



Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi and Rumi

Seyyid Yahya Bâkuvî ve Rumî

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ABSTRACT

Sufism, an integral part of Turkish-Islamic philosophy, holds a significant position thanks to the historical figures it has nurtured. It has also played an exceptional role in Azerbaijan's socio-political and cultural history. As an Islamic way of life and thought system, Sufism aims to lead individuals to purity of heart and soul, high morals, and ultimately, the true level of humanity through special training. Mysticism, which developed in Muslim societies from the earliest periods, became known as "Sufism," and those who followed this path were called "Sufis." The concept of "irfan" means knowing and understanding; it is divided into two parts: traditional and theoretical. With its rich history, culture, and traditions, Azerbaijan has become a center for the development of the concept of Irfan; it has nurtured leading figures of the Sufi tradition both within its own borders and across East to West. Nizami, Fuzuli, Shams-i Tabrizi, Yunus Emre, Mevlana, and many other great thinkers and prominent figures of Turkish-Islamic culture have left profound marks not only in their own regions but also on world civilization. These personalities delved into the depths of the human soul, explored the hidden world of the heart, and illuminated the spiritual life of societies. Among the most important "architects of the heart" in the world of Sufism, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, the leader of the Mevlevi order, and Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi, one of the founders of the Halveti school, hold a special place. As the most distinguished travelers on the path of wisdom, they have guided humanity not only in the spiritual realm but also in the fields of science and thought. This article will examine the contributions of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi to Sufi thought. Keywords: Mysticism, Sufism, Architects of the Heart, Mevlana, Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi

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ÖZET

Türk-İslam felsefesinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olan tasavvuf, yetiştirdiği tarihî şahsiyetler sayesinde önemli bir konuma sahiptir. Azerbaycan'ın sosyo-politik ve kültürel tarihinde de tasavvuf müstesna bir rol oynamıştır. İslâmî bir yaşam biçimi ve düşünce sistemi olan tasavvuf, özel terbiyeler aracılığıyla insanı kalp ve ruh saflığına, yüksek ahlâka ve nihayetinde hakiki insanlık mertebesine ulaştırmayı amaçlar. Müslüman toplumlarda ilk dönemlerden itibaren gelişen mistisizm, "tasavvuf" adıyla tanınmış, bu yolun yolcularına ise "sûfî" denilmiştir. "İrfan" kavramı bilmek ve idrak etmek anlamına gelir; geleneksel ve teorik olmak üzere iki kısma ayrılır.

Zengin tarihi, kültürü ve gelenekleriyle Azerbaycan, irfan anlayışının geliştiği bir merkez olmuş; hem kendi topraklarında, hem de Doğu'dan Batı'ya yayılan tasavvuf geleneğinin öncü şahsiyetlerini yetiştirmiştir. Türk-İslam kültürünün önde gelen simaları olan Nizami, Fuzuli, Şems-i Tebrizi, Yunus Emre, Mevlâna ve daha pek çok büyük düşünür yalnız kendi coğrafyalarında değil, dünya medeniyetinde de derin izler bırakmışlardır. Bu şahsiyetler, insan ruhunun derinliklerine inmiş, kalbin gizli dünyasını keşfetmiş ve toplumların manevi hayatına ışık tutmuşlardır. Tasavvuf dünyasının en önemli "gönül mimarları" arasında, Mevlevîlik yolunun önderi Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rumî ile Halvetîlik ekolünün kurucularından Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi özel bir yere sahiptir. Onlar, irfan yolunun en mümtaz yolcuları olarak yalnızca manevî alanda değil, ilim ve düşünce hayatında da insanlığa yön vermişlerdir.

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Bu makalede Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rumî ve Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi'nin tasavvuf düşüncesine katkıları ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İrfan, Tasavvuf, Kalp mimarları, Mevlâna, Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi

INTRODUCTION

Religion, as both a cultural heritage and a legacy of the past, constitutes one of the most profound and sacred spiritual values transmitted to future generations. Islam, with a history spanning more than fourteen centuries, has exerted a powerful intellectual and cultural influence across much of the world. In its essence, religion embodies spiritual progress in the truest sense, for it is inseparable from culture (Aslanova, 2002).

