

POLITICAL GOALS UNITING SHEIKH JUNAYD, LEADER OF THE SAFAVID ORDER, AND HASAN BEY BAYANDURLU

Received: 21 May 2026 | Accepted: 20 June 2026 | Published: 30 June 2026

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ABSTRACT

To research the history of medieval Azerbaijan, it is important to understand the historical roots of political alliances in the region during that period. This will also help to understand the political processes taking place today, as similar strategic alliances continue to influence global politics. Bearing this in mind, our research examines the political alliances between the Aghqoyunlu leader Uzun Hasan and Sheikh Junayd, the leader of the Safavid order, as an example of strategic alliances in the medieval period. The research utilizes methods such as historical analysis, comparison, and contextual interpretation, relying on reliable primary sources and scholarly research. The results of the research show that although the alliance initially served the purpose of consolidating Uzun Hasan's regional power, it ultimately contributed to the realization of Sheikh Junayd's ideological struggle in the long term and led to the establishment of the Safavid state by Shah Ismail. This research allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between religious movements and political goals.

Keywords: Hasan Bey Bayandurlu, Sheikh Junayd, Safavid order, Akkoyunlu

1. INTRODUCTION

In the rich fabric of history, particularly during the expansive period of the Middle Ages, the symbiotic relationship between religion and political authority profoundly influenced the formation of states and the trajectory of nations. This influence was subtle and multifaceted, penetrating to varying degrees across diverse geographies and manifesting its effects in diverse and often complex ways. This period is particularly significant due to the central role religion played in political affairs in both the Muslim and Christian worlds.

The second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed a significant paradigm shift characterized by the articulation of the principle that religion and state should be separate. However, this assertion obscures the fact that religious ideologies are deeply embedded in the foundations of states and continue to shape contemporary political processes. While the principle of secularism was groundbreaking, it did not completely sever the entrenched links between religious beliefs and political structures, and these links still influence modern governance and societal norms.

Considering the key role played by religion-state relations in the complex fabric of the modern world, our scholarly research undertakes a critical examination of these enduring dynamics. Specifically, we will explore the shared interests that united two powerful forces in Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and the Caucasus region during the 15th century. At the forefront of this historical alliance were Sheikh Junayd, the wise leader of the Safavid order, who gained widespread support through his religious propaganda, and Hasan Bey Bayandur, a prominent military leader from Anatolia.

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In this article, by examining the relationship between these two important figures of the medieval period, Sheikh Junayd and Hasan Bey, we will attempt to understand how their religious and political ambitions influenced their surroundings and left a lasting mark on history.

As an Azerbaijani historian, my interest in this topic also stems from the necessity of conducting in-depth research into the medieval history of my country. Throughout the medieval period, Azerbaijan was ruled successively by the Baharli (Karakoyunlu), Bayandur (Akkoyunlu), and later the Safavid dynasties. However, the subsequent occupation of Azerbaijan by Tsarist Russia and later its incorporation into the USSR, in accordance with the ideological requirements of the new regime, created obstacles to the thorough study of the region's medieval history, aiming to erase national memory. After Azerbaijan regained its independence, the study of new sources and the opening of archives made it essential to research the obscured pages of our region's past.

In our study, in order to evaluate the relationship between Sheikh Junayd of the Safaviyya order and the Bayandur Bey of Anatolia, Hasan Bey, we took into account the broader political and social context of the period and applied historical analysis methods to conduct a detailed examination of their relationship. For this in-depth analysis, we referred to several Persian-language sources, including *Tarikh-i Alam-Ara-yi Abbasi* by Iskender Bey Munshi (2009), *Kholde Barin* by Muhammad Yusuf Qazvini (1993), and *Gesasul-Khagani* by Valigulu Davudgulu Shamlu (h.1395). All of these sources were written during the Safavid era and offer valuable insights into this period. We also referred to Molla Kamal bin Jalal al-Din Muhammad Manjam's *Tarikh-e Safaviyan* (h.1355). These sources were instrumental in our examination of materials related to Safavid Sheikh Junayd. We have thoroughly and meticulously examined the perspectives on that period presented in these sources.

