

“Come to us Tonight”: Two Poetic Invitations Written by İsmā‘īl Hakkī Bursevī (d. 1137/1725) to his Friends

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Context

The works of the Celveti sheikh İsmā‘īl Ḥaḳḳī Bursevī (d. 1137/1725), the exact number of which has yet to be determined, contain numerous poems composed for various purposes. The records found in a manuscript that the author apparently used as his personal *mecmū‘a* in the years 1115-1120 (1703-1709) are remarkable in demonstrating the richness of Bursevī’s poetic practice. Although registered in the catalogue under the title *Mecmū‘atü’l-Fevā‘id* (a compilation of useful knowledge and notes on various subjects), this manuscript was not given a specific name by Bursevī himself. It comprises his spiritual inspirations (*vāridāt*) alongside their commentaries (*şerḥ*), poems composed in the style of hymns (*ilāhī*), commendatory prefaces (a *taḳrīz* containing personal reminiscences) written for other people’s *mecmū‘as*, letters and poems addressed to his friends on various occasions, as well as records of birth and death dates.¹ This diversity in the content of the *mecmū‘a*, along with the personal names mentioned in it, illustrates not only Bursevī’s close relationship with poetry but also the extent to which poetry was integrated into various forms of daily use in Ottoman society.

Among these poems, which provide valuable insights into the author’s broad social circle, are two short verse invitations. One of these was written to Sheikh Şāḫaḫī Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1146/1733) of Bursa for the Night of Power (*Ḳadīr Gecesi*, *Laylat al-Qadr*), while the other was addressed to Sheikh ‘Abdurraḥmān (d.?) for an *iḫtār* dinner².

The verse invitation written to ‘Abdurraḥmān Efendi is on 102^b of the *mecmū‘a* and begins with honorific phrases *Ey şeyḫ-i enām dīn iḥre imām* (O sheikh of mankind, leader within the faith), just as is customary in classical Ottoman letters. In the invitation

¹ Derin Terzioğlu has drawn attention to the rich contents of this *mecmū‘a* as well as the extensive social network revealed by the poems it contains. See Derin Terzioğlu, “Mecmū‘a-i Şeyh Mısrī: On Yedinci Yüzyıl Ortalarında Anadolu’da Bir Derviş Sülûkunu Tamamlarken Neler Okuyup Yazdı?”, *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VII: Mecmûa Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*, edited by Hatice Aynur et al., (İstanbul: Turkuaz, 2012), 319. The first 54 folios of the *mecmū‘a* have been the subject of a critically edition and analysis. See Zeynep Türkoğlu, “İsmail Hakkı Bursevî’nin Mecmûatü’l-Fevâid (Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi Pertev Paşa nr. 645, vr. 1a-54a) Adlı Eserinin Tahkik ve Tahlili”, (Master’s Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2023).

² The fast-breaking meal at sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. In Islamic culture, it refers not only to the physical meal but also to a spiritual gathering and acts of hospitality where family, friends, and community members come together.

extended to this individual, Bursevî writes, *Oğluñuz bile bize geliñüz* (Along with your son, come to us!) stating that a Mawlid (the recitation of Süleymân Çelebî's *Vesîletü'n-Necât*, a poem on the birth of Prophet Muḥammad) will also be performed in the gathering he is hosting, and explicitly adding that he will accept no excuses. Unlike the other poems in the *mecmû'a*, the invitations are composed in the syllabic rather than the *'arûz* meter. Although a few lines deviate from the expected syllable count, possible emendations may restore the intended metrical pattern.³ The invitation addressed to 'Abdurrahmân Efendi employs internal rhyme and phonetic repetition, creating a lively rhythmic effect.

The short poem written to Şahafî Efendi is found on folio 98^b of the *mecmû'a*; it begins with a prayer *Qadriñüz ola şu deñlü 'ālî* (May your worth and rank be so sublime). Bursevî invites his friend to his home to spend the Night of Power together.

'Abdurrahmân Efendi and Şahafî Efendi also appear in Bursevî's other *mecmû'as*. Bursevî composed poems in the form of mutual questions and answers (*es'ile-ecvibe*)⁴ with these two close friends. Both the poems Bursevî composed to discuss scholarly matters and the invitations he wrote in an intimate and cordial tone point to the versatility of poetry in his interactions with fellow dervishes. This illustrates the extent to which poetry served a practical function in both amicable and scholarly relations between eighteenth-century dervishes.

³ Both poems are composed in a 5+5 syllable meter. In the first poem, the expected syllable count is restored by reading *dille* as *dil-ile*. In the second poem, the metrical pattern is maintained through liaison (*ulama*) between *Ḥaqqîye* and *icabet*.

⁴ This genre represents a structured form of poetic and intellectual exchange between scholars. Rather than a simple inquiry, these verse dialogues functioned as a venue for intellectual debate, a tool for pedagogical instruction, or a vehicle for establishing and reinforcing scholarly authority and social networks within the literary community. For Bursevî's *es'ile-ecvibe* exchanged with 'Abdurrahmân Efendi, see Mehmed Demirci, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevî'nin Ecvibe-i Hakkîyye'si", *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 4, no. 10 (2003): 9-43; For Bursevî's poetic exchanges with Şahafî Efendi, see Zülfiye Eser, "İsmail Hakkı Bursevî'nin Es'iletü's-Sahafîyye ve Ecvibetü'l-Hakkîyye İsimli Eseri", (Master's Thesis, Marmara University, 2003).

