisations might be compared, emphasizing that the investigation of

living phenomena are absolutely reliant upon comparing and establishing the differences between relevant groups.[1]

Eventually it is perhaps the modern views of the nation-state and all of its institutionalized mythologies that has confused, erased, desecrated and demolished our understanding of the local definitions and categories of group identity, as articulated in everyday life. Whereas history is regarded as a technique that makes it possible to reveal the origin, and thus the very meaning of the real definition and the true nature of Bektashism, beyond this meaning, what is finally at issue is the inclusion of Bektashism into the nation and into the categories of negotiation and declaration of identity and otherness. In these conditions, many supposedly well established facts concerning historical developments of Bektashi doctrine and organization have to be severely contested and questioned, as resulting from the deliberate use of myths for political, ideological and religious purposes.

_____

[1] A few exceptions apart, only texts written in a dervish milieu contain information about holy men and their doings, and these texts were written not for historical but religious purposes. However, in recent studies by contemporary Turkish scholars, such as the thorough commentaries on the *Vilayet-Name* of Hadji Bektash or the comprehensive study of pre-Islamic motifs in Bektashi legend (Golpinarli 1958; Ocak 1983), a narrative or group of stories will be followed in their passage through different literatures, while the researcher tries to reconstruct the political reasons, in the broadest sense, why the narrative was put together in one fashion in a given context and in quite a different manner somewhere else. After having rediscovered the old truth that many apparently non-political acts have a political dimension, authors attempting these kinds of analyses are no longer concerned with the concrete details of dervish life, but with the great debates of the time, such as the tension between orthodox and heterodox world views or between the mystics and holy men who have accepted integration within mainstream Muslim society and the mystic who refused such an accommodation. This novel type of elaboration is very attractive, particularly given the ordinarily pedestrian proceedings of many Ottoman historians. Yet the danger of arbitrarily attributing to fifteenth-century writers of dervish legends, motivations which stem indirectly from late twentieth-century concerns is not to be minimized. (See Faroqhi 1995.)

A series of historical incidents like the sudden appearance and rapid spread of the Bektashi group of dervishes during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, their transformation into a powerful Sufi order during Ottoman times, and the developments to which Bektashism has been subjected in late Ottoman period as well as in independent Albania and in modern Turkey, still remain issues that require explanations. One of the main reasons that a thorough critical analysis using explanatory insights from historical anthropology and sociology may prove to be important is the possibility it offers to combine the study of Bektashism both as a creed within Islam, as a kind of liberation theology, as a quasi-political movement and partner suited to national movements, and as an ideological power base to reassert political authority. This means that the discussion must deal with the main groups within society in a coherent analytical framework in terms of ideology, organization, government and opposition, something that is often omitted in discussions of Ottoman society.

I do not seek here to reassess the arguments over the available Bektashi material, nor am I able to treat in anything but the most superficial way the fascinating but complex world of Ottoman history. I do believe, however, that we are immensely in need of a comprehensive analytical model to understand the meaning and purpose of such a coherent ideology subsumed under the rubric of religion, a model that must explain indeed a great deal of the diverse religious paths that I believe are characteristic of the modern world today. To this aim, this article, taking the development of master-disciple relationship within Bektashism as a working example, is part of a larger critical and explanatory analysis aimed at revealing that the variations in the course of Bektashism's history probably best exemplify such a transformational model involving many of its complex theological, ideological, cultural, social, and political aspects.

Without being necessarily concerned with genealogy, my position is anthropological, i.e. seeking by a comparative approach to benefit from the discontinuity between the distinct historical vicissitudes of

Bektashism in order to discover typological homologies which may show them to be different realizations of a similar pattern, thus making it possible to discover a structure of common fundamental constraints to a spiritual tendency to meet social, cultural, national, and political perspectives. The search for this common background thus does not erase the differences and their distinctiveness, which an anthropologically informed approach to history rather aims to locate, since it is their reality that only makes it possible to elucidate the homologies.

Heterodox religious movements and the institution of new forms of religion, as in the case of mystical orders of Islam like the Bektashis, are decisive for understanding the history of religions in Southeast European area. Understanding this history in turn could bring forth insights for understanding the current situation in which group identities are being negotiated and redefined. While mystics do not partake in, or directly express class struggle, their heterodoxy, over and beyond the intensity and power of their beliefs or the radical character of their opposition to the established religion, always did and still necessarily does crystallize political, social and cultural discontent which is, in turn, very often either ethnicized along nationalist lines or politicized along power forces or both.

The point is not only that religion as a cultural symbolic system uses political and other resources that show a power base. More importantly, religion, in its own field, has a symbolic structure, which, as Bourdieu put it (Bourdieu 1971), reproduces the distribution of resources and power from the non-symbolic mundane field in a transformed form. To better appreciate this we must arguably begin by attempting to comprehend the underlying significance of the structures of religious representation and mediation, and the implication of their change in support of either cultural orderings or order-questioning projects in human society.

Background

The Bektashi order of dervishes originated as one of the many Sufi movements of Islam that developed in the Middle East from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards (Karamustafa 1994). At this time a number of missionary precursors, known as the Saints of Khorassan, infiltrated Anatolia where they paved the way for dervish groups like the Bektashis. The name of the order is derived from the legendary founder Hadji Bektash, even though, as in many other cases concerning Sufi hagiography, Hadji Bektash was not the actual founder of the order but a patron saint chosen at a later date. He is himself supposed to have come originally from Khorassan in north-east Iran and lived in Anatolia in the second half of the thirteenth century (Melikoff 1998). The description of his *Vilayet-Name* corresponds to that of the typical wandering dervishes known as Iranian Kalenders or Anatolian Abdals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Ocak 1995). The dervishes who followed him are called Abdal and from the very start, he is called "leader" (*pir*) of Anatolian Abdals.

Apparently Bektashism must have started during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a mixture of shamanism inherited from the Turkic tribes of Khorassan with popular beliefs in such a way as to appeal to villagers and the lower class of the Anatolian population. In its region of origin Bektashism must have mingled with local beliefs, and it is not surprising that besides different Sufi doctrines and practices, many religious traditions may have contributed to the development and appearance of Bektashism, including ancient Turkic elements preserving pre-Islamic and non-Islamic beliefs and customs originating in shamanism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity and ancient religions (Birge 1937). In Anatolia, and later in the Balkans, Bektashism encountered further Neoplatonist, Christian and Nestorian influences. Being receptive to many elements of these religions, the Bektashis also incorporated anthropomorphic and cabbalistic doctrines of letter and number symbolism that can be traced to Hurufism (Melikoff 1992:163–74; Popovic

and Veinstein 1995:39–53), combined with an extremist Shiite credo that linked devotion to the divinity of Ali with beliefs in anthropomorphism, the manifestation of God in human form, reincarnation and metempsychosis (Melikoff 2001:97–120).

Such a considerable number of doctrines and practices of heterogeneous origins has lead to heated disputes between specialists over the prevalence of one influence or the other and finally to claims that the Bektashi order did not have a well defined theology, that it could accommodate much local influence, and that its fundamental character is an all-encompassing syncretism (Melikoff 1992; Popovic and Veinstein 1995). Many authors have regarded Bektashism as an external layer over pre-Islamic, Christian or other beliefs.[2] In Turkish scholarship, however, from the very start Western studies were severely criticized for having attributed the specificities of Bektashism to Christian traditions (Koprulu 1926), and Turkish nationalists and folklorists have insisted on the Turkish

---

[2] In the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, early European scholars more particularly found in Bektashism a worship that they linked to crypto-Christian traditions surviving in Anatolia, which would also explain the special missionary interest in their regard (Kieser 2001). Some perceived parallels, among others, to the Christian Trinity and the Twelve Disciples, or between Christian devotion to the Virgin Mary and Bektashi devotion to Fatima, wife of Ali and daughter of Muhammad, have led many commentators to presume that these features were taken from Christianity and simply given a superficial Islamic veneer. Such syncretism is further claimed to have made Bektashism acceptable to many non-Muslims who would have found the austere teachings of Sunni orthodoxy unattractive. Authors holding such views tend to think that Bektashism turned into a refuge for many Christians and that the syncretistic forms of sectarian Islam became an appropriate bridge for the transition from Christianity to Islam. The many traits of Christianity that had been incorporated into Bektashism and other Sufi groups are supposed to have contributed significantly to the shaping of popular Islamic beliefs, thus facilitating the conversion to Islam of the Christian populations in Anatolia and the Balkans, which are assumed to have been previously only superficially Christianized. In Eastern Europe, for instance, the population remained generally faithful to Eastern Christian Orthodoxy, except for some Albanian, Bosnian, and Bulgarian groups, but those who did convert to Islam under the Ottoman Empire

origins of Bektashism. Still, a prevailing syncretism between ancient, pre-Islamic Turkic, and Islamic elements in Bektashi lore is argued again on the account of the encounter of pre-Islamic Turks with "high religions" in Central Asia and the position of the Bektashis at the crossroads of different cultures, while the question of shamanic remainders is claimed to be far less important than has been usually assumed (Ocak 1983). This official version, still current, has been taken over willy-nilly by many Western specialists without questioning its actual relevance.

Another general claim is that the Bektashis preserved many traits of oppositional movements and heretical groups, and shaped them into a synthesis during times of a mutual penetration of Turkic and Byzantine cultural traits. There is clear evidence for the participation of Hadji Bektash himself and his adherents in the Turcoman uprisings against Seljuk rule in 1239–1240, the so-called Babaî revolt (Koprulu 1993:76–77). However, there remains probably very little resemblance between the Turkic beliefs of Hadji Bektash's time in the thirteenth century and the heterodox but sophisticated doctrines taught at the turn of sixteenth century when the Bektashis were organized as an established order of dervishes.

While the complexities of the Bektashi past may never be known precisely, specialist historians appear to agree that they were often tribal or nomadic communities who inhabited that uneasy geographical region between the central power of the Ottomans, on the one hand, and the gradually more orthodox Safavid Iran on the other. While they were exposed to many different currents of Islamic thought, one of the most effective was a form of revolutionary mystical leadership espoused by Iranian Shiism, which gave Kizilbash-Bektashism after this period a distinctive Shiite character. This brought the

_____

chose the Bektashi interpretation of Islam. A tenet of Bulgarian scholarship, in particular, has for a long time been the Bogomil hypothesis (see Gramatikova 2001), which associated the Bektashi ethnically with the Bulgarian component and religiously with the Christian Bogomil heresy, thus presenting them as descendants of either Old Bulgarians or Islamicized Christians.

Kizilbash into violent conflict with the Ottoman state, itself ever more inclined towards Sunnism (Kehl-Bodrogi 1988:42–47). It led to widespread, brutal massacres and forced conversion, a persecution that reached its peak during the time of Sultan Selim I (1512–1520). As a result of mass deportations during this time from Anatolia to the European provinces, the Kizilbash and other heretics integrated into the Bektashi order must have laid the ground for the presence of Shiite and heterodox elements in southeast Europe.

Parallel to the tumultuous Kizilbash developments in the early sixteenth century taking place under the explicit patronage of the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512), a reforming trend was introduced with the appointment of a dervish known as Balim Sultan (1473–1516) to the headship of the order of Bektashis. Formerly leader of an important Bektashi foundation in Dimetoka near Edirne in Thrace, he took up his post at the Bektashi headquarters of Hacibektash Village in Anatolia around the year 1501, taking firm control and introducing a large degree of uniformity, which earned him to be revered as the order's second founding saint. Shortly thereafter, the Bektashis astonishingly established themselves as one of the most influential dervish orders during the Ottoman period from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As colonizers charged with the Turkicization and Islamicization of countries conquered by the first Ottoman sultans (Melikoff 1992:115–137), the Bektashis were not only an instrument of the Ottoman propaganda in these countries, but also enjoyed some political importance in the Ottoman Empire, even imposing themselves on certain weak or mystically inclined sultans, especially when the Bektashis were closely connected with the Janissary troops, the instrument of Ottoman military power. It is considered that the Bektashis constantly encouraged and dominated the Janissaries by traditionally providing their religious guides. This elective affinity between the two groups has been attributed both to the supposed Christian substratum of Bektashism and to the widespread and long-lasting Ottoman practice of conscripting Christian youths

into the Janissary Corps. To what degree, however, the rise of the Bektashi order can be attributed to its links with the Janissaries is a matter still open for investigation, as disputes rage among specialists about the role of Bektashis in the formation of Janissaries as an elite army.

