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A Brief History of the Relationship between *Futuwwa* (Muslim Brotherhood) and the Ṣūfī's *Ṭarīqah*s in the Islamic Civilization

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Abstract

Futuwwa or a brotherhood is one of the important social institutions in the Islamic civilization. Although many historians assumed that it has originated from the Persian military organization, it was later known that many of the characteristics of being a part of *futuwwa* such as generosity, truthfulness, self-sacrificing, hospitality, hardworking had all its roots in the Qur'ān and Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his beloved Companions. We will delineate briefly a background history of the connection of *futuwwa* with its Persian roots, and later it was developed and systematized further to be part of the Sūfī institution, and functioned as an influential social institution either in the education and training of acquiring various skills and craftsmanship and contributing towards a thriving local economy, or as an outgoing and influential Sūfī institution in defending and propagating Islam.

Keyword: *Futuwwa, Sufism, Islamic Guilds, Islamic Social Institutions*

Abstrak

Futuwwa atau persaudaraan adalah salah satu institusi sosial yang penting dalam tamadun Islam. Walaupun ramai ahli sejarah menganggap bahawa ia telah berasal dari organisasi tentera Parsi, dan ia kemudiannya diketahui kebanyakan ciri-cirinya adalah sebahagian daripada futuwwa seperti kemurahan hati, kebenaran, rela berkorban, layanan yang baik, rajin yang berpunca daripada Al-Qur'an dan Sunnah Nabi Muhammad (SAW) dan sahabat-sahabat Nabi. Gambaran secara sejarah ringkas latar belakang kaitan futuwwa dengan salur-galur Parsi, dan pembangunan dan sistematik yang menjadi sebahagian daripada institusi Sufi, dan berfungsi sebagai sebuah institusi sosial yang berpengaruh sama ada dalam pendidikan atau latihan untuk memperoleh pelbagai kemahiran dan ketukangan yang menyumbang kepada ekonomi tempatan yang berkembang maju, atau sebagai sebuah institusi Sufi yang mesra dan berpengaruh dalam mempertahankan dan menyebarkan Islam.

Kata kunci: *Futuwwa, Sufism, Islamic Guilds, Institusi Islam Sosial*

Introduction

The word *futuwwa* came from the word *fatā* (pl. *fityān*) which means youth, juvenile or a young man. The word has been associated with various forms of religious, social and economic organizations such as the chivalrous religious Ṣūfī brotherhood and dervish orders, various types of craft and artisan guilds, urban militia (*'ayyārān-fityān*), warriors of the faith (*ghāziyān-mujāhidūn-murābiṭūn*), and even the Persian classical gymnastic clubs (*zūrkhāna*) (Zakeri, 1995). In spite of its various forms of manifestations in various social orders, being a member of a *futuwwa*, it is understood that one is aspired to be "the ideal, noble, and perfect man whose hospitality and generosity would extend until he had nothing left of himself; a man who would give all, including his life, for the sake of his friends" (al-Sulamī, 1983). *Futuwwa* is a Ṣūfī code of honorable conduct that took the honorable Prophets, their blessed Companions, and the great saints and sages (*awlīyā'*) of Allah SWT as their supreme example whom through them the characteristic of a true *futuwwa* is manifested: hospitality, generosity, courage, forbearance, forgiveness, sacrificial attitude and practices, and not just to one's own kin, friends and family, but these good *akhlāq* (manners) are extended even to one's own enemies.

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References on *Futuwwa* as Based in the Qur'ān and Sunnah

In the *futuwwa* traditions, there are some Qur'ānic verses that inspire and became the foundation on which the *futuwwa* traditions claim to be as the legitimate source of its basic principles. Particularly, the verse 21:60, "They said, "We heard a youth (*fatān*) talk of them: he is called Abraham," of which the youth is referred to Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.) who had broken all the idols of his people except the biggest of the idols. Thus many early Ṣūfī scholars such as Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1074 CE), in his *Risālah*, defined *fatā* as: "The *fatā* is he who breaks the idol," and he added further, "And the idol of each man is his ego" (al-Sulamī, 1983). And once the idol or the ego has been "broken", the *fatā* or the Ṣūfī disciple would discover eventually at the end that he has no ego, and that his self and others that he had loved so much doesn't "exist" after all. This, in the Ṣūfī terminology, is the station of *fanā'*, a total annihilation of the self in experiencing the Unity of Allah SWT, i.e., the self ceased to exist in relation to the *Wujūd* (Existence) of Allah SWT. Thus, eventually, there is no god other than Allah SWT, as reflected in the *syahādah* that every Muslim has to uphold on to until the end of life. Thus there are no more idols, so to speak, and that all the spiritual practices and hardship have become, like the furnace of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s.), "cool and peace" (*bardān wa salāmān*) (Qur'ānic verse, 21:69).

Another verse in the Qur'ān that mentions the word *fatā*, is verse 18:13: "We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youths (*fityah*) who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance." This verse refers to the Companions of the cave (*aṣḥāb al-kahfi*) who ran away from a cruel king who had tried to persecute them for believing in the *Tawḥīd* of Allah SWT. Their true numbers is not known; some said there were three of them, or five or seven of them. As mentioned in the Qur'ān, in verse 18:25, they were protected from the evil king by being made to sleep continuously for 309 years. Thus, by holding on firmly to their true belief, Allah SWT saved them from being persecuted. In the Christian version of the story, it is said that the youths are seven Christian youths from Ephesus, who left their hometown to protect themselves from being persecuted by the Roman Emperor Decius (who reigned from 249-251 CE). They hid themselves in a cave nearby and slept for more than 300 years, while their faithful dog, Qiṭmīr, stretched its two fore-legs guarding the entrance of the cave.

The most prominent figure in the *futuwwa* traditions is none other than the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) himself. His sacrificial acts toward his own Companions and even toward his own enemies are well documented in many of the *sīrah* of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.). His willingness and eagerness to share any means that he had with the People of the Bench (*Ahl aṣ-Ṣuffah*), who mostly were poor and had no means to support themselves, even to the extent that there weren't much left for his own household. The Prophet (s.a.w.) used to say: "The food of one is enough for two, the food of two is enough for four, and the food of four is enough for eight" (Lings, 1983). It is reported that once a lamb was represented to the Prophet (s.a.w.) as a gift; and when most of the meat had been distributed, 'Ā'ishah (r.a.) remarked to the Prophet (s.a.w.), "Only the neck is left for us," and the Prophet (s.a.w.) replied, "No, all of it is left for us except the neck" (al-Sulamī, 1983). It is also reported that "whenever the Prophet (s.a.w.) ate with others, he was the last one to begin eating" (al-Sulamī, 1983). Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) never had any feelings of revenge towards his enemies and the people who had fought against Islam. Once, after the battle of Khaybar, a Jewish woman served the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his companions a lamb dish that had been glazed with poison. The dish, however, miraculously, informed the Prophet (s.a.w.) that in fact it has been poisoned. The Jewish lady was being summoned and she said, "You have killed my father, my uncle and my husband. So I told myself: 'If he be a king, I shall be well quit of him; and if he be a Prophet he will be informed of the poison.'" A companion who had taken a bite of the lamb was instantly killed, and the Prophet (s.a.w.), nevertheless, forgave her in spite of her wrongdoings (Lings, 1983). As he had always practiced, the *futuwwa* characteristics has always being part of his *akhlāq*, as it is reflected in one of his sayings, "Visit those who do not visit you, give to those who do not give to you, and respond with kindness and good deeds to the harm that is done to you" (al-Sulamī, 1983).

Narratives on *Futuwwa* Characteristics of Some of the Companions

The beloved Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.) were also considered as the true examples of the *futuwwah* traditions. There are many narratives of the first four pious caliphs, Abū Bakr (r.a.), 'Umar (r.a.), 'Uthmān (r.a.) and 'Alī (r.a.), focusing on their generosity, compassion, altruistic and chivalrous values, placing other people's need above their needs, and above all their love, their love towards Allah SWT, for His Prophet (s.a.w.), for other Muslims, for non-Muslims in general, be them friend or foe towards Islam, and for all His other creations. 'Alī (r.a.), the first cousin of our Prophet (s.a.w.), was well-known for his prowess and bravery in many battle-fields encountered by the Muslims, that he was called the Lion of Allah SWT. A

narrative of him overpowering an enemy was well documented in many of the *futuwwah* traditions: "In one battle he had overpowered an enemy warrior and had his dagger at the man's throat when the nonbeliever spat in his face. Immediately ʻAlī (r.a.) got up, sheathed his dagger, and told the man, "Taking your life is unlawful to me. Go away!" The man, who had saved his own life by spitting in the face of the revered Lion of Allah SWT, was amazed. "O ʻAlī," he asked, "I was helpless, you were about to kill me, I insulted you and you released me. Why?" "When you spat in my face," ʻAlī (r.a.) answered, "it aroused the anger of my ego. Had I killed you then it would not have been for the sake of Allah SWT, but for the sake of my ego. I would have been a murderer. You are free to go." The enemy warrior, moved by the integrity displayed in ʻAlī (r.a.), converted to Islam on the spot" (al-Sulamī, 1983).

Another narrative focused on the generosity and altruism of Abū Bakr (r.a.). He was well-known to be so generous that at one time he gave all his wealth to the Prophet (s.a.w.), who was collecting donations to be used for a battle against the enemy of Islam. And when the Prophet (s.a.w.) asked him if he had left anything for his family, Abū Bakr (r.a.) replied, "I left them in the care of Allah SWT and His Messenger (s.a.w)." Later, it is found out that he had only a piece of cloth which he shared with his wife, and thus he didn't have anything decently to wear in other to pray congregationally at the mosque. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) heard about this, he asked his daughter Fāṭimah (r.a.) if she had any extra cloth so that it can be given to Abū Bakr (r.a.). However, the only extra cloth that she had was a piece of cloth made from goat's hair and it was too short to cover Abū Bakr (r.a.) decently. Thus Abū Bakr (r.a.) sewed some date palm leaves onto the cloth to extend it further and he could wear it decently to the mosque. As the narrative continues, "Before he arrived (at the mosque), the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet (s.a.w.) in the same unseemly outfit that Abū Bakr (r.a.) was wearing. When the Prophet (s.a.w.) said to Gabriel that he had never seen him in such strange clothes, Gabriel replied that today all the angels in heaven were so dressed to honor Abū Bakr (r.a.), the loyal, generous, and faithful. Allah Most High was sending blessings and salutations to Abū Bakr (r.a.)" (al-Sulamī, 1983).

The Persian Origin of *Futuwwa* Traditions

Historically, the *futuwwa* traditions were considered by some historians to have been originated from Persia. The word Persia or *bilād al-Furs* (the country of Persia) and the word Persian or *fārisī*, have the same etymological root with the Arabic word *faras* (horse) and the word *fāris* (pl. *fawāris/fursān*), which means horseman, rider, knight or cavalier. And since the *futuwwa* traditions have always been associated with chivalrous and heroic deeds and attitude, it is assumed that the traditions have been originated from Persia. The Persians are well-known for their expertise and skills in horsemanship, military art and war tactics, that there is even a literature genre that focuses on the art of war, known in Arabic as *ʻilm al-furūsiyya* or "Know-how of the warrior profession." Even the Persian poets would mention the connection between military skills and *futuwwa* with the Persian identity. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967 CE), a famous 10th CE Arab historian, who collected Arabic poems and songs in his major work, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (The Book of Songs), wrote that, a Persian poet, by the name of Ismāʻīl b. Yasār (d. 750 CE), has this line in his poem: "The cavaliers are called *fawāris* only because of the Persians (*Furs*)" (Zakeri, 1995). Abū al-Ḥasan ʻAlī b. Husayn al-Masʻūdī (d. 956 CE), a 10th CE geographer, historian, and a traveller, wrote in his major work, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, that an early Umayyad poet by the name of Khaṭṭāb b. al-Muʻallā al-Fārisī, wrote this line in his poem: "It is because of us that the warrior is called *fāris*, and it is from us that the noble *fityān* are issued" (Zakeri, 1995).

Louis Massignon (d.1962 CE), the famous French scholar of Islam, traced the origin of *futuwwa*, its code of conduct, its organizational principles and system, and its various artisan guilds to the Persians during the Sāsānid period, the last Persian Empire before the Persians were under the control of Islam (Zakeri, 1995). The *futuwwa* traditions was said to have centered at the Sāsānid capital and metropolis, Ctesiphon, an ancient city, situated about 30 km from the modern day Baghdad. However, some scholars considered that the *futuwwa* traditions could have originated from Khurāsān and the eastern part of the Persian Empire, particularly from one of its major cities, Balkh, which is an ancient city, currently located in the north of Afghanistan. An old manuscript preserved in the Aya Sofya mentioned that Balkh is the origin of the Persians' knowledge and skills in horsemanship and chivalric organizations: "I asked a number of learned people from Balkh, those who in our time best understand the principles of horsemanship (*al-riyāḍa*) [and found] that as the Arabs in Qādisiyya put the Persians to flight, the best riders of the [Persian] king rode to Balkh and made that country their abode, and from them came the knowledge of horsemanship to [the people of Balkh]" (Zakeri, 1995).

The famous Arab-speaking Persian poet Bashshār b. Burd (d. ca. 694-793 CE), hailed himself to be from Balkh, or Ṭukhāristān, a region north of Afghanistan. When he was asked by the ʻAbbāsside Caliph, al-

Mahdī (d. 785 CE): "Of which Persians is your origin?" Bashshār explained that "He is from those who are richest in horse-riders (*fursān*) and strongest among their contemporaries, the people of Ṭukhāristān". In one of his poems, he wrote, "We are kings, who have always been so through long ages past; we brought the horsemen from Balkh, with no lie, until we watered them in the twin streams of Aleppo; then, when they had trampled on the hard earth of Syria, we marched them to Egypt, in a noisy host, so that we seized that realm, taking it into our realm that we had seized before" (Zakeri, 1995). Moreover, in his well-known collection of poems, *Dīwān Bashshār Ibn Burd*, he commonly used the word *fatā* and *futuwwa*. His *Dīwān* is one of the earliest examples where the word *futuwwa* has begun to take root in Arabic literature, where he said to have claimed himself to adorn the "garment of *futuwwa*," and to be the first to have broken the "seal of *futuwwa*," and he referred to his fellow companions as men of *futuwwa* (Zakeri, 1995). Bashshār also eulogized his deceased son as the best of all youths (*futuww*), and he praised Caliph al-Mahdī with the title *fatā al-Quraysh*.

The best Persian personality that exemplified the characteristic of the *futuwwa* principles is none other than the great Persian companion of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), Salmān al-Fārisī (r.a.), or also known as "Rūzbih son of Marzbān," his birth given name. Among all the Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w), he and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib (r.a.), were considered as the founders of *futuwwa*, and although ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib is considered by many Ṣūfī orders to be as their first founder after the death of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), Salmān, however, has also been honored to be in the line of *isnād* or the chain of authorities of the Ṣūfī masters in some of the Ṣūfī orders such as the Qādiriyya, Baktāshiyya and Naqshbandiyya. In the history of *futuwwa*, Salmān al-Fārisī, was a shining example of piety, asceticism, and heroic and chivalrous deeds. He was known to be so pious and austere that he only had a piece of cloak on which he would wear and sleep with it. His greatest contribution was his suggestion to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to dig a trench (*khandaq*) around Medina in order to defend Medina from the onslaught of the Meccan armies during the battle consequently known later as the Battle of *Khandaq*. The war strategy turned out to be quite successful; the horses of the Meccan armies were reluctant to cross the trench since they have never encountered such structure before (Lings, 1983). This military tactic as suggested by Salmān showed that he has a deep and experienced knowledge on war and horsemanship. In fact, before he became the wandering seeker of Truth and left his Persian hometown, Isfahan, he was one of the Sāsānid *asāwira*, a class of warrior in the Sāsānid social system (Zakeri, 1995). Later, at the time of Caliph ʿUmar (r.a.), he was appointed as a general in the Muslim conquest of the Sāsānid Empire, and later he was appointed as the first Muslim governor of Ctesiphon, the Sāsānid capital, when it has been conquered by the Muslims (Zakeri, 1995).

Moreover, Salmān was reported to have initiated the initiation ceremony of *futuwwa*, and it was said that he had been in charge of the initiation ceremony of the Prophet's Companions (Zakeri, 1995). Not much is known about these early ceremonies of initiation, and there is not any traditions that link the ceremony back to the Prophet (s.a.w.) himself. In fact, most scholars agreed that the initiation rite of the *futuwwa* is very likely to have been adopted from the coming of age ceremony of the Persians' Zoroastrianism, i.e., the Persians' former religion before they embraced Islam. By the age of fifteen, a Zoroastrian boy would be celebrated and welcomed into the Zoroastrian community with a special girding ceremony. A girdle of manhood, which is a belt known as *shadd* or *kustīk*, is tied three times around the waist representing the three cardinal principles of Zoroastrianism, which are good speech, good thoughts and good acts. The word *kustīk* is often being mentioned in Avesta, the main religious text of Zoroastrianism, and the belt is compulsory for every Zoroastrian to wear it. Similarly, a young novice of *futuwwa*, once he has passed all the necessary tests and acquired all the necessary skills and craftsmanship of his particular guild or military organization, is celebrated with a feast, and a belt or *shadd* is tied around him three or four times. Other than a belt, a pair of pants known as *sirwāl al-futuwwa*, is also being handed down as honorary items during the ceremony. Even the Arabic word *sirwāl* (pl. *sarāwīl*) comes from the Persian word *shalwār*, since pants or trousers are not originally part of Arab garments, but in fact has been adopted from the Persian people who wear trousers while riding their horses. And since horsemanship is part and parcel of the Persian way of life, thus wearing trousers has always been part of the Persian culture.

Another ceremony that is also part of the *futuwwa* initiation was drinking salt water from a cup or a bowl known as *ka's al-futuwwa*. This ceremonial drinking was done together