

The Food of the Khanaqahs in the Culture of Tasawwuf

Prof. Dr. Necdet Tosun

Turkey

Abstract:

During the early period of tasawwuf the Sufis placed great emphasis on zuhd (asceticism) and eating little. However, as a result of the institutionalisation of Sufism and the expansion of the Sufi lodges (khanaqahs, tekkes), they were later compelled to identify certain rules that needed to be followed in the lodges. The table manners of Sufism also needed to be determined. The etiquette (âdâb) of eating in Sufi culture was expanded even more in the Anatolian (Turkish) lodges of the Ottoman period and was transformed into ceremonies in which certain special meals were prepared and eaten accompanied by prayer and dhikr (remembering of God) on certain days and nights. The Sufis loaded certain symbolic meanings and religious-Sufi motifs onto the ingredients and methods of cooking. As a result they were able to turn the act of eating, a worldly act, into an act of joyful worship. This article addresses in short, the historical progress of the etiquette of eating in tasawwuf and then provides information about the special meals that were prepared at certain times in the sufi lodges of Anatolia during the Ottoman period. These have been examined under four categories, namely soups, sweets, sherberts, and other foods.

Early Sufis frequently emphasized the topics of hunger and eating little, in order to curb the desires of the nafs (ego). The Sufis of Damascus in particular gave special importance to this topic. However, in time, as tasawwuf became institutionalized and the lodges began to expand, it became necessary to feed and host the murids (disciples) or guests that came. This situation ensured the development of certain rules that needed to be followed, and as a natural result of this, an etiquette of table manners and of eating .

- Table Etiquette (Âdâb al-sufra)

The matters discussed in the books on tasawwuf in regard to the topic of table etiquette were not particular to Sufis or dervish khanaqahs, but were rules that concerned all Muslims. Some of these were the product of Islamic culture and others came from Arabian-Persian traditions .

Certain Sufi writers such as Sarraj Tusi (d. 378/988), Abu Talib Makki (d. 386/996), Hujwiri (d.465/1072), Ghazali (d.505/1111) and Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234) assigned certain chapters in their works for the topic of table etiquette and as a summary this is what they recorded: 1) Food should be lawful (halal); 2) If the time for prayer arrives and the table is ready, then one should eat first before praying; 3) Hands need to be washed before and after eating; 4) One should start eating by saying 'Bismillah' and finish saying 'Alhamdulillah'; 5) One should eat with one's right hand; 6) One should begin and finish eating with a pinch of salt; 7) Food should not be criticised; 8) One should take small bits and chew every mouthful well; 9) One should not look at the face of people eating nor watch what they eat; 10) One should not eat leaning on something or lying down; 11) One should sit on one's left foot and bend the right knee; 12) One should not begin eating before one's elders; 13) One should stop eating before one has filled one's stomach; 14) One should not be entirely silent during the meal (One should speak about matters of wisdom), 15) One should drink water after eating; 16) One should drink a glass of water in three sips; 17) After eating, one should recite the chapters Ikhlas and Quraysh from Qur'an and pray to Allah with prayers that express gratitude; 18) One should clean one's teeth after eating. Amongst these items of etiquette, was the following custom of the Arabs of that day - they did not cut cooked meat or bread with a knife .

In the 5th hijri century (11th century of the Common Era) Abu Sa'id-i Abi al-Khayr (d. 440/1049), in listing the ten rules needed to be followed in the khanaqah, also mentioned the ninth rule that no murid was allowed to eat from their friends' food without first asking permission .

However in the 6th century after the hijrah (12th century of the Common Era) and from then on, when many more established and effective tariqas (Sufi lineages) arose, in addition to the many additions made to the etiquette of the

khanaqah and the tariqa there were also additions made to the topic of table etiquette .