When after repeated revolts and rebellions the Janissary troops were finally dismantled in 1826, with resisting forces being massacred, the Bektashis as well became subject to state suppression and had to move to the margins of the Empire. A hundred years later, in the modern Turkey after World War I, the Bektashi order again suffered state prosecution, until 1925 when it was officially abolished together with the other dervish orders in the newly founded Turkish Republic. These trials and tribulations allowed Bektashism to develop again a non-conformist and antinomian stance, to the point of being often depicted, despite its deep mystical roots, as a progressive current within Islam, close to Westernizing and modernizing trends.

In a very broad generalization, it has been argued that a "historical bipartition" developed between the Bektashis who were traditionally urbanized and educated and the Alevis who lived in villages, the former having spread in the Balkans and the latter remaining in the Anatolian countryside (Melikoff 2001:37–44). Bektashism has therefore often been considered as a kind of "purified" Islam, what an older generation of social anthropologists might have termed the "great tradition" of the urban and organized Bektashi order against the "little tradition" of the rural and less-educated Alevi or Kizilbash. Insisting, however, that modern Alevi and Bektashi groups have much more in common than they have differences, the Alevis themselves will often talk about the "Alevi-Bektashi" creed, culture, or traditions.

In the persecution climate during Ottoman-Safavid wars in the sixteenth century, the isolated Kizilbash-Alevis in rural Anatolia developed traditions, practices, and doctrines that by the early seventeenth century marked them as closed, autonomous religious communities, opposed to all forms of external religion (Kehl-Bodrogi 1988:38–47).

Alevism used to be and to some extent still continues to carry a social stigma in contemporary Turkey, and many Alevis have attempted to hide their backgrounds once they had moved to large cities.

The relationship with the Sunni majority remains one of mutual suspicion and prejudice, dating back to the Ottoman period. Sunnis have accused Alevis of heresy, heterodoxy, rebellion, betrayal and immorality. Alevis, on the other hand, view themselves as the true preservers of authentic Turkish culture, religion, and language. More importantly, Alevism is claimed to be able to adapt to modernity because it is flexible and tolerant, possessing a natural sense of equality and justice. It is much more suitable for the modern world than Sunnism, it is said, for it includes traits supposedly suppressed by the latter, which is therefore not true Islam but an aberration that opposes free and independent thought by its strict legalism, which is seen as reactionary, bigoted, fanatic, intolerant, domineering, and antidemocratic.

More importantly, in the last three decades one has witnessed in Turkey what has been described as an Alevi cultural revival, which has led to the issue of Bektashi or Alevi heterodoxy becoming heatedly politicized and ethnicized (Kehl-Bodrogi 1992; Vorhoff 1995; Shankland 2003; Massicard 2005). Spearheaded by the new, educated Alevi elite, Alevi cultural associations are established, foundations and trusts organized, old Bektashi convents reopened, saints' tombs rebuilt, rituals restored and re-invented. The revival places emphasis on Alevism as a cultural and religious heritage and aims to reconstruct Alevi culture, community, and identity, but also to articulate Alevi collective interests towards the modern state and demand equality with the Sunni majority. In an ongoing process of negotiation where leaders representing different traditions and trends participate, many intellectuals have made contributions towards a systematization of Alevi beliefs, and a flood of new books and journals reflects the efforts to reinvent Alevism.

Certain actors interpret Alevism as the specifically Turkish form of Islam, that is, the "true" Islam rid of Arab influences. Alevism,

according to them, is a Turkish-Anatolian religion combining Islam with elements of Turkish culture. An ethnic dimension is often emphasized, making Alevism into a support for Turkish identity or portraying it as an authentic Kurdish phenomenon. More generally, this view sees Alevism as the authentic expression of an Anatolian culture and civilization, and in contrast to a specific Turkish nationalism sets up an Anatolian cultural mosaic, which includes many other groups allied with the Alevis against Ottoman oppression.

While many have remained Kemalist and continued to hope that the state will officially legitimize the Bektashi order, the new generation has shown a strong tendency to think of Alevism as a political opposition movement rather than a religious tradition. Partly due to the severe repression of the left and partly as a response to the imposition of a conservative brand of Sunni Islam by the state, the young generation joined extreme leftist parties. Working for a radical restructuring of society, they viewed all "reactionary" elements which tried to assimilate them into mainstream Sunni life as enemies, reinterpreting both historical opposition to Sunnism in terms of class struggle and Alevism in a socialist and Marxist idiom that hightlighted Bektashi ideals of equality and traditions of revolt and opposition to the state (Vorhoff 1995). They viewed their religion as a positive political and social revolutionary ideology fighting against oppression and evil on behalf of the poor and marginalized sectors of society. They thus defined Alevism in the tradition of democracy or as a culture of rebellion, based on the Kizilbash revolts under Ottoman Empire or on the massive Alevi engagement to the left in contemporary Turkey. Considering that Ali was the defender of the poor and oppressed, and that Hassan and Hussein were the first martyrs in the cause of the dispossessed, they presented Alevism as having always led the fight for liberation against all tyranny, while reactionary Sunnism served the rich and powerful dominant elites.

Still, most Alevis follow the Kemalist secularist ideology, and as Alevism becomes more secular, the conception of God becomes

almost entirely internalized and conflated with the person in worldly life (Shankland 2003). Thus, the Sufi cry of ecstasy conflating God and the self, regarded as the pinnacle of profound understanding and often associated with a mass of complicated symbolism and secret doctrine, becomes completely routinized, a casual but assertive claim to place the individual and their desires at the centre of the universe. This shift can lead to a profoundly peaceful humanism, and frequently does. It may also lead to a notable phenomenon whereby individuals, or sometimes whole Alevi associations, interpret Alevism as an international culture. They stress only the liberal and humanistic values of Alevism as a world-view, downplaying its religious connotations. In this context they may deny that Alevism is Islamic, and claim that its origins lie in pre-Islamic religious systems, stressing their links to similar groups, all assumed to be fragments of an original community. For these people, being a Alevi is extended to mean something that is common to all humanity, not restricted to a chosen group of believers, and which, in effect, has nothing to do with religion.

On the other side, during the later developments of Bektashism under the Ottoman Empire Albania often served as a kind of exile for the adherents of the Bektashi order, and there is general agreement that after their first noticeable presence in that country in the second half of seventeenth century, Bektashism gradually became more and more deeply rooted in Albania during the end of nineteenth century. Besides the fact that the Bektashis in Albania were spared the suppression that the order had to face in Anatolia and other core areas of the Ottoman Empire after 1826, a reason for its growth in that country may be the specific Albanian religious climate (see Doja 2000b), on which account the establishment of Bektashism in Albania has attracted special attention as a religion supposed to have incorporated many archaic traits and to have developed in Albania an independent character, something which serves as another paradigmatic example of the forces of cultural inertness and political resistance (Kressing 2002). Because of its

both pantheistic and unorthodox character, it has often been assumed that the acceptance of Bektashism in Albania was largely facilitated by the fact that Bektashi syncretism already combined pre-Islamic and Shiite elements with Christian elements.

When Bektashism established itself in Albania, the argument goes that these elements must have been quickly replaced by Albanian popular traditions. Arguably Bektashism came to be perceived as the purest expression of Albanian religiosity and the conservatory of Albanian traditions, to the point of being considered as the only truly national religion, and it is no surprise if Bektashis might have played an important role in the national awaking of Albania in the second half of the nineteenth century. Specialists speak of the "solidification" of a properly Albanian Bektashism in the western confines of Ottoman Empire, with elements of Albanian nationalism being integrated into Bektashi doctrine, especially in the southern parts of the country where most of the Bektashi lodges were situated (Popovic and Veinstein 1996:470).

Whether religious politics was instrumental in mobilizing ideological myths or actual action on the eve of the Albanian independence, the Bektashis were numerically important and politically influential, and Albanian Bektashi dervishes were frequently found in convents outside their own country. Many high Bektashi dignitaries, including sometimes even the supreme leader of the central institution, are often thought to be of Albanian origin. When Turkey decreed the definitive abolition of all the mystical orders in 1925, the Bektashi general headquarters once again took refuge in Albania. At any case it became quite clear that a decisive national Albanian character of the order was further fostered in the course of the twentieth century, when Bektashism became officially recognized by the Albanian state as the fourth legal denominational congregation of the country.

Nonconformist Groupings and Liberation Theology

The Bektashis were one of the many bands of believers seeking to achieve the goal of most Sufis, that is, mystic union with God. When mystical union with God was not quite the goal sought, it was the cult of the miracle-working saints, living or dead, through worship of their tombs, which prevailed in the religious fervour of these heretical and heterodox groupings of dervish religiosity. In these conditions, the intensity of religious life prevailed over its extension, and salvation became a personal affair rather than a relationship with some grace-dispensing agency. Participation in the spiritual community comforted the individual need to oppose or transcend society, raising one temporarily into timeless supernatural experience. Heterodox or heretical movements and mystical orders like Bektashism embodied in themselves the whole *mysterium fascinans* of the age, the revealed, esoteric, mystical, and emotional religion. Their function was to mediate the inner aspect of religious experience.

Regarding their organization, broadly speaking and aside from the peculiarities that may be accounted for by the political and economic systems of the countries in which they spread, the initial structures specific to their communities are suggestive of the early Christian groups of the first centuries, as related in the Acts of Apostles and the Epistles of St Paul. Early Sufi and Bektashi groups were linked by enthusiasm, common devotions, and methods of spiritual discipline, with the aim of stripping the soul and eliminating the self to attain a vision of divine reality. They were therefore integrated by spirit and aim rather than by any formal organization, and were in fact very loose organizations, more or less anarchical, closed, and secret groups or circles of initiates who showed no interest in sharing any collective discipline or dogma. In the early stages of the Sufi movements, until about the thirteenth century, the master is not mentioned at all (Trimingham 1971:167), even though the respect for the spiritual freedom of each member neces-

sitated regulations for the common life. The idea of a spiritual
community was formed in such groups as a basis for their common
life, and the master remained essentially a guide in spiritual mat-
ters, but not an autocrat of a convent, allegedly acting as an inter-
mediary between the believers and God.

   Hadji Bektash himself, for instance, led a life of a wandering
hermit during most of his life and did not seem to have been a
prominent character in religious matters. He did not even seek to
found any order or to have disciples during his life (Melikoff
1998). He remained the eponym of an order he did not found him-
self, and was quite unconscious of the impact he was going to
have, his success being achieved after his death and in spite of
himself. Although Bektashism had spread over a wide area and
gained many adherents, it is considered that "before 1500 both the
order and its teachings developed in a random fashion." In addi-
tion, specialists are led to consider that "this vagueness of belief
was paralleled by lack of uniformity in their organization," even
though they normally attribute this character to the supposed
Bektashi all-encompassing syncretism and the "readiness to incor-
porate a wide range of beliefs and practices, which made it difficult
to define precisely what the order stood for" (Norton 2001:171).

   My position, following innovative approaches within the field
regarding early Sufism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Tri-
mingham 1971; Karamustafa 1994), is rather to consider Bektash-
ism first as a reaction against the external rationalization of religion
in law and systematic theology. Essentially, like other early Sufi
groupings, in its earlier developments during the thirteenth and
fourteenth centuries, Bektashism corresponded to the sphere of reli-
gious experience which developed from the common experience of
both spiritual knowledge and suffering, while running parallel and
often in opposition to the orthodox institutions and the mainstream
of Islamic consciousness derived from prophetic revelation.

   Making deliberate use of altered states of consciousness, such as
ecstatic dance (*sema*) and recitation (*zikr*), which are still a common

feature of Bektashi practices, Bektashism must have aimed first at spiritual freedom whereby intrinsic and intuitive human spiritual senses would be allowed full scope, over and against instituted religion as based on authority and legalistic morality. It must have been an assertion of a person's right to pursue a life of contemplation, seeking contact with the ultimate source of being and reality. In reaction to the expression of religion as a communitarian matter, Bektashism was a subjective expression of personal religion, directed at an individual and direct experience of the presence of God. Finding inspiration in interpretations revealing the "inner meaning" behind the literal sense of sacred texts, the craving for spiritual satisfaction led these early Sufi Bektashis into a non-conformist religious experience where there was no room for a clear-cut separation between humans and the divinity.

