

Sufi Brotherhood beyond Boundaries: Murad al-Bukhari's (1640-1720) Travels and Residence in Istanbul

Tasavvuf and Sufi brotherhood contributed significantly to the construction of Islamic society exceeding over political and regional boundaries beginning from as early as 9th century. Naqshbandiyyah order founded by Baha' al-Din Naqshband (d.791/1389) in Buhara in the 14th century has proliferated in the following century across Middle East, Anatolia and the Balkans. The spread of Naqshbandiyya gained momentum in the Ottoman lands especially upon the arrival of Ubaydullah Ahrar's (d. 895/1490) two deputies (*halifes*) Molla Abdullah İlahi (d.896/1491) and Emir Ahmed Buhari (d.922/1516). Their deputies disseminated the Naqshibandi brotherhood in the capital and provinces and it had already gained popularity among the Ottoman population when a new interpretation of the Naqshibandiyya arrived in the Ottoman lands in late 17th century; Mujaddidiyya. Mujaddidiyya was named after its founders appellation "*muceddid-i elf-i sani*" "the renewer of the second millennium" Ahmed Sirhindî (d.1034/1624) and it spread all over the world from Pencap, India. It arrived in the Ottoman lands thanks to missionary works of two eminent and physically handicapped deputies of Muhammad Masum (d.1079/1668): Yakdast (the one-handed) Ahmad Juryanî (d.1119/1708) and Muhammed Murad Buharî (d.1132/1720), whose legs were paralyzed at the age of three.

Murad Buharî was born to a noble family in Samarkand probably in 1050/1640. His father was *nakib* (head of sayyids ie. descendants of the Prophet), in the city. In spite of his condition he travelled vastly in the Islamic lands between Samarkand, India, Arabia, Iraq, Syria and Anatolia. His family the *Muradis* settled in Damascus and held a respectful status serving as Hanafi Mufti of the city in the second half of the 18th century. Murad Buharî went to India in 1663 at the age of 23 to be a disciple of Imam Rabbani's son Muhammad Masum (1599-1668). Probably after his master's death in 1668, he went to pilgrimage and stayed in Hijaz for three years. Then he moved to Baghdad (probably in 1671) and continued his journey towards his homeland Buhara through Isfahan. After a short stay in Buhara, Samarkand and Belh, he departed for hajj again through Iraq. Following his second hajj he travelled to Cairo met with local ulama and dervishes and moved to Damascus. He decided to settle in Damascus and got married probably in 1672, at the age of 32.¹

Murad Buharî came to Istanbul upon an invitation in 1092/1681 (aged 41) and he was received well.² He was probably invited by famous sheyhulislam of late 17th century Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi (d.1703) who was tutor to şehzade Ahmed (III) at that time. Feyzullah Efendi was, like his

¹ Muhammad Khalil al-Muradî, *Silk al-durar fi a'yan al-qarn al-thani 'ashar* (4 vols., Beirut, 1988, 3rd ed.), 4: 129. Muhammad Khalil al-Muradî, *Matmahü'l-vacid fi tercemeti'l-validi'l-macid*, British Library, Ms. or. 4050, 26. al-Muradî does not provide an exact date but states that it was "after 1080/1669". Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi (ö. 1144/1731) and Raşid Mehmed Efendi ö.1148/1735, the most reliable two contemporary sources do not mention the exact date either, see Râşid Mehmed Efendi, *Târîh-i Râşid ve Zeyli*, haz. Abdülkadir Özcan, Baki Çakır, Yunus Uğur, Ahmet Zeki İzgöer, İstanbul, Klasik Yayınları, 2013, c.2, s.1177. Şeyhî Mehmed Efendi, *eş-Şekaiku'n-nu'maniyye ve zeyilleri: Vekayiü'l-fudala*, haz. Abdülkadir Özcan, İstanbul, Çağrı Yayınları, 1989. v.3, p. 673-5. Ayvansarayî Hüseyin Efendi ö.1201/1787 does not present additional information, Ayvansarâyî Hüseyin Efendi, Ali Sâtrî Efendi, Süleymân Besim Efendi, *Hadikatü'l-cevami (İstanbul camileri ve diğer dini-sivil mimari yapılar)*, haz. Ahmed Neziha Galitekin, İstanbul, İşaret Yayınları, 2001, p. 372-5.