Aziz Nasafi (d. 700/1300) summarised the rules that needed to be followed by the dervishes (sufis) as follows :

“The dervishes should sit at the table in a state of adab and not in a state of heedlessness. They should not rush to eat but rather wait for their shaykh or for their elders. They should not look at others’ hands or bowls. They should take small bites and chew their food really well. They should not take another bite without swallowing the first. If the dervishes are eating from the same bowl, then everyone should eat from what is in front of them. If something falls to the floor, they should pick it up with their left hand and place it in a corner. A dervish should never leave the table before the others. Dervishes should wash their hands before eating, and wash both their hands and their mouths after eating”

‘Ala’uddawla Simnani (d. 736/1336) penned a book called *Âdâb al-sufra*, the etiquettes of eating and mentioned the following matters, in addition to what we have already mentioned :

The dervish must be in a state of ablution when preparing the meal, and continue to perform dhikr whilst preparing the meal. He should say ‘bismillah’ before transferring food from the pots into the bowls. He should carry the table under his left arm, the salt shaker in his left hand, and the bowls in his right hand. When setting the table he should first put the bread and then the bowls. The elder of the gathering (the shaykh) should first pray before beginning to eat and the others should say ‘amen’. The dervishes should not take any of the leftover food home, nor should they give any to their friends. He should not place his foot on the table. He should break the bread with his two hands and only break off what he can eat. Water should not be drunk during the meal, but if there is an absolute need, then one should hold the glass with one’s clean fingers. The eldest diner should make a supplication at the end of the meal. The server should bring the water urn in his left hand and the soap in his right. Everyone should dry their hands with his own napkin, however if the server indicates the towel he carries on his shoulder then they should also dry their hands with this. One should also avoid eating very spicy foods.

- Food of the Khanaqah

In time, it became a custom for certain dishes, sweets and sherberts to be prepared and served after certain ceremonies, or on certain days of the year, especially on the qandil nights (special nights like laylat al-qadr). There are interesting examples of this in the Anatolian (Turkish) khanaqahs of the Ottoman period .

Some examples are as follows: The famous Uzbek rice dish prepared at the Naqshbandi Uzbek tekkes and Qalandarkhanas of Istanbul; fried meat dish

prepared with freshly slaughtered meat during the ‘id al-adha celebration by the Mawlawi dervishes and served to guests; milk semolina halwah (a kind of sweet) prepared with pine nuts on qandil nights and served in abundance to everyone; lemon, orange or mulberry pudding served on rice at the Merkez Efendi Tekke; food gatherings organised at every tekke from the 10th day of the month of Muharram to the end of the month of Safar; ‘ashûra (Noah’s pudding) prepared in large pots with eight handles and then served in abundance for days to neighbours and the poor in copper vessels.

The foods prepared in the tekkes were not in fact very different from the foods prepared according to the region and food culture of the day. The only difference was that these would be prepared on certain days and offered accompanied by prayers and ceremonies.

It is possible to divide these foods into the following four categories ‘soups’, ‘other meals’, ‘sweets’, and ‘sherberts’ and give examples of each.

- Soups

The first dish that comes to mind when one thinks of tekke meals is soup. In fact, there is a saying amongst the common folk that ‘the one who waits at the tekke gets to eat the soup’.

At the Numaniyya Tekke in Bursa, which belongs to the Ashrafiyya branch of the Qadiriyya tariqa, a meal of meatball soup would be prepared and served during a ceremony on the second days of both ‘ids, the ‘id of Ramadan and the ‘id al-adha.

After praying the dawn prayer in congregation, the people would gather and read the Qadiri awrâd and then perform dhikr, pronouncing the kalima-i tawhid (‘La ilaha illa Allah’) and chanting ‘ya Latif, ya Wadud, Hu’.

After the gulbank and the prayer, they would then go down to the large dining halls known as the ‘somatkhane’ and the ‘taamkhane’.

Here people would gather around tables set up for 12 people indicating the 12 imams of the ahl al-bayt. Everyone would stand respectfully waiting for their shaykh to say the prayer. Whilst standing their hands would be crossed across their breast, while the big toe of the right foot would be placed on the big toe of the left foot. Heads would be slightly bowed towards the heart and they would begin a dhikr of ‘Allah, Allah’. Eventually the shaykh would begin the prayer known as ‘table prayer’:

“Allah, Allah, thank you. Let the door of good be opened and evil gone and destroyed. Let us enter this path of love and travel along it. Our shaykh is the sultan of lovers, the guide for those who wish to reach Allah, the mirror reflecting the mysteries of the Qayyum (the power that holds up the universe), the second shaykh of this tariqa, the son of Eshref, Abdullah Rumi (may Allah increase his station). Let us follow the tradition of our Master Muhammad.