Legalistic orthodox religion fulfilled a social far more than a spiritual function and had little to offer to human spiritual needs, being not concerned with the exercise of a pastoral office and having neither the means nor the agencies for emotional outlet and few for free intercession. In Sunnism, like other formal religious prescriptions, the commandments and rules regarding disciplinary practices, such as praying, fasting, forbidden food and other austerities belong to the Law which the followers are forced to obey by complying with formalities and dogmas. In Bektashism, like other early dervish groups, the initial dogged individualism was reinforced by initiation into a claimed higher degree of knowledge and awareness, for a follower no longer to be bound by the formalistic austere demands and prohibitions of the Islamic faith comprehended within the orthodox, codified, and systematic theology such as propounded by the legalist Sunni dogma.

The claim of having learned and understood the essence and core of religion led Bektashis to personal interpretations of the doctrines and traditions. Claiming to be enlightened enough to follow the Way by obeying the voice of conscience they could thereby proceed alone by carrying out the religious commandment with a tendency to reduce salvation and rebirth to a purely internal oper-

ation, to the point of denying the need for rituals. They actually rejected any external display or collective worship for their religion, thus repudiating especially the external forms of Islam and its five pillars. For Bektashis, worship is a secret affair, peculiar to initiates who are taught that inner purity and sincerity are more important than outward ablution and ritual. They firmly believe that it is essential not to unveil the secret, that they are responsible to God and not to their other fellow humans, that sin involves doing things surreptitiously rather than in public, and so on. The premise that underlies the distinctive character of the Bektashis is the purification of the human heart and spirit, which is the fundamental purpose of all religious rites. They claim that this purified state is attainable without following either the Sunni or the Shiite forms of worship.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the Bektashis are systematically criticized for both their fanaticism and their liberalism, insofar as their heterodoxy resided in the non-observance of canonical rituals. They do not practice at set times the five daily prayers (*namaz*) or the ritual ablutions (*abdes*), nor do they observe the fast of Ramadan or believe in the necessity of pilgrimage to Mecca. They interpret the Koran in an esoteric, allegoric, and symbolic rather than literal manner and appeal to Koranic authority rather less than do most other dervish groups. Appropriate verses are read at weddings and funerals, but otherwise they are happier to listen to the verses of their poets conveying their own responses to the sacred texts. On a more formal level, they are criticized for their tolerance of alcoholic beverages and the presence of women during ceremonies, as well as for indulging in orgies or sexual licenses and of all the slanders to which eccentrics of all sorts have been victims during the centuries (Müller 1967).

In the face of economic, social and ideological upheavals, the most radical mystics always adopted attitudes cultivating distance not simply from legalist religion but from mainstream society as well. Their watchword was the desire to be outsiders in a world they claimed to be corrupt and led astray by bad guides. Mystics

of this sort were not simply opponents of the ruling classes, they were intent on going against social norms as well. Alternatively, whenever faced with drastic social change, people will systematically turn from the worship of a transcendental, orthodox God towards an internalized sense of spiritual self that is far less reliant upon the formalized framework of traditional religious ritual such as that exemplified by legalist Sunni Islam. This is, of course, an extremely abrupt summary of a particular inclination that appears to have been active among the Bektashis and was especially emphasized in the course of history each time they were subjected to political state oppression.

This must have happened specifically in the early phase of Bektashism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, during the Ottoman-Safavid wars in the first half of sixteenth century, after the suppression of Janissary troops in the first half of nineteenth century, or after the abolition of the dervish orders in the first half of the twentieth century (Doja 2006a). It is this emphasis that has made it possible for the Bektashis in Anatolia to achieve a close sense of identity successively with the Young Turk movement, with the Albanian national awakening in the second half of nineteenth century (Doja 2006b), and with early Turkish nationalism in the first quarter of twentieth century. The same emphasis must have also interacted with more recent nationalist ideals and left-wing "progressive" political philosophy, which are even more unstable, as has been often the case with the Alevi revival in contemporary Turkey, or with the "democratic" processes of post-communist transformations in contemporary Albania.

Among groups which possess a radicalized interpretation of the social world, one that relies upon, and feeds off, the communist ideal of the inherently illegitimate state, this emphasis may become less a route to toleration than one of hardened bitterness over the perceived lack of respect that is paid to the person in modern society. Indeed, if a group or organisation both lose faith in the state and respect for divine authority, they may turn more easily to

imposing their ritual practices and anti-authoritarian ideas into the service of a revolutionary ideology. Viewed in this light, the religious experience of the Bektashis have presented recognizable characteristics of a liberation theology, while the structure of their groups corresponded more or less to the type of religious organization conventionally known as charismatic groups.

Master and Disciple

One of the functions of religion as a cultural system is to serve as a mediating representation between powerless earthly creatures and an all-powerful God located in heaven. Mediation may make it possible for the heavenly divinity to intercede on behalf of humans on earth. The assumption here is that different covenantal structures of divine mediation must correspond to specific stages in the development of Bektashism and Sufism. The following assumption is that it is possible to gain a different meaning if a mediating hierarchy is to be found in the conceptualization of the divinity or in the organization of the worldly human society.

The manuals produced as guides for initiation may be somehow useful for elucidating the theological philosophy and the social experience of Bektashi religiosity. Some sections in the manuals are particularly significant in their emphasis on a restricted hierarchy, from which it could be clearly inferred how questions of religious hierarchy and authority are dealt with. They successively describe the ranks of leader, teacher or guide (*pir, murshid* and *rehber*), and the different ranks of followers (*talib* and *murid*), which resemble each other closely with the importance of submitting to a master being stressed throughout (Kehl-Bodrogi 1988:104–12).

Bektashi discourses, as other Sufi apologetics, assert that their Islam is more than religion and articulate its techniques and master-disciple relations as reflections of those of God to humans. However, a critical examination of this relationship, conceptualized externally in terms of the societal, personal, and ritual meanings it presumes,

can be an outstanding opportunity for approaching religious conceptions in their ideological and political implications. Indeed, if a difference is claimed in the case of Bektashism which for the disciple must lay in the accessible presence of the master as the intermediary between humans and God, while in the case of orthodox Islam or Christianity the relationship is claimed to be inaccessible and no intermediary is available, these assertions are commonly met with a more social or political ontology.

Such assertive claims are nevertheless taken for granted and never questioned even in the most sophisticated analyses. A case in point is Frances Trix's sociolinguistic study of the meanings of, and the means for transmitting, Islamic spirituality and worldview, from the master and spiritual guide (*murshid*) to his follower, aspirant and disciple (*talib*) (Trix 1993). I have argued elsewhere that in spite of her sophisticated conceptual framework and methodology, Frances Trix, "going native" in the very conditions of her specifically lasting and "faithful" experience as a Bektashi *talib* herself, could not but view the relationship in this way (Doja 2004). The learning framework and the position of disciple offered her a vague yet all-encompassing scheme in which every narrative and adage must be placed according to theological explanations. In addition, the teaching process Trix described was not an over-common occurrence in daily life but rather part of those rare instances when one is faced publicly to produce the type of intellectual explanation which daily life does not normally call for.[3] Indeed, this is nothing other than what Maurice Bloch calls the expansion of ideology into something which misleadingly looks like an interpretation of the world (Bloch 1985).

Normally, Sufi and Bektashi groups are inspired by the ideal of a community of the spiritually pure who are gifted with the graces and powers that knowledge is supposed to procure, and who are

---

[3] The same Albanian Islamic master teaching "spiritual discourse" to anthropologist Frances Trix, has published a number of intellectual speculations on

called upon to dispense these benefits around them. A dividing line splits followers into two classes, depending on whether they are capable or worthy of receiving some or all of the gifts of grace and spirit, some having acquired them and possessing them fully, while others aspire to partake of them, or are just at the beginning.

Since all the stipulated moral prescriptions could not be observed literally and to the same extent by all, early Sufi and Bektashi groups only demanded that the best of the followers be strict in their practices. They were obliged, therefore, to resort to a sort of dual ethics, prescribing two distinct systems of observances and rules of conduct. A more liberal set of rules was conceded to the weakest and most imperfect, the seekers or followers, designated as disciples (*murids* or *talibs*). Another, much stricter code, was reserved for the initiated elite, also known as the perfects or saints (*eren* or *të mbërrimët*), who belonged to the superior class of the elect few. Each of the religious groups, and each of the communities

_____

Bektashism (Rexhebi 1970), which have also inspired a number of other area specialists (Clayer 1990, 2002). But whatever such patented super-informants like Baba Rexhebi may tell us, we must not loose sight of the fact that what we are observing is exactly what they can manage to do with their ideological schemes when their prestige is at stake. This also clarifies the apparent elective affinity between anthropologists and informants who are themselves somehow marginal to the culture that is being studied, even though, or perhaps because, they are in a representative position. One thinks, for example, of Marcel Griaule's or Victor Turner's famous accounts of their long exegetical sessions with Ogotemmeli and Muchona respectively (Griaule 1948; Turner 1967). The marginal figure is more likely to ponder on what is going on and why, precisely because his or her partial detachment from the centre of things. This is, if not a problem, at least gives pause for thought. What is created in this kind of encounter is a kind of intermediate ground between cultures, "the beginnings of a hybrid, cross-cultural object or product," a "liminal world," as Paul Rabinow (1977:153) describes it in his own account of fieldwork. If there is systematically a general concern to provide the anthropologist an official or respectable version of the facts, this undoubtedly reveals something of the nature of cultural self-awareness as well as of the politics of fieldwork.

of which they were composed, contained members of both sorts, more or less clearly grouped into two classes, the larger of the two, the followers, auditors or adepts (*muhibs*), being organized by and subordinated to the other, the elected few, perfects and fathers (*dervishes*). Thus, at the top there were the saints, almost sacred; below them were the sinners, or at the least, the profane, the lay people still under the sway of the world and its temptations.

The opposition between the elect and the followers is akin to those between the elder and the younger, the strong and the weak, the perfect and the imperfect, the spiritually accomplished and the novices, the master and the disciple. However, the distance between the two groups should not be exaggerated, at least for the beginnings of Bektashism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries or for the later, difficult periods of recurring persecution. Aside from the fact that followers and seekers were supposed to have received both the faith and knowledge when they entered the religion, they were acknowledged as true believers and were an integral part of the Bektashi order on a par with the elect. The disciples became adepts, as the "followers" became "believers," and the latter became "perfect" dervishes after given proof of their strict observance and wisdom.

According to Sufi Bektashi conceptions, God is supposed to be present in everyone and the potential for perfection is present in every human being, insofar as for all Reality (*hakikat*) there is no existence but in the Truth (*hakikat*), which is in fact God (*al-Hakk*). In the theory of the "oneness of being,"[4] it is required of individuals to become aware of their state as ultimately emanated, and to understand the community of their essence with the whole of creation. They may thereafter make their way back towards their creator, towards their origins, towards the state of ultimate perfection and truth. God may be approached through the improvement

---

[4] Experienced as one Reality, for the Muslim mystic this is the world's foundation and its subsistence. Therefore everything in the world is nothing other than God, and the created world is only an appearance. This view of the created world

of oneself. God is incarnated in humans when they have reached the highest stages of perfection, which is obtained only by the sacrifice of self, in order to better free one's body and to be integrated into the divinity or rather to integrate divinity into the self.

It is through the elect, however, thanks to the contacts and concrete ties created and maintained with them through the mediation of spiritual knowledge (*marifet*), that seekers and followers formed and strengthened the bonds that attached them to the body of their religion, while they at the same time acquired merits and edified themselves. In addition, for the masters of the Bektashi Way, like in early Sufism, the mystical tendency became highly dangerous as an individual experience, since there can be mystic Ways, the Sufi argument goes, to other gods than God. Hence the necessity of guidance under an experienced director was insisted on. In order to go through the gateways of spiritual growth, and to experience the divine Reality and ultimate Truth and penetrate to their inner significance, one needed a guide, a spiritual master (Birge 1937:102–3).