During our research, we also used a comparative method by consulting sources critical of the Safavids. Among these sources, we examined the work of Ruzbihan Khunci, the court historian of the Akkoyunlu ruler Sultan Yaqub, who was politically opposed to the Safavids. His work, *Tarikh-i Alam-Ara-yi Amini*, proved to be a particularly informative source (1987).

Previous researchers have primarily focused on events that took place after the establishment of the Safavid and Akkoyunlu states and have studied the relationships of their rulers with other regional powers. However, there has been limited scholarly attention paid to the earlier period - specifically, Hasan Bey's political struggle to gain power prior to the establishment of the Akkoyunlu state and the activities of the Safavid sheikhs in the region before the founding of the Safavid state. Taking this into consideration, we focused our analysis on these lesser-explored topics within the aforementioned sources. In our study, we considered not only the information provided by primary sources but also local and foreign historiographical works on this period and topic.

Historical studies on the subject prove that although Sheikh Junayd Hasan Bey supported the political ideas of Bayandurlu, he was also able to formulate a new ideology for the future political steps of the sect. His new ideology and the political traditions he created became the means for the Safavid leaders who led the sect after him to achieve greater victories. This process ultimately led to the formation of the Safavid state, which left deep political and ideological traces in the history of the Eastern region, especially Azerbaijan.

2. THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF SHEIKH JUNAYD AS THE LEADER OF THE SAFAVIYYA SECT

Sheikh Junayd, who led the Safavid order from 1447 to 1460, was a leader who led to the emergence of political tendencies within the order. His attempts to directly intervene in political processes distinguished him as the first Safavid sheikh to express a desire to establish a state. During his leadership, Shiite beliefs also began to manifest themselves in the ideological foundations of the order. Sheikh Junayd's leadership ensured that the Safavid order participated more decisively in political processes, as a sign of a departure from traditional practices.

When the Safavid Order was founded in Ardabil in 1300 by Sheikh Safiyaddin, it was a direction that preached Islam and Divine love, fulfilling the spiritual religious needs of people. Gunel Rahimli writes that "The Safavid Order emerged in its early period as a Sufi-centered structure, uniting diverse religious and ethnic communities around a spiritual center" (Rahimli, 2026, p.17). However, under the leadership of Sheikh Junayd, the direction of the order changed.

Under Sheikh Junayd's leadership, the Safavid movement underwent a significant transformation. His vision extended beyond the spiritual and religious realms into a relatively unknown political landscape. Sheikh Junayd continued to openly pursue state-building, creating the foundational ideology that would later be implemented by his successors. His commitment to Shia beliefs further solidified the sect's identity and distinguished it from other contemporary religious movements. This strategic alignment won the support of Shia followers and positioned the Safavids as a formidable political force. Sheikh Junayd's leadership thus represents a critical stage in the changing nature of the Safavid order, marking its transition from a purely spiritual entity to a politically ambitious and influential movement.

Sheikh Junayd, with his unique thought process and unique personality, blazed a trail that distinguished him from his predecessors. His leadership ushered in a transformative period for the Safavid order, marking the beginning of a departure from existing norms. This was not just a doctrinal change, but the beginning of a transition from being a mere religious order to a nascent state (Shukurov, 2006, p. 49).

In a short time, Sheikh Junayd gained a large number of supporters and their respect. Realizing the inherent power of the sect, he decided to use this influence and build a strong state. European researcher A. Allouche wrote about the actions of Sheikh Junayd that, after taking leadership, Junayd significantly departed from the way of life adopted by his ancestors. The desire for power, inflamed by new ambitions, began to revive in his dreams. The main goal of the Sheikh was to conquer territories and regions, thereby achieving comprehensive influence and dominance (Allouche, 2001, p.59).

In the *Lubbut-Tawarikh*, a well-known source from this period, the beginning of the foundation of the Safavid state is attributed to Junayd. The text describes this development as follows: "Upon assuming leadership, Sultan Junayd emerged as a contender for global influence, marking the initiation of the Safavid kingdom" (Qazvini, 1984, p. 387). Another source mentions that Sheikh Junayd amalgamated the external and spiritual caliphates, adorning his head with the crown of wealth and kingship, thereby symbolizing the commencement of both external and internal sovereignty (Qazvini, 1993, p. 48).

