



The Role of Anatolia Alavis in Safavid-Ottoman Relations (From Sheikh Safi to Shah Abbas I)

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Abstract

Safavid doctrine was initially favorite with many of its proponents. For that reason, the Safavid diverted all their preaching attempts towards Anatolia. Claiming that they are Alavi and Seyyed, they could attract Anatolia Alavis who were dissatisfied with Ottoman Empire. Anatolia Alavis also played the main role in Shah Ismail's uprising and in promoting the Safavid doctrine to the Safavid sovereignty. The Safavid support of Anatolia Alavis brought about some tensions between both Safavid and Ottoman governments. This research attempts to scientifically and systematically study the role of Anatolia Alavis in social and political relations between the Ottomans and Safavid. The author of current research seeks to answer the questions that what the role of Anatolia Alavis was regarding the Safavid and Ottoman relations. In response to the abovementioned question, two hypotheses are put forth: i. The Safavid support of Anatolia Alavis led to the Alavis' uprising against the Ottoman Empire; hence, strained relations between two governments. ii. Immigration of Anatolia Alavis from the Ottoman to Iranian territory cause some various economical and social problems for the Ottoman sovereignty; hence, the conflict between the two states.

Keywords: Iran, ottoman, safavid, anatolia, alavis.

Introduction

The Anatolia Alavis and the conversion of the Safavid doctrine to the Safavid sovereignty. From Sheikh Safi-Addin Ardabili to Sheikh Junayd: The Safavid were named thus after Sheikh Safi-Addin Ardaili, Shah Ismail's great ancestor. Sheik Safi-Addin was living in a region in Ardabil and in search of a Murshid, He went to Sheikh Zahed Gilani who living in a village near the Caspian Sea and was under his discipleship for twenty-five years. After his demise, Sheikh Safi-Addin was ordained as the eminent leader of Zahediyyeh Credo. He moved the Sufi Center to Ardabil and renamed the Zahediyyeh Credo to Safaviyyeh Credo. Sheikh Safi-Addin managed to catch the attention of different individuals from different castes (strata) of his contemporary time. Geographically, he spread his influence out to Rome, Anatolia, India, Syria and Palestine. After Sheik Safi-Addin, his son Sadr-Addin and thence his grandson Khajeh Ali were in charge of Safaviyyeh Credo. Since the time of Khajeh Ali Siyah-poosh (black-clad) (demise in 830 After Hijra), Shiism in Safavid Family was disclosed¹. It is ought to be said that most of the researchers believe that Sheikh Safi-Addin and his successors initially were not in Shiism but practiced Sunnism, Shafei Sect. They also contend that they were not Seyyed and Alavis and Imam Musa-Kazim's descendants, but they were from Kurdish origin².

Having carried out an army campaign against the Minor Asia in 804 AH/ 402 A.D., Timur Beg Gurkhani met Khajeh Ali and bid a command so as to bestow Ardabil and all the villages and

boroughs and adjacent lands to the control of the Safavid. By the request of Khajeh Ali, Timur ordered to hand over all the prisoners of war captured in Anatolia to Sheikh and Sheikh set all of the free. All these captives stayed in Sheikh's discipleship as a sign of appreciation.

Khajeh Ali accommodated all the staying captives in Ardabil after their liberation in a part of the city³. These captives were the chiefs of three great clans of Tekeli, Şamlı, Ustaçlı, Qacar, Afşar, Rumlu, Zengene as well as the clan of Zulqadr that organized the core of a group later on called Qızılbaş (pronounced Gizilbash)⁴. Timurid princes, on their way to army campaigns to west, paid tribute to the leaders of this credo in Ardabil⁵. For instance, Amir Timur was impressed by Shiism and he highly respected Khajeh Ali⁶. Shahrokh, Timur's son, also was in the same unanimity with Safavid Family as his father. His meetings with Khajeh Ali were interesting owing to the fact that Safavid Credo had overt Shiite tendencies. Apparently in the Sunni viewpoint, political objectives entailed such a procedure and that Shahrokh paid tribute and visit to the 8th Imam's Holy Shrine in Mashhad for several times confirmed this point.

After Khajeh Ali's demise, his son Ibrahim succeeded to the head of Safavid Credo and held this position up until his death in 1447 A.D. / 851 A.H. It was obvious that Ibrahim sustained and reinforced a network of adherents who were actively involved in proceeding Safavids' preaching in Anatolia and

other regions and appointed a position as the head of this organization which was called the Khalifatolkholafa (Caliph of Caliphs). Although no event of importance occurred in Sheikh Ibrahim's era, it appears that Safavid Credo in Ardabil experienced its ebbing times. This era corresponds to Timurid Shahrokh's time in east and earlier Qara-Qoyunlus in Azerbaijan and Iraq⁷.