Come o pure hearted brothers, let us eat from this meatball soup for this good means and good memory, let us remember our deceased friends”.

After the prayer was read, they would immediately sit and eat and drink from the dish of meatball soup with a few slices of bread. These meatballs were generally made from beef and would be added to a soup of rice and parsley and cooked there. When the soup was finished they would turn in the direction of the tomb and recite the al-Fatiha for the builder of the tomb and the other dead spirits lying in the graves of that area .

During his youth Eshrefoglu Abdullah Rumi (d. 874/1469), visited the famous Sufi of Bursa, Abdal Mehmed. Abdal Mehmed said to him: Danishmand! Bring us some meatball soup!” Eshrefoglu went to the market, found some soup but could not find any meatballs, and brought back only soup. Abdal Mehmed asked: “Where are the meatballs?” Eshrefoglu apologised saying that he was unable to find any. Abdal Mehmed then took some mud from near him and moulded it into the shape of meatballs. He threw it into the soup and offered it to Eshrefoglu. Eshrefoglu did not object and when he began to eat Abdal Mehmed repeated the following a few times to him: “If it is not you, then who else?”

According to the journal (rûznâme) published during the month of Ramadan in 1906, in the Qadiri Khanaqah in Tophane, Istanbul, the dishes that could always be found at this tekke were one or a few of either noodle soup, lentil soup or tripe .

In the journal on tasawwuf called Muhibbân, which began its publication in the hijri year 1327 (1909) in Istanbul, many recipes can be found for dishes and sweets. Even if these dishes were not particular to those eaten in the tekkes, at least we understand that these dishes were also eaten here during this period. One of the recipes found in this journal is “wedding soup” which was at first recorded to be particular to dervishes. The title of the recipe, which is signed as being provided by “Ahmed of the Mawlawiyya Tariqa”, is as follows :

“A wedding soup especially for the families of the poor dervishes who have never been invited to a wedding in their life and who have no hope of ever being invited. The ingredients of the soup are 50 dirhams (approx. 150g) of lamb, 10 dirhams of flour, one lemon, one egg, and some water.”

At the beginning of the Yemek Risâlesi (Treatise on Food) written shortly before the year 1275 (1858-59) by Ali Eshref Dede, the shaykh of the Edirne Mawlawi Khanaqah, we find recipes for chickpea soup, fish soup, tarhana soup, and liver soup. We also know that when the members of the Yasawiyya sufi order were in khalwah (retreat) they would break their fast with soup made from either brown or red maize, and sometimes would eat an amount of watermelon or drink ayran also.

.'Other dishes

All of the varieties of food that were eaten by the general community were in all likelihood eaten at the khanaqahs. We can find the names and recipes for many of these in the *Yemek Risâlesi* (Treatise on Food) of Ali Eshref Dede. This Turkish work consists of 19 chapters with the following titles: 1) Soups, 2) Salads and Pickles, 3) Kebabs, 4) Steaks, 5) Sweets and Kadaifs, 6) Blancmanges and Icecreams, 7) Biscuits, 8) Revani and similar dishes, 9) Pickles, 10) Pastry dishes, 11) Pancakes and Boreks, 12) Stuffed dishes, 13) Calves foot dishes made with eggplant and vegetable patties, 14) Meatballs, 15) Spinach and Zucchini dishes, 16) Making marrow and stews, 17) Varieties of rice dishes, 18) Composts, 19) Methods of freezing water. When we look at the menus for the Ramadan of the year 1906 of the Istanbul Tophane Qâdirî Khanaqah, we find that these dishes were not any different from traditional Turkish cuisine. For instance, on the sixth day of Ramadan seven tables were prepared and the first table had the following dishes: Noodle soup, fried eggs, meat stuffed dishes, eggplant, spinach, borek, baklava, green beans, zucchini, bean salad, stuffed vine leaves and rice (11 dishes).

In the aforementioned Qâdirî Khanaqah, on the last Tuesday of the month of Ramadan, it was a custom to prepare seven dishes. These were 'soup', which symbolized water, which has an important role in the life of the human being, 'vegetables', which symbolized the earth, 'rice and borek' which symbolized fire, 'eggs with pastrami', which symbolized the generation, and 'milk pastry dish (gullach) with cream' with symbolized love for Allah. On the 27th night of Ramadan (layla al-qadr), soup, a meat dish, and a dish made with olive oil, rice, and a dessert would be made at this khanaqah.

There was a dish prepared with ceremony called 'Lokma' in the Mawlawi tekkes. It was a rice dish, with meat, onions, chickpeas, coriander, and nuts and was prepared on Friday nights and sometimes Mondays. There was a large pot used for this which was not used to cook anything else. It shone like silver and was stored, wrapped in a cloth in its own particular cupboard. The stove that was used to cook it in the kitchen was called "Ateshbâz-i Valî Stove". The doors of the kitchen would be locked whenever this dish was being cooked, and there would be nobody present other than the boiler and the dervishes serving in the kitchen.

The ingredients of the lokma would be determined by the boiler, who would do this by considering the number of people who would be eating the dish. While the dish was cooking, those present in the kitchen would stand in a position of entreaty. The cooking of lokma had its own special term called 'lokma basmak'. When the lokma was cooked, the boiler would open the lid, and the helpers would put it down on the floor accompanied by the following hymn which would be sung by the boiler:

“Let the cooking of this food and its taste be good. May Allah give us its blessings (that is increase it). Let it be the light of belief for those eats it. Let us say Hu for the nafas of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, the mystery of Ateshbâz-i Valî, and the generosity of Imam Ali (ra)”.

When it was time to eat, the tables would be prepared and the spoons would be placed face down on the tables. A pinch of salt would be placed in front of everyone. The meal would be served and an appointed dervish would inform all that it was time to eat by calling out: “Hû, come to the lokma”, “Come to the table”. They would come out of their cells and sit at the table and begin to eat. The Mawlawis would never speak at the table and at the end of the meal (or if there were more than one dish, when the rice dish arrived), the shaykh, and if there was no shaykh, then the head chef would recite the following Persian and Arabic hymn :

Mâ sûfiyân-i râh-îm, mâ tabla-khâr-î shâh-îm ,
Pâyanda dâr yâ Rab ïn kâsa vu nân râ.

Salli va sallim va bârik ‘alâ as‘adi va ashrafi nûri jamî’ al-anbiyâ va al-mursalîn. Va’l-hamdu lillâhi Rabbi’l-‘âlamîn. Al-Fâtîha .

Translation: “We are Sufis of the Sufi path who have sat (and eaten) at the table of the Padishah. O Lord, make eternal this dish and this table, let this table be filled with food always. Peace and blessings be upon the most precious of all prophets, Muhammad. And praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Al-Fâtîha.

After everyone recited the Fatiha, the following gulbank would be recited :

“Praise be to Allah. Thank You Allah. May Allah bless our food (by increasing it). May the bread and favours of the awliya be increased. May all good come to those who provided this food for us and may their spirits be happy and joyful. Let it be a source of health for them while they are alive. Let us say Hu for the blessed breath of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, for the mystery of Ateshbâz-i Valî.”

Despite Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı stating that fish was not eaten in the Mawlawi lodges because of the smell and stimulated desire and because it was an obstacle to purification of the hearts, we can understand that this was not a general rule since there are recipes for fish in the Yemek Risâlesi (Food Treatise) of Mawlawi Ali Eshref Dede .

Members of the Bektashi lineage would organise ‘muhib âyîni’ for new recruits into the group and would eat from the meat of the sacrificial animal brought by this new murid (disciple), and eat halwah. On the other hand, the Bektashis considered rabbit meat to be impure and thus inedible and they would never eat it. However wine and raki (a strong alcoholic drink) would be drunk at these tekkes. In fact, there was even a manner in which these would

be served and drunk. The Bektashi gulbank that was recited before the meal was called ‘the lokma gulbanki’ and it went like this :

“In the name of our spiritual padishah. Let us say Allah first. Let the Shah give us and let us eat. Thank you Allah, friend. Allah, Allah, there is only Allah as a god. This (meal) has gone, let the next one come. May Allah bless us in this food (may He increase it). Let it be light for those who eat it. May Allah help the troubled dervish who prepared and cooked it and may He help us also. May the bread that comes to us from the doors of happiness of the twelve imams, from our fourteen sinless, pure masters from the lineage of the prophet, let it be plenty. The threes, the sevens and the forties (the three, seven, and forty awliya who possess the greatest spiritual ranks in this world). For the light of the prophet, for the generosity of Imam ‘Ali (ra), for our Shaykh Haci Bektashi Valî. Let us say Hu for all of our shaykhs and for all of the generous people and for all time, Hu”.

On Thursdays in the Naqshbandî Uzbek tekkes (Sufi lodges) of Istanbul, a dish of Uzbek rice would be prepared with meat, carrots, and thinly sliced orange peel. From there it would be served to those present. In the Gulshanî tekkes, twice a week, generally on Mondays and Fridays, the nights would be brought to life by the head chef, who would prepare a dish of Baghdâdî soup for eleven people. The sofraji would prepare a sufficient number of decorated tables at every corner of the square. Rice and lentils would be served on Mondays, whereas on Fridays stew and rice would be prepared.

In the Yasawiyâ Sufi lineage, when the retreat was completed, an animal would be sacrificed and kebab prepared from the neck. Cold water or ayran would be offered to the those in retreat.

Halwah- sweets

In many of the lodges of Anatolia there was the custom of preparing halwah and Noah’s pudding (ashûra) on certain special nights. Sweets would generally be prepared on the nights of the qandil or on the 7th day of Muharram. In the lodges of the brothers (akhî, futuwwa) they would prepare a dish called “halwa-yi jafna”, which was a sweet cooked in a pot and was not prepared on any particular day but rather when desired. It was made by mixing honey, butter, flour, and dates and zagferan (a spice similar to saffron) with its own special ceremony. In the *Futuwwatnâme* work by Muhammad ibn Alâ’uddin Husayn al-Razawî (d. after 931/1524) entitled *Miftâh al-daqâyik fî bayân al-futuwwa wa al-haqâiq*, he explains the custom of cooking halwah as follows : The naqîb (the one appointed to carry out the tasks of the people of futuwwa) would suggest to his friends that they cook halwah for the spirit of the Prophet and His Companions. After they all accepted, they would all give an amount of money to the naqîb. The collected money was then given to a few murids who were sent to the market to buy the necessary ingredients. The naqîb would say

to his shaykh: “By your permission” and then he would light the stove and say: “Let us pronounce the takbîr for the spirits of Abdurrahman-i Gulkhan-tâb and Ishaq-i Kunda-shikan”.

They would place a large pot on the stove and while placing some butter inside they would say: “For the spirit of Zayn al-âbidîn”; when putting the flour in they would say “for the spirit of Salmân”; when putting the honey in, they would say “for the spirit of amîr al mu’minîn Ali”; and when they put the dates in they would say: “Peace and blessings be upon you o Messenger of Allah”; and they would then sing their gulbank.

When the halwah was cooked, they would divide it up into three or five portions and place each portion in wooden bowls. The murids would carry the bowls over their heads and place them down on the table in front of the shaykh.

Then the naqîb al-nuqabâ (the murid who served in previous ranks and has attained the position of naqîb) would divide up the halwah. Two parts were given to the shaykh, one half to the naqîb, one part each to the ranking murids and masters, and half to the middle ranking murids. If the shaykh was a sayyid (that is from the lineage from the prophet Muhammad) he would be given three parts.

A part of the halwah could also be sent to the people of futuwwa in other cities. For this they would take one box and fill it with halwah. They would then place 12 dates around the top of the halwah which represented the twelve imams from the ahl al-bayt. The naqîb would then place a needle, which symbolised the people of tawhîd and uprightness (istiqâmah) and a circle which represented the assembly of suhba. The lid was then placed on the box. They shaykh would take it and read a hymn and then give it to the naqîb who farewelled him and then set off, with some of the murids, to the city of their destination. They would enter the city with cries of takbîr (Allâhu akbar) and tahlîl (Lâ ilâha illallâh), reach the assembly and deliver the box to the shaykh. The letter sent by the shaykh who sent the halwah was then kissed and given to the shaykh at the destination. The shaykh would then say Allâhu Akbar, and read a gulbank. The meal would be eaten and the box opened, accompanied by prayers, and the halwah divided up. An amount of money would be given to the naqîb who brought the halwah, and a letter written addressed to his shaykh and then the farewell.

There is the tradition of preparing the “Halwah-i Arba‘în” (in Turkish: Erbain Helvası) at the Tophane Qâdirî Khanaqah in Istanbul. The period of 40 days between the 21st of December and the 30th of January, in the cold of winter, was known in the old calendars as ‘Arba‘în’ (meaning ‘40’) and some Sufis would enter into retreat during this time. At the end of this Arba‘în period certain ceremonies would take place. The halwah-i arba‘în ceremony at the

Qâdirî Khanaqah took place like this: Twenty sacrificial animals sent by the padishah (Ottoman king) would be slaughtered after the dawn prayer and its awrâd, by the shaykh himself. The evening meal would consist of five dishes representing the family of the prophet. After the evening meal, the dervishes would recite a hamdiyya together and would then divide up the parts of the Qur'an amongst them and complete a recitation about one hour before the late night prayer ('isha).

The recitation along with the preparation of the halwah-i arba'în would be finished in one hour and then a collective prayer would be read. The halwah would be cooked by seven members of the khanaqah, reciting the kalima-yi tawhîd, which represented the seven stages of the nafs. The halwah-i arba'în was a halwah of semolina prepared with tahini and honey. After being cooked it would be removed from the stove and left to rest. While it was resting, the late night prayer would be performed and 70000 kalima-yi tawhîd and a nashid would be sung. After that the shaykh and his murids would go down to the kitchen and apportion the halwah onto the tables and then eat.

Other sweets would also be prepared at the tekkes. The most famous of these is ashûra. Ashûra comes from the word 'Âshir (the tenth day) and was probably first celebrated by the lovers of ahl al-bayt in order to commemorate and remember the prophet's grandson, Husayn, and others who were martyred at Karbalâ on the tenth day of the month of Muharram. In time it came to be a tradition amongst Shiite and Sunni circles.

Ashûra is a sweet usually prepared on the tenth day of Muharram, from wheat, various fruits and grains. The Mawlawis call ashûra "ash", and remember Hadrat Husayn and the other martyrs of Karbalâ with their ashûra collective prayer.

At the Tophane Qâdirî Khanaqah ashûra would be prepared twice a year with a special ceremony. The first, the Muharram Ashûra, signified the anniversary of the Karbala event, whilst the second, the ashûra of Safar, was a celebration of the continuation of the lineage of the prophet Muhammad when Imam Zayn al-'Âbidin was able to escape from Karbala safe and sound. Each ingredient placed into the ashûra represented one of Allah's Names or indicated one of the twelve imams. The twelve ingredients were: Water, sugar, butter, wheat, rice and rice flour, seeded grapes, a little salt, white beans, chickpeas, starch, milk, and arrowroot. It was a custom to recite the al-Fatiha whenever an ingredient was placed into the pot. The Names and the chapters that were read were specified for each ingredient. Two dervishes would stir the pot with two special spoons called "mablak". They would begin by drawing the spoon towards them and making the letter "alif" and then continue writing the word Allah with the Arabic letters.

After the ashûra was cooked, 12 pieces of cream, shredded coconut,

pomegranate, black currants, brown dried raisins, hazelnuts, walnuts, pinenuts, pistachio and almonds would be placed on top of it. The Sunni members of the Tophane Qâdirî-khane placed much emphasis on the twelve imams due to the influence of the Baktashi tariqa, with its culture of the twelve imams.

Some Sufis, in particular the Bektashis, would write the letter wâw, twice, whilst stirring the ashûra from right to left and then from left to right. In the abjad measure, the letter wâw has the value of 6. Side by side two wâws have the value of 66 which is the abjad value of the word “Allah”. Thus “stirring up two wâws” was considered dhikr of the name of Allah .

Abdülbaki Gölpinarlı has recorded that it was a custom with almost all of the tariqas, with the exception of the Nasqshbandi tariqa, to prepare ashûra in the month of Muharram and recite a dirge for Karbala. In the journal Muhibbân, in the issue dated the 14th of Safar 1329 (1911), there is a list of khanaqahs that prepared ashûra from the tenth day of Muharram until the night of the 29th, which confirms Gölpinarlı .

Sweets other than halwah and ashûra would be prepared in the khanaqahs. At the Tophane Qâdirî Khanaqah, five dishes would be prepared on the Qandîl-i Mawlid (birthday of the Prophet Muhammad), and the fifth would be either rice pudding or milk pudding. Four dishes would be prepared on the night of the Qandîl-i Raghâib and jelly would be served as a sweet. Merkez Efendi (Musa Muslihuddin, d.959/1551), one of the shaykhs from the Sunbuliyye Sufi order, created mesîr paste from 41 different spices. This paste, however, was served not as a sweet but with the intention of a cure .

‘Sherberts

In the Mawlawi tekkes, after the special ceremony called ayn-i cem, sherberts made from dried and fresh fruits and nuts and cinnamon or other fruits would be drunk. In some Naqshbandi tekkes, after the Khatm-i Khwâjagân ritual performed on Sundays and Thursdays, sweets, grapes, dates or halwah would be eaten. And after the ‘ishâ prayer on Friday eve, the khatm-i salawât would be performed and the sherbert would be drunk .

Whenever a murid would join the Badaviyya Sufi order, sherbert would be drunk at the ceremony. If one wanted to make the attraction great, a sherbet of vinegar and milk would be served, if an average attraction was desired, a dish of dates, raisins and dried figs, and if a small amount was desired then olive oil and water would be served. Those in futuwwa groups (Akhîler) were quite fond of a kind of berry, known as ‘sultan blackberry’ or ‘mountain strawberry’ and would drink a sherbert made of this fruit. There is talk of the possibility of this sherbert which was known as “Akhi dudu” then changed to “ahududu .“

Generally after the meal, at the tekkes, the meal prayer would be read in either Arabic or Turkish. We have already mentioned some examples of these Turkish prayers. In the Ushshâqî tekkes, in addition to these prayers, the Hamd

divine hymn would also be read. This Turkish divine hymn was written by Muhammad Hamdî Baghdâdî (d. 1723), the Ushshâqî shaykh from Edirne, and began as follows :

All praise be to Allah, All praise be to Allah ,
Ya Allah, All praise be to Allah ,
There is no god but Him, there is no god but Allah, Allah.
Allah has favoured us, thank you Allah
He has engulfed us in bounty, thank you Allah
Allah, there is no god but Allah (chorus)
Let us recognise His favours, praise His mercy
Let us remember Him, thank you Allah
Allah, there is no god but Allah (chorus) ...

Conclusion

The early Sufis who emphasised zuhd and eating little, were compelled to identify certain rules that needed to be followed in the tekkes (Sufi lodges) as a result of their expansion and the institutionalisation of tasawwuf. This also included the identification of the table etiquette (âdâb al-sufra) of tasawwuf. This table etiquette of Sufism expanded even more in the Anatolian tekkes of the Ottoman period, and was transformed into special ceremonies that took place on particular days and nights in which special meals were prepared accompanied by prayers and dhikr. The Sufis loaded many symbolic meanings onto the ingredients used and the methods of preparation of the food. In this way the worldly act of eating was transformed and became a joyous act of worship. One certain religious days and nights, they would offer these meals to the people in their surrounding neighborhoods so that they too could more easily breathe this spiritual air. In addition, they also made important contributions to our culture and in particular the Turkish cuisine .