² al-Muradî, *Silk al-durar*, Raşid Mehmed Efendi states it was in 1091/1680.

family members, an adherent of Halvetiye path, but it is possible that their friendship began in 1078/1668 when Feyzullah Efendi performed hajj. It is also possible that another deputy of Muhammed Masum, Ahmad Yakdast Juryânî (d.1119/1708) who had resided in Makkah for a long time, had developed friendship with Feyzullah Efendi. A contemporary of Murad Buhari, Şeyhî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1144/1731) states that after Murad Buhari gained fame and sympathy of Damascenes he was invited to Istanbul. When he arrived in Istanbul, he resided in Eyub district for five years but we do not know exactly where he stayed. [Later on, Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad Efendi Damadzade (d.1741) established a *tekke* in Eyüp district for him. (this is probably after his death in 1720. Damadzade was a young muderris when Murad Buhari arrived in Istanbul in 1681. His father, Kazasker Mustafa Rasih had built a madrasa in Eyup district, which was transformed into tekke upon Murad Buhari's death by his son Damadzade³. Probably, Murad Buhari taught and stayed at that madrasa during his first residence in İstanbul between 1681-1686.)]

Then, He appointed his deputy Kilisli Ali Efendi (d.1147/1734) to the *madrassa-tekke* and returned to Damascus 1097/1686 (aged 46).⁴

After 1686, Murad Buhari stayed in Damascus teaching in Berraniye madrasa and preaching and propagating principles of Naqshbandî-Mujaddidî order. He had gained favor especially among Ottoman learned circles and Mujaddidî order spread rapidly in the capital and Anatolian provinces. Murad Buhari's emphasis on supremacy of sharia and classical religious sciences like Fiqh, kelam, and tafsir over esoteric wisdom might have contributed to attract them. As we will see below in more detail while examining Murad Buhari's works and sermons, he constantly stressed on the importance of religious sciences in determining basic tenets of Islamic faith and practice instead of personal experience and discovery (*keşf*) of Sufis. He emphasized to follow path of former generations, especially the first generation of Islam, ie. *Ashab* (companions) of the prophet Muhammad. As Halil İbrahim Şimşek rightly pointed out Murad Buhari advocated a slightly different view from other Naqshbandî-Mujaddidîs in the Ottoman world. For instance, he attributed little importance to dreams in the spiritual journey of the followers.⁵

It seems that, Murad Buharî gained respect among learned classes and people in Damascus due to his views and manners. An incident recorded by his great grandson Muhammad Halil al-Muradî (d. 1791) reveals that Murad Buharî distinguished himself with his zeal to defend righteous acts and to criticize wrong doings even when it means confronting with the highest Ottoman authorities. As Muhammad Halil's work narrated, his great grand father did not hesitate to clash with the powerful governor of Damascus of the time İsmail Pasha. In addition to governorship, İsmail Pasha had been appointed as the *mir-i Hajj* i.e. commander of pilgrimage in 1105/1694. The post of *mir-i hajj* normally was to ensure the safety of pilgrimage routes and pilgrims but İsmail Pasha's empowerment was different because it also covered to dislodge powerful Sharif of Mecca Sad. Sharif Sad was appointed to the post in the previous year but his policy to please nomadic Arab peoples at the expense of pilgrims angered many. He had attracted Bedouins support to establish his rule in the region but to do that he capitalized resources collected unjustly from pilgrims. Therefore, according to semi-official Ottoman chronicles İsmail Pasha's job was to enable a smooth change in the post of

³ Damadzade Ahmed Efendi served as mufti of Istanbul near to the end of his life, between 27 Şaban 1144/24 February 1732 and 13 Cumadelula 1146/22 October 1733. His waqf deed regulating the affairs of Murad Buhari tekke dated 1 Ramazan 1145/15 February 1733, in other words it was issued while he was serving as sheyhülislam.

⁴ al-Muradî, *Silk al-durar*, Raşid Mehmed Efendi states it was in 1098/1687.