Sheikh Junayd

After Sheikh Junayd passed away in 851 A.H., his son, Sheikh Junayd succeeded his father. After Sheikh Junayd's investiture to Safavid Credo leadership, Safavid movement entered an important phase of patiently preparing for the possession of power for two centuries via founding Safavid Dynasty since Sheikh Junayd was the first person from this Credo to show his openly longing for power possession and kingdom. He not only modified and completed the secret and hidden teachings of the Credo which started to be impressed by Shiism since his great-grandfather Khajeh Ali's time but also recruited new disciples and followers to plan for power possession.

Sheikh Junayd's ambitious tendencies and his ever-increasing number of Sufis and followers brought about Jahanshah Qara-Qoyunlu's despair and suspicion and thereby Jahanshah wrote a letter to Sheikh Jaafar, Sheikh Junayd's uncle with whom he was in conflict, requested Sheikh Junayd's departure and exile. Therefore, Sheikh Junayd along with a number of his most loyal followers departed from Ardabil and went to Anatolia and began to preach among Alavis in Anatolia. Despite the fact that Sheikh Junayd asked Sultan Murat II, the Ottoman Empire, for a place to dwell, the Sultan turned a deaf ear to Sheikh Junayd's requests because he learned about Sheikh Junayd's intentions and objectives and the Sultan thought granting some money and gifts would suffice⁸. Sheikh Junayd found a very favorable atmosphere for him to preach. He encountered some people already Shiite or prone to be Shiites among the nomads and peasants and managed to amass 5-10 thousand followers from among Anatolia peasants and nomads. Turk peasants' and nomads' dissatisfaction with the economic and political conditions of the country and Sheikh Junayd's sagacity were the motives for these people to team up⁹. Among the people who joined Sheikh Junayd, one can name out Sheikh Badr-Addin Samavane'i's followers. Sheikh Junayd could aptly attract Sheikh Badr-Addin's followers who were looking forward to the emergence of a leader after Sheikh Badr-Addin's death.

Sheikh Junayd went to Diyâr-ı Bekr, hopeful of being kindly attended by Uzun Hassan Aq-Qoyunlu. Uzun Hassan received him with open arms, knowing that Sheikh Junayd could be a highly potential ally against Qara-Qoyunlus and that he could use Sheikh Junayd's manpower against Jahanshah Qara-Qoyunlu. Sheikh Junayd stayed in Diyâr-ı Bekr for three years during which he enjoyed Uzun Hassan's hospitality¹⁰. Sheikh Junayd married Khadijeh Begum, Uzun Hassan's sibling, in 1459 A.D./ 863 A.H. This marriage strengthened Sheikh

Junayd's position and from then on, Uzun Hassan supported Sheikh Junayd ever more. Sheikh Junayd, utilizing this support, sent delegates called caliph on his behalf to all territories under Aq-Qoyunlu so as to gather new followers. Shiite Sheikh Junayd and Sunni Khadijeh Begum gave birth to Sheikh Heydar who organized a well-structured military system called Qızılbaş in accordance to his predecessors' political-religious movements.

Sheikh Junayd came back to Ardabil after some duration of settlement in Anatolia, but again Jahanshah Qara-Qoyunlu began to have ill-feeling towards Sheikh Junayd. So Sheikh Junayd was forced to leave Ardabil. But this time, Sheikh Junayd decided to lead an army to fight out The Circassians in Shirvan to provide the earnings and proceedings for his men as well as to pave the way for his political prestige to increase. But in the fight against the governor of Shirvan, he was killed by a man named Khalil¹¹.

Yahya-ibn-Abollatif Qazvini wrote in his famous history book called *Lobbottavarikh* about Sheikh Junayd as following, "Mirza Jahanshah Qara-Qoyunlu requested Sheikh Junayd to leave his territory for the fear of his country collapse. The Reverend Sheikh Junayd along with a great number of his sincere followers went to Halab. After some while he went to Diyâr-ı Bekr under Amir-Kabir Abunahr Hassan Bayk who was in enmity with Mirza Jahanshah. Hassan Bayk received him warmly in person. He took pride in his marriage with his majestic sister, Khadijeh Begum Aga. Her Excellency gave birth to Safdar Abulghazi Sultan Heydar. Sheikh Junayd with a company of many people from Diyâr-ı Bekr set off to fight against pagans in Trabzon. Finally, he added that Sheikh Junayd was killed by Amir Khalil, Shirvan's governor in a war¹².