In most Bektashi narratives, indeed, the point is clearly made that "the *murshid* is the way through which the student reaches God" (Trix 1993:123). This is simply because the master has already acquired the perfection stage of "the perfect human being" (*insan-i kamil*) (Birge 1937:96–97). For Bektashis, if each human being is a mosque, each human face is the face of perfection (*vech-i kamil*) of one's master. In him the outer signs of perfection are matched by inner perfection, and the dual, inseparable personality

---

seems to have encouraged a quest for "hidden" connotations that was joined with an emphasis on the mystic pantheism of the oneness of being (*vahdet-i vucud*). As one of the most illuminating expressions of Muslim heterodox mysticism, the theory professed that ultimate truth and perfection can lie only in a pantheistic synthesis. Especially the existential monism of the theory, to the extent that there is no radical distinction between the Creator and his Creation and that everything exists within a single reality, earned Sufism the charge of having exchanged monotheism for pantheism, drawing strong condemnations from the orthodox doctors of religion.

of Muhammad and Ali was believed by the Bektashis to be represented on earth by every master, who is to the follower what the Prophet is to the community of Muslims. For this reason, the follower is taught to owe a greater allegiance to his master than to his own parents, and the Bektashis equal ritual prayer (*namaz*) with paying visits to one's master (Norris 1993:97), who was thereby entitled to great veneration.

Therefore, to the extent of his status of perfection, the master is supposed to have already acquired the capacity to communicate directly with God, which the disciple still lacks. God could respond to the master if called upon, but not yet to the disciple. To be sure, the disciple is a "faithful," but he or she is still a follower and a seeker, encouraged to pass through the gateways of ultimate truth-reality, and in his or her turn, to become perfect and reach his or her own union with God.

Historically, the first meaning of "faith" was a virtue of loyalty. In the relation to divinity as well, as I have shown elsewhere (Doja 2000a), faith always implied a loyalty to the conventions and fidelity to commitments. In this case, faith was not a belief in a theological *credo*, but the confidence that the faithful showed to the power of god. It was a kind of initial contract, where a distinction can always be made between the confidence that humans place to the "credit" of gods and the favours that gods are supposed to send to humans. These are the two movements in opposite directions which define two complementary fields of exchange. Their automatism is thus less magical than legal, because they imply constraints like a pact, at least like that type of implicit pact that Marcel Mauss studied in his essay on *The Gift* as "the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies" (Mauss 1950).

The inclusion of faith within the field of discourse and exchange makes it possible to grasp that the act of faith always encompasses a confidence in a reward. To believe is to engage his or her own confidence in an act of faith expressed towards a god, but on the provision of a return. It is a kind of concrete stake and security

token, which also engages personal feelings. It is this concept which is then invested with a mental attitude and an "interior state," in Evans-Pritchard's terms (Evans-Pritchard 1965), that is, the confidence which belongs to oneself and which one offers up to a high and powerful god. It is this relation that constitutes a bond of faithfulness, which is necessarily accompanied by an act of confidence, with the certainty to receive a return in the form of a favour awarded in the form of divine inspirations.

Now for the Bektashis, the experience of spiritual learning is achieved by means of the master as a communication process with the spiritual knowledge. Had this process led to the possession of the mystical gnosis (*marifet*), as is normally expected to result in the very "faithful" sense from the internalizing experience as an "act of faith," the novice would be sanctified as a potential saint, having achieved a mystic union with God. But the union, involving divine inspiration, is not possible without progressive communication through different manifestations of divinity, split into a series of hierarchical emanations. The most accessible of these is, in fact, none other than one's own master, who appears to be, not so much a simple intermediary between humans and God, but rather God himself in a different guise.

Of course, in Bektashi practice, neither religious leaders nor their followers justify their behaviour by direct reference to their sacred books or manuals nor, indeed, is there ever any mention that there are categories outlined theoretically which must be found in the local community. Even though the Bektashi masters appear regularly to possess some kind of manual, they never bring it into religious ceremonies. They rather absorb aspects of Bektashi religious philosophy that they find interesting in their own time and recount them in the course of commentaries, as they do with song, poetry, and narrative in the mode of parable. The great weight of the inculcation, teaching and perpetuation of Bektashi religious thought lies almost exclusively with the local religious leaders themselves and the oral tradition that supports them. To illustrate, a well-known

narrative is frequently told where the disciple looking for his master went to his house, looked for him down twisting streets, then inside another house, and finally up on the flat roof. When he did not see him on the roof either, he jumped off, and his master caught him in his arms (Trix 1993: 158).

Each practicing leader has an oral account which explains his past, within which is often a mention of his spiritual ancestors and teachers attending the lodge of Hadji Bektash and also of his own ability to perform miracles. The immediate reason for the religious leaders' accepted authority is that they are accepted as having been sanctioned by Hadji Bektash and his successors. These claims are supported by myths and, from a wider perspective, are embodied within a cosmology which assumes that some may be closer to God than others. They express this by saying that they are people of "charisma" (*keramet*), which is best understood in this context as "the ability, given by God, to perform miracles." Independently of any other consideration, "charisma" is a mark of God's favour and places the leaders in the rank of ultimate "truth-reality" (*hakikat*), where one is in contact with God, at liberty to perform miracles and control the material world.

On a more technical level, as in Sufism generally, the claims are supported by explicit hierarchical series or chains of initiation (*silsila*) that connect the masters ultimately to God. In the developed series the chain of authority includes an unbroken historical line of masters and disciples, through which they are connected to the founder of the order, their patron saint Hadji Bektash. This unbroken chain of spiritual revelation and power continues the link that leads from the order's founder himself to earlier saints, to the Imams, to Hussein, whose master was Ali, whose master was the Prophet Muhammad, whose master was the Angel Gabriel, and which thus ends in God. If God's manifestation (*mazhar*) is Ali, who shows himself under various forms, and if Ali is the source of the divine light, Bektashi poetry and narrative offer numerous witnesses to the belief that Ali was fused with the various Prophets, that he appeared

under the aspect of the Twelve Imams and that he showed himself as Hadji Bektash, who "carried the sign of Ali in the palm of his hand." In other words, Hadji Bektash as well was God in a different guise. Building on this continuity, Bektashi followers come into relation with God through devotion to their personal master.

Clearly, if there are mediators between humans and God, such as the Sufi and Bektashi master (*murshid*), for instance, or a priest or sacrificer, they act as representatives of the secular congregation and place themselves on a higher plane than the latter but in a position of inferiority with respect to the deity. However, the mediational structure may also be of another type, and claim to be the negation of hierarchy of any sort. In this model, the initiative is entirely in the hands of the divinity, which may manifest itself in a number of hierarchized emanations but without any mediation, by dispensing the gifts of its grace directly to the faithful, with believers receiving immediate inspiration. Charisma, divine grace, and spiritual knowledge touch them without the help of any intermediary, and is in no way affected by the degree of effectiveness of any ritual or specific expertise performed or controlled by a mediating priest or master.

Following a structural hypothesis suggested by Edmund Leach (1972), I have argued elsewhere that a crucial factor for understanding the communication between humans and God lies in the fact that the conceptualization of a hierarchical model of religious mediation corresponds to the dogma of orthodox faiths, while the conceptualization of a model in which all hierarchies are denied, in its real embodiments, is closely linked to millenarian and mystical beliefs and to the development of heresies and heterodoxies (Doja 2000a), such as those related to Bektashism. The former model may well support an established, hierarchical power, whereas the latter corresponds to an oppressed or deprived minority, seeking justification for its revolt against the established authorities.

According to this model, the establishment of a political hierarchy in a given society goes hand in hand with the introduction of

a unified conception of divinity, that is, a pure monotheism within the theological system. On the other hand, a manifest hierarchical conception of the divinity goes together with egalitarian politics. The conception of a relational equality, derived from the idea that people are equal in their relations with the divinity, is effectively present alongside an ideology of substantial egalitarianism among human beings.

This brings us to our main assumption regarding the character of Bektashism. Insofar as the master is perceived as "God himself in a different guise," the system of beliefs and practices related to Bektashism is a liberation theology, which makes it possible to meet social, cultural and national demands. In turn, when the master is perceived as a kind of priest, an "intermediary between a disciple and God," Bektashism becomes an orthodox ideology aiming at the establishment of a political hierarchy.

Organizational Transformations

The normal relationship of a disciple to his or her master has often been described as a spiritual sonship, but the relationship implied by these terms in different stages of development came to be entirely different. In an extended Bektashi adage, it is asserted that a disciple is one who "knows that he or she does not know" (Trix 1993:86). This refers, of course, to more than facts, for when Bektashis in general speak of knowledge, they mean spiritual knowledge, that is, the process of coming closer to God. For the lowly Bektashi disciple, however, what is lacking is a framework for understanding what is going on. In addition, the Bektashi goal for the disciple "to know what one does not know," also implies, as Trix showed, an acknowledgment that one is unable to predict sequences and find meaning within a new situation.

In other words, to use Goffman's terms (Goffman 1974), *knowing one's lack of knowledge* is a sort of suspension of the frame of experience. In the interaction with the master, this lack of a frame of reference, this lack of knowledge, is reflected in features that are often characterized as differential strategies between negative and

positive experiences, in an attempt to both maintain and reduce social distance. Thus, if the Bektashi tradition expects and promotes this suspension of a cognitive framework for the disciple, its purpose should be the actualization of the relationship with his or her master, a kind of "negative experience" allowing the reintegration into a new frame. In Bektashi thinking, the way to achieve the spiritual goal is understood with the help of the master, who serves as "the only way to a reintegration, thus the *knowing of one's not knowing* cuts one loose and focuses trust on the *murshid*" (Trix 1993:103).

Based on Bektashi beginnings in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the evidence from subsequent times of political oppression, it is generally assumed that the continual guidance of individual disciples has made the masters appear quite naturally as the medium between God and humans. However, the overriding importance of the system of the master-disciple relationship, which became the very foundation of the Sufi orders, is that it implies a shift in morality. The institutionalization of the master-disciple hierarchy brought forth the organization of what cannot be properly organized, that is, personal mystical life and individual creative freedom, which are now fettered and subjected to conformity and collective experience. I believe this process must correspond to the radical change that took place in the Bektashi environment after the organization of the order in the sixteenth century, which may also be discerned to repeat itself each time after recovering from periods of persecution.

In times of consolidation of the order, the masters would deny the right of the individual, not merely to seek a Way by trial and errors but even under any guidance. Thus, the master would become an exclusive mediator, like a priest, who allotted spiritual tasks according to a mechanical ritual process, whereas the initiation of a disciple involved the surrender of his or her will to that of the master. It was the task of the master to judge the personality and capability of his followers, to instruct them in the teachings of the order and at appropriate stages to reveal to them the order's

secrets. The follower who had received instruction and was deemed worthy by his or her master was initiated into the Bektashi order by means of the special ritual considered to have been part of the organizational reforms introduced by Balim Sultan in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Members of the order could attend the ceremony welcoming a new member up to and including their own rank, but such gatherings were not open to those to whom a master had not yet revealed the secrets relating to that level (Norton 2001:174). Thus, although Bektashism, like Sufism in general, is clearly the embodiment of mystical experience, its distinctive feature has become the insistence that "knowledge" of the divine is only transmitted through the master.

Therefore, the idea of the disciple seeking "to know what one does not know" could be considered, with Trix, as a strong indication that it is only through the master that light and assistance may be gained (Trix 1993:89). Every act of knowing brings forth a world, and all knowing is effective action, since the power of all discourse is the potential to disclose a world. Therefore, in Ricoeur's terms, "to understand is not to project oneself into the text; it is to receive an enlarged self from the apprehension of proposed worlds which are the genuine object of interpretation" (Ricoeur 1981:182–83). This view squares well with the Bektashi vision of spiritual knowing as the action of drawing closer to God. In Bektashi terms the "enlarged self" includes the spiritual realm.

Through the immersion into mystical Sufi ideas, the image of God that is experienced by the Bektashis through their membership in the ritual activities becomes, from the theological point of view, highly sophisticated. A layered concept of divinity with various levels present God, in effect, not so much as transcendent but rather in a more immanentist fashion than is generally assumed and relies on the Bektashi internalized perception of the divine. Bektashis believe that within all people, their soul is a part of God. They are aware of the Koranic account of creation, but they most frequently describe the way human beings gained a soul as coming

directly from God. Some see the whole of creation, animate and inanimate, as "emanating from a single light identified with God" (Zarcone 2005:41). Others recount that God gave life (*xhan*) to each of the creatures he created on earth, but when he found that he had nothing with which to reflect himself in them, he gave them all a piece of himself (*ruh*), which does not die on the death of the mortal body, but returns to God (Shankland 2003:118).