Transcription

Şeyh 'Abdurrahmān Efendi

*Ey şeyh-i enām dīn içre imām
İftāra aḥşam bize gelüñüz*

*Cān u dil-ile hoş güle güle
Ogluñuz bile bize gelüñüz*

*Melā'ik bu şeb gökden iner heb
Olur lutf-ı Rab bize gelüñüz*

*Meclis olur nūr zulmet olur dūr
Mevlid okınur bize gelüñüz*

*Da 'vet-i Ḥaḳdur cezb-i muṭlaḳdur
Behāne yokdur bize gelüñüz*

*Ḥaḳkī dir yā ne siz şeyh-i cāne
Gitmeñ yabāne bize gelüñüz*

Şahafī Efendiye Berā-yı Da 'vet

*Ḳadriñüz ola şu deñlü 'ālī
Cümle esmāya olasız maḥdūm*

*Da'vet-i Ḥaḳkīye icābet idüb
İdesiz Leyle-i Ḳadr'de ḳudūm*

Translation

Sheikh ‘Abdurrahmān Efendi

O sheikh of mankind, leader within the faith,
For this evening’s *iftār*, come to us!

With heart and soul, in joyous laughter,
Along with your son, come to us!

Angels descend from heaven this night,
The bounty of the God will be upon us, come to us!

The gathering will fill with light, darkness will flee away,
For the Mawlid will be recited, come to us!

This is a divine calling, an irresistible divine attraction,
No excuse is accepted, come to us!

Ḥaḳḳī says to you, sheikh of the heart, what else?
Go not to strangers, come to us!

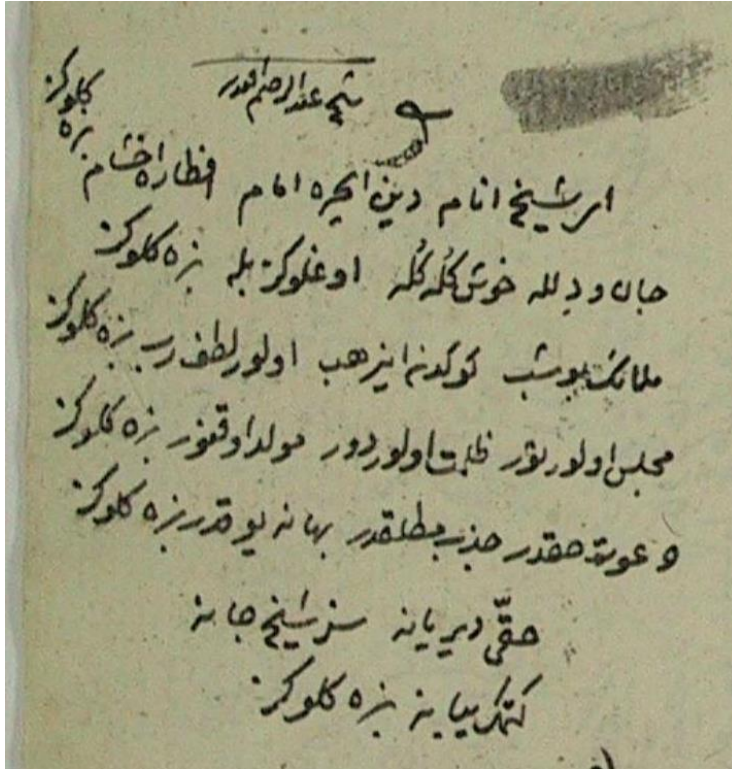
Invitation for Şaḥafī Efendi

May your worth and rank be so sublime,
That you become master of all that is exalted.

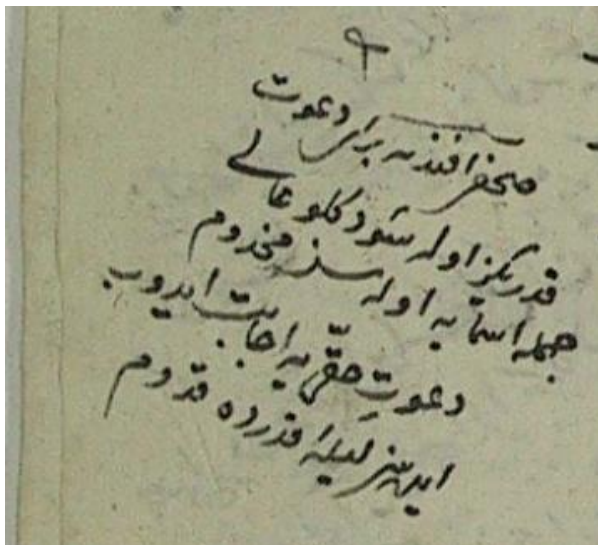
Complying with this invitation of Ḥaḳḳī,
May you come to us in the Night of Power.

Facsimiles

Sheikh ‘Abdurrahmān Efendi



Invitation for Şahafî Efendi



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