⁵ Halil İbrahim Şimşek, *18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nakşibendî-Müceddidîlik*, İstanbul, Litera, 2016, s.262-3, 291-2.

Sharifate. But, suspicious of the unusual forces accompanying İsmail Pasha, Sharif Sad refused to attend usual ceremonies and therefore İsmail Pasha could not succeed in arresting him. Moreover, Sharif Sad obtained support from the Amir of Yemen and attacked to Ottoman forces when İsmail Pasha appointed Abdullah bin Hashim as Sharif of Mecca. Eventually Ottoman forces overpowered but they could not capture Sharif Sad or Amir of Yemen. When İsmail Pasha came back to Damascus as a victorious commander in August 1694, Muhammad Halil Muradi states, all Damascene notables and ulama members visited him to congratulate as usual. İsmail Pasha proudly narrated how he managed to defeat powerful Sharif Sad. All attendees either praised him or kept silent fearing to anger him. Only Murad Buhari criticized him for offending sanctity of Mecca and hurting her inhabitants, but İsmail Pasha did not hear his words. Murad Buhari was so upset, he left Damascus and settled in Haleb for a while. Descent members of Damascene ulama like Esad bin Ahmed es-Siddiki, Nakib Abdülkerim bin Hamza, and Seyyid Hamza Uclani, Mufti Ali Imadi, and Mihmandar Abdurrahman ibn Ahmed wrote letters to convince him to return. It seems that Murad Buhari attempted to influence Ottoman policy about amirate of hajj and sharifate of Mecca. if we are to believe Muhammad Halil Muradî, his great grandfather even managed to reach Sultan Ahmed II who passed away on 6 February 1695 without reaching a decision about latest undesirable results of İsmail Pasha's actions. Sultan Mustafa II replaced him and reversed the Ottoman policy towards Sharif Sad in the first days of his reign. The Ottoman army was having a difficult time in the west, waging war with Austrians in the land and the Papacy in the sea. On the other hand, in the East, Sharif Sad had assembled a great army and upon İsmail Pasha's departure, he had easily recaptured Mecca in late 1694. Sharif Abdullah bin Hashim was compelled to leave the Holy city to save his life. Eventually Sharif Sad managed to get support of local notables who signed a petition demanding pardon for Sharif Sad and his reassignment as the Sharif of Mecca. Ottoman capital discussed the offer and decided to ease the tension in the region by appointing Sad as Sharif in 11 March 1695. Sharif Sad stayed in the office until his voluntary retirement in late November 1702, when his son Said's sharifate was approved by the Ottoman capital. Whereas, İsmail Pasha was discharged from office when Sharif Sad reassigned. Ten days later, he was transferred to Cairo and stayed there three years as the governor of Egypt. In that respect, he was promoted to a higher position but again he was dismissed from office as a result of clash with local powers; the implementation of an imperial decree about usage of new Ottoman coins caused revolt of local soldiers and they released İsmail Pasha from the office. Then İsmail Pasha was transferred to another significant but problematic province, Bagdad. But he was dismissed a year later by the center due to incompetence. In short, İsmail Pasha and Sharif Sad presents a good example to describe decentralization process of the Ottoman administration prevalent in the 18th century. Muhammed Halil Muradî states that Governor İsmail Pasha met with Murad Buharî in Hama on his way back to capital after his dismissal from the office and asked for forgiveness. That statement is most probably true at least metaphorically. Anyway, Murad Buharî was the first among Damascene notables who was rewarded with a fiefdom in the form of *malikane*. Muhammed Halil Muradî underlined that point noting that the property granted by Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) in the form of *malikane* was still in the hands of the family in his days, ie. 1780s. The official historian (*vakanüvis*) of the age, Raşid Mehmed Efendi d.1735, writing immediately after the death of Murad Buharî emphasize that "everyone in the capital confess Murad Buhari's virtues and nobody can say anything against him except that he had accepted property from the Ottoman Government": "*Ulemâ-i rüsûm fazîlet-i zâhirelerine insâf ve ehl-i kulûb velâyet-i bâhirelerine itiraf etmeleriyle kibâr-ı selef gibi nişâne-i sihâm-ı ta'n ve inkar olmayup, fakat Şam-ı Şerifde taraf-ı Devletden cânib-i âlîlerine temlik olunan ba'zı kurâ kabûlünden ve a'sâr-ı*