In the centre of Creation, there seems to be a high-level God who gives humans his Light, whereas a lower level God is emanated from that high-level God and humans in turn are emanations of that emanation. Every human being on earth is an emanation of God on that lower level, which seems to be a kind of astral, shining or spiritual self to whom humans may direct their prayers. This spiritual self improves itself through different incarnations and different social positions, in order to develop into higher degrees of perfection, of which the final stage and supreme goal is to become a "perfect human being" (Cornell 2006), who must achieve union with God, just as did Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad and Ali, among others.

While the higher level is beyond comprehension and reach, and human influence remains doubtful, the ultimate truth of God can be intelligible to humans on earth, which corresponds to the highest degree of initiation in Bektashism. If Aristotle's most perfect human fulfilment lies not in moral action but in intellectual contemplation, in the context of Bektashism, this would imply that the morally advanced initiate follows the way (*tarikat*), while the "perfect human being" is united with God through contemplation and thereby has risen beyond the earlier stages to truth-reality (*hakikat*). The main goal of Sufi Bektashi practice is precisely this level of full perfection where humans on earth are completely united with their spiritual self and fully initiated. Therefore, the spiritual self seems to be the voice of conscience guiding humans on their way to perfection and thus allowing them to reach union with God.

Yet, instead of speaking of an "enlarged self," Bektashis speak of a "loss of self," of a "death before dying." The Bektashis may explain the literal meaning by saying that the interrogations they undergo by their masters is parallel to that which they will receive from God after death (Shankland 2003:128). In a language strongly reminiscent of Chapter 3 of St John's Gospel, they also say that a Bektashi is born first from his mother and then born again into a new world from his master; otherwise he cannot enter the kingdom of the heart (Norton 2001:173). Taken together, this would mean that by dying to this world and its values one may be reborn by entering the kingdom of heart in a mystical union with God, which coincides with a "lost self," dissolved and annulled in order to reach the "enlarged self" of ultimate unity.

In addition, these seemingly contradictory metaphors should not mask the relevance of Ricoeur's insistence that any event of interpretation is a hermeneutical appropriation (*Aneignung*), which basically "means to make one's own what was initially alien" (Ricoeur 1981: 185). What the disciple "makes his or her own" is not something mental, nor it is some design supposedly hidden behind spirituality. Rather, it is the projection of a world, the proposal of a mode of being in the world, which the master discloses by means of non-ostentatious references. Far from the idea that the master, who already masters his own being in the world, projects the *a priori* of his own understanding and injects it into the disciple, the appropriation is rather a process by which the revelation of new modes of being and new forms of life gives the disciple new capacities for knowing. If the reference of discourse is the projection of a spiritual world closer to the world of God, then it is not in the first instance the disciple who is projected in this world. The disciple's capacity for projection is only broadened by receiving still new modes of being from the master.

Therefore, in the Bektashi vision of spiritual knowing, understood as an action of drawing closer to God, it seems more appropriate to see fundamentally an experience of spiritual growth in which one receives but does not control or direct. The Bektashi expres-

sion of "loss of self" partly reflects the precariousness of trusting the Unknown, as well as the reframing and restructuring of the experience that can ensue. In turn, the master nurtures the relationship with the disciple but always with a clear sense of who has the knowledge. This concept of knowledge becomes actually a prime source of power, whose potential for understanding social relations has been shown by Foucault (1980). Henceforth, subjection to the arbitrary will of the perfects turned the follower into a spiritual slave, not of God, but of a human being, albeit one of God's elect.

To illustrate, in a well-known narrative the master commanded his disciple to swim across the water with him, holding onto his collar and all the time saying *Pir Hakk!* "patron saint," here meaning, "the master is the truth." The disciple, however, revealed his lack of trust in the master by reconsidering halfway across the water and calling out to God instead, at which point he began to drown (Trix 1993:121). In his explanation, the master Baba Rexhebi made it clear for his disciple Frances Trix that it was the master's place to call out to God for both of them. As for the disciple, his place was to call out only to the master.

For Bektashis, obedience must be total and unquestioning, for failure to obey the master is a failure to keep the oath sworn at initiation. It is certainly not accidental therefore that in the literature it is over and over again reported that one or another unworthy and unscrupulous master will be tempted to exploit his power for personal advantage. Specialists may notice the fact, but they simplistically qualify that when such abuse occurred it was condemned by the Bektashis themselves and outsiders alike (Norton 2001:173). Such occurrences are considered as occasional aberrations from the generally assumed humanistic characteristics of Bektashism, much the same as individual corruption is often assumed to have destroyed the "progressive" role of one or another Bektashi convent, which on occasion turned into a hotbed of conspiracy (Shankland 2003).

Important changes, however, were taking place in the very meaning of Sufi terms as well. By degrees, "awareness," "contemplation" and "meditation" acquired new meanings, until they came to signify,

in the orders, participation in the being of the object of contemplation (Trimingham 1971:146–48), the union and participation in God developing into that in "Muhammad-Ali," in Hadji Bektash, and finally in one's master, living or dead. Hence, the meaning of terminology degenerated from a relationship to God to a relationship to a dead saint or living master, who now became the medium between God and human beings. For example, "mental concentration" (*tawajuh*) came to mean the spiritual assistance rendered by the saint to his devotees or by the master to his disciple. In this exercise, like the attempt to contact the spirit of the dead saint, the master concentrated upon the disciple, picturing the spinning of a line of linkage between his pineal heart and the heart of the disciple through which power was supposed to flow. At the same time, the disciple concentrated upon becoming a passive vessel for the inflowing power of the master.

In certain instances among the rather few anthropological approaches to Bektashism there is also a focus, even if somewhat timidly, on the sophistication of the Bektashi ideas, which present God as being immanent and transcendent at the same time (Shankland 2003:113–16), but, surprisingly, one has been unable to consider ideological change and authoritarian agency in such matters. Omniscient authority became a vital conception of God among the Bektashis, when religious leaders came to reflect God's authority on earth. While in heterodox Bektashism the person may find God within themselves, from the orthodox theological point of view this is regarded as unacceptable, because it permits the person to become part of God himself. Therefore, the sense of a transcendental God must necessarily rely upon the creation of social control and order by means of an institutional Bektashism.

The transformation in the conception of God is profoundly intertwined with the mediating function of the religious leaders within the local community, and indeed may be said to be essential to their distinctive means of achieving social control and gaining political power within the traditional setting. In effect, the internal-

ized God is now held to be a reflection of an omnipotent, omniscient, transcendent being. Thus, God may be fearsome, cast supplicants into heaven or to hell at a wish, and sanction particular people through a sign to be leaders to the rest of the community. Indeed, it is the presumption that the religious leaders are in some way qualitatively different from other people by virtue of their closer contact with God which allows them to mediate within the community. That they occupy an intermediary position between God and their followers, that they are God's spokesmen and have the capability to help others contact the Divine is important not simply as a key element in ritual but also becomes the rationale of their authority to mediate in the worldly life.

Religious scholars normally outline three successive stages of development in Sufism, from asceticism (*zuhd*) to mysticism (*tasavvuf*) and then to corporatism (*tarikat*). Trimingham characterized these three stages, respectively, as the individual's surrendering to God, their surrendering to a rule, and finally their surrendering to a person (Trimingham 1971:102–4). In the first stage, the master and his circle of pupils were frequently itinerant, having minimum regulations for living a common life, leading to the formation of undifferentiated, unspecialized lodges and convents. Methods of contemplation and exercises for the inducement of ecstasy were individualistic and communal. In the second stage, the transmission of a doctrine, a rule and a method corresponded to new types of collectivistic methods for inducing ecstasy. Deriving from professed illuminates, the development of continuative teaching schools of mysticism (*silsila-tarikat*) disciplined the mystical spirit within organized Sufism and made it conform to the standards of tradition and legalism. In the third stage, the introduction and transmission of allegiance toward the doctrine and the rule formed new foundations for numerous "corporations" or "orders," whose practices were fully incorporated with the saint veneration cult.

Essentially, as in early Sufism, a change took place with the development of *collegium pietatis* into a *collegium initiati* whose

members ascribed themselves to their initiator and his spiritual ancestry, and were prepared to follow his Way and transmit it to future generations (Trimingham 1971:13). The leading master even ceased to teach directly, and delegated authority both to teach and initiate to representatives (*halife*). A special cult therefore surrounded the master, associated with the power supposed to emanate from the saint founder of the order. He became the spiritual heir of the founder, whose qualities and powers become inherent in him upon his succession. The Bektashi life of recollection and meditation now became increasingly associated with a line of ascription, which bestowed the order, its formulae and symbols, as emanating from the master and guiding all disciples along his Way in his name, while the new aura emanated from the master as a protégé (*wali*) of God probably came to imply the belief in his role as a mediator and as an intercessory with God.

The theological rationalization of the necessary relationship between master and disciple was articulated through the historical aspect of the divine hierarchical chain (*silsila*), an idea which was available already in the very theological conceptions of Sufism. On first sight, as Trix showed, divine and historical chains connecting the master to God may be seen as a device to legitimize the place of the master cosmologically (Trix 1993:103). Yet, given the excessive proliferation of orders and their ramifications in almost any local setting,[5] there is good reason to believe that the primary concern of the founders and leaders of an order's branch, while seeking to gain personal ascendancy and protect themselves against accusations of doctrinal irregularities,[6] was that of demonstrating their orthodoxy by showing how their teachings followed those of some famous theologian whose orthodoxy was acknowledged by all. They could then use the authority of this master and all the intermediary links of transmission back to the Caliphs and the Imams for their teaching and practice. Thus, the *silsila* became a

---

[5] This can be shown in the Albanian context (Doja 2006b).

[6] As for instance in the case of the Sanusi (Evans-Pritchard 1949:3).

means to assert the new doctrinal orthodoxy of the order. As new ideas were fostered on eminent Sufis of the past in order to make these ideas respectable, the *silsila* provided a doctrinal as well as a power line leading to the ultimate source of religion.

This process became clearly visible in the history of Bektashism with the advent of Balim Sultan at the head of the order in the early sixteenth century. Out of diverse backgrounds and heterodox tendencies, the nebulous group of Bektashi dervishes gradually developed into an ecclesiastic institution with a highly organized and centralized hierarchy. All available accounts in the literature clearly show that this process was fostered under the specific conditions of Ottoman patronage during the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, especially after the order became linked to the powerful military body of the Janissaries (Doja 2006a). A similar process was reiterated in independent Albania in the twentieth century, when Bektashism enjoyed official state recognition (Doja 2006b).

During those periods the organizational system of the Bektashi order was increasingly replaced by another one, more sophisticated and much more institutional, ecclesiastical and hierarchical. Of course, even in the heyday of Bektashism, the distinction between masters and disciples was maintained, but the subordination of the latter to the former was now emphasized. In addition, both categories simply became the last two ranks of a larger hierarchy containing a number of other additional grades, so that the system of two classes was replaced by a much more complex one. The hierarchically lower level, the class of ordinary people and potential followers was categorized as adepts (*muhibs*). The immediately superior class included the elect (*eren* or *të mbërrimët*), righteous and truly initiated. They might become dervishes and later "fathers" (*baba*), hierarchically recognized religious leaders. They must be officially ordained by the "grandfathers" (*dede* or *gjysh*) to whom they paid allegiance. The organization as a whole was now headed by a single leader, the Arch-grandfather (*grand-dede* or *kryegjysh*), who was supported by the leading figures of "grandfathers" known as his caliphs (*halife*).

Even though in contrast with the ulema there were no class distinctions among dervish groups, Bektashi leaders formed an instituted religious class. The officials of the order approached the role of a clergy class similar to that in Sunni Islam or Iranian Shiism, and the Bektashi institutions provided a parochial village religion, with a system of hierarchically affiliated lodges in Anatolia and the Balkans, which in many respects was equivalent to the diocesan church system. Centralization was pushed to the extreme, as the Arch-grandfather, legitimate heir and terrestrial representative of God, came to act as the supreme pontiff of the holy religion of the order. High priest and master of the masters, Grandfather of all Fathers and Grandfathers, he embodied all of the spiritual power and was supposed to lead and govern his followers by ensuring that the dogmas were maintained and transmitted properly, discipline and tradition were respected, and orthodoxy was upheld.

In this way, the Bektashi order developed its final forms of organization and spiritual practices. Innovations were fully integrated and their spirit and aims were stereotyped. No further development was possible and new revelations of mystical insight that could mark a new point of departure in either doctrine or practice were precluded. The authoritarian principle had become the chief feature of the organization, along with the veneration of the master, the supreme inheritor of the divine mystical wisdom, and subjection to his authority was unconditioned. The organization was hierarchical, imposing uniformity, and instituting an elaborate initiation ceremony, non-hereditary offices and disciplinary practices, such as celibacy and other austerities for adepts.