The Sheikh persisted in expanding his propaganda efforts to further enhance the sect's influence. In the source titled *Tarikh-e Safaviyan*, it mentions Sheikh Junayd, stating that: "with each passing day, the authority of Hazrat in society was growing stronger" (Manjan, h.1355, p. 3). Perspectives indicate that Sheikh Junayd possessed a distinct personality.

During the period when Sheikh Junayd led the Safavid sect, Jahanshah Baharli (Karakoyunlu) held rulership over Azerbaijan. Jahanshah was aware of Sheikh Junayd's political inclinations and the support he had garnered. Recognising Junayd as a significant threat to the Karakoyunlu state, Jahanshah acted to remove the Sheikh from Ardabil and the territories under his influence.

Sheikh Junayd's political tendencies also caused discontent among his uncle, Sheikh Jafar. Sheikh Jafar was a supporter of the continuation of the order as a purely religious and spiritual institution. He was also known for his close relationship with Jahanshah of Karakoyunlu. Sheikh Jafar's son was married to the daughter of Jahanshah.

The Ottoman historian Münecimbaşı notes that, in addition to Jahanshah, Sheikh Junayd's uncle, Sheikh Jafar, also refused to recognize him as the leader of the sect. There was a significant disagreement between Sheikh Jafar and Sheikh Junayd regarding the religious orientation of the sect. Although Sheikh Junayd was inclined towards Shiism, Sheikh Jafar advocated preserving the sect's previous Sufi orientation. This disagreement indicates that Sheikh Junayd followed a completely different path, while

Sheikh Jafar adapted to the traditions of his ancestors (Müneccimbaşı, 1979, p.180).

Regarding the relationship between Sheikh Junayd and Sheikh Jafar, the contemporary source *Gesasul-Khagani* recounts: "One day, his uncle Sheikh Jafar entered into dispute with him over the matter of his brother's succession. Mirza Jahanshah, the son of Kara Yusif, the reigning king at that time, became wary of Turkman Sultan Junayd's actions as a ruler. Consequently, he began to support Sheikh Jafar" (Shamlu, h. 1395, p. 31). In Part III of the book "History of Islamic Nations and States," V.C. Brockelman observes that Sheikh Jafar played a pivotal role in inciting Jahanshah Baharli against Sheikh Junayd. One factor that contributed to Jahanshah's alignment with Sheikh Jafar was their familial connection. Specifically, Sheikh Jafar's second son, Sayyid Gasim Khan, married Jahanshah's daughter. Leveraging these familial ties, Sheikh Jafar encouraged Jahanshah, the ruler of the Karakoyunlu dynasty, to engage in hostilities against Sheikh Junayd (Brockelmann, 2002, p. 260). Shahin Farzaliyev asserts that one of the motives behind Jahanshah Baharli's efforts to displace Sheikh Junayd from Ardabil was the conflict between these Safavid sheikhs and the Armenians and Georgians under the Karakoyunlu rule. This struggle involved acts of plundering, which ran counter to Jahanshah's economic interests (Farzalibeyli, 1995, p. 68). Rejected by both Sheikh Jafar and Jahanshah Baharli, Sheikh Junayd realises that he cannot remain in Ardabil. Under the weight of such significant opposition, he is compelled to depart from the dargah.¹

In 1448 (852 Hijri), Sheikh Junayd left Ardabil and relocated to Anatolia. There were various reasons behind the sheikh's decision to move. One notable factor was the positive relations established between the Safavid sect and the Ottomans from the outset. As previously mentioned, the Ottoman state regularly dispatched donations and assistance to the Ardabil Dargah under the designation of "cherag akcha"² (Birdogan, 2001, p. 13). However, this assistance was not dispatched even once during Sheikh Junayd's tenure, prompting him to voice his grievances to the Ottoman Sultan Murad II (1421-1444) (Babinger, 2001, p. 19). Due to this close relationship, Sheikh Junayd turned his attention to Anatolia.