şerriyyeleri taraf-ı azîze vusûlünden gayrı haklarında harf tefevvühüne bir ferd zebân-dirâz olmamış idi.”⁶

Murad Buharî’s next recorded conflict with an Ottoman statesman caused his banishment from the capital. Murad Buharî went to pilgrimage for the fourth time in 1119/1708 March and returned to Damascus. Muhammed Halil states that famous Şeyhülislam Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi who was martyred brutally in September 1703 was among his most important protectors. But it seems that Murad Buharî did not lose his influence after losing his most powerful friend and Naqshbandî-Mujaddidî order continued to grow in Syria, Iraq, Anatolia and Hijaz. Then Murad Buharî decided to leave Berraniyye tekke in the hands of his son Muhammed Bahaeddin and came to Istanbul to stay permanently in 1120/1708 (aged 68). He was well received by the people and notables of the capital. He resided in the house of Bıçaklı Efendi, which was located near Selim Mosque. But Çorlulu Ali Paşa had ascended to the highest post in May 1706 and he was obsessed with establishing his rule firmly. Therefore, he was intolerant to every potential political criticism especially when they are expressed in politically influential *ilmiyye* circles.

Çorlulu Ali Pasha had already banished former Şeyhülislam Paşmakçızade Seyyid Ali Efendi to Sinop in February 1707. The Grandvizier was probably right in his worries because four years later he was convicted guilty of treason and executed by Paşmakçızade Ali Efendi’s fetwa. Later on, Sadrazams continued to exile Şeyhülislams especially if they are critical of their policies. For instance Şehid Ali Paşa had banished two former Şeyhülislam Ebezade Abdullah Efendi and Ataullah Efendi in 1714 to Trabzon and Sinop. They were caught in a storm while sailing in the Black Sea and Ebezade Abdullah Efendi could not survive it. In our case, it seems that Çorlulu Ali Paşa regarded Murad Buharî’s presence as a threat to his government and he decided to exile him shortly after his arrival in the capital. Murad Buharî was sent away probably in 1709, at first he was forced to live in Sakız island but later on, probably after Çorlulu Ali Pasha’s dismissal in June 1710, he was allowed to reside in Bursa. He stayed in Bursa for five years where he accompanied by his disciple (halife) Hüseyin Ladiki, who recorded in *sohbetname* conversations with his sheyh Murad Buharî.

Murad Buharî came back to Istanbul probably in 1717 August and he stayed in Hüseyin Efendizade’s farm in Eyüp district. Later on, he was lodged with Sultan's former chief physician Nuh Efendi’s seaside residence. He passed away on 26 Rebiulahir 1132/7 March 1720 at the age of 80’s.⁷ His funeral was organized in Eyup Sultan Mosque and it was attended by many people and dervishes including high ranking Ottoman officials and members of *ilmiyye*. Şeyhülislam Damadzade Ahmed Efendi (d.1741) was one of his followers who served as mufti of Istanbul between February 1732 and October 1733. He transformed the madrasa built by his father into a tekke and Murad Buharî’s body was transferred and buried in that building. Later on, grand vizier Köse Mustafa Paşa (ö.1765) built a mosque nearby in 1753. His son Muhammad Bahaaddin (d.1755), grandson Ali al-Muradi (d.1770) and great grandson Muhammad Halil al-Muradi (d.1791) served as hanafi Mufti of Damascus and continued to teach in Berraniye madrasa.

⁶ Râşid Mehmed Efendi, *Târîh-i Râşid ve Zeyli*, haz. Abdülkadir Özcan, Baki Çakır, Yunus Uğur, Ahmet Zeki İzgöer, İstanbul, Klasik Yayınları, 2013, c.2, s.1177.