Thus, the development of Bektashism appears to be a perfect illustration of the different phases that all religions experience in their evolution, which corresponds to what Joachim Wach has called the threefold expression of the experience of the sacred (Wach 1958). First of all, doctrinal elaboration, based on prophetism, gradually fashions revelation into an oral message, which receives a written codification, becoming a theology and a dogma.

Next, the worship shapes behaviour into a liturgy, rites, a protocol, whose performance is usually entrusted to ministers of the cult who become its guardians and make sure the rules are not overstepped. Last, in reaction to the anarchist tendencies of frenetic movements or ataraxy, organizational measures are taken by the creation of a hierarchy determining roles, classing believers, and controlling the tradition. Its task is to coordinate and subordinate, canonize and censure, balancing the measures of tradition and innovation, and presiding over the relations between the religious body and its environment. At this point, a religious institution — the "Church" — is established. It takes its place within a religious society by means of which human society asserts both its convictions and its doubts.

With these changes, Bektashi religion, rather than seen as an individual life path, must be regarded as the collective subservience to a road, as a religious order headed by an authoritarian leadership. Bektashism, henceforth viewed as a revealed religion whose doctrines were literally true, became a system of thought which also claimed legal authority. The different elements on which this power was based consisted of the acceptance of the inherent superiority of the Bektashi leaders, the ratification of their decisions at collective rituals, and the inculcation of a sense of appropriate behaviour encapsulated within a necessary moral philosophy. The programme as a whole was supported more immediately through a rich corpus of ritual, narrative, poetry, music, and myth.

A different path is being taken by the Alevi revival in contemporary Turkey, which can be brought in here as a counter-example. Traditional Alevism was based in closed rural communities and consisted of local, largely orally transmitted traditions, while the new Alevism is based in modern urban associations and is experiencing a rapid process of rationalization and scripturalization. This has allowed a redistribution of the knowledge capital to the extent of witnessing the appearance of a new body of exegetes, comparable to a clergy, that is, to use Weberian terms, a group holding the monopoly on the manipulation of the visions of the world. Indeed,

knowledge is not only a symbolic capital but represents a prime
essential resource, absolutely sacralized by all identity and political
actors of Alevism (Massicard 2005). However, in the course of the
movement no consensus has emerged among the actors and entre-
preneurs, who are even aware of their dissension concerning the
origins and the very nature of Alevism. While all are in search of
a relevant knowledge, the accounts are so contradictory that they
often do not know which of them to believe. There are so many
competing conceptions of what Alevism is or should be that the
validity of knowledge can always be called in question. Instead of
leading to the unification of the movement, the resource of knowl-
edge thereby contributes to the dispersion of interpretations and the
multiplication of conflicts.

The persistence of debates and the not-attribution of a fixed
meaning to Alevism cannot be explained by its syncretistic charac-
ter, but rather by the fact that knowledge has not yet been natural-
ized and objectified. It can be argued that this state of affairs is due
above all to the fact that in the course of the movement no major
actor has yet emerged likely to impose a single interpretation of
Alevism in politically relevant categories. This is due both to the
configuration of actors and to the absence of institutions making
it possible to objectify a source of knowledge acceptable and
accepted by all. Finally, while seeking to organize themselves for
their own protection and survival by building up a religious-cultural
association, in the process the Alevis have not yet established a
hierarchy of their own, claiming a "true" faith with its own infal-
lible dogmas and doctrines.

Instrumental Theology

One of the cornerstones of political anthropology is that ideol-
ogy supports the existing power relations within the social community.
Indeed, religious leaders are validated in many ways both by
Bektashi cosmology in general and by the myths which Bektashi

masters themselves teach. Yet, the two sociological conceptions of the role of religious faith, as supporting either orthodoxy or liberation, are not, by any means, mutually exclusive or essentially contradictory. There are not two kinds of behaviour set once and forever, nor is there a merely "routinization" in the Weberian sense (Weber 1978:246–54), but rather a process of dialectic change and transformation. As political conditions change and the organization of religious structures undergo a number of transformations, the final assumption is that the essential differences between hierarchical and unified types of theology, acting as mediating cultural systems of representation between humans and God, must change and adapt accordingly.

If the character of Bektashism and all Sufi groupings of Islam showed first a cultural system corresponding to the model of religious mediation in which all hierarchies were denied, the subjective and millenarian doctrines of heterodoxy and liberation theology fade into the background at the moment when the members of the previously persecuted religious minority attain a degree of religious and political respectability within society at large. Eventually, chances are that the heirs of mystics and the heterodox promoters of spiritual reform and social movement will turn into followers and faithful defenders of a legitimate authority. They will become the spokespeople for an institutionalized orthodoxy whose support will be sought by the political regime.

The transition from innovation to conservatism in theological conceptions and organizational structures, and the subsequent renewal of innovation, in support of either liberating social and national movements or the re-establishment of a new political power in society, takes on different forms and tones, forming a complex process requiring detailed historical and political analysis of the cultural values and social entities involved. Instrumental transformations of this kind are clearly evidenced by the development of Bektashism down through its history, depending on different political contexts and the course of events, as I have shown for the

classic Ottoman period, for the reformed Ottoman system or for Modern Turkey as well as for Albania from independence to the post-communist era (Doja 2006a, 2006b).

From almost all documentary accounts the important fact can be shown that Bektashi ideas, particularly during the critical periods of the Kizilbash movements in Ottoman Anatolia, the Alevi movements in Modern Turkey or the national movement in Albania, stand forth as extremely heterodox and heretical. In addition, many discursive interactions in Bektashi narratives, poetry, and adages show a coherence of linkages progressing from the outer to inward, that is, as Frances Trix has pointed out (Trix 1993:33–34), from a more Sunni or orthodox Islam to the decidedly mystical conceptions of Sufism, apparently because Sufism or Islamic mysticism could only progress from the outer Sunni form to an inner Sufi meaning. The Bektashi world of discourse can be seen then as a legit-imizing strategy by which a later relationship not sanctioned by Orthodox Islam, seeks legitimacy by being related to one of the basic relationships of Islam. Actually, Sunni Islam is often considered by Bektashis to be a cloak covering the essential Shiite and pantheistic character of the Bektashi faith, and the prevailing opinion assumes that the Bektashis entirely neglected the religious performances required by the Sharia.[7] However, my assumption is that

---

[7] When the Bektashis affirm, for example, the importance of the prescribed Sunni rituals, they understand true rituals (*namaz*) not as mere superficial practice but rather esoteric symbols of justice and goodness, giving emphasis to the sincerity of faith and not to the religion's outward observances. They believe that salvation is found in emulating such perfect models as Ali, Hadji Bektash, and other saints. Everyone must seek "purity of heart" and self-awareness, but piety is measured by lifestyle and not by ritual. Their "three conditions" of speech, action and moral containment (*eline diline beline*) are a succinct statement of an overall orientation that implies very strongly that it is through continual striving for perfection in worldly moral conduct that divine approval will ensue. Again they see the true fast of Ramadan not as the renunciation of material food but rather as a spiritual cleansing of heart from evil, just as they see true pilgrimage not as a physical journey to Mecca but rather as a spiritual journey to the heart. In the same

the part Sunni Islam has played in Bektashi life and thought is more important than it appears.

The fact that the Bektashis were rarely attacked on the grounds of doctrine or innovations is directly related to their association with the Janissaries and the Ottoman authority. In its Ottoman heyday, when it maintained a strong central organization, Bektashism even claimed to be a Sunni order (Trimingham 1971:80; Norris 1993:89), in spite of its very unorthodox and Shiite tendencies. No wonder therefore that the officials of the order clearly insisted on their loyalty to the Sunna of the Prophet as a necessary stage in their code of discipline. More importantly, as generally within institutional Sufism, from the moment the religious Bektashis leaders felt the need to support their statements with prophetic sayings, they also felt it necessary to express conformity with the Sharia, the revealed Law of orthodox Islam, which coincided with their growing conformity to the legal establishment.

As a result, the mystical content of the order weakened. In fact, every time the order approached the establishment of orthodox political powers, whether in Ottoman as in Modern Turkey or in independent Albania, its hierarchical and centralized organization corresponded to a doctrinal radicalism. It is by no means accidental that the sources emphasize over and over again that a certain eminent Bektashi took the Sharia seriously, a fact that shows that as long as the desire for power of the orthodox postulates its own position as absolute, the educational attitudes of the Bektashis will necessarily follow suit. Order leaders vied with one another in demonstrating their loyalty and subservience to legalistic Islam, and in the process Bektashism was emptied of its essential elements and left with the empty husks of mystical terminology, disciplines, and exercises.

---

way, the order of the hierarchical chains by which the Bektashi conception of divinity is structured parallels once again the outer to inward paradigms leading from the more general Sufi to the more particular Bektashi.

To illustrate, from Albanian Bektashis there are known two seventeenth-century manuscripts written in Turkish, in which it is interesting to notice how the language, in contrast with both earlier and later manuals, is unusually wrapped in the flowery Sunni orthodox vocabulary, often ambiguous, but appearing sometimes as a forced disguise giving all the outward appearances of Sunni orthodoxy (Guidetti 1998:264). More importantly, it can be shown that in these texts there is an effort to comply with the dogma of orthodox Sunni Islam even in respect to features of a categorically Sufi and Shiite nature. I believe the explanation of this attitude is to be found in the context of a more hierarchical development of the Bektashi internal organization, in connection with the historical and political conditions of Albania in the period of the texts' composition. In the seventeenth century, as political power in the Ottoman world was overwhelmingly in the hands of orthodox Muslims, Sunni doctrines were the grounds of legitimacy.

Under these conditions, Bektashi leaders were seeking to subject the mystical element to Islamic standards, to make mysticism innocuous by tolerating many of its outer aspects and forms in return for submission. They increasingly strived to reprimand several colorations of mysticism and fanaticism, while trying to bring followers back to more respect for fundamental Islamic rules. Up to the present day, there are many who vigorously reject any criticism that the order and its doctrines are against the beliefs of Islam, claiming that otherwise Bektashi dervishes would only create prejudices against Islam, by separating themselves from the genuine Islamic teachings.

Religious scholars warn, in particular, against the belief in the incarnation of God in human form, the transcendental annihilation in God, and the cult mysticism where the master is mistaken for God. They try to defend Bektashism from all accusations of heterodoxy or liberalism and consider it identical with the normal understandings of legalist Sunni Islam, stressing its missionary role and the links of transmission, which guarantee against doctrinal deviations of any kind.

A frequent point of friction, as with the case of other dervish sects of extremist Shiite inclinations (Moosa 1988), is the belief in reincarnation (*tenasuh*), the idea of the transmigration of souls, which implied a belief in transformation and the multiplicity of forms, and the doctrine of emanation, which eventually implied the "manifestation" of God in human form (*tecelli*). Specialists may notice that the theory of emanation and the belief in reincarnation are not uniform and not an important theme in Bektashi teaching, and that according to groups and periods, one or another of the strands predominates (Norton 2001:177–78; Zarcone 2005:40). There is general agreement on the conditions under which the animistic belief in the transmigration of souls came about in Turkic mystical and heterodox circles, and also on the character of Alevi-Bektashi groups in which these beliefs became firmly rooted. There is no attempt, however, to understand why in practice some other individuals or groups did not accept or clearly deny such beliefs.

While marginal heterodox and nonconformist influences are admitted, I believe it is the most conservatory trend in the development of Bektashism that claims that these opinions make an amalgam between moderate Bektashi and extreme Shiite views, in order to protect Bektashi religious identity from such distortions that would make it appear hostile to the founder of Islam and to Islam altogether. Actually, in the course of argument, Bektashism is said to have been "misused and misunderstood by destabilizing forces and currents hostile to Islamic society during nineteenth century," which eventually did cause its disgrace in 1826 (Izeti 2001:53–55). Authoritative assertions come thereby to claim that the Bektashi religious system, as a doctrine and a practice, "is closely connected with the internal development of Islam as a religion" and that its "indisputable ideological and philosophical basis is Islam." Insofar as it adheres to the two basic Islamic postulates — faith in the unity of Allah and the messenger mission of Muhammad — "we cannot consider its history and philosophy in isolation from Islam" (Gramatikova 2001:600).