Another factor that contributed to his focus on Anatolia was his awareness of having a substantial number of supporters in the region. Upon his arrival in Anatolia, Sheikh Junayd intensified propaganda efforts among the Turkmen tribes, strengthening their allegiance to the sect and establishing a significant influence over these groups. However, the question remains as to whether Sheikh Junayd, the Safavid sheikh, had already embraced the Shia sect by the time he arrived in Anatolia.

Faruk Sumer examined this issue in depth, arguing that although it is difficult to provide a definitive answer to this question, there is some validity to the suggestion that Sheikh Junayd adopted Shiism after arriving in Anatolia. However, sources also suggest that during his travels in Anatolia, he not only assumed the role of a Safaviyya sect sheikh but also that of a seyid (sayyid)³ (Sümer, 1979, p.10). This indicates that if the Sheikh was traveling in Anatolia as a seyid, he likely already harbored Shiite tendencies in his ideology.

One plausible scenario is that Sheikh Junayd arrived in Anatolia as a Sufi and, sensing the Anatolian Turkmens' affinity for the Shia religious ideology, began advocating for this ideology to garner their further support. Given the significant importance he placed on religious gatherings, it is challenging to assert that Sheikh Junayd worked exclusively for faith causes. If Sheikh Junayd had solely championed the Shiite ideology, it seems unlikely that he would have formed an alliance with Uzun Hasan Bayandurlu - who was known for his Sunni inclinations - and gone so far as to marry his daughter.

¹ Dargah: A place where followers of sects gather, worship, and listen to the teachings of their leaders.

² "Cherag akcha" was the name given to all the gifts sent to Ardabil by the Ottoman sultans until Yavuz Sultan Selim II, when the great-grandfather of Shah Ismail, the founder of the Safaviyya sect, Sheikh Safiyeddin, and his successors resided.

³ In the Muslim world, someone who is a descendant of Prophet Muhammad, and specifically whose lineage traces back to his grandson Husayn, is referred to as a seyid (sayyid).

Sheikh Junayd's primary objective was to establish a state by leveraging the influence he had amassed. In this pursuit, he demonstrated an adept strategic use of the opportunities available to him. Sheikh Junayd adeptly cultivated trust among the people of Anatolia through his sagacity, to the extent that they were willing to sacrifice their lives at his command. The disciples who gathered around him exhibited unwavering devotion, considering Sheikh Junayd almost divine and engaging in worship. R. Savory notes that during Sheikh Junayd's time, his followers openly referred to him as God and even as God's son (Savery, 1980, 195).

While Sheikh Junayd was in Konya, he became embroiled in a dispute with the city's most famous sheikh, Sheikh Abdullatif. The debate culminated in Sheikh Junayd asking Abdul Latif, "Is loyalty to my Companions a crucial requirement, or is it like a child?" The veracity of this statement is debatable. In response, Abdullatif asserted, "In the matter you mentioned, loyalty to the Companions is indeed a vital requirement, as there is a verse in the Qur'an that addresses this issue." Sheikh Junayd retorted, stating, "Were you present when that verse was revealed? In other words, were you with them?" The argument between them escalated to the point where they were both taken by the arm and removed from the scene (Gündüz, 2017, p. 26)

Indeed, through this argument, Sheikh Junayd appears to align with Shia beliefs. He was among those who claimed that certain verses in the Qur'an had been altered over time, and portions related to Hazrat Ali had been removed. During this debate, Sheikh Abdullatif remarked, "With such beliefs, you have essentially adopted disbelief (kafir), and those who adhere to such beliefs will similarly be deemed as disbelievers" (Ekinci, 1997, p. 69-70).

Sheikh Junayd is considered one of the earliest leaders to initiate the Jihad movement in the history of the sect. Upon arriving in Canik, near the Black Sea, Sheikh Junayd organized a campaign against the Trabzon Roman Empire, the only non-Muslim community in the region. His primary objective in this undertaking was to seize power from the Emperor of Trabzon, Kalo Ioannes. According to Shahin Farzaliyev, Sheikh Junayd successfully overthrew the Trabzon Empire and endeavoured to establish a state for himself and his disciples (Farzalibeyli, 1995, p. 61).