⁷ Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi states that he was 76 years old when he died on 12 Rebiulahir 1132, Tuesday. But 12 Rebiulahir 1132 actually corresponds to Thursday, whereas Raşid Mehmed’s description and detail seems more reliable. He states that Murad Buharî’s age was over eighty and close to ninety though he did look like sixty or at most seventy years old. Later sources, including Muhammed Halil Muradi’s account rely on these two contemporary sources, since they do not provide any new information.

Halil İbrahim Şimşek prepared a comprehensive study on Mujaddidiya order in the Ottoman lands and he presented a detailed account of 35 mujaddidi shayhs, ulama and statesmen. According to him Mujaddidiya received considerable support from high ranking Ottoman officials. We have already mentioned role of famous Şeyhülislam Fezullah Efendi who invited Murad Buhari to the capital. Şeyhülislam Damadzade, Paşmakçızade Ali Efendi (d.1712), Mustafa Efendi (d.1745) and Mehmed Salih Efendi (d.1762) are among other şeyhülislams with mujaddidiya affiliation. Grand viziers Şehid Ali Paşa (d.1716), Yeğen Mehmed Paşa (d.1745) and Köse Mustafa Paşa (ö.1765), Darussaade Ağası (Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Palace) Beşir Ağa (d. 1746) contributed to development of the order in the Ottoman empire. Qadı and bibliophile Veliyyüddin Carullah (d.1738), mudarris Muhammed Hadimî (d.1762), historian and alim Müstakimzade Süleyman Sadeddin (d. 1788) and famous mujaddidiya şeyh Mehmed Emin Tokadi (d.1745) should also be remembered as significant well-known Mujaddidî figures.

As Halil İbrahim Şimşek pointed out, achievement of mujaddidiya order in the Ottoman lands and especially its acceptance among the Ottoman ilmiyye class can be explained by its high esteem for religious sciences and their judgments rather than the esoteric sciences or practices.⁸ As Şimşek indicated Ottoman mujaddidis had a different attitude towards *vahdet-i vücud* than Indian mujaddidies; though they accepted İmam Rabbani's formulation of *vahdet-i şuhud*, they did not abandon İbn Arabî's formulation completely, and they have defended both of them. Similarly, though Naqshibandi-mujaddidi way preferred *hafi zikr* (silent repetition of God's names) instead of *cehri zikr* (loud or public recitation of God's names), they wrote pamphlets to defend usage of music and dancing (*musiki* and *sema*) in *zikr* ceremonies. These pamphlets can be seen as a late response to 17th century kadizadeli-sufi debate⁹, or as an early example of 18th century vahhabi-sufi debate. In that respect, Ottoman Mujaddidi movement seem to have a positive manner in dealing with traditional values, sufi circles and ilmiyye class in the Ottoman society. On the other hand, as we see in Murad Buhari's life and writings, that compliant behavior did not prevent him to confront with local and central authorities from time to time and he criticized some sufi practices of other tariqas as well. For instance, he, unlike other Ottoman mujaddidis, criticized usage of dreams in directing and evaluating spiritual journey of an adherent.

If we have a closer look at Murad Buhari's conversations with his disciple and halife Hüseyin Ladiki when he was in exile in Bursa in 1714, we see that the most often stated principle of his path is a strict commitment to sharia. Here, Sharia is not understood only as the Islamic law but as a whole set of principles explained by religious sciences and transmitted with *lisan* or language. One may ask, then, why sufi path is a necessity for a Muslim? It is a necessity for a Muslim wishing to apprehend *hakikat* or reality of oneself and the whole world of being. It is because human beings are consisted of heart (*kalb*) and body (*kalıp*), and heart has two function: to know (*ilim*) and to will (*irade*). Similarly, the realm of reality also has two sides; though both of these sides corresponds and confirms each other, they are different in nature. *Sharia* ie. Outward or ostensible sciences (*zahiri ilimler*) provides necessary tools to understand outwardly affairs, and they are transmitted through language from generations to generations. Whereas, hidden meaning of the being can only be understood through purification of heart (*tasfiye-i kalb*) and it is transmitted not by language but by love (*muhabbet*). Murad Buhari strongly emphasizes that the prophet and his companions are the primary sources of that kind of knowledge as well, but it is not narrated orally but transferred by

⁸ Halil İbrahim Şimşek, *18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Nakşibendî Müceddidîlik, Anadolu'daki Temsilcileri ve Tasavvufî Görüşleri*, İstanbul, Litera Yayıncılık, 2016, p. 289-290.