Sheik Heydar

After Sheikh Junayd's being killed in the battle, his son Sheikh Heydar who was living with his uncle Uzun Hassan Aq-Qoyunlu arrive in Ardabil at the age of nine and took the responsibility of Safavid Credo leadership. Sheikh Heydar ascended to the position of a sheikh effortlessly. He married with his cousin, Martha or Halima Begum who was a progeny to the marriage of Uzun Hassan with Despina Catherina, a Trabzon princess. The result of this wedlock was Ismail, the founder of the Safavid Dynasty as well as three other children. Apparently, his early part of lifetime was devoted to extend his organization in Anatolia and preach and gather up new followers. Some of his talented followers in Anatolia were sent to other countries as a Caliph after having been trained in special courses and briefed to some information. Caliphs had the duty to preach Safavid Credo and to collect treasury for Sheikhs. As Faruk Sumer said, "The Credo had his head in Ardabil and his body in Anatolia. The book *Ahsanottavarikh* recounts, "Sultan Heydar was living in Ardabil after his father's martyrdom and the followers of the royal family and the believers in the virtues of that lineage from Rome, Damascus and other countries brought along vows to His Majesty¹³. Sheikh Heydar added up the number of his followers

in Anatolia due to his constant and excessive propaganda. These followers went to pay a tribute to their Sheikh in Ardabil with vows and gifts. Whereas their Sunni neighbors suggested them to pilgrim the Holy Shrine of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in Medina instead of enduring the difficulties of this journey. They responded that they would go and pilgrim the alive rather than the dead. According to Faruk Sumer's beliefs, ever-increasing expansion of Safavid Credo in Anatolia was due to Sultan Bayezid II, Ottoman Empire's negligence and insouciance in governing his country.

Sheikh Heydar could no longer stay in one place with gathering of many followers around him because his followers, from one hand, expected him to carry out greater tasks and from the other hand they needed supplies and provisions. They were mostly poor and without weapons and clothing. That was a good reason for Sheikh Heydar to attack the pagans in Circassia and Dagestan for three times; in first two attacks in 1483 A.D. / 888 A.H. and 1487 A.D. / 892 A.D., he could plunder and take many hostages, but in his third attack in 1481 A.D. / 893 A.H., since he looted Şamaxı, the capital city of Shirvan, he was defeated and killed by Farrokh Yasar, Shirvan's ruler who was an ally of Sultan Yaghub Aq-Qoyunlu¹⁴.

Before his third attack to Shirvan in 1488 A.D. / 839 A.H., Heydar introduced a uniform for his followers, which is indicative of his innovative mind in organizing men. He also designed a special red capas (headwear) with 12 patches and rims on them as a token of 12 Imams. Then after, it featured the loyal adherents of Safavid lineage. The Ottomans called them Qizibash (namely, red-headed) to ridicule them. But the Safavid honorably accepted this title as a source of pride. In strict sense of the word, the name Qizibash was attributed only to Turkmen tribes who were the inhabitants of eastern Anatolia, northern Syria and Armenian highlands and accepted the Safavid called and became the followers of Suffiyyeh Sheikhs in Ardabil. However, this name was loosely and roughly used to address non-Turkmen adherents as well. The prevalent use of this capa caused an internal unanimity and solidarity among Safavid warrior groups since only those who had strong belief in the Credo accepted to change their headwear.

Shah Ismail's Movement and the Founding of Safavid Kingdom

After Sultan Heydar has been killed, His eldest son Ali succeeded him. But Sultan Yaghub Aq-Qoyunlu ordered Ali and his brothers and their mother Martha who was Yaghub's own sister to be arrested and imprisoned in Estakhr of Fars Province. They were imprisoned there for four years and six months. After Yaghub's death and his territory's being fragmented due to internal wars and conflicts, one of the government claimants called Rostam set them free from the prison to use the Safavid manpower for his benefit and for the elimination of his rivals. After Rostam got riddance of his most threatening rival called Baysongor, he thought of the imminent

danger from Sultan Ali and for that reason he killed Sultan Ali somewhere near Ardabil. Ali had appointed his brother Ismail, six years of age then, as his successor.

Ismail was occulted by some of Safavid followers, who were later called "Ahl-e-Ekhtesas", in Anatolian neighborhood in Ardabil. After that, some of intimate followers of that lineage such as Hussein Beyk Lellah Shamlu and Abdal-Beyk Zulqadr and Gök Ali from Anatolia, let Ismail escape to Gilan for the fear of being arrested. Ismail stayed with Karkia Mirza, Gilan's governor who was a Shiite in Lahijan for more than six years. In this long run, he was never neglected by Sufis and even many followers especially from Anatolia, Qaraja Dag, Ahaar went to pay tribute to their Murshid with their vows and gifts. In this time, Ismail composed some simple poems in Azerbaijani with the penname of "Xatayi" in order to maintain his ties with his followers in Anatolia, South Caucasus and Azerbaijan¹⁵.