The Safavid sheikh's motivation for engaging in this war was the power struggle within the Trabzon Empire. Sheikh Junayd believed that seizing Trabzon in such a context would be opportune in this context, given that the surrounding communities were Christian, and he anticipated minimal objection to the capture. He envisioned establishing his own state in Trabzon in lieu of the Greek Empire, with him assuming rulership over this newly formed state (Hinz, 1992, p. 20).

In order to execute his plans, Sheikh Junayd mobilized soldiers and initiated the formation of an army. However, due to limited resources, he could only muster a few thousand soldiers. In around 1456 CE, Sheikh Junayd launched an attack on Trabzon with the assembled troops, but despite advancing to the capital, the prolonged siege spanning several days yielded no results (Uzunçarşılı, 2011, p. 223; Sümer, 1979, p. 10; Hinz, 1992, p. 21). The governor of Amasya, Khizir Bey, was dispatched to Trabzon by the Ottoman Sultan, Fatih Sultan Mehmet (1451-1481), to prevent Sheikh Junayd from capturing the city. He successfully halted the siege and compelled the Sheikh to retreat.

Two noteworthy aspects emerge from the siege of Trabzon led by Sheikh Junayd. Firstly, until Sheikh Junayd's time, the population of Trabzon was predominantly Turkish and Muslim. The small Christian community, consisting of Trabzon Christians, Georgians, and Cherkezes, had acknowledged Ottoman rule by paying taxes, thus eliminating the need for jihad. However, Junayd's revival of the jihad movement generated enthusiasm among his disciples and kindled a desire for war.

⁴ Jihad refers to the holy war waged by Muslims against non-Muslims.

Through this conflict, Sheikh Junayd both gauged and intensified the fervour for war among his followers.

Secondly, the Trabzon war enabled Sheikh Junayd to assess the military strength of the sect. It enabled him to identify the deficiencies and weaknesses within his army. Although Sheikh Junayd did not emerge victoriously in this battle, he gained valuable insights into the capabilities of his forces.

3.HASAN BEY BAYANDURLU AND SHEIKH JUNAYD: SHARED INTERESTS AND ALLIANCE

Following the unsuccessful siege of Trabzon, Sheikh Junayd relocated to an area near Diyarbekir. At that time, Hasan Bey of the Bayandurlu dynasty, who ruled Diyarbekir, was actively working to turn his principality into a powerful regional state. Upon arriving in Diyarbekir from Ardabil at the request of Jahanshah, the ruler of the Karakoyunlu (Baharli), Sheikh Junayd discovered common ground with Hasan Bey in their shared political ambitions. Hasan Bey greeted him as an ally. Recognising the mutual benefits of their cooperation, they decided to form an alliance. This collaboration was driven by their need to consolidate power and expand their influence in the region. Both leaders were aware that unity would enhance their ability to face their common adversaries and achieve their political goals. Consequently, Hasan Bey's alliance with Sheikh Junayd was a significant step towards strengthening his position and advancing the interests of the Bayandurlu dynasty. This raised the question: Who was Hasan Bey Bayandurlu?

Hasan Bey, more commonly known as Uzun Hasan, was a prominent figure in the Bayandurlu family, which was part of the Oghuz Turkish dynasty. At the end of the 14th century, the Bayandurlu dynasty successfully established a Turkish principality centered in Diyarbakir under the wise leadership of Qara Yuluq Osman Bey. The rise of this principality and the subsequent establishment of the Akkoyunlu state are closely linked to the name of Hasan Bey, who ruled from 1453 to 1478. Uzun Hasan rose to the position of Diyarbakir Bey in 1453 (Woods, 1993, p. 145). With his strategic and military intelligence, as well as the support of Sheikh Cüneyd, he united Eastern Anatolia, the Iraqi-Arab and Iraqi-Ajami territories, and extended his rule to Khorasan, establishing the Akkoyunlu state in 1468 and turning it into an empire.