Throughout history, from the Great Wall of China to the Adriatic, Turkic-Islamic culture has emerged as a decisive and transformative force in shaping civilizations. Within this broad cultural and intellectual tradition, prominent Muslim Sufi thinkers and scholars – including Nizami, Fuzuli, Shams Tabrizi, Yahya Shirvani, Yunus Emre, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, Haji Bektash Veli, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Khoja Ahmad Yasawi, Mahmud al-Kashgari, al-Ghazali, Ibn al-‘Arabi, Avicenna, among others – have played a distinctive role in the history of Turkic-Islamic philosophy and religious thought. Their intellectual and spiritual contributions represent an invaluable legacy, profoundly shaping both regional traditions and humanity's universal heritage.

As a principal path of gnosis (*irfan*), the science of Sufism, rooted in ancient traditions, constitutes one of the fundamental streams of national and spiritual heritage. Sufism represents a discipline of moral refinement that defines the relationship of the noblest of creatures – the human being – with God, with himself, and with the society in which he lives. By cultivating the inner world, Sufism offers a method of ethical training that remains firmly grounded in the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. When embraced as the most beautiful form of practicing Islam, it entails the profound responsibility of adhering to the Divine Book and the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Historically, numerous religious scholars, serving as spiritual leaders, played a pivotal role in introducing Islam to Anatolia and in disseminating the *irfan* tradition, thereby securing their place in history as influential figures. Human existence, from the Sufi perspective, is conceived as a journey toward the Hereafter, for man is created for the eternal life to come. This worldview may be concisely summarized as follows: "*Faith and Islam culminate in righteous conduct and benevolence, and in the Hereafter, we are to appear before God as those who have done good*" (Sert, 2022).

Sufism has also played a significant role in the socio-political and cultural history of both Anatolia and Azerbaijan. Within Muslim societies, what would later be described as "mysticism" was originally known as *tasawwuf*, and its adherents were referred to as Sufis (Qasimov, 2020). Among the most distinguished figures of this tradition, one of the two most prominent scholars is Jalal al-Din Rumi, who lived and wrote in the thirteenth century.

Recognized as one of the most celebrated saints of the thirteenth century, Jalal al-Din Rumi was born in 604 AH (1207 CE) in Balkh, Khorasan. From an early age, he was introduced to Sufi knowledge through his father, who instructed him within the framework of the Kubrawiyya order. Although Rumi lived more than eight centuries ago, his works remain the subject of extensive study, and his ideas continue to gain increasing relevance. He is regarded as one of the most distinguished figures among Turkic-Islamic scholars and thinkers.

For centuries, Rumi's teachings have inspired profound devotion to God, the Prophet Muhammad, humanity, and the inseparable love for both the Creator and His creation, all deeply rooted in adherence to the Qur'an. The Mevlevi lodges (*mevlevihane*), founded upon his intellectual and spiritual legacy, have become enduring cornerstones of Turkish culture, ensuring the transmission of his thought and wisdom into the present day (Rahmet Kapısı, 2015).

The eminent scholar who devoted his life to the path of divine love and affection is the author of the *Mathnawi*, a monumental work comprising nearly 26,000 couplets. This masterpiece constitutes a universe of profound meaning and spiritual mystery, ranking among the rare works that skillfully



articulate the truths of Sufism and the intricacies of the human soul. Through the *Mathnawi*, Mawlana conveyed mystical concepts – often beyond ordinary reasoning – through spiritual expressions, allegories, and parables of great wisdom. He himself described the work as "a luminous path for those who seek the truth and desire to become familiar with divine mysteries" (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).

Mawlana (quddisa sirruh) thus transformed the inner journey of the human heart into a vivid literary monument, offering it as a timeless gift to humanity. The essence of the *Mathnawi* may be encapsulated in his own couplets: "*If you have a heart, then circumambulate the Kaaba of the heart! For the true meaning of the Kaaba of earth and stone is the heart itself.*" Similarly, he proclaims: "*The Exalted God has made the circumambulation of the visible Kaaba obligatory so that one may attain the Kaaba of the heart, purified and cleansed of evil.*"

The *Mathnawi* is a literary universe filled with profound secrets – an exposition of the human condition and a portrait of the soul rendered into words. In this work, Mawlana penetrated deeply into the human spirit, closely observing the inner essence of man (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).