After all, indeed, "the Order that had enjoyed the full support of Ottoman power cannot be thought outside the fundamental values of Islam" (Izeti 2001:55). That is why, in Bektashi circles, Hadji Bektash is increasingly presented as a good Muslim, respectful of the prescripts of Islam, and according to a late tradition, even a descendant of the Prophet (Melikoff 2001:121–33). Especially in the period of independent Albania, representatives of the hierarchy of Albanian Bektashi clergy reacted against assertions that tended to consider the order of Bektashis as a doctrine of strong heterodoxy, diverging from orthodox Sunni Islam much more than other Muslim orders. Not surprisingly, they kept up a certain appearance of respect for the law of Sharia, drawing on the traditional tenets that the spiritual way of *tarikat* must necessarily go through the legal gate of the *sheriat*.

The simple traditional Bektashi discussion of the *Sheriat* gateway to religious knowledge takes therefore on a different meaning. Traditionally the Bektashis have built into their religion such flexibility that it is quite acceptable for them to follow the precepts of Sunni Islam when they find it expedient to do so. Such a dual orientation is not just a practical solution to external religious pressure. It also provides a way for the particular and preferred interpretation of Bektashism as an established religion to be linked to the wider body of orthodox history and theology that they regard as being characteristic of Islam. Furthermore, this is more important than it might sound, because it denotes very clearly the way for individuals, or groups, to explore such orthodox practice, not just "if they feel such inclination" in Shankland's characterization (Shankland 2003:86), but essentially when they see the opportunity for gaining authority and political benefit in doing so.

Birge, for example, witnessed that several evenings as he sat in the guest-room of the head of the Bektashi order in Albania, he saw outside the window a dervish stepping on to the veranda and giving the evening call to prayer. When, in surprise, he asked the reason for this he was told that this was the *sheriat* part (Birge 1937:107).

Still today a certain faction of Alevi writers in Turkey will often quote individual Koranic verses as an appeal for authority to support their view on a given topic or to justify a certain Alevi religious tradition, a trend which is becoming increasingly typical for Sufi scholars in their struggle for legitimacy.[8]

With this type of development is also associated a new reverence for the Prophet, which not merely has brought him into the category of wonder-workers at the popular level, but has also led to the doctrine of the pre-existence of Muhammad before creation and to the popular equivalent of the belief in the Spirit of Muhammad as the Logos, guardian, and preserver of the universe. The celebration of the Prophet's birthday seems, at least in part, to have been already a compensation for the suppression of Ali demonstrations after the destruction of Shiite regimes (Trimingham 1971:27).

In contrast with orthodox Islam, one of the central Bektashi beliefs is that Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, was a manifestation of the divinity on earth. A significant part of Bektashi discourses is taken up by the description of how Muhammad was introduced to the original forty followers of Ali, who were learning to perform the ritual from him. They affirm that they were taught how to perform the initiation ritual by Ali, and their slow-stepping "dance of the forty" commemorates the first men and women who gathered around Ali and learnt from him (Melikoff 2001). In many accounts Ali appears to have been chosen by God to become Muhammad's representative, that Muhammad concurred with this, and that the two men became one. This revelation hinges around Muhammad's ascent (*miraj*) to God, which is a central part of Islamic thought and features also in the Koran, but the Bektashi version is unusual in its emphasis on the place that Ali holds within this divine transmission.

One of the founding tenets of Bektashi religious doctrine is that Allah, Muhammad and Ali are conceived in a triune relationship

---

[8] A recent case in point is Douglas-Klotz 2005.

(referred to as the *ucler*). Although God was described as the one truth-reality (*hakikat*), both Muhammad and Ali were regarded as special manifestations of the same divine essence of truth and reality (Birge 1937:132–34). They were thought of as a personification of some higher spiritual being united together in a miraculous and indivisible unity of personality (*tewhid*). Muhammad is present in Bektashi religious doctrine as the "beginning," that is, as the founder of the religious way, whereas Ali is the last point, the "accomplishment," that is, the mark of perfection to which a believer should strive. In Bektashi liturgical objects, pictorial art and theological tracts, the trinity Allah-Muhammad-Ali is all-important. Ali is always depicted in a hierarchically organized divine triad, miraculously unified with the Prophet and Allah, the supreme God (Birge 1937:217; De Jong 1989). Even in everyday speech, Muhammad and Ali are understood as the same manifestation of, and as identical to, the divine, the ultimate truth-reality.

The cult of Ali in Bektashism, as in certain other dervish orders, carried to an extreme, was a major cause of friction. It was exaggerated to a degree intolerable to the orthodox mind, especially when in extreme cases it culminated in his deification, or in any case, in a veneration detrimental to that of the Prophet. For orthodox Islam, Muhammad and Ali are human beings and they cannot be of divine essence. In a much symmetrical but inverse relation, for the doctrine of Trinity in Catholic orthodoxy there cannot be any hierarchical projection within a divine essence. Now, just as there is a Christian heresy of Docetism, that refuses the Trinity and denies the fusion of divinity and human nature as inseparably united and fully achieved in the person of Christ, in a symmetrically inverse relationship, the divinity of Muhammad and Ali is obviously a very extremist and heretical Shiite concept.

In the history of Christianity, the recognition of Jesus Christ's divinity seemed to threaten Christian monotheism, while the denial of his divinity put salvation in doubt. Hence the doctrine of Trinity represented the radical reformulation of the doctrine of Godhead to

meet the demands of Christian faith. It was formulated at the Nicene Council in the fourth century, and became since the formal statement of orthodox Christian belief. In striking similarity, Balim Sultan, the great reformer of the Bektashi order appointed in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II, is said to have formalized the belief system that propounded the concept of trinity peculiar to Bektashism (Norton 2001:171), which is still in force amongst the current leaders of the order.

Baba Rexhebi, for instance, the influential leader of the Albanian Bektashi foundation of Michigan, in one of his treatises on Bektashism, makes a clear distinction between the triune Bektashi conception of divinity comprising inseparably the Ultimate Truth-Reality of God, Muhammad and Ali, and the heretical and heterodox traditions in Bektashi conceptions regarding the divinity of Ali. Furthermore, he once again maintains that the order respects the rituals of the faith and insists that Bektashi rituals are not in opposition to Sunni Islam, that Bektashism is "within Islam" and, sometimes, that it is even the "real" Islam (Rexhebi 1970). Allegations of this kind, fervently claimed by religious scholars (Izeti 2001:53–55), or naively justified by seemingly well-intentioned local scholars (Rexhepagiqi 1999:258), may well be noticed by area specialists (Clayer 1990:77–78; Norris 1993:94), but without necessarily explaining — nor indeed understanding at all — that a deep evolution had been already achieved, not only in organizational and political structures, but also in theological and religious conceptions.

When during the Communist period, Baba Rexhebi escaped to the United States where he founded the Bektashi lodge of Detroit, he came into contact with more sophisticated types of Sufism, read in English the works of Western Orientalists, specifically French Orientalist Henry Corbin (e.g. Corbin 1971, 1979, 1982, 1983), and understood that to survive, Bektashism would need to go through a drastic revision. In his theological treatise he tried to put Bektashism in the perspective of Muslim mysticism and relate it to other more elaborate forms of Sufism. In particular, he demonstrated that

Bektashism is closely related to Iranian Shiism, and he tried to dismiss the shamanistic and pre-Islamic influences in order to bring Bektashism back onto the path of Shiite orthodoxy. As this book is the only one of its kind available in the Albanian language, his work had a tremendous influence on Bektashis, even though the doctrines found in it differ greatly from the Bektashi traditions.

There is no wonder afterwards that precisely his book opened the door to Iranian influence in post-communist Albania, which is aimed at bringing all the Bektashis back to the Shiite flock and hardening the orthodox line of the order. Similarly, amongst the different factions competing for political audience in Turkey after the revival in the 1990s, there is a reformulation of Bektashi-Alevism in connection with Iranian Shiism that sometimes moves in a direction quite different from the one mostly taken for granted. While active in West Europe, particularly in Germany, it is also said to influence the Alevi villages in Turkey (Shankland 2003:169). In Albania, among other things, a significant number of new Bektashi dervishes are sent to Iran for religious training at the Theological Faculty of the Holy City of Qom. It is probable that when they return, they will be much closer to Iranian Shiism than Bektashism ever was.

Indeed, instead of the traditional local leaders, they already regard themselves bound to spiritual leaders who are sent from Iran. From them, they learn a form of Shiism that insists on the veiling of women, on men and women worshipping apart, and upon the importance of the *Sheriat*. Rather than reject mosques, this movement appears to create or build Shiite mosques which act as centres of religious activity in a way that is unusual in Bektashi tradition. In this case, it appears that the segregating, puritanical elements of orthodox practice have come to the fore, and once more with an emphasis on the subordination of women. The result appears to be a religious revolutionary spirit that is as potentially aggressive as any other form of fundamentalism.

Once again, specialists have not failed to touch upon these recent conflictual developments within Bektashism. After the 6th Congress

of the Albanian Bektashis in Tirana, for instance, growing opposition is noticed among the remaining Bektashis in Macedonia and Kosova as well as within immigrant Bektashi communities in Western Europe and overseas against Arch-grandfather Reshat Bardhi in Tirana. Yet, quite simplistically, no other explanation is offered than the supposed weakness of the current leader of the Bektashis, who unlike his energetic predecessors, seems to be only "an old man with little education" who "lacks the vision necessary for the movement's survival" (Lakshman-Lepain 2002:54).

Concluding Remarks

The establishment of dervish orders can be considered as the organized form of mysticism, and the psychological affinity between mysticism and pantheism, related as much to dualist and gnostic conceptions as to the Shiite devotion to Ali, has been pointed out. This is doubtless justified, but at the very starting moment of organization and systematization, there must occur either a split into different sects or a beginning to create a new separate orthodoxy of its own (Kissling 1954:25). A moment of crisis comes at this point, for mysticism does not allow itself to be pressed into a system originating in rational considerations. The contrast of any mysticism to its own orthodoxy, as far as it exists, as it does in the case of Bektashism, lies in the fact that mysticism is always based on a feeling of pantheistic wholeness, while any monotheism is the result of intellectual thought. The all-embracing sentiment relies on itself, while monotheism and any form of theism are the results of a search for causes. The development of orthodoxy is aimed precisely to overcome these irreconcilable differences.

The overall model finally turns around a classic issue of modern social anthropology that assumes that both culture and the social order are inculcated by the authority to which people have given their subservience and that those favoured by the social order often teach successfully their own validation. An obvious instance is the

way that religious leaders who are in a privileged position at the top of the hierarchy tend to profess, and even insist upon, a world-view that maintains that hierarchy. They may teach that they are particularly favoured by God to fulfil that role, claiming that either holy writ or spiritual knowledge ordains, even demands, their assuming a dominant position.

Basically, translated in sociological terms, this means that the rigid, intolerant and authoritarian attitudes of the local religious dignitaries, as well as the formalism and dogmatism prevailing in all fields, religious or political, simply express the haunting fear that they will lose their power. Within the political system, as Levtzion has argued for other contexts (Levtzion 1979:213), Islam and religious ideology are by no means abstract concepts, but represent different social groups competing to extend their influence over political authority. A religious leader might react first against established authority out of personal or factional interest or ambi-tion, or he might be a channel for the expression of social discon-tents. Yet very soon leaders of heterodox movements will often aspire to political power. Normally, religious leaders from local hagioc-racies sooner or later will evolve into pillars of the established order and the society at large.

Every Church, having been a sect itself at its beginnings, that is, a movement of social and religious protest breaking with society at large, ends up being reconciled with the latter. As Bryan Wilson has argued, the first stage of this process normally occurs at the second generation of members. Characteristically, there is a loss of the original spontaneity in all fields, the creation of professional ministries, the adoption of oaths, a positive attitude toward society at large and the acceptance of pluralism. This transformation par-allels the access of members of the group to respectable social sta-tus, whereas the sects, originally very much in reaction against society at large, soon become *established* when the second gener-ation takes the reins, even though there will always be a *first* gen-eration to be recruited in a sect (Wilson 1990).

Protest may come within a recognized religious group and establish an *ecclesiola in Ecclesia*, a religious "way", or a *collegium pietatis*, characterized by mysticism, as in the case of early Bektashism. But it may also lead to dissidence and factionalism, in which case we often observe the formation of ecclesiastic bodies of the Church type, or of semi-ecclesiastic bodies such as autonomous Churches or, again, of new sects to which ecclesiastic and theological terminology will preferably refer as either schism or heresy, and recent political discourse as fundamentalism.