During his time as ruler of Bayandur, Hasan Bey came up against one of his main rivals, Jahanshah Karakoyunlu. According to Iskender Bey Munshi (2009, p. 62), the relations between Hasan Bey, who was ruling Diyarbekir at the time, and Jahanshah were consistently strained. The Baharli dynasty, a prominent Oghuz tribe, ruled over extensive territories including Azerbaijan, Anatolia, and Iran, and was the dominant political power in the region. Uzun Hasan, in his role as the Bey of Diyarbekir, staunchly resisted being subjugated by the Baharli dynasty. His refusal to acknowledge their supremacy led to significant tensions and outright hostility between the two factions. The resulting animosity manifested in various ways, such as the closure of key trade routes and increased military skirmishes, which further exacerbated the conflict (Munshi, 2009, p. 62; Ibrahimov, 1958, p. 34). This period of sustained conflict highlighted the fragile nature of regional alliances and the constant power struggles among the ruling dynasties.

Hasan Bey sought to build a coalition to oppose the Karakoyunlu people. He knew that Sheikh Junayd was also in opposition to Jahanshah Baharlu. Hasan Bey Bayandurlu also recognized that Sheikh Junayd held significant influence among the Anatolian Turkmen tribes. After being defeated in Trabzon, Hasan Bey wrote a letter to Sheikh Junayd to offer him friendship. Some sources suggest that Hasan Bey Bayandurlu initially approached Sheikh Junayd in a hostile manner, arresting him. He subsequently released Sheikh Junayd, recognising him as a potential ally in the fight against Jahanshah, and established a close relationship with him (Paşazade, 2003, p. 267). According to Isgender Bey Munshi's account, Hasan Bey welcomed Junayd and his retinue graciously and dignifiedly (Munshi, 2009, p. 62). Faruk Sumer corroborates this information, referencing *Tarixi-alāmara-yi Abbasi*, to attest to Sheikh Junayd's reception with profound respect by Mr. Bayandurlu (Sümer, 1979, p. 11). Hasan Bey Bayandurlu was well aware of Sheikh Junayd's significant influence among Anatolian Turkmen tribes, and he intended to exploit this aspect for political gain.

According to Mehmet Saray, this alliance altered the course of Sheikh Junayd's life and that of his followers completely (Saray, 1990, p. 14). The initial closeness between them evolved into a deep bond of friendship and kinship. Sheikh Junayd solidified this relationship by marrying Hasan Bey's sister, Khadija Beyim. Ayşe Arayancan emphasises that Sheikh Junayd's influence grew significantly after his marriage to Khadija Beyim (Arayancan, 2010, p. 73-74). This union was a significant early political triumph for the Safavid sect, strengthening their strategic alliances and increasing their influence in the region. There are several ways in which the reasons and consequences of Sheikh Junayd's connection to the Akkoyunlu can be explored. Firstly, through this marriage, Sheikh Junayd became affiliated with a powerful future ruler. Secondly, both parties acquired formidable allies in the struggle against Jahanshah Baharli.

Sheikh Junayd's uncle, Sheikh Jafar, had allied himself with the Karakoyunlus and was eager to remove him from Ardabil. Sheikh Junayd had not forgotten what his uncle had done to him and was determined to confront him in the future (Hinz, 1992, p. 27-31). Upon arriving in the Ottoman lands, Sheikh Junayd sought the Ottoman Sultan's permission to settle there. However, Sultan Murad II (1446-1451) denied his request, stating in a letter that "two sultans cannot coexist within one state". Consequently, although the Ottomans did not grant him permission to settle there, Sheikh Junayd found unrestricted mobility within the Akkoyunlu lands. Moreover, this alliance played a pivotal role in hastening the establishment of the future Safavid state. Mehmet Dağlar and Cevdet Yakupoğlu also note that in their research, the Safavids inherited the legacy of the Akkoyunlu (Dağlar, 2020, p. 1008). Furthermore, the marriage to an Akkoyunlu princess connected him to the ruling line, enabling him to claim that he belonged to a hereditary ruling line for the state he aspired to establish.