⁹ Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Fakihler ve Sofuların Kavgası 17. Yüzyılda Kadizadeliler ve Sivâsiler*, İstanbul, İletişim, 2016, pp.131-137.

heart. Therefore, spiritual journey of a dervish does not need novel tools and practices necessary to purify one's heart, the required practices and recitations are already explained in Quran and hadith. Therefore, Murad Buharî sees no need to invent new *esma* or prayers even if they are result of a true murshid's *keşf*, like İmam Gazzali.¹⁰ An adherent of mujaddidi path should follow strictly what *ahl-i sunnah* imams explained in the *fiqh* and *akaid* works about daily practices and doctrinal principles of Islam. In addition to these works, a dervish should attend congregation of true lovers (*ehl-i tasfiye*) and he should have a deep love for them. If a dervish keeps hold of that love and practice of *rabita* which combines him with his master, then, God may bestow him the reality (*hakikat*) of his being and the reality of everything. Sufi path starts with recognition of one's self as a combination of two conflicting power, *nafs* and *kalb*, and it emphasizes in training of *kalb* to have *irade* (will) which eventually develops into *muhabbet* (love). Therefore, sufi path cannot be explained or transferred with language, it dwells on heart and grows out of love for God and God's friends. With Murad Buhari's words: What is tariq (i.e. Sufi path)? It is to love Allah and to love those who love Allah and being loved by them. It is not possible without *muhabbet* (love), first, love for the master, second, for sharia."¹¹ So, this path of love and renunciation of one's selfish desires (*nafs*) leads the seeker to different levels of consciousness (*hal* and *makam*) and with it new forms of understanding becomes possible like *zevk* and *müşahede*. Just there is a hierarchical difference between knowledge (*ilm*) and absolute certainty (*yakin*), there is difference between will (*irade*) and love (*muhabbet*). Once the seeker reaches the level of renouncing his ego (*enaniyet*) his will (*irade*) develops into love (*muhabbet*). Then, he can reach integration or perfection (*tekamül*) and grasp the reality of his essence. However, it should be noted that *ilm-i batın* (esoteric wisdom) will never contradict with sharia, or outward or ostensible sciences.¹²

As stated above, Murad Buharî's views in a number of issues were slightly different from other Ottoman mujaddidis. First of all, about role of dreams and use of new "esma" (divine names) discovered (*keşf*) by competent shayhs. Murad Buharî thinks that it is possible to employ them in the training of dervishes but it is not standard way. Because the companions of the Prophet and the former generations did not apply those methods. Besides, there is no proof in the sharia legitimizing use of these unreliable and vague methods. Therefore, he recommends to stick with the traditions established by sharia and former generations.¹³ Secondly, Murad Buharî is not sympathetic towards those using sema and devran in *zikir* rituals. As we stated above, Naqshibandi-mujaddidis upheld hafi *zikir* but most of the Ottoman mujaddidis wrote pamphlets defending sema and devran. Murad Buharî thinks about adopting these practices as a deviation from the tradition and those who are in favor of them are immature at best.¹⁴ Lastly, Murad Buharî does not think *keşf* and *ilham* are reliable sources of information and he thinks they should always be checked with sharia.¹⁵

To conclude, Murad Buharî's revivalism consists of traditionalist and reformist elements. Naturally, being a sufi movement, it largely depends on traditional values and institutions. And it is reformist in the sense that it tries to establish more coherent theory and practice of sufi way by

¹⁰ Muhammed Murad Buharî, *Sohbetnâme*, haz. Fakirullah Yıldız, İstanbul, Litera Yayıncılık, 2017, p.193, 194.

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 178.

¹² *ibid.* p. 179.

¹³ *ibid.* p. 204, 221-3, 226, 244.

¹⁴ *ibid.* p. 225-6.

¹⁵ *ibid.* P. 204, 224.

eliminating some methods leading to marginal practices. His thought and political activism reflects his zeal to form a strong Islamic society organized under the guidance of influential religious leaders.