Ismail enjoyed Mevlana Shams-Addin's presence in Lahijan and learned how to recite Quran and the works in Arabic and Persian. It seems that Ismail's residence in Gilan had a great role in the formation of Shiism and his religiosity. Since this region was one of the Shiism foci in Iran. Thus, Ismail was brought up among his followers and disciples who were mostly Ghulât, meaning "extremists in religion", and he acquired the principles and basics of Imamiyyeh Shiism¹⁶. He also learned how to be a brave warrior from ten noble men of Sufis from Anatolia who were titled "Ahl-e Ekhtesas".

In 905 A.H., Ismail and the small group of "Ahl-e Ekhtesas" came to the conclusion that it was high time they launched a movement. In that year, he went back to Ardabil and in Moharram Month, 905, he launched his movement. Ismail sent envoys from Ardabil to his followers in Syria and Anatolia so as to communicate with the main source of power and required them to meet him in Arzanjan. Then Ismail went to Arzanjan along with a group of his followers. In Arzanjan, the Turks joined him in big groups from different tribes of Ustaclu, Shamlu, Rumlu (Above all of them the Turks for Sivas, Amasiyeh, Tugat), Takalu (Antalia Region) and Zulghadr and the people from Qaraman in Anatolia (with Turghurs scouting them) and Varsaqs (Turkmens from Tarsus). This is indicative of the fact the Turks supporting and reinforcing the Safavid were mostly from Central or South Anatolia. Shah Ismail left Arzanjan in 1501 A.D. / 906 A.H. with 7000 Qizibash followers and attacked Shirvan and conquered Baku not only to provide his men with economical supplies but also to take a harsh revenge on his father's murderers. He defeated Alvand Mirza Aq-Qoyunlu in Sharur Battle (907 A.H.). Ismail arrived in Tabriz after Victory and performed his coronation ceremony and minted a coin after his own name. His most salient task in Tabriz was his declaration of Twelver Imam Shiism as the formal sect in Safavid country.

Shah Ismail ordered to all the preachers and orators all over the country to introduce and recite Shiism-specific declaration of

faith, i.e., "Ashhaddo Anna Alian Vali Allah" [I testify Ali is friend of God], and another statement, "Hayye Ala Khairil Amal" [Come to the best of all actions], into Azan (prayer's call) and Egameh (prayer's action) and to recount some orations under the name of 12 Imams. Since the majority of Muslims in Tabriz were practicing Sunnism, Shiite scholars were worried about such an extremist measure from Shah Ismail. For that reason a group of scholars and jurist, who were greatly concerned about the conditions, one night before coronation ceremony went over to Shah Ismail and said, "All Majesty, precisely two-third of two hundred thousand or more population of Tabriz are Sunnis and from the time of Imams up to now nobody has openly recited this orations. I fear from the peasants and vassals to turn against the Shiite Shah with the excuse that they may not want a Shiite Shah, God forsaken. We have to think of a strategy. [In response, Shah Ismail said] We are obliged to do so and the Almighty God with Saint Imams will aid me out of this problem. I fear no one. And with the grace of God, if any one from the peasants and vassal open their mouth to utter anything wrong I blade all of them out and leave nobody alive. On Friday, I will myself go and recite Twelver Imam Oration"¹⁷.

On the first Friday of 907 A.H., Shah Ismail and three close followers named Dadabayk, Hussein Bayk Lellah, Abdal Bayk and Qizilbash leaders came to the conclusion that they would resort to violence if necessary. It was so adventurous to take such a measure in Tabriz in which two-third of the population were Sunnis. It seems that Ismail relied on the power supplies coming from Anatolia Alavis to decide thus. Shah Ismail was not content with Iran regarding this and He went on beyond his territory and with the aid and abet of his caliphs trespassed into Ottoman realm and began to preach Shiism and provoked the Shiites against Sunni rulers in Anatolia¹⁸. Since Ottoman Shiites didn't have satisfactory economic status and were dissatisfied with Ottoman oppression and cruelty, they were revived by the advent of Shah Ismail and consolidation of Shiism in Iran. They considered Shah Ismail as their suitable savior and supporter and set off to some movements and riots against the ruling system in their land under the Safavid propaganda and they opened a new chapter in Ottoman-Safavid ties. Since the number of Alavis immigrating to Iran after Shah Ismail's coronation was significant, Sultan Bayezid ordered his courtiers to exile Shah Ismail's followers in Hamid and South Anatolia regions far into the coastline of Rome to ban the trend of these immigrations. This was of necessity because this caused Ottoman economic conditions to be severely impressed. Abandonment of the lands inhabited by the emigrators caused some problems in taxation systems and put the Ottoman government relying on "treatment system" into terrible conditions. Consequently, Shah Ismail requested Bayezid II via a letter not to deprive the enthusiastic pilgrims of his ancestors from paying a tribute to their Shrines in Iran. In return, Ottoman ruler justifiably considered the pilgrims' departure as escaping from military service not visiting the Safavid Shrines¹⁹.