The fact that Sheikh Junayd formed an alliance with the Sunni Akkoyunlu, despite being a Shia, demonstrates that his desire to establish a state took precedence over religious considerations. Shahin Farzaliyev, who provided information on this issue, asserts that Sheikh Junayd's acceptance of kinship with Uzun Hasan Bayandurlu highlights the importance of political concerns in his decision-making (Farzalibeyli, 1995, p. 74). The Sunni historian Fazlullah Ruzbihan, who served in the court of Sultan Yaqub, the son of Hasan Bayandurlu of Akkoyunlu, writes about the actions of Sheikh Junayd. He expresses regret that Sheikh Safieddin himself could not guide his children to abstain from worldly affairs, despite keeping his distance from all that is forbidden (haram). Consequently, his children subjected themselves to various humiliations and misfortunes in their pursuit of the throne. Once Junayd became viceroy, he became obsessed with the idea of conquering and capturing other lands and territories (Khunci, 1987, p. 78-79).

Thanks to his alliance with Uzun Hasan Bayandurlu, Sheikh Junayd gained considerable approval from the Bayandurlu and dispatched emissaries throughout the Akkoyunlu territory, thereby expanding his network of supporters. Over approximately three years, Sheikh Junayd successfully assembled a following of around 12,000 supporters through extensive propaganda efforts. In 1459, as tensions between the Bayandurlu and the Ottoman Empire over the issue of Trabzon escalated, Sheikh Junayd returned to Ardabil in a markedly stronger position.

Just as Sheikh Junayd gave new strength to the sect, the future goals of the sect were also determined. Although his untimely death prevented him from carrying out his ideology, the generation that came after him managed to carry out this ideology. First, Sheikh Junayd left three great legacies to his descendants. The first was the spiritual leadership of the sect, the second was the tradition of fighting armed non-Muslims who opposed them, and the third was the kinship with the ruling family to realize the claim to statehood.

4. CONCLUSION

The encounter between Sheikh Junayd and Hasan Bey Bayandurlu led to both leaders gaining powerful allies. This alliance in particular stands out as a major turning point in Safavid history. Their close relationship eventually developed into friendship and kinship, as Hasan Bey married his sister Khadija Bey to Sheikh Junayd. Hasan Bey, who established family ties with Sheikh Junayd, won his struggle against Baharlı Jahanshah with the support of the Safavids. He laid the foundation for the Akkoyunlu rule, which encompassed parts of Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. As a result, the Bayandurlu dynasty became the ruling dynasty in the region.

At the same time, the political changes that took place in the region during Sheikh Junayd's reign led to an increase in the number of Safavid supporters. During this period, Sheikh Junayd played a significant role in the expansion of the order by encouraging nomadic Turkmen tribes to join the Safavids. One of the main reasons for his success was his ability to influence and his deep understanding of the culture and mindset of the social class he targeted. This ability allowed him to gather a strong army of thousands of loyal followers, which was very important for the Safavid movement. In fact, the complex interaction of political processes and Sheikh Junayd's precise understanding of social dynamics led to the expansion of the Safavid movement and the mobilization of broad support from the Turkmen tribes. This constituted a decisive stage in Safavid history.

In fact, according to research based on Sheikh Junayd and Hasan Bey Bayandurlu, both paved the way for the Safavids to become the dominant power in their region and shaped the course of history for centuries. Together, they changed the foundations of regional governance and developed a new era that flourished with the Akkoyunlu and later the Safavid, as the powerful. The transformative effects of this development lasted for centuries and left a deep mark on the historical development of the region.

Future research on this topic could expand on the following directions:

First, the alliance between the Safavids and the Aghqoyunlu could be analyzed in comparison with other Sufi-political collaborations of the same period. In particular, drawing parallels between the Safavid order and other branches that emerged from the Zahidiyya, such as the Khalvatiya, could provide new scholarly insights.

Second, the marriage between Sheikh Junayd and Hasan Bey's sister could be examined in relation to other politically motivated marriage alliances in the medieval Islamic world. A comparative study could provide a broader perspective on the political significance of kinship in state-building efforts.

Third, the reactions of other regional powers of the period—such as the Ottomans, Mamluks, and Timurids—to the alliance between Sheikh Junayd and Hasan Bey could be analyzed in a broader geopolitical context. Examining how this alliance affected their political interests would add depth to our understanding of regional dynamics. Research in these areas will contribute to a deeper understanding of political processes and religious ideologies in the medieval East.

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