In conclusion, I believe we must put the dialectics of the development of Bektashism into the same perspective as the reformist vision of all other "revived forms of Islam" (Voll 1994) whose prime ideal is the integration of religious and political authority, which implies an activist political concept of Islam. The active commitment comes to destroy corrupt versions of Islam and bring into being an ideal Muslim community modelled on the example of the Prophet. Such an ideal may spread first in religious circles, but soon make a wide social impact, the reformers being particularly effective in organizing religious movements in transition societies. Many reformist movements in lineage or tribal societies the world over in this way led to the formation of states dedicated to the integration of political and religious authority (Evans-Pritchard 1949; Geertz 1960; Peacock 1978). Similarly, the contemporary Islamic revival, the so-called fundamentalist movements, are inspired by the vision of a prophetic community. They attempt to return to the principles of Islamic morality and to a renewal of personal commitment to the symbolic foundations of Islam. They commonly aim to control the state and to use the power of the state to enforce what is believed to be the true Islam.

Still, the constant tension that subsists between orthodoxy and mystical movements is not exclusive to Islam. The polemic against sects and heterodox religious movements is primarily and essentially expressed in terms of conflict on doctrinal grounds. If the sociological perspective points to the economic and social roots of

religious movements, it tends to underestimate the importance of the religious structure itself. Up to now, the ideological and doctrinal field has been left exclusively in the hands of theologians, occasionally disputed by Orientalist and Medievalist historians. I have discussed elsewhere the particular affinity that sociologists and anthropologists have always shown between new religious movements and social, cultural and national crisis movements, as well as the extent to which religious ideas must be regarded either as a justification for liberationist movements or as an ideology justifying domination (Doja 2000a:677–79). The analysis of doctrinal-ideological and structural-organizational characteristics of Bektashism throughout its history that I presented here, especially in Ottoman Anatolia and early independent Albania, is an illustrative suggestion that it is precisely on these structural and ideological grounds that such a dialectical correlation may be correctly addressed.

College of Humanities   ALBERT DOJA
University of Limerick
Limerick
Ireland
albert.doja@ul.ie
adoja@uamd.edu.al

REFERENCES

Barthes, Roland
    1993   [1957] "Le mythe aujourd'hui." In *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Seuil,
            Vol. 1, 681–719.
Bausinger, Herman
    1993   Volkskunde ou l'ethnologie allemande: De la recherche sur l'antiquité
            à l'analyse culturelle. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.
            [Orig. Volkskunde: Von der Altertumsforschung zur Kulturanalyse.
            Darmstadt 1971; Tübingen 1979.]
Birge, John K.
    1937   *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes.* London: Luzac Oriental. Repr. 1994.
Bloch, Maurice
    1985   "From Cognition to Ideology." In Richard Fardon (ed.), *Power and*

Knowledge: Anthropological and Sociological Approaches, Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 21–48.

Bourdieu, Pierre
1971   "Genèse et structure du champ religieux." *Revue Française de Sociologie* 12(3):295–334. [Eng. trans. in *Comparative Social Research* 13 (1991) 1–44.]

Clayer, Nathalie
1990   *L'Albanie, pays des derviches: les ordres mystiques musulmans en Albanie à l'époque post-ottomane, 1912–1967*. (Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen 17.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
2002   *Religion et nation chez les Albanais (XIXᵉ–XXᵉ siècles)*. (Analecta Isisiana 64.) Istanbul: Isis.

Corbin, Henry
1971   *L'homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien*. Paris: Éditions Présence. [Engl. trans. Boulder, CO/New York, NY: Random House 1978.]
1979   *Corps spirituel et Terre céleste: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran chiite*. 2nd ed. Paris: Buchet-Chastel. [Engl. trans. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1989.]
1982   *Temps cyclique et gnose ismaélienne*. Paris: Berg Publishers. [Engl. trans. London: Kegan Paul 1983.]
1983   *Face de Dieu, face de l'homme: herméneutique et soufisme*. Paris: Flammarion.

Cornell, Erik
2006   "A Surviving Neoplatonism: On the Creed of the Bektashi Order. Conversations with a Mursit." *Islam & Christian-Muslim Relations* 17(1):1–20.

De Jong, Frederick
1989   "The Iconography of Bektashism: A Survey of Themes and Symbolism in Clerical Costume, Liturgical Objects and Pictorial Art." *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 4:7–29.

Doja, Albert
2000a   "Histoire et dialectique des idéologies et significations religieuses." *European Legacy: Journal of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas* 5(5):663–686.
2000b   "The Politics of Religion in the Reconstruction of Identities: The Albanian Situation." *Critique of Anthropology* 20(4):421–438.
2004   "Cultural Politics and Spiritual Making of Anthropologists." *Reviews in Anthropology* 33(1):73–94.
2006a   "A Political History of Bektashism from Ottoman Anatolia to Contemporary Turkey." *Journal of Church and State* 48(2):423–450.

2006b "A Political History of Bektashism in Albania." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 7(1):83–107.

Douglas-Klotz, Neil
2005 "Sufi Approaches to Peace: The Mystical and the Prophetic in Modern Culture." *Spirituality and Health International* 6(3):132–137.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward E.
1949 *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica*. Oxford: Clarendon.
1965 *Theories of Primitive Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Faroqhi, Suraiya
1995 "Conflict, Accommodation and Long-term Survival: The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State (Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries)." In Popovic and Veinstein 1995:171–184.

Foucault, Michel
1980 *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Geertz, Clifford
1960 *The Religion of Java*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Goffman, Erving
1974 *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Golpinarli, Abdulbaki
1958 (ed.) *Menakib-i Haci Bektas-i Veli: Vilayet-Name*. Istanbul.

Gramatikova, Nevena
2001 "Changing Fates and the Issue of Alevi Identity in Bulgaria." In Antonina Zhelyazkova and Jorgen S. Nielsen (eds.), *Ethnology of Sufi orders: Theory and Practice* (The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans 8), Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 564–621.

Griaule, Marcel
1948 *Dieu d'eau: entretiens avec Ogotommeli*. Paris: Fayard.

Guidetti, Vittoria Luisa
1998 "Elementi dualistici e gnostici della religione Bektashi in Albania fra il XVII e il XIX secolo." In Giulia Sfameni Gasparro (ed.), *Destino e salvezza: tra culti pagani e gnosi cristiana. Itinerari storico-religiosi sulle orme di Ugo Bianchi*, Cosenza: L. Giordano, 239–264.

Izeti, Metin
2001 *Tarikati Bektashian*. Tetova, Macedonia: Çabej.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T.
1994 *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200–1550*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press.

Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina
  1988   *Die Kizilbash/Aleviten: Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubens-
          gemeinschaft in Anatolien.* (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 126.) Berlin:
          Klaus Schwarz Verlag.
  1992   *Vom revolutionären Klassenkampf zum "Wahren" Islam: Transfor-
          mationsprozesse im Alevitum der Turkei nach 1980.* (Sozialanthro-
          pologische Arbeitspapiere 49.) Berlin: Freie Universität.

Kieser, Hans-Lukas
  2001   "Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia: The Interactions Between
          Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia." *Die Welt des Islams*
          41(1):89–111.

Kissling, Hans-Joachim
  1954   "The Sociological and Educational Role of Dervish Orders in the
          Ottoman Empire." In Gustave E. Grunebaum (ed.), *Studies in Islamic
          Cultural History* (Memoirs of the American Anthropological Asso-
          ciation 76), 23–35.

Koprulu, Mehmed Fuad
  1926   "Les origines du bektashisme: essai sur le développement historique de
          l'hétérodoxie musulmane en Asie mineure." *Actes du Congres Inter-
          national d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, Vol. 2, 391–411.
  1993   [1922] *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion (Prolegomena).* Ed.
          Gary Leiser. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press.

Kressing, Frank
  2002   "A Preliminary Account of Research Regarding the Albanian Bektashis:
          Myths and Unresolved Questions." In Frank Kressing and Karl Kaser
          (eds.), *Albania, a Country in Transition: Aspects of Changing Identities
          in a South-East European Country* (Schriften des Zentrum für Euro-
          päische Integrationsforschung 51), Baden-Baden: Nomos, 65–91.

Lakshman-Lepain, Rajwantee
  2002   "Albanian Islam: Development and Disruptions." In Frank Kressing
          and Karl Kaser (eds.), *Albania, a Country in Transition: Aspects of
          Changing Identities in a South-East European Country* (Schriften des
          Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung 51), Baden-Baden:
          Nomos, 39–64.

Leach, Edmund
  1972   "Melchisedech and the Emperor: Icons of Subversion and Orthodoxy."
          Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 5–14.

Levtzion, Nehemia
  1979   (ed.) *Conversion to Islam*. New York, NY: Holmes & Meier.

Massicard, Elise
2005   *L'autre Turquie: Le mouvement aléviste et ses territoires*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

Mauss, Marcel
1950   [1924] "Essai sur le don: forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques." In *Sociologie et anthropologie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 143–279. [English translation: *The Gift: The Form and Reason for exchange in archaic societies*, trans. W.D. Halls, foreword by Mary Douglas. New York/London: Norton 1990.]

Melikoff, Irene
1992   *Sur les traces du Soufisme turc: recherches sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie*. (Analecta Isisiana 3.) Istanbul: Isis.
1998   *Hadji Bektach, un mythe et ses avatars: genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie*. (Islamic History and Civilization 20.) Leiden: Brill.
2001   *Au banquet des Quarante: exploration au coeur du Bektachisme-Alevisme*. (Analecta Isisiana 50.) Istanbul: Isis.

Moosa, Matti
1988   *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*. (Contemporary issues in the Middle East.) New York, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Müller, Klaus E.
1967   *Kulturhistorische Studien zur Genese pseudo-islamischer Sektengebilde in Vorderasien*. (Studien zur Kulturkunde 22.) Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Norris, Harry T.
1993   *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society Between Europe and the Arab World*. London: Hurst.

Norton, John D.
2001   "The Bektashi in the Balkans." In Celia Hawkesworth, Muriel Heppell and Harry T. Norris (eds.), *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans* (School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London), New York, NY: Palgrave, 168–200.

Ocak, Ahmet Yashar
1983   *Bektashi Menakibnamelerinde Islam oncesi inanc motifleri [Patterns of pre-Islamic beliefs in Bektashi books of legend]*. Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi.
1995   "Remarques sur le rôle des derviches kalender dans la formation de l'ordre bektashi." In Popovic and Veinstein 1995:55–62.

Peacock, James L.
1978   *Muslim Puritans: Reformist Psychology in Southeast Asian Islam*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Popovic, Alexandre, and Gilles Veinstein
  1995 (eds.) *Bektachiyya: études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*. Istanbul: Isis.
  1996 (eds.) *Les voies d'Allah: les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam des origines à aujourd'hui*. Paris: Fayard.

Rabinow, Paul
  1977 *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rexhebi, Baba
  1970 *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*. New York, NY: Waldon Press.

Rexhepagiqi, Jashar
  1999 *Dervishët, rendet dhe teqetë në Kosovë, në Sanxhak e në rajonet e tjera përreth, në të kaluarën dhe sot [Dervishes, Orders and their Institutions in Kosovo, Sandjak and around, in the Past and Today]*. Peja, Kosova: Dukagjini.

Ricoeur, Paul
  1981 *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shankland, David
  2003 *The Alevis in Turkey: The Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.

Trimingham, J. Spencer
  1971 *The Sufi orders in Islam*. Oxford: Clarendon. Repr. 1998.

Trix, Frances
  1993 *Spiritual Discourse: Learning with an Islamic Master*. (Conduct and Communication Series.) Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Turner, Victor W.
  1967 *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Voll, John O.
  1994 *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Vorhoff, Karin
  1995 *Zwischen Glaube, Nation und neuer Gemeinschaft: Alevitische Identität in der Türkei der Gegenwart*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 184.) Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

Wach, Joachim
  1958 *Sociology of Religion*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Weber, Max

1978   [1922] *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

2002   [1905] *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury.

Wilson, Bryan R.

1990   *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society*. Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press.

Zarcone, Thierry

2005   "Stone People, Tree People and Animal People in Turkic Asia and Eastern Europe." *Diogenes* 52(3):35–46.