An important event that occurred in Ottoman-Safavid ties was "Shahgoli" movement in 1510 A.D./ 916 A.H. Shahgoli, Caliph Hassan's son who was one of the Sheikh Heydar and Shah Ismail's caliphs in Antalya, answered the Safavid call after his father's death and misused the opportunity of Ismail's empowerment and Sultan Bayezid's infirmity to launch a movement. Shahgoli's leading an army of 15000 men to join Shah Ismail's Military camp is indicative of Safavid conspiracy in this movement. Shahgoli's unsuccessful movement culminated in the detriment and disadvantage of all Shiites living in Minor Asia because in less than three years, Yunus Pasha, Sultan Selim's Grand vizier had the mission to eradicate all the Anatolia Alavis. All over the Anatolia region, everyone who had the slightest relations with Takali group and Shahgoli's movement was tortured and killed savagely by the command of Yunus Pasha. And anyone else who narrowly escaped accusations, but had any tendencies to Alevism was cauterized in their foreheads so as to be distinguishable from non-Alavis²⁰.

Another important event was Caliph NoorAli's movement in the reign of Sultan Selim, Bayezid II's son. Shah Ismail not only did not congratulate Sultan Selim's accession to the throne but also he dispatched Caliph NoorAli to Anatolia to summon all Sufis from this region. Caliph NoorAli with the help of Prince Ahmet, who did not recognized his brother's sovereignty and intended to turn against him, along with Sultan Murat, the Governor in Amasiyeh who became Qizilbash Allies, urged the Qizilbashes from Sivas, Tugat, Amasiyeh and Chorum to rise up. Having integrated with Sultan Murat who had 10000 Qizilbashes under his command, Caliph NoorAli arrived in Tugat and recited some orations after Shah Ismail. As soon as he became aware of the people's opposition with him in doing so, he set the whole city in fire and after his mission went back to Arzanjan.

Shah Ismail also interfered in the interior affairs of Ottoman reign by supporting Ottoman Princes in his party. It should be noted that Ismail initially supported Prince Ahmet, Bayezid II's son and immediately after his murder, Ismail supported Murat, Ahmet's son. Sultan Selim took precautionary measures against Safavid propaganda in Anatolia after his coronation. In the first phase, he, in a variety of ways, terminated all the princes claiming the throne to prevent them from being granted the asylum to Safavid or western states²¹. In the second phase, Sultan Selim killed 40000 Safavid adherents in some regions of Anatolia where most of them populated²². Without doubt, there had been some exaggeration in the number of the 40000 people killed since it could have led to an important issue of the time. According to the scripts and documentations, Sultan Selim killed only activists like caliphs and he just exiled majority of ordinary people. Probably this number indicates the total number of the killed as well as the imprisoned and the exiled. Yet another measure taken by Sultan Selim, to confront the Safavid propaganda in Anatolia, was to obtain a creed from Sunni Clergies stating that Shiite Clergies are all pagans and they should be fought in Jihad. Also he issued some information among people on the fact that the Safavid Lineage is not

Seyyed, i.e. descending from Imams. Sultan Selim was a militant unlike his father and since Shah Ismail continued interfering in Anatolia, Sultan Selim decided to destroy Safavid government. He had two reasons for this combat: Caliph NoorAli's measures in Anatolia and Shah Ismail Safavid's supporting the Sultan Selim's rivals (Prince Ahmet and Prince Murat). Sultan Selim informed Shah Ismail about Sunni Clergies' creeds on his apostasy by sending contemptuous letters to him and challenged him into a war. He also called Shah Ismail as the "**Zahhāk**" of the time and the "**Afrasiab**" of this age. In response to these threats, Shah Ismail declared with a soft tone that there were two reasons he had been sincere to Ottoman Sultan and not encroached his territory yet: "One, that territory is populated mostly by our ancestors' followers and devotees. Two, our affection to that respected dynasty has been ancient and we did not intend to have an insurrection broken out in that realm precisely like what happened in the Timurid era and nor do we yet. We do not take these disrespects to our hearts." After having exchange such letters between two Sultans, Shah Ismail finally sent a message to Sultan Selim and informed him that he would be awaiting him in Chaldiran. Ismail was defeated in Chaldiran plain on 24 August, 1514 / 3 Rajab, 920 A.H. and he was about to lose his life. But he could narrowly escape and survive the battlefield due to self-devotion of some of his followers. Sultan Selim, who had acceded to this war with the intention of demolishing Safavid Shiite government, marched towards Tabriz and entered the city. He was welcomed by the Noblemen and the merchants²³. Shah Ismail escaped to Dargazin, Hamedan because other than Qizilbash, he had no popular base among Iranians especially the people in Tabriz. Sultan Selim started to massacre all the Qizilbashes and the Shiite in Tabriz.