At its core, the *Mathnawi* constitutes a dialogue between Rumi and his disciple Husam al-Din. As Mawlana (quddisa sirruh) himself stated, "*I wrote this Mathnawi for Husam al-Din.*" For Rumi, Husam al-Din embodied both the grief of losing Shams – the ocean of divine love – and the desire to share his words with a wider community.

The *Mathnawi* unfolds through hundreds of stories narrated in succession, each designed to offer lessons through reasoning and comparison. Rumi transformed abstract, metaphysical truths – often inaccessible to the ordinary intellect – into concrete forms and vivid parables. His purpose, however, was never mere storytelling. He himself declared: "*My aim in narrating tales is to convey lessons. I do not intend to entertain you with stories!*" Accordingly, he emphasized the necessity of discerning the spiritual essence within these narratives: "*O brother! Stories are like fruit, and meaning is the kernel within. The wise seek the kernel and pay no heed to the rind.*"

Central to these teachings is Rumi's conviction that a pure heart can only be attained under the spiritual guidance of the *murshid al-kamil* – the perfect master and heir of the prophets. He explained that unless the obstacles of the *nafs* (lower self) are overcome, knowledge cannot be transformed into *irfan* (gnosis), nor can one realize the true purpose of creation, attain human dignity, or discover the essence of the self. Deliverance from the ego, Rumi insisted, requires acknowledging one's nothingness before divine majesty—a realization that leads to authentic self-awareness. For him, the path of *ma'rifa* (gnosis) can only be undertaken by a heart illumined with divine love. He expressed the futility of unpracticed knowledge in unequivocal terms: "*Words of wisdom without action are like a borrowed ornamental robe. Know this well!*" (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).

Another integral aspect of Rumi's legacy is the ritual of *sema*, which emerged as a defining symbol of the Mevlevi tradition. Rumi's twenty-first generation descendant, Jalaluddin Bakır Çelebi, describes it as follows: "*Sema is the turning of the servant towards the Truth, ascending with intellect and love, renouncing the ego, dissolving in God, and returning once again to servanthood as a perfected human being*" (Rahmet Kapısı, 2015).

The *sema* ritual carries profound philosophical and spiritual meanings, embodied in its rich symbolism. Each element reflects a stage in the annihilation of the ego (*nafs*): the markings on the dervish's turban signify the ego's tombstone; his white robe represents its shroud; and the black cloak draped over it symbolizes the grave itself. The ritual begins with the dervish standing with arms crossed – a gesture affirming the oneness of God – before extending them outward. With his right hand raised toward heaven in supplication and his left hand turned toward the earth, he assumes the role of mediator, distributing to humanity what he receives from the Divine. Revolving from right to left around his heart, the dervish embraces in love every blessing bestowed by the Creator.

The *sema* is firmly rooted in the Qur'an and interwoven with praises of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The rhythm of the drum echoes the divine command "*Be!*" (*Kun fayakūn*), while the sound of the reed flute (*ney*) evokes the divine breath that animates all creation. Following this opening stage, the second phase commences, known as the "Cycle of Sultan Veled." In this phase, the participants engage in a circular procession, greeting one another as an expression of readiness for the spiritual

journey. This symbolic salutation, performed three times, is interpreted as the greeting of soul to soul, affirming the shared path of seekers united in the quest for divine Truth.

The third stage of the *sema* consists of four salutations (*selam*).

- The first salutation symbolizes man's return to the Truth and recognition of God's majesty.
- The second expresses awe at the divine order and grandeur inherent in creation.
- The third represents the transformation of wonder and gratitude into divine love, the surrender of intellect to love. In Sufi terminology, this is the station of *fana fi'llah* – the mystical annihilation in God, the highest level of experiencing His presence.
- The fourth salutation marks the completion of the spiritual journey and the return of the dervish to his own state. At this stage, the presence of the Sheikh, alongside the participants, signifies the guiding role of the spiritual master: the leader who eases the journey and protects the seeker from its dangers.

In the fourth section, Qur'anic verses are recited, and the ritual concludes with prayers offered for the souls of all prophets and all humanity, as well as for peace. In this sense, the *sema* culminates with prayers and admonitions of Mawlana, offering timeless guidance for the people of our age.

“... Biz Hakk`ın nuruyuz, Hakk`ın aynasıyız,
O halde kendi kendimizle birbirimizle ne diye çekişip duruyoruz?
Bir aydınlık, bir aydınlıktan neden böyle kaçıyor?
Haydi şu benlikten kurtul, herkesle birleş, herkesle bir ol!...” (Rahmet Kapısı 2015).

"... *We are the light of Truth, the mirror of Truth.*
Why then do we quarrel with ourselves and with one another?
Why does one light flee from another light?
Come, free yourself from the ego—unite with all, become one with all!..."
(Rahmet Kapısı, 2015).

In the history of Sufi literature, Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi, remembered as the founder of the Mevlevi order, occupies a distinguished place as one of the most significant figures of the Turkic-Islamic world. His works – *Mathnawi*, *Divan-i Kabir*, *Fihi ma fihi*, *Majalis-i Sab'a*, and *Maktubat* – remain deeply relevant today, simultaneously harmonizing with real life and making invaluable contributions to the intellectual and spiritual heritage of Sufism. The continuity of the Mevlevi order into the present era owes much to the spiritual leadership of the Çelebi lineage, descendants of Sultan Veled, Rumi's son. Mawlana's counsels, composed in both Arabic and Persian, continue to serve as foundational sources not only for the study of Sufism but also for research in music, literature, and the fine arts.

Alongside Rumi – the "sultan of divine love" and a traveler of the prophetic path – another prominent figure who profoundly influenced the development of Turkic-Islamic Sufism was Sayyid Yahya Shirvani Bakuvi. Born in Shamakhi at the end of the fourteenth century, Sayyid Yahya descended from a noble lineage tracing back to Imam Musa al-Kazim, with his ancestors belonging to the family of naqibs. In his poetry, he highlighted his affiliation with the Ahl al-Bayt by adopting the pen name "Sayyid."

From an early age, Sayyid Yahya was admired for both his physical and moral qualities and was regarded by his contemporaries as an exemplary individual. Historical sources describe his character with expressions such as: "He possessed perfection and beauty," "He had extraordinary outward beauty and incomparable virtues," "He bore a unique creation of rare excellence," and "His countenance was so luminous that after forty days of spiritual retreat in his cell, the brilliance of his face would dazzle the eyes of those who looked upon him." Owing to these qualities, he was honored with the epithet *Jamal al-Din* (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).



Sayyid Yahya Shirvani Bakuvi was introduced to Sufism at a young age. His childhood in the early fifteenth century coincided with a period when Shamakhi was considered a central hub of the Khalwati order. From an early age, he regularly attended the lodge of Shaykh Sadr al-Din, where he completed his suluk, the disciplined training and education of the Sufi path. Following the death of his master, Sayyid Yahya migrated from Shamakhi to Baku.

Although Shaykh Sadr al-Din had appointed Sayyid Yahya as his successor during his lifetime and advised his disciples to pledge allegiance to him, after the Shaykh's passing, his son-in-law and chief disciple, Pirzada, claimed leadership for himself. Accepting this as taqdir-i ilahi (divine decree), Sayyid Yahya departed from Shamakhi and established himself in Baku.

Around the 1420s, during the reign of Khalilullah Khan of the Shirvanshah dynasty—when Baku briefly served as the state capital—Sayyid Yahya, with the support of the ruler, founded the first Khalwati khanaqah (Sufi lodge) in Baku, near the palace. Historical sources emphasize that Khalilullah Khan held him in the highest regard and extended generous support. As a testament to their close and sincere relationship, Sayyid Yahya dedicated his work *Kashf al-Qulub* ("Unveiling of Hearts") to the ruler.

Throughout his life, Sayyid Yahya devoted himself to training disciples within his tekke, delivering ethical and philosophical instruction, and composing numerous works. His existence was marked by zuhd (asceticism) and mujahada (spiritual struggle) (Riitim & Bakırkaya, 2013). Within the Khalwati order, he became the first figure to author a substantial corpus of works. He not only instructed his deputies (khalifas) but also systematized and disseminated the principles of the Khalwati path through his writings, ensuring their preservation and transmission to subsequent generations.

Sayyid Yahya's scholarly excellence is reflected in the breadth of his works. As he himself noted, "This poor servant has inquired from many and studied many commentaries," demonstrating his mastery in Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), hadith, kalam, fiqh, and Sufi sciences. A considerable portion of his Persian writings is in verse, encompassing mathnawis, qasidas, and ghazals. His poetry exhibits the fervor of Hallaj and Nasimi, the mystical wisdom of Rumi and Attar, and the contemplative depth reminiscent of Nizami. While his prose is measured and balanced, his poetry varies—at times passionate, at times melancholic, and at times solemn. His verses exclusively convey Divine love, eschewing earthly or human attachment.

The mystical themes in Sayyid Yahya's poetry are central. Like Yunus Emre, Nasimi, and Ahmad Yasawi, his ultimate goal was spiritual guidance (irshad); poetry served as a vehicle for conveying Sufi truths rather than as an end in itself. The titles and content of his works reinforce this aim, passionately addressing the stations and mysteries of the Sufi path, as well as devotion to God, the Prophet Muhammad, and Imam Ali.

Sayyid Yahya's Turkish-language work, *Shifa al-Asrar*, stands as his most extensive composition. While containing some Arabic sections, its Turkish is straightforward and reflects elements of both Anatolian and Azerbaijani Turkish. The language is largely conversational. The text outlines seventy spiritual stations that a disciple must traverse on the path to guidance under a murshid (spiritual master). Throughout the work, Sayyid Yahya frequently references Quranic verses, hadiths, and the sayings of various Sufi masters, emphasizing both theoretical knowledge and practical application. By systematizing these teachings, he ensured the Khalwati path would endure as a coherent and transmissible tradition.

One notable feature of the work is its inclusion of miniatures. For example, in the discussion of *dhikr*, the heart is depicted alongside representations of parrots on five separate trees, illustrating the spiritual concepts in visual form. In *Shifa al-Asrar*, Sayyid Yahya addresses issues of purity, knowledge, worship, the self (*nafs*), and the soul (*ruh*). He quotes Imam Ali (r.a) as saying:

"Before performing ablution, a servant must purify five things: First, the heart from deceit, cunning, arrogance, envy, malice, and hostility; second, the tongue from gossip, lies, useless, meaningless, rude words, and slander; third, the body from forbidden and doubtful matters; fourth, the clothing from unlawful garments; and fifth, the external ablution itself."

The Shaykh (q.s.) comments: *"If you purify yourself as Ali (r.a) did – cleansing the heart of arrogance, envy, and deceit, the tongue of gossip and slander, the body of unlawful food, and the clothing of forbidden garments – then you become worthy of external purity."* (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).

Sayyid Yahya emphasizes that the foundation, source, cultural wealth, and treasury of all worship, Sharia, the Sufi path, and Truth is religious knowledge. As narrated in the hadith:

"Whoever leaves his home to seek knowledge to benefit from it and teach it to others, Allah grants him the reward of a thousand years of fasting and prayer for each step he takes. Angels surround him with their wings, and all living beings in the air, on land, and in the sea greet him." (Abu Dawud, *Ilm*-1; Tirmidhi, *Ilm*-19) (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013).

Sayyid Yahya Bakuvi, one of the most prominent figures in the cultivation of Azerbaijani Sufism, revived and developed the Khalwatiyya order, following the example of his predecessors. From the fifteenth century onward, this order gained widespread influence across literary, philosophical, social, and political spheres, enabling it to expand significantly throughout the Muslim world.

By examining the sayings of Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi, one can truly follow the profound philosophical meaning of his guidance:

The greatest of worldly blessings is chastity, and the master of the blessings of the Hereafter is Islam.

Love is intoxication. The lover regains self-awareness only by observing the Beloved.

Khalwa (spiritual retreat) cultivates the self (*nafs*), while *siyar* (conduct in society) educates the soul (*ruh*).

The religion of Islam is like a "tree of guidance": its root is sincerity (*ikhlas*), its fruit is abstention from the forbidden, its branches are prayer, its leaves are fasting, and its water is good moral character.

Knowledge that leads to effort and supplication is the knowledge of asceticism (*zuhd*). The effort is to detach from worldly life, and supplication is to attain the Hereafter.

Knowledge is like water, and patience is like soil. Just as life exists in water and soil, so does the life of the heart exist in both.

When the wind of desire, passion, and lust blows, waves arise, and the sands are exposed. Make an effort, but do not sink the ship. Lower the anchor of enthusiasm and be patient.

When the wind of affection (*mawaddat*) begins to blow, raise the sail of love. You are about to cross the sea of self (*nafs*).

For the worlds of outward and inward existence to flourish, reason must govern the heart (*fu'ad*), and desire must be subdued.

After embracing faith, a Muslim cannot fully savor the sweetness of divine unity (*tawhid*) without strengthening belief through rational proofs and purifying it from doubt and hesitation. Only by properly understanding the meaning of the testimony (*shahada*) and sincerely accepting it in the heart with truthfulness and sincerity (*sidq* and *ikhlas*) can one experience the true delight of *tawhid*. (Rihtim & Bakırkaya, 2013)

Thus, as a significant figure in Azerbaijan's cultural history, Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi – who authored more than 20 works and composed poetry under the pen name "Seyid" – represents a thinker whose life and intellectual legacy warrant careful scholarly attention. He transformed the Khalwatiyya order, reflecting the national and spiritual characteristics of the Azerbaijani people, into one of the most influential spiritual centers of the Muslim world. His writings are composed in a style accessible even to ordinary readers, allowing them to grasp and benefit from his teachings. It is precisely for this reason that the Khalwatiyya order successfully spread across diverse regions of the Islamic world, from the Balkans to North Africa (Rihtim, 2013).

By developing a comprehensive system of thought that illuminated the profound meanings of Islam's core principles, Seyyid Yahya emphasized not only the external observances of religion but also its inner, esoteric dimensions. He also made substantial contributions to the development of the Azerbaijani



language. Although well-versed in Arabic and Persian, as were many scholars of his time, he authored *Shifa al-Asrar*, considered the most important work of Azerbaijani prose, in his native tongue, thereby enriching Azerbaijani literature.

Seyyid Yahya's philosophical and Sufi-irfan ideas remain highly relevant today, fostering reconciliation among Muslims. The study of his legacy – the true founder of the Khalwatiyya order from the 15th century onward, which traces its origins to the 11th century – is an important scholarly undertaking. Having spread globally for over five centuries and met with enduring respect, Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi occupies a prominent place in the history of the Turkic-Islamic world as a messenger of religious and philosophical thought.

It can be asserted that both Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi and Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi occupy an exceptional place in the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Turkic-Islamic world. Their teachings, shaped by the Qur'anic worldview and the prophetic tradition, established two influential Sufi paths – Mevleviyya and Khalwatiyya – that profoundly shaped the ethical, philosophical, and cultural landscapes of their societies. While Rumi articulated the mysteries of the human soul through universal love, poetic symbolism, and the transformative ritual of sema, Bakuvi systematized the principles of the Khalwati order, integrating practical and theoretical dimensions of Sufism into a coherent spiritual discipline.

Rumi's spiritual humanism and Bakuvi's structured Irfan methodology converge in their shared emphasis on purification of the heart, moral refinement, and the indispensability of the spiritual master (murshid al-kamil). Despite differences in historical context and stylistic expression, both thinkers contributed to the emergence of a rich Sufi tradition that transcended geographical boundaries and continues to inspire contemporary scholarship, interfaith dialogue, and spiritual practice.

Taken together, the works and teachings of these two masters demonstrate that Sufism is not merely a mystical doctrine but a comprehensive worldview centered on divine love, self-knowledge, and ethical living. Their enduring legacy remains vital for understanding the evolution of Azerbaijani and Anatolian Sufism, as well as the broader currents of Islamic philosophy. The intellectual and spiritual models they established continue to illuminate pathways toward inner transformation, social harmony, and a deeper comprehension of the human-divine relationship.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be asserted that just as no force can extinguish the flames of a volcano, no power or authority can halt the dissemination of Sufism – particularly Islamic Sufism – into the world. The enduring relevance and contemporary applicability of Rumi's teachings, spanning eight centuries, provide tangible evidence of this Truth. Perhaps the greatest shortcoming of today's youth is their lack of familiarity with the guidance left by these perfect spiritual masters (murshids) and their insufficient acquaintance with the works of these sages.

In contemporary life, the alien and often rebellious approach of the Western world toward the Islamic values brought by the Prophet – and the widespread misrepresentation of Islam – pose dangers comparable to catastrophic events for humanity. As Rumi once asked, "If a fire breaks out somewhere, even if the Qur'an burns, does its meaning burn?" (Rahmet Kapısı, 2015). The Qur'an conveys profound truths while simultaneously urging believers to love and internalize these teachings deeply. By following the guidance of Rumi and other spiritual masters, one strives to draw near to the Divine, to earn God's favor, and to gain the Prophet's approval.

This spiritual aspiration must be realized collectively, in unity, and with respect for the principles and legacies left by our spiritual guides. May God protect humanity from disunity, inequality, and disregard for the wisdom inherited from the saints, and may He keep us steadfast on the righteous path.

At every stage of Sufi practice, a spiritual chain extends from the last murshid back to the Prophet himself. The historical authenticity of this chain is crucial to ensure the proper continuity of spiritual grace and blessings. The soundness of this chain most reliably demonstrates the integrity of a Sufi path. In the Khalwatiyya lineage, from the Prophet to Pir Umar, there were nineteen sheikhs, and up to Piri-Sani Seyyid Yahya, twenty-three sheikhs in total. Sources indicate that Seyyid Yahya had nearly 20,000

disciples, of whom 360 were authorized as successors. Among the most prominent of these disciples were Pir Vahhaddin Erzincani, Dada Umar Rovshani, Habib Qaramani, Pir Shukrullah, Alaeddin Rumi, and Ziyaeddin Yusuf Mushkuri. Through its successors (khalifas), the Khalwatiyya order subsequently spread widely across Anatolia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Africa, and the Balkans.

Seyyid Yahya Shirvani did not confine himself to transmitting his path solely through discipleship; he systematized and articulated the principles and philosophy of the Khalwatiyya order in writing. His works have preserved the intellectual framework and methodologies of this Sufi path, ensuring their continuity and transmission to the present day without alteration.

The depth and richness of Seyyid Yahya's writings reflect his scholarly knowledge, intellectual insight, and literary sophistication. The quantity of his works is remarkable. In his poetic compositions, including mathnawis and ghazals, one encounters the ecstatic spirit of Hallaj and Nasimi, the wisdom of Rumi and Attar, and the profound contemplative depth of Nizami.

Fortunately, all of Seyyid Yahya's works have survived to the present day as manuscripts, preserved in libraries around the world, particularly in Turkey. Current research identifies nineteen of his works, with nearly two hundred manuscript copies extant in Turkish libraries (Rihtim, 2013).

Seyyid Yahya succeeded in constructing an intellectual system dedicated to uncovering the profound meanings of Islam's core principles. By composing his most significant work, *Shifa al-Asrar*, in his native language, he made an enduring contribution to the development of Azerbaijani literature. Seyyid Yahya's philosophical ideas, and Sufi-Irfan thought in general, remain highly relevant today, serving as a powerful instrument for fostering reconciliation and harmony among Muslims (Rihtim, 2013).

In essence, *Shifa al-Asrar* embodies profound Sufi-philosophical reflection. The Sufi thought represented by Seyyid Yahya also contributes meaningfully to interfaith dialogue. The principle "Love the created for the sake of the Creator" highlights the universal humanist ethic of compassion, emphasizing that differences in belief or perspective do not prevent genuine love and meaningful dialogue among people.

It is therefore no coincidence that the teachings of Irfan masters such as Ibn Arabi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi continue to resonate even among non-Muslims. This attests to the universal and unifying language of Sufism at its highest expression. Finally, the study and re-examination of Seyyid Yahya Bakuvi's heritage – revered and widely respected for over seven centuries – within his native Azerbaijan is both an essential and significant scholarly endeavor.

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