

A Neglected Ottoman Sufi Treatise from 16th century: *Mawāhib al-Rahman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* by İbrāhīm al-Qirīmī

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'Mawāhib al-Rahman fī Marātib al-Akwān': İbrahim el-Kırımı'nın Unutulmuş 16. Asır Osmanlı Tasavvuf Risalesi

Öz ■ Makalede 16. yüzyılda Kıımlı âlim İbrahim el-Kırımı (ö. 1593) tarafından yazılmış ve bugüne dek araştırmacıların dikkatleri dışında kalmış “Kozmik Düzenin Yorumlanmasında Rahman'ın Hediyeleri” isimli Tasavvuf risalesi incelenmektedir. Söz konusu mistik eserin, Halvetiye Tarikatının genel gelişimine önemli katkısı olduğu görünmektedir. Araştırma; İbrahim el-Kırımı'nın biyografisini, risalenin biçimsel yönleri ile ana konuları kapsamaktadır. İbrahim el-Kırımı'nın Halvetilik öğretisindeki “yükselme” (urūj) ve “alçalma” (nuzūl) kavramlarına dair görüşlerinin, önceki Halveti düşünürlerinin fikirlerini yorumlayarak ortaya atıldığı tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca, yazar kendi döneminin tarihsel olaylarına tasavvufi görüşlerini uyguladığında, söz konusu olayları döngü modeline göre açıklamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Osmanlı'daki Halvetiye akımının mirasının devamlı araştırılması, 16.yy Osmanlı Tasavvufunun aydınlanmasına katkıda bulunabileceği söylenebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Post Klasik Dönem, Osmanlı Tasavvufu, Halvetiye Tarikatu, Kıırım, Osmanlı-İran Savaşları, Döngüsel Zaman.

Introduction

Many contemporary scholars consider the rise of Sufism to be one of the main features of the post-classical Islamic thought. As John Walbridge notes, “mysticism was a phenomenon for philosophers to explain, but eventually it also

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became a philosophical tool central to the metaphysics and epistemology of the postclassical Islamic philosophers.”¹ Notwithstanding this obvious fact, most of the studies on Sufi doctrines continue to deal mostly with the Classical Age (from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī up to Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī and his followers from “Konya school”²). The only extension is the importance of some later traditions of Persian Sufi and Ishrāqī authorities (‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, Mullā Ṣadrā). For the periods between 14th and 18th centuries, many scholars restrict their efforts to historical, political and social dimensions of Sufi orders. As in the case with Islamic philosophy, it is now considered that post-classical Sufi orders mostly followed classical patterns of Sufi thought and thus produced limited numbers of new ideas. It must be remembered, however, that most of this literature, written in the post-classical period of Islamic thought, remains in a manuscript form and thus needs further studies to evaluate its real significance for the development of Sufi doctrines in general.

One of the best examples of a possible challenge to the idea of “stagnation” in the philosophical Sufism, is the written heritage of the Halveti Sufi brotherhood. In the last two decades, due to studies by A. Abdulkadiroğlu,³ B. Radtke,⁴ N. Clayer,⁵ J. Curry,⁶ E. Geoffroy,⁷ Y. Öztürk⁸ and other scholars, the history of this Sufi order and its importance on the Ottoman lands has become more generally known. Founded by ‘Umar al-Khalwatī (d. 1397/1398) and strengthened through the efforts of Yaḥyā Shirwānī (d. 1463), the Halveti order entered the social and political arena of the Ottomans under the spiritual leadership of Čelebī Khalifah

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- 1 John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 89.
 - 2 This term firstly used by Alparslan Açıkgenç. See his “The Konya School of Philosophy as a Historical Framework of Ottoman Thought”, *Al-Shajarah*, 17, 1 (2012), pp. 1-23.
 - 3 Abdülkerim Abdulkadiroğlu, *Halvetilik'in Şa'bâniyye Kolu Şeyh Şa'bân-ı Velî ve Külliyesi*, (Ankara: Kastamonu Şeyh Şa'bân-ı Velî Derneği, 1991).
 - 4 Bernd Radtke, “Sufism in the 18th Century: An Attempt at a Provisional Appraisal”, *Die Welt des Islams*, 36, 3, (1996) , pp. 326-364.
 - 5 Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société: les Halvetis dans l'aire Balkan de la fin du XV^e siècle à nos jours* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994).
 - 6 John Curry, *The Transformation of Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order, 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
 - 7 Éric Geoffroy, *Le soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premiers Ottomans: Orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturels* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1995).
 - 8 Yaşar Nuri Öztürk, *Kuşadalı İbrahim Halveti: İslam düşüncesinde bir dönüm noktası* (Istanbul: Yeni Boyut, 1997).

(d. 1481) and Sünbül Efendi (d. 1529). Later, new branches of the Halveti order appeared, such as the Sha'bāniyah (founded by Sha'bān-i Veli. d. 1569). Despite some tensions with 'ulamā' of other schools, Halvetis of Istanbul remained extremely powerful during the reign of Suleimān the Magnificent (1520 – 1566): according to Mehmet Bursali, their Sheikh, Muşliḥ al-Dīn Nūr al-Dīn Zādah (d. 1573) had a close friendship ties with Sultan.⁹

As it has been noted before, since the absolute majority of Halveti works remain unpublished, the philosophical background of this Sufi brotherhood needs further study. In this context, one of their most significant pieces of writing is the Arabic treatise *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* ("The gifts of the Merciful in Interpreting the Cosmic Order") by Ibrāhīm b. Ḥaqq al-Qirīmī (d. 1593). Although the author and his work are mentioned in some biographical dictionaries (such as those of Bursali¹⁰ and al-Ziriklī¹¹), neither his personality nor the legacy of his main treatise has been a subject of any detailed study. We strongly believe that an in-depth study of this work may show new lines in development of Halveti Sufi doctrines in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the significance of post-classical Sufi thought in general.

For our research, we used the manuscript of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*, found in Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi.¹² There is no information about its previous owners. The manuscript contains 236 folios (300 x 195 mm) bound, written in 23 lines. As the last folio of this copy says, it was finished by the second day of Şafar 1000 A.H. (corresponding to November 19, 1591) by Muştafā 'Abid al-Karavī, "known as Beşkerzāde".¹³ He used several types of Arabic script, mostly *naskh* and *nasta'liq*. The author (his name firstly stated on the beginning: "‘abd al-murīd... Ibrāhīm bin Ḥaqq Muḥammad al-Qirīmī")¹⁴ worked on this treatise for at least seven years: between 991/1583¹⁵ and Sha'bān 7, 998 (June 10, 1590).¹⁶ Since this

9 Bursali Mehmet Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri* (İstanbul: Meral Yayınevi, 1975), s. 118.

10 Bursali, s. 118.

11 Al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn, *Al-'Ālām. Qāmūs Tarājim* (Beirut: Dār al-'İlm li-l-Millayin 2002), vol. 1, s. 37.

12 Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī, *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī Marātib al-Akwān*, Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi, no. 3649.

13 Al-Qirīmī, f. 233b.

14 Al-Qirīmī, f. 1b.

15 Al-Qirīmī, f. 2a.

16 Al-Qirīmī, f. 230b.

copy was written during the lifetime of its author, it may be posited that the scribe used the original copy of the treatise. The author also noted his place of writing: “Little Hagia Sophia tenement” (*Zawiyā Küçük Ayā Şūfiyā*), a well-known residence of Halveti Sufis in the Ottoman capital.¹⁷ Apart from explanatory pictures on a few pages (see below), the manuscript also contains a kind of general index¹⁸, and, as its last page, a number of isolated inscriptions. Here one may read a collection of Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī’s dreams, his personal “mystical events” (*wāqia’b*) and a few well-known Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*). It seems that most of them were written after the author, probably by his students.

I. Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī and his Sufi background

There are not many biographical records about the author of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*.¹⁹ 18th-century Crimean historian Muḥammad Ridhā says that Sufi Ḥaqq b. Muḥammad, the father of Ibrāhīm, was born in Deşt-i Qıpçaq, meaning the steppes of the northern shore of Black and Azov Seas.²⁰ Khayr al-Dīn az-Ziriqlī adds to the name of Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī *nisbah* “al-Dishtī”, also confirming this fact.²¹ Kazanian scholar Murād Ramzī, who mentions al-Qirīmī in his *Talfīq al-Akḥbār*, says his father moved to Crimea before his son was born.²²

There is Sufi-styled legend about his birth, recorded by Murād Ramzī.²³ According to this, Ḥaqq b. Muḥammad saw the signs of God’s blessings in a dream: “After his night recitation of the Qur’an and exercises of the *ṭariqah*, he saw the enlightened elder. This elder gave him the Qur’an, placing it on his head. But the Qur’an moved from his head, so the elder placed it on his shoulder. The Qur’an also moved from his shoulder, so the elder placed it on his stomach, where the

17 Al-Qirīmī, f. 231b.

18 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 1a.

19 See some previous attempts to reconstruct his biography: Soysal Abdullah, “İbrahim Efendi bin Hakmehtmet Efendi”, *Emel*, 7 (1961), s. 23; Lenara İzzetova, “Qırımiy İbrahim bin Haqmehmed efendi (ö.1593)”, *Günsel*, 7 (2000), ss. 34-37.

20 Muḥammad Ridhā, *Al-Saba’ As-Siyār fī Akḥbār Mulūk Tātār* (Qāzān: Madrasah ‘Aliyah İmbirātūriyah, 1248/1832), s. 102.

21 Al-Ziriklī, s. 37.

22 Murād Ramzī, *Talfīq al-Akḥbār wa Talqīḥ al-Athār fī Waqā’i Qāzān wa Bulgār by Mulūk al-Tātār* (Orenburg: Karimov, Huseynov I Ko., 1908), vol. 2, s. 43-46.

23 Murād Ramzī, s. 44.

Holy Book remained to lay. When [Ḥaqq b. Muḥammad] woke up, he told this story to the Sheikh whose *murīd* he was. After thinking a few minutes, the Sheikh said: your lumbar (*ṣulb*) will bear a son, who will reach the highest level of happiness and the most exalted evidence (*al-shahādah al-‘aliyah*)”.

Al-Qirīmī received his primary education in Crimea; as Gulnara Abdullaeva supposes, probably at Zıncırlı medrese, founded in Bakhchisarai around 1500. It is also said that during these times al-Qirīmī established ties of friendship with Crimean Khan Devlet I Giray (1551 – 1577).²⁴ Halveti tradition (as well as other Sufi brotherhoods) has a significant legacy in Crimea: Sulaymān al-Kafawī (d. 1582) recorded in his famous *Kata‘ib A‘lām al-Akhyār* biography of Crimean Qādiri Sufi Khayr al-Dīn al-Kafawī (d. 1562), who studied in Kefeh under supervision of local Sufi scholars.²⁵ Another well-known Crimean figure belonging to the Halveti order was Abu’l-Fayḍ Muḥammad al-Kafawī (d. 1643), whose Arabic treatise on religious practice *Ḥadā‘iq al-Akhyār fī Ḥaqā‘iq al-Akbbār* (“Gardens of the Best in Cores of the Stories”) is preserved in Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi.²⁶ It must also be remembered that the first Sufi treatise was written in Crimea in the 13th century (*Kitāb al-Maṣābih fī al-Taṣawwūf*, “Book on the Lights of Sufism”).²⁷ Since al-Qirīmī’s father also was a Sufi, there is little doubt that his first encounter with Islamic mysticism occurred in Crimea.

Finishing his studies there, al-Qirīmī left his motherland for Istanbul, where he became a follower of the aforementioned Halveti Sheikh Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Nūr al-Dīn Zādah (d. 1573). There are also some mystical accounts about their meeting: Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī saw his future Sheikh in a dream, explaining this as God-given sign (*ishārah*) for his future life. Nūr al-Dīn Zādah, mentioned in Halveti *silsilah*, was especially interested in the philosophical thought of Muḥī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240) and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), as he wrote a commentary interpreting their works (*Risālah fī Waḥdah al-Wujūd, Sharḥ Kitāb al-Nuṣūṣ*).²⁸

24 Gulnara Abdullaeva, *Zolotaya Epoha Krymskogo Hanstva* (Simferopol: Krymucpedgiz, 2012), s. 143-148.

25 Sulaymān al-Kafawī, *Kata‘ib ‘Allām al-Akhyār min fuqahā’ madhhab al-Nu‘mān al-Mukhtār*, National Library of Iran, no. 14127, f. 231b.

26 al-Kafawī, *Ḥadā‘iq al-Akhyār fī Ḥaqā‘iq al-Akbbār*, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, Manisa Akhisar Zeynelzade Koleksiyon, no. 240.

27 Yaqub Kemal, “Arabs’kyi Sufiys’kyi Rukopys XIII viku, v Krymu znajdenyi i chy ne v Krymu pysanyi”, *Studii z Krymy* (Kyiv: Vseukrains’ka Akademiya Nauk, 1930), s. 159-164.

28 Bursalı, s. 171.

Apart from Istanbul, Ibrāhīm al-Qrīmī also visited Sofia, where he stayed in the *tekkīye* of Bālī Şofyālī (also known as Bali Efendi, d. 1552), the famous Bulgarian Sufi of the Halveti brotherhood. *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* provides few references to Ibrāhīm al-Qrīmī's mystical experiences in "blessed city of Sofia," mostly the visions of his prophetic dreams. Bālī Şofyālī, who was a student of Qāsim Efendi, a disciple of the noted Čelebī Khalīfah, also left a copious written legacy. For example, his commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* is well known. In it he outlined the basic principles for the development of the Halveti order, along with practical instructions to the Halveti, based on Ibn 'Arabī's theosophical concept of "mystical monism."²⁹ The influence of Bālī Şofyālī on Balkan Sufism (and, especially, the Halveti brotherhood) did not cease until to the end of 18th century, as the recently discovered vita of Shaykh Bali Efendi by Süleyman Küstendili reveals.³⁰

Around 1573, when his teacher died, al-Qrīmī visited his homeland in Crimea, where he lived for several years. However, as Murād Ramzī argues, "facing injustice and many other things contradictory to *sharī'ah*, he felt himself unable to change things and returned to Istanbul."³¹ This second trip to Istanbul occurred around 1577, after death of his patron, Crimean Khan Devlet I Giray. In Istanbul, al-Qrīmī first stayed in *tekkīye* of Sheikh Mustafa Pasha and then moved to one of the main Halveti centers of learning, the Little Hagia Sophia tenement. He also gave sermons in Jerrah Pasha mosque, as Bursali says.³² This shows not only his spiritual but also his public significance. As Derin Terzioğlu points out, by the late sixteenth century it had become quite the norm for "Sunna-minded, learned sufis to be appointed as preachers in mosques adjacent to their lodges, or if they were particularly favored, at the sultanic mosques that attracted particularly large crowds, often including influential men of state and sometimes the sultan himself".³³ Murād Ramzī maintains that al-Qrīmī had a close relations with Sultan Murad III: it is already known that Sufi's son, 'Abd Allah 'Afif al-Dīn

29 Maria Kalicin, Krassimira Mutafova, "Historical Accounts of the Halveti Shaykh Bali Efendi of Sofia in a Newly Discovered Vita Dating from the Nineteenth Century", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 12, 3 (2001), p. 344.

30 Maria Kalicin, Krassimira Mutafova, pp. 339-353.

31 Murād Ramzī, s. 44.

32 Bursali, s. 118.

33 Derin Terzioğlu, "Sunna-minded sufi preachers in service of the Ottoman state: the na-ṣiḥatnāme of Hasan addressed to Murad IV", *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), p. 251.

b. Ibrāhīm, was granted a position as judge in Kefeḥ, the Ottoman-governed city in the Crimea.³⁴

Al-Qirīmī's last years are known mostly from the accounts of his dreams, written on the last page of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*. These dreams mostly tell us about his visions of some Qur'anic verses, dialogues with Sufi authorities of the past (like the Ottoman Sufi Badr al-Dīn al-Sīmāwī, d. 1416), and even imagined conversations with the Sultan. It is worth mentioning the paramount importance of dreams and dream interpretation in Sufi Islam: the higher the level of dreams attested, the greater the spiritual ranking of the person.³⁵ Furthermore, dream accounts were a tool of self-description for late Sufi authors and hence assisted in producing autobiographical diaries.³⁶

Muḥammad Ridhā describes the death and funeral of al-Qirīmī (this happened in 1593), accompanied by the large crowd of people in the presence of "notable scholars" and state officials. He even writes: "Many people said he was undoubtedly the one who comes once in 100 years,"³⁷ meaning *mujaddid*, the "renewer" of Islam (as the ḥadīth, recorded by Abu Dawūd, says: "God shall raise for this *ummah* at the head of every century a man who shall renew for it its religion"). These words attest to the high position of Ibrāhīm al-Qrīmī in the eyes of his followers, especially in his native Crimea, where *Tātār Sheikh* (as Crimeans called him) is considered to be one of the greatest Sufis of his time.

Apart from *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*, the titles of five works by Ibrāhīm al-Qrīmī are known: *Tafsīr sūrah al-Nūr* ("Explanation of the surah *al-Nur*"), *Sharḥ ḥadīth amr Allāhi Tā'ālā 'ātani saba' al-mathānī* ("Commentary to the tradition *God the Almighty ordered to give me Seven the Repeated*"), *Ḥashīyah 'alā al-Jām'ī*, *Risālah fī l-Haqq* ("Treatise about the Truth") and *Risālah*

34 Muḥammad Ridhā, *Al-Saba' As-Siyār fī Akhbār Mulūk Tātār* (Qāzān: Madrasah 'Aliyah İmbirāṭuriyah, 1248/1832), s. 105.

35 See, for example: Reşat Öngören, "The Three Dimensional Dream Interpretation Of An Ottoman Sufi-scholar: Kutbuddin zade (d. 1480) on Dreams", *Istanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 15 (2007), pp. 55-69.

36 Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", *Studia Islamica*, 69 (1989), pp. 121-150; Derin Terzioğlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mısrī (1618-94)", *Studia Islamica*, 94 (2002), pp. 139-165.

37 Muḥammad Ridhā, s. 104.

fi Kufr al-Ḥaḳīqī (“Treatise about the Real Unbelief”).³⁸ It is not known whether the first three works by al-Qirīmī are preserved or not; the last two manuscripts, fortunately, are available in the Vatican Library.³⁹

II. *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fi bayān Marātib al-Akwān:* Composition and Sources

As is usual for many Sufi treatises, the text of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fi bayān Marātib al-Akwān* has a quite long introduction, stating the goals of the author and making reference to a prospective audience. By the second page he has already mentioned Murād III, asking God to help him in the conquest of new lands and enemies, “both Eastern and Western.”⁴⁰ al-Qirīmī frequently refers to his poetries (*munājat*) and the introductory part provides them as well. There is, however, one strange point in the title of the book. The author writes that his idea was to “make the book out of two books, *Madārij al-Malik al-Mannān fi bayān Ma’ārij al-Insān* and *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fi bayān Marātib al-Akwān*.”⁴¹ This has been done, the author explains, in order to combine the idea of seven spiritual circles of the soul with five divine spiritual stages: the first are the “ascending” (*‘urūjīyah*) and the second are the “descending” (*nuzūliyah*).⁴² Nevertheless, the book is known in all records under the name *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fi bayān Marātib al-Akwān* only; Murād Ramzī also mentions a copy of this work which contained two treatises in one.⁴³ There is, however, no formal division between the two treatises in the book; it is just the introductory part which provides these kinds of “chapters” (*fuṣūl*). Nevertheless, other parts of the text are continuous and may hardly be distinguished from one another. Headers, provided by the scribe, cover only the main topics of what is said on the page. The subjects of the book are intertwined with al-Qirīmī’s own spiritual experiences, explanations of the Qur’anic verses and Prophetic ḥadīth, and references to some historical events; it is sometimes hard to determine the context of the author’s narration. Written over the course of seven years of his life, *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fi bayān Marātib al-Akwān* may be

38 Bursalı, s. 118.

39 İbrāhīm Efendī al-Qirīmī, *Risālah fi l-Ḥaqq*, Vatican Library, no. 1470 (3); İbrāhīm Efendī al-Qirīmī, *Risālah fi l-Kufr al-Ḥaḳīqī*, Vatican Library, no. 1470 (2).

40 Al-Qirīmī, f. 2a.

41 Al-Qirīmī, f. 2b.

42 Al-Qirīmī, f. 3a.

43 Murād Ramzī, s. 46.

considered as al-Qirīmī's *magnum opus*, summarizing all his previous experience and, probably, his previous writings. Among other things, this work is also a kind of diary, where the author conducts a dialogue with himself and recalls important spiritual events.

The first eighteen folios of the manuscript maintain the basic principles of Sufi epistemology. Al-Qirīmī refers to the sūrah *al-Ḥashr* as a starting point: "O you who have believed, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow – and fear Allah."⁴⁴ It must be noted that the surah *Al-Ḥashr* elicited many commentaries from Sufi scholars, mostly due to the final four verses, where sixteen of the "most beautiful names" (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) are mentioned.⁴⁵ Al-Qirīmī argues that God calls his pious servants to contemplation and understanding. Since this kind of knowledge may be achieved only through reason, he must explain "the merit (*sharf*) of reason, of knowledge, of faith, and of piety." This may be accomplished only through the twelve stages of the ascent and descent of the human soul, which seeks its perfection in the knowledge of true reality (*ḥaqīqā*). To write down this path and explain its features are the main aims of the book.

In contrast to many other figures of post-classical Islamic thought, al-Qirīmī does not reduce his work to a commentary on the authorities of the past. In particular, one sees influences of the oral tradition, the most important kind of instruction in Sufi teachings. Despite the lack of mention of the titles of works by previous Halveti authorities, the legacy of their ideas is obvious when compared with some of the features of Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī's own formulations of the doctrine.

It must be noted that al-Qirīmī frequently refers to Nūr al-Dīn Zādah as his Sheikh; he also provides a version of the *silsilah* of the Halveti brotherhood. Among the most notable of this *ṭarīqah*, al-Qirīmī mentions 'Alī ibn Abu Ṭālib and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; he then counts later Sufis such as Ḥabīb al-'Ājamī (8th century), Dawūd al-Ṭā'ī (d. 738), Ma'rūf al-Karakhī (9th century), and, finally, his Ottoman forerunners: Qāsim Čelebī and Şofyālī Bālī.⁴⁶ There are also a few references to Yaḥyā b. Mu'āz al-Rāzī (8th century), Bayāzīd Bisṭāmī (d. 874), Junayd al-Baghdādī (d. 909), Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922), Abu Bakr al-Shiblī (d. 946),

44 Al-Qirīmī, f. 3b. The Qur'an, 59:18. All quotations are taken from the translation by "Saheeh International Team": *The Qur'an. English Meanings* (Jeddah: Al-Muntada al-Islami, 2004).

45 See, for example, anonymous work: *Tafsīr sūrah al-Ḥashr*, Milli Kütüphanesi-Ankara, Milli Kütüphanesi Yazmalar Koleksiyonu, no. 5595.

46 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 113b-114a.

Abu Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111); the most cited author, unsurprisingly, is Ibn al-‘Arabī, the great sheikh of Sufism: there are numerous quotations from his *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, *Al-‘Aqalāh al-Mustawfizah*, and other writings. For his commentaries on some verses, al-Qirīmī mentions by name the tafsirs of al-Bayḍāwī and Fakhr al-Rāzī and that of one of his later Ottoman contemporaries, Abu s-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī (d. 1572).

III. Circles of “ascent” (*ṣu‘ūd*): Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī on the Seven Stations of the Halveti Path

As has already been noted, al-Qirīmī identifies the idea of the soul and its perfection in knowledge as the main goal of his treatise. He discusses the concept of the “seven circles” (*al-dawāʾir al-sab‘a*) or the “seven stages” (*al-aṭwār al-sab‘a*) of this perfection, adding also the five stages of “descent” (*nuzūl*), meaning a path for apprehending the unity of being (*waḥdah al-wujūd*). For the state of ignorance, which signifies the Islamic notion of *kufr* and *jahl*, al-Qirīmī generally uses the term *al-ṭabī‘ah al-mazlūmah* (“the darkened nature”). To transcend the measures of this nature, the soul must proceed to the ultimate truth, hidden in the plurality of the world. Al-Qirīmī was not the first to use this term in that sense: long before him, Ibn ‘Arabī wrote “*Al-ṭabī‘ah* is the shadow of the world soul... when this shadow extended over the essence of the world first matter... the images and the forms of the corporeal world appeared from the substance of the first matter and the nature of the body.”⁴⁷ In the philosophical vocabulary of the post-classic Islamic philosophy, however, *ṭabī‘ah* was used in a more neutral psychological sense: Abū’l-Baqā’ al-Kafawī (d. 1682) in his *Al-Kulliyāt* explains *ṭabī‘ah* as the case when “soul dominates body without freedom of choice.”⁴⁸ Thus, al-Qirīmī uses this notion in its specifically Sufi context: “*ṭabī‘ah* may be divided into three levels: those of actions (*af‘āl*), attributes (*ṣifāt*), and essence (*dhāt*): all of them are nothing but curtains of God, placed between the servant and his Lord.”⁴⁹ To comprehend this, one must overcome these mysteries in order to reach the root of the “eternal light.” This “path”, al-Qirīmī states, consists of the aforementioned circles.

47 Ibn Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, ed. by Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2004), vol. 3, p. 296.

48 Abū’l-Baqā’ al-Kafawī, *Al-Kulliyāt*, ed. by ‘Adnān Darwīsh and Muḥammad al-Maṣrī (Beirut: Mu‘asasah al-Risālah, 1998), s. 585.

49 Al-Qirīmī, f. 3a.

Before an in-depth study of this idea may be begun, its legacy in previous Halveti writings must be maintained. John Curry mentions a few works of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Halvetis where the idea of “seven stages” is used, among them treatises by Čelebī Khalifah, Şofyālī Bālī, and ‘Umar Fu’ādī.⁵⁰ Long before them, the origins of this idea were argued in some way by ibn ‘Arabi (for example, in his division of beings in accordance with the number of angels and constellations, made in *Al-‘Aqalah al-Mustawfiz*).⁵¹ Ibn ‘Arabi’s philosophical vision of divine manifestations in beings and ultimate reality as the only true existence served as a powerful background for further development of Halveti thought (as well as many other orders). Post-classical Sufis, however, made their best efforts to present the idea of self-purification in a systematic way. For them, it was the point where the highest Sufi knowledge meets with everyday religious practice of the brotherhoods.

One of the most advanced outlines of the idea of *al-aṭwār al-sab’a* may be found in a treatise by Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī (d. 1493), Al-Qirimī’s forerunner from the same brotherhood. This treatise bears the title *Risālah al-Aṭwār al-Sab’a* and contains just six folios.⁵² Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī takes verses from the surah *Al-Mūminūn* as Qur’anic proof for this doctrine: “And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump of flesh, and We made from the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators”⁵³ and “While He has created you in stages? (*aṭwārā*)”⁵⁴ These are the “external” (*ẓāhir*) levels, while the “follower of the path” (*sālik*) must also to know “the internal ones,” supposed to be hidden in the allegorical sense of the sūrah *al-Naṣr*. The first level (*naṣr*, “help”) is the domination of spirit over soul; the second level is the openness of the hearth (*al-fatḥ*, “the victory”). The third level (*wa ra’āyta n-nāsa*, “and you see the people”) means vision, and the fourth (*yadkḥulūna fī dīni Allahi afwājā*,

50 John Curry, “Transforming Muslim Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: the Case of the Shabaniyye Order in Kastamonu and Beyond” (doctoral dissertation), Columbus: The Ohio State University, 2005, p. 247.

51 Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al-‘Aqalah al-Mustawfiz*, Rasā’il ibn ‘Arabi, ed. by Sa’id ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ (Beirut: Mu’asasah al-Intishār al-‘Arabi, n. d.), s. 79-100

52 Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī, *Risālah al-Aṭwār al-Sab’a*, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, no. 2963/6, ff. 173b-180b.

53 The Qur’an, 23:14.

54 The Qur’an, 71:14.

“entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes”) means “entering the powers of the soul into the domain of light and tranquility.” The fifth level (*fa-sabbih bi-ḥamdi Rabbi-ka*, “then exalt Him with praise of your Lord”) is a “level of perfect purification” (*kamāl al-taqdīs*). Correspondingly, the sixth level (*fa-stagfir-h*, “and ask forgiveness of Him”) is the *gafar* (“covering”) of “darkened existence” by “lightened existence.”⁵⁵ The seventh and last level (*inna-hu kāna tawwābā*, “Indeed, He is ever Accepting of repentance”), denotes the manifestation of the Divine essence in the gnostic (*‘ārīf*) soul and mind. There are also other projections of *al-aṭwār al-sab’a* in Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī’s treatise: against, for example, the elements of the human body as well as the constellations. All of these analogies are an attempt to show the vitality of the idea of *al-aṭwār al-sab’a* in relation to the order of beings.⁵⁶

Al-Qirīmī follows the same hermeneutical approach to the Qur’an. As along with his forerunner Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī, he understands the Qur’anic expressions *aḥsan al-taqwīm* and *asfāl al-sāfilīn*⁵⁷ as the highest and lowest levels of human perfection. His starting point for the idea of *al-aṭwār al-sab’a*, however, is the history of the prophet Ibrāhīm from surah *al-An’ām* (verses 76-79).⁵⁸ For the author of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*, there are seven levels along the path to perfection, as indicated in this story: first, Ibrāhīm sees the rising of a star, then the moon and the sun; these three objects mean first, third, and fifth levels, while their setting signifies the second, fourth, and sixth levels. The seventh and highest level, argues the author, is meant by the words of the prophet Ibrāhīm: “Indeed, I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with God”.⁵⁹ That is, the level of *fanā’*, Sufi “elimination” in God.

The first “circle” of the soul’s perfection is *al-naḥs al-ammārah* (‘the commanding soul’).⁶⁰ As the root (*aṣl*), this soul signifies the “darkened nature,” and bad morals are its “branches” (*furu*). On this level, writes al-Qirīmī, the soul becomes a *sulṭān* over its rational and spiritual faculties. This seems to be a picture of the ordinary human self, mostly unconscious about what he or she is doing. There

55 Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī, ff. 174a-178b.

56 Jamāl al-Aqsarā’ī, ff. 179a-180a.

57 The Qur’an, 95:4,5.

58 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 110b-111a.

59 The Qur’an, 6:79.

60 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 20a-b.

is no path of perfection for this soul, save to follow the external side of religious law (*ẓābir al-sharīʿah*). That is why under this “circle” the author describes some “additional rites” (*nawāfil*) of Islamic religious practice, such as night invocations, etc.⁶¹ To move from this level, one must open his heart to ones’ in-born quality (*fiṭrah*) and divine light.⁶²

The second “circle” of the path to truth is *al-naḥs al-lawwāmah* (“the re-proving soul”).⁶³ This “circle” means a soul that purifies itself of evil morals and intends to conduct religious obligations (*takālīf*) as much as possible. The spirit (*rūḥ*) becomes *sultān* over the believer, while the intellect (*ʿaql*) plays the role of “minister” (*wazīr*) to the *sultān*, and the soul itself is wife to this “minister.” This level also means the active imagination (*khayāl*), while the previous one has been the degree of passive mind (*wahm*): “in this circle the *murīd* becomes dominated by imaginative power as well as imaginative openings... this is also the manifestation of the human names and actions and tastes of the plurality of the hearth.”⁶⁴ Keeping in mind the plurality of the world, the *murīd* on this level recognizes the necessity of continuing his spiritual path.

For the third “circle” al-Qirīmī uses the well-known Sufi term of *al-naḥs al-mulḥimah* (“the inspired soul”).⁶⁵ This is the station of the spirit (*maqām al-rūḥ*). It signifies the setting of the imagination (*maghrīb al-khayāl*) and the manifestation of divine names. It is only the purified soul which reaches this level in its path to the truth. The soul perfects its repentance and “dives into the ocean of reality” (*baḥr al-ḥaqīqah*). It surmounts the “darkened nature” and senses the trace of divine domination (*rubūbiyah*). In this stage, one feels himself as the whole world and perceives the world as his own individual existence (*ānā al-ʿālam wa al-ʿālam ʿaynī*). This allows the seeker to penetrate the measure of time and space, and perhaps observe distant places and past times (first and foremost, in prophetic dreams). This “circle” elevates the believer over the world, due to the manifestation of divine names.

The fourth “circle” (*al-naḥs al-muṭamaʿinah*, “the tranquil soul”) leads the *murīd* to the acknowledgment of reality (*ḥaqīqah*) and purification from the effects

61 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 20b-35a.

62 Al-Qirīmī, f. 34b.

63 Al-Qirīmī, f. 35b.

64 Al-Qirīmī, f. 37b.

65 Al-Qirīmī, f. 50b.

of imagination.⁶⁶ On this level, the soul comprehends the particulars (*juz'īyyāt*) of beings and their metaphysical origins (*uṣūlu-hā al-kulliyah*). This circle is also the place where human beings understand their links with other creatures and perceive themselves as superior existences. Al-Qirīmī also describes this station as “*majm'au' l-baḥrayn*”: a point of meeting with divine.⁶⁷ Finally, one may reach “the most important goal” (*al-maqṣūd al-a'ẓam*): “to realize the wisdom in the creation of creatures and the mode of their order (*kayfīyah al-niẓam*).”⁶⁸

The next level, the fifth, is *al-naḥs al-rāḍīyah* (“the pleased soul”).⁶⁹ Al-Qirīmī says that the idea of this stage is indicated by the verse of the Qur'an: “If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of God.”⁷⁰ The authors compare this level to the events of resurrection (*ba'ṭh*): this “circle” is an allegory for spiritual awakening, which may be opened to those “travellers” who have patience and gratitude. *Al-naḥs al-rāḍīyah* is like the souls of those awaiting the gathering (*al-ḥaṣhr*) before the Last Judgment.

The sixth “circle” (*al-naḥs al-marḍīyah*) signifies the decision of God (*ḥukm Allah*) as well as “the enlightened nature” (*al-ṭabī'ah al-musharraḥah*) to be attained by those who have proceeded through the previous stages. It is a kind of spiritual Paradise. When the last visible curtain (*ḥijāb*) is removed, the *murīd* goes directly to the seventh level, the level of *khifā* (“hiding”) and *fanā* (“annihilation”).⁷¹ Now the *murīd* enters into the realm of divine essence and professes the true unity of God (*aḥadiyyah*). Using Qur'anic expressions, al-Qirīmī calls this level a “kingdom” (*malakūt*) and the “seven heaven.”⁷² Such is the “perfect human” (*al-insān al-kamāl*), the real manifestation of God in His creations. This, the author says, is the ending of the first part (*Madārij al-Malik al-Mannān fī bayān Ma'ārij al-Insān*) and the beginning of the second (*Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*). Thus, when finishing with the path from human to God, al-Qirīmī switches to another path, from God to human.

66 Al-Qirīmī, f. 64b.

67 Al-Qirīmī, f. 65a.

68 Al-Qirīmī, f. 65b.

69 Al-Qirīmī, f. 86a.

70 The Qur'an, 59:21.

71 Al-Qirīmī, f. 140a.

72 Al-Qirīmī, f. 140b.

IV. “Five Circles on Descend” and Their Philosophical Interpretation

It must be remembered, that al-Qirīmī describes the Halveti vision of both paths (*urūj* and *nuzūl*) in his hand-written illustrations with twelve circles pictured.⁷³ There are few versions of this scheme: some of the twelve circles are written in line, while some laid out in an irregular circular pattern.⁷⁴ One scheme also provides links between opposing circles. The lowest circle is *al-nafs al-ammārah* and the highest is the *fanāʾ*. *Murīd* goes counterclockwise, “ascending” along the right side of the circuit and “descending” along the left one. The most detailed scheme also provides some of the divisions of being: the internal part of the circuit is a “being” (*wujūd*), while the external one is an “absolute being” (*wujūd muṭlaq*). It seems that by this, al-Qirīmī means that the soul in its travels realizes the essence of human nature as the measure between necessary and possible existence.

The aforementioned seven circles, reached by the will (*irādah*) of the God-seeker, are the external (*ẓāhir*) stations of the path, while another five are the internal (*bāṭin*) ones. To finish this path means to reach a harmony between the “external” and “internal.” Both of them are manifestations of divine *jalāl* (“the glory”) and *jamāl* (“the beauty”). Al-Qirīmī tries to explain that perfection of soul and knowledge of God may be realized only when there is a way not only “to God”, but also “from God” with new spiritual experience and, finally, exploration of level of beings (*marātib al-akwān*). As well as his Halveti forerunner Jamāl al-Aqṣarāʾī, al-Qirīmī equates his “circles” to the signs of the zodiac and names of the months in the Islamic calendar.

Al-Qirīmī goes further in his explanations, referring to the well-known Islamic formula of *lā ilaha illā Allah*, “there are no god but God.”⁷⁵ The first part of it, as may be understood from the manuscript, gives to the *murīd* purification from *shirk*. This is the case with the prophet Ibrāhīm, who moved from one natural object to another in his search for the true God. Thus, saying *lā ilaha murīd* removes the curtains and reaches the ultimate annihilation in God (that is, at the seventh stage). The other five “circles” reveal the meaning of the second part, *illā Allah*. Knowing the real divine essence, attributes, and actions, the *murīd* “descends” to the lower level of reality, knowing that everything around (*wujūd muṭlaq*, “the absolute being”) is God and nothing exists beside Him. Al-Qirīmī,

73 Al-Qirīmī, f. 1b. See the illustration below.

74 See: Al-Qirīmī, f. 1a, 19a, 19b, 71b, 72a.

75 Al-Qirīmī, 140a-150b.

following the ontology of ibn ‘Arabī, calls this path of knowledge the way from *aḥadiyāh* to *wāḥidiyāh*, from the profession of “Oneness” to the “Absolute Unity”. In other words: first of all, the soul must understand that God is one, and only then know that there is nothing in the world except Him.

Not every seeker of truth may achieve this, argues al-Qirīmī. He narrates the idea of “ascent” and “descent” through the description of a dream that occurred on Muḥarram, 15, 998 (October 24, 1589). In this dream, al-Qirīmī “saw” the Sulṭān (he means Murād III), who asked him about the stations (*maqāmāt*) of the Sufi path. He mentions their number and explains:

“*Murīd* and *sālik* going along this path from the world of nature to the world of truth. He approaches it from the western side. He goes through the six levels, realizing the unity of truth and seeing the absolute and noble face of God. Along the way, he becomes annihilated within God, and his confession of God’s Oneness and sincere faith transforms him into the perfected one. He becomes one of those who wander in the glory of the Most Exalted and the Most Powerful God. After this, he begins his descent from the [mount] ‘Arafāt of unity to the plurality of beings. He approaches it from the eastern side. He passes through the six levels, step by step. To complete this descent is harder than the ascent, hence there are many followers who ascend, but only a few who descend.”⁷⁶

This “sacred geography” (the idea of the spiritual East and West, the mention of mount ‘Arafāt in Makkah, where the rite of Islamic pilgrimage reaches its culmination) is well-known in Sufi thought. It was used, for example, by both Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī and Ibn Arabī.

The first of the five “descending circles” is that of staying (*al-baqā*) after *fanā*’. The first thing a seeker sees on this level is the “mystery of God” (*sirr Allah*), revealed through the divine names, related to the idea of creation (*al-bārī*, *al-khāliq*, *al-muṣawwir*). On the next, second “circle”, the *murīd* comprehends the divine throne (*al-‘arsh*). To explain this notion, al-Qirīmī mostly refers to ibn ‘Arabī, who interpreted the meaning of *al-‘arsh* in many of his writings.⁷⁷ Travelling by the next “circle,” the *murīd* comprehends the world of nature (*al-ṭabī‘ah al-kulliyah*), because on this level the plurality disappears.⁷⁸ The fourth “circle” brings the *murīd* to the world soul, since this is the place of the highest knowledge. Finally,

76 Al-Qirīmī, f. 195b.

77 Al-Qirīmī, f. 184a.

78 Al-Qirīmī, f. 195a.

on the next and last level, the *murīd* reaches God-given inspiration and perceives the reality of the Pen (*al-qalām*) and the Spirit (*al-rūḥ*), facing the very origins of creation.

V. Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī's Spiritual Vision of History

It is worth mentioning that the Halveti brotherhood was actively involved into political life of the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, this order was an active participant in the process of Sunnitization in the eastern empire (especially during the wars with Safavids). Unsurprisingly, relations between Sufi circles and the authorities were reflected in many genres of Sufi literature. *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* also contains many places, where current political events were in the center of author's attention. Furthermore, al-Qirīmī tries to establish a link between his vision of politics and the aforementioned Halveti idea of "twelve circles."

Al-Qirīmī's "philosophy of history" (or, rather, historiosophy) seems to be based on his "sacred geography," as mentioned before. The Holy City of Makkah in his teaching means the level of Oneness (*aḥadiyyah*), while the second Holy City, Madinah, signifies the level of Unity (*wāḥidiyyah*).⁷⁹ The city of Madinah is also explained as the "manifestation of the complete divine appeal to the Islamic community" (*mazhar al-da'wwah al-tāmmah li-l-ummah*) and has the divine throne (*al-ʿarsh*) as its symbol. "Makkah" is the "ascent" of the *murīd* while "Madinah" is the "descent." Victory (*fath*) of the Prophet over Makkah, for example, is the perfection (*takmīl*) of *aḥadiyyah*: that is why Halvetis so greatly honored the recitation and interpretation of the surah *Al-Naṣr*, where this event is mentioned.

The author of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* draws a special "map of the world" in accordance with his vision of the history.⁸⁰ For him, the lands between Crimea, Kazan and Khwarezm are the manifestations of the first circle. The second circle is the place where "the seas meet each other", meaning Istanbul. The eastern Mediterranean Sea (*al-baḥr al-abyād*) is the place of the second circle ("the inspired soul"). The following circles are manifested in four parts: Egypt, "the land between Egypt and Jerusalem," Jerusalem itself, and, finally, "the lands between Jerusalem and Makkah" (that is, the seven circles and "the world of the reality").

79 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 208a-211b.

80 Al-Qirīmī, f. 74b.

The other five circles (circles of “descent”) are also enlisted by al-Qirīmī. The first of them is Madinah, the second one is the east of Syria with Aleppo, then Basra, Kufa and, for the fifth circle, Khorasan. If the “direction” of the circles of descent is considered, they generally follow the history of Islamic victories (*al-futuḥāt al-islāmiyah*). The first seven circles of “ascent” may be understood when considered from the perspective of a map of the real world with a south-north orientation: this is the way from the northern part of Islamic world to *qiblah* in Makkah.⁸¹

A way to the truth (that is how al-Qirīmī understands “global history”) moves from one circle to another. Victories of the Ottoman Empire are the signs of this movement. In this way the author of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* explains some contemporary events. He says that when the Ottoman Empire annexed the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah (in 1517), the “circles of ascent” reached their perfection. All subsequent events that took place in the Ottoman Empire during 10th A.H./16th C.E. century, are the manifestations of other levels, the levels of descent. “Now we live in the fourth circle among the circles of descent”, al-Qirīmī says of his era.⁸² Then, continues the author, the Ottoman Empire (*Al-dawlah al-Rūmiyyah*) must “fulfill its existence,” being the last political power to represent the Islamic community.⁸³

al-Qirīmī devotes a few pages of his work to current political events, namely, the Ottoman war with the Safavids. He describes the spiritual significance of the victory over *qabilah Qizilbāsh* (“the tribe of Qizilbash”). Similar to many of his Ottoman contemporaries,⁸⁴ al-Qirīmī means by this name all Shia supporters of the Safavid Empire.⁸⁵ He mentions twelve years of war (meaning the Ottoman-Persian conflict of 1578 – 1590) and insists on the religious context of this continuing battle. He positions the Ottoman state as the only true defender of Sunni Islam (*ahl al-sunnah wa l-jamā'ah*) against every kind of heresy (*ilhād*). The author of *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* does not forget to mention his great patron, Sultan Murād III. He also describes the sultan as the perfect follower

81 Al-Qirīmī, f. 211.

82 Al-Qirīmī, f. 216b.

83 Al-Qirīmī, f. 216b.

84 Natalja Volkova, “O nazvanijax azerbajdzancev na Kavkaze”, *Onomastika Vostoka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), s. 209.

85 Al-Qirīmī, f. 215b.

of the Sufi path (*mukammal al-irādah wa l-sulūk*).⁸⁶ It must be remembered that at the beginning of his treatise al-Qirīmī already defines belonging to *ahl al-sunnah wa l-jamā'ah* as the real identity of the Halveti path (even the idea of “seven circles” is been presented as the true Sunni doctrine).⁸⁷ Thus, al-Qirīmī maintains the political importance of the Halveti brotherhood and its potential role in the propagation of loyalty to the Ottomans in the eastern regions of the empire. In accordance with the widespread medieval pattern, al-Qirīmī also sees the battle with the Qizilbash from an eschatological perspective. He mentions the prophetic tradition that “the Hour will not come until *al-Rūm* become the most numerous people,”⁸⁸ meaning the military power of the Ottomans.

The author also reveals his vision of the Sufi role in *jihād*. al-Qirīmī describes his conversation with notable Halvetis that took place in 985/1577 at “*zawiyā* of Muṣṭafā Pāshā” in Istanbul.⁸⁹ He persuades his spiritual brothers that *jihād al-gazā'* (“military *jihād*”) is an obligation for “kings and emirs” of Muslims, while Sufis must be involved in the “greater *jihād*,” meaning the spiritual one. “Our *jihād* is a root, and their *jihād* is a branch, which depends on the root.”⁹⁰ Thus, “people of the internal reality” (*aṣḥāb al-bāṭin*) must wage their spiritual struggle properly in order to urge others to participate in military fighting. His counterparts agreed with this idea, but al-Qirīmī recognized personally those who left the “greater *jihād*” (“despite this I saw sincerity in military *jihād*, being trustworthy and genuine”). By this reference we may suppose that al-Qirīmī participated in some military campaigns, but no further information is given in the manuscript. In some way, al-Qirīmī appeals to the spiritual vision of history, when the “external” events of history mean nothing other than the manifestation of “internal” processes.

Conclusions

The manuscript of the book *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān*, written by al-Qirīmī in the end of 16th century, reveals some new features of post-classical Sufi thought in the Ottoman Empire. First of all, it is possible to reveal

86 Al-Qirīmī, f. 214a.

87 Al-Qirīmī, f. 18a.

88 Al-Qirīmī, f. 214a.

89 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 101a-b.

90 Al-Qirīmī, ff. 101b.

Halveti doctrine from the inside, since the text, as is obvious from the vocabulary used, has been focused on a Sufi audience. It may therefore be attested that al-Qirīmī provides one of the best and most complex outlines of the Halveti Sufi path (the idea of *al-aṭwār al-sabaʿ*), interpreting it in accordance with his vision of Ibn ʿArabī’s teachings and, even more interestingly, his evaluation of social and political realities.

Despite some parallels with his Halveti predecessors, such as Jamāl al-Aqṣarāʾī (d. 1493), al-Qirīmī seems to be quite innovative in his thought: for example, in relation to the idea of the “five circles of descent.” He intentionally tries to reconcile traditional Halveti visions of the “ascent” (meaning the path to God) with another necessary concept, the “descent” (the path from God). By this al-Qirīmī finds harmony between *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, the internal and the external “sides” of the global cosmic circle. His idea was to show the features of the path from the oneness of God (*aḥadiyah*) to His unity (*wāḥidiyah*). Interestingly, in contrast to Ibn ʿArabī himself and many of his later followers, al-Qirīmī does not use the technical terminology of *falsafah* or *kalām*. For his description of the level of beings, he mostly uses purely Sufi terms. For this reason it may be said that the work *Mawāhib al-Raḥman fī bayān Marātib al-Akwān* is intended for a limited readership (his own *murīd*, above all).

Nevertheless, the heritage of al-Qirīmī seems to be important not merely within the context of the Halveti tradition, but in the development of Ottoman Sufism in general. It must also be noted that the political implications of al-Qirīmī’s doctrine were considered in the context of the Ottoman politics, since his circles of “ascent” and “descent” represent the territorial development of the Ottoman Empire. This may attest to the fact that al-Qirīmī was involved in the politics of Sunnitization in the eastern empire, especially during the wars with Persian Safavids.

Further studies on al-Qirīmī must also link his thoughts to those of his teaching environment, that of the great Halveti Sufis Şofyālī Bālī (d. 1552) and Muşliḥ al-Dīn Zādah (d. 1573). Their works, however, also remain in the manuscript form and hence need separate research. As our review of al-Qirīmī’s work shows, the philosophical side of Halveti doctrine may be one of the keys to a new vision of Ottoman intellectual heritage and the role it played in post-classical Islamic thought.



Figure 1, Al-Qirimi, f. 1b

A Neglected Ottoman Sufi Treatise from 16th century: Mawāhib al-Rahman fî bayān Marātib al-Akwān by Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī

Abstract ■ The article surveys the contents of the neglected Sufi treatise “The Gifts of the Merciful in Interpreting the Cosmic Order” from the 16th century, written by the Crimean scholar Ibrāhīm al-Qirīmī (d. 1593). It seems that his mystical heritage is an important contribution to the general development of the Halveti Sufi brotherhood. The study covers al-Qirīmī’s biography, formal descriptions of the manuscript, and its main topics. It is argued that al-Qirīmī outlined his vision of the Halveti doctrine of “ascent” (*‘urūj*) and “descent” (*nuzūl*), re-interpreting Halveti authorities of the past. It is also shown in the study that the author of the treatise compared his spiritual visions to current historical events, describing them in accordance with the patterns of cyclism. In this context, further studies of Ottoman Halveti thought may lead to a more comprehensive picture of 16th-century Ottoman Sufism.

Keywords: The Post-Classical Period, Ottoman Sufism, Halveti brotherhood, Crimea, Ottoman-Persian Wars, Cyclic Time.

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