Interestingly, the Ottomans, in spite of their victorious position, did not march into the inland Iran and did not abolish the Safavid completely and they retreated after the occupation of Tabriz for one week. A question occurs in one's mind: Why did the Ottomans not march eastwards in their victorious movement and not eradicate one of their own serious sources of trouble (the Safavid)? According to the documents available the Janissaries asked Sultan Selim to stop this genocide and he accepted. But why ever should the Janissaries request this from the Sultan? In response to this question we should refer to the close relations between the Janissaries and Baktashiyeh Credo that brought the Janissaries in contact with Shiism and their convert to it. For this reason they were reluctant to kill the Shiite. They wrote a petition to Sultan Selim, "Approximately 45000 individuals in our country and almost 20000 individuals living in Iran were sliced into pieces by the swords of treachery and oppression for the accusation of heresy and atheism. Our prejudiced clergymen did not give us the true insight into heresy and atheism and they deceived His Majesty and caused the bloodshed from those precious populations and forced us to murder the Muslims. In what religious condition, should they be killed while they chant the Muhammedian call for prayers for five times a day, make ablution, and pray God in groups, fast

and give out Zakat, recite Quran, perform Hajj, and always say the sacred sentences of "La Elaha Ella Allah, Mohammad Rasul Allah"[There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is His Messenger] just like the Sunni Muslims? If praying God with ones' hands hanging sideways of the body is contrary to religion, why do the Shafei's do so some times and the other way some else times? Or if it is considered to be contrary to the established teachings of Islam to say " Ashhaddo Anna Alian Vali Allah and Hayye Ala Khairul Amal" in Azan and Eghameh, innovatory though, it is a good innovation like the attachment of Minara to the top of mosques. We all confess that Ali is God's Vali and our muezzins say "Hayye Ala Khairul Amal" in the morning Azans. The truth is that we will not fight against Iranians under the pretext of religion. If we are told off to be fighting over the territory, this ruined country is not worth the blood we shed to confiscate it²⁴.

The content of Janissaries' petition to Sultan Selim shows that they were reluctant to kill the Shiite for the pretext of their supposed heresy and atheism. Unlike their prejudiced Clergymen, they recognized the Shiite as Muslims, and they overtly declared that they would not get into war with Iranians over religion. Baktashiyeh impact on the Janissaries to take such steps vis-à-vis Iranian Shiites was quite obvious. Sultan Selim opted to retreat from Iran because he became aware of the Shiism bonds between the Janissaries and Iranian Shiites.

Shah Ismail could greater actions to reduce the power of the Qizilbash in the last years of his reign. One of his actions was that he never appointed any Qizilbash emir to the position of a deputy. His other action was to dismiss Hussein Bayk Lellah Shamlu from the position of the Emir of Emirs and relegated it to an anonymous position-holder named Muhammad Bayk Ustaclu who was previously a simple table-setter.

From Shah Tahmasp to Shah Abbas

After Shah Ismail's demise in 1524 A.D. / 930 A.H. at the age of 38, his son Tahmasp ascended to throne. When Tahmasp took the reign, each of the tribes in some places of Iran possessed lands and properties. Ustaclus were at the top of the hierarchy because most of the emirs from this tribe held crucial positions in the government. Ustaclus' lands and properties covered Azerbaijan, part of Iraq Ajam and Kerman, Shamlus presided over Khorasan and Takalus captured Iraq Ajam except Isfahan and Hamedan. Fars was exclusively in the hands of Zulghadrs, and Rumlus mostly populated Azerbaijan and Aran.

Shah Tahmasp's being of minor age and impotent in country's issues left the arena open for Qizilbashes empowerment and invasion. They took the office and captured the power away from the Shah for one decade. In the tribal council formed by Div Sultan Rumlu was recognized as vice-regent, Emir-Alomara and tutorial for Shah Tahmasp with full assent of Rumlu, Takalu and Zul-ghadr tribes. Ustaclu were politically marginalized after Div Sultan took the power and were defeated in a war in 1526

A.D. / 922 A.H. and were forced to escape away. After Ustaclus having been excluded, the power fell into the hands of Div Sultan and Chuha Sultan Takalu. In rivalry over gaining more power, Chuha Sultan was the winner and he persuaded Shah Tahmasp to terminate Div Sultan. After Div Sultan's death, Chuha Sultan became the statesman and important positions were available to Takalus. After four years, Chuha Sultan also was deleted from power scene in 937 A.H. by Hussein Khan Shamlu. Even Shah Tahmasp bid the order to massacre Takalus. Majority of Takalus were killed and some of them fled to Baghdad²⁵. After four years of Takalu hegemony, there came three years of dominance for Shamlus and Hussein Khan Shamlu delivered all crucial positions to the Shamlu and even did not let the Shah intervene in the governmental affairs. He actually signed his own kill command when he arbitrarily killed Emir Jaafar Savoji, the vizier, in 939-940 A.H. since Shah Tahmasp issued the command to murder Hussein Khan Shamlu. His death put an end to one decade reign of Qizilbash rule (930 – 940 A.H. / 1524 – 1533) and paved the way for the Shah to regain the sovereignty.

The interesting point in Safavid-Ottoman relations for which the Alavis played an important role was that Ulameh Sultan took refuge to the Ottomans and encouraged Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to raid Iran. Ulameh was a governor in Azerbaijan. After power possession by Hussein Khan Shamlu, he took refuge to the Ottoman state and actually got into their disposal. In 1533 A.D. / 939-40 A.H., when Shah Tahmasp wanted to lead an army to Transoxiana, Ulameh Sultan informed Sultan Selim about the fact that north-western and central Iran is defenseless and he himself led an Ottoman forces towards Iran. Extremes blizzard in Sultaniyyeh plain forced Sultan Suleiman to retreat to Ottoman soil via Kurdistan. In Sultaniyyeh, Shah Tahmasp's emirs, Mohammad Khan Zul-ghadr Oghlu, Qia Sultan and Hussein Sultan, Burun Sultan Takalu's son, joined the Ottoman forced along with 3000 manpower under their command.

Ulameh Sultan attacked Iran leading a massive Ottoman army two more times but each time Shah Tahmasp's Scorched Earth Strategy and Partisan Attacks and his clash and harassment operations frustrated the Ottomans in Iranian territory and force them withdraw back to their own soil. It is noted that in above-mentioned geostrategic campaigns, instigations by Algas Mirza, Shah Tahmasp's betraying brother who was in the Ottoman's side, played the greatest role²⁶. Amasiyyeh Peace Treaty in 1555 A.D. / 962 A.H put an end to long clashes between the Ottoman and the Safavid. Since a clause was included in Amasiyyeh Peace Treaty to mutually exchange and control the migrants, one can understand that previously there were constant and collective migrations of the Qizilbash from Anatolia to Iran. The lack of social and economic justice in Ottoman society was one of the reasons causing these migrations. The recruiting system in the Ottoman government from Anatolia caused most of the peasants and farmers abandon their jobs and turn to militarism. But soon enough, the Ottoman government realized her mistake

in performing such a policy and forcibly returned all the farmers, who had abandoned their jobs, back to their original place of work. This led to the dissatisfaction of the Turks who had left their peasantry life and practiced militarism for a long time. Meanwhile, mismanagement of the peasants was another reason for them to disobey.

Shah Tahmasp in his powerful time managed to limit Qizilbash solidarity and take them under his domination. One of the most important tasks that Shah Tahmasp carried out in this regard and it fructified mostly in Shah Abbas Safavid reign was to introduce a third element of force, i.e., Circassians and Georgians into the arena of power rivalry. After Shah Tahmasp, the Qizilbash seized the opportunity in power recession time and took the important positions and they rivaled with each other to empower their own prince.

Shah Ismail II came to power with the aid of Rumlu and Ustaclu tribes. Although Rumlu and Ustaclu tribes helped Shah Ismail II to gain the power, they were victimized by Shah Ismail II's despotism and could not gain their solidarity. Actually, Shah Ismail II made a balance of power between four tribes by re-authenticating the Ustaclu and Shamlu tribes. Turkmens united with Takalus and Ustaclus united with Shamlus. Shah Ismail II is featured by not having any extreme Shiite religiosity and he banned cursing three Caliphs, Omar, Abu-Bakr and Othman, and Ayesha which caused people to think of Shah having some Sunni tendencies among the people. After untimely death of Ismail II, the courtiers who were mostly from Qizilbash agreed to give the power to Muhammad, Shah Tahmasp's oldest son. Sultan Mohammad Khodabandeh who suffered from low eyesight due to his physical weakness could lend the arena to the Qizilbash to intervene in the power affairs. It seemed that the emirs intentionally considered this weakness when they wanted to empower him. After that the union between Qizilbash chiefs vanished into thin air and they formed two opposing front against one another, on one side Turkmens and Takalus and on the other Ustaclus and Shamlus. Savagely murdering the Queen, Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh's wife before his eyes was indicative of the bitter fact that how powerless the Shah had already become and how powerful and courageous the emirs were. In short, the Qizilbash occupied all governmental positions in Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh's time and they even introduced new vacancies for themselves. The Ottoman state also became aware of this weak Safavid Sultan and was waiting to seize a new opportunity. So they violated the long-lasting peace treaty with Iran and they usurped most parts of western Iran. Tabriz, the first capital city of the Safavid was also occupied by the Ottomans and this time it lasted for 20 years. The Qizilbash empowered Hamzeh Mirza, Sultan Muhammad's son. But he also was a puppet in the hands of the Qizilbash until the end of his reign in 1586 A.D. / 995 A.H.

Shah Abbas Safavid

Abbas Mirza, Sultan Mohammad Khodabandeh's son, held the

power by the help of Ustaclu and some other tribes, but, in practice, he proved that he did not intend to lend himself as a puppet to their hands. Shah Abbas became a king when the country was threatened by the Uzbek from the east and the Ottomans from the west. However, Shah Abbas thought of first organizing the interior affairs of the country and making some balance and discipline among the Qizilbash who were his primary base for his governments.

Shah Abbass followed the policy of removing powerful Qizilbashes from the scene and appointing young emirs in their positions. He also dispersed all the different tribes like Afshars, Zulghadr, Qajars, Bayats from their central populating place to different parts of Iran.

Another policy of Shah Abbas to reduce the power at the hands of the Qizilbash was to introduce new elements of Circassian, Georgian and Armenian power who were settled in the country in Shah Tahmasp's time. They were appointed not only in critical governmental positions but also as the leaders of many tribes. This made a balance between Iranian, Qizilbash and Circassian elements. But the Qizilbash maintained their previous position in the government and were considered as important as before.

Shah Abbas succeeded to return the usurped Iranian territory by the Ottomans. He also captured Baghdad. There were some migrations from Anatolia in Shah Abbass time. In 1602 A.D. / 1012 A.D, a Turk nomadic population of approximately 2000 families came to Iran and Shah Abbass settled them around Saveh, Khar, and Firuzkuh. The following year a mass of Anatolia Sufis along with their household came to Iran and inhabited around Maraghei. A huge population of Jalalian also came to Iran. Jalalian thought Anatolia could not be suitable for living due to extreme suppression by the Ottoman Empire and migrated to Iran in 1608-9 A.D. / 1017 A.H²⁷.

At the end, it can be said that Shah Abbass could found a new military organization composed of the servants (Qapi Qullari) from Georgians, Circassians, Armenians and gave them some vacancies in salient important position in the country just as what was prevalent in the Ottoman Janissaries organization so as to reduce the Qizilbash hegemony and to bring them under his domination.

Conclusion

The Safavid Credo leaders could gain power thanks to the Anatolia Alavis. tion composed of the servants (Qapi Qullari) from Georgians, Circassians, Armenians and gave them some vacancies in salient important position in the country just as what was prevalent in the Ottoman Janissaries organization so as to reduce the Qizilbash hegemony and to bring them under his domination. These leaders with their political sense chose an appropriate region for themselves. Anatolia Alavis were good options for the Safavid for two reasons: firstly, they had some

strong religious affinity with the Safavid and secondly, they were in opposing frontiers with the Ottoman government in politics and religion.

The Anatolia Alavis were called Qizilbash in Iran and in transition of the Safavid from credo to state especially in Shah Ismail's movement played a significant role and the Safavid carried out their policies on the basis of their power.

Influx and overflow of Anatolia Alavis to Iran After the establishment of Safavid government was one of the causes to challenging relations between Iran and the Ottomans. Because this caused the lands to be abandoned and depopulated and it led to fragile economy of the Ottomans. Another issue in the relations of the two countries was the Safavid's aid and abet in Alavis movements in the Ottoman Empire. Shahgholi and NoorAli Caliph's movement can be named. All these factors contributed to the outbreak of many wars between two governments. Although the Ottomans were victorious, they could not use this dominance.

The Anatolia Alavis took the control of the power thanks to the contributions they did for the Safavid and sometimes their power took precedence of the king's power. Different tribes competed to gain power and wealth. Shah Ismail tried to limit the range of the Alavis power but after his death the Alavis had the command. Although Shah Tahmasp was initially a puppet in the hands of the Qizilbash due to his minor age, in the following phase of his government, he could limit the Qizilbash power and get them under his dominance. Although the Qizilbash reappeared in the political arena, Shah Abbas managed to make a power balance between governmental power elements with the introduction of a third power element called "Circassians".

At the end it should be concluded that whenever the Safavid kings decided to limit the Alavis power and bring them under their control, they could have the command of everything and administer the interior and exterior affairs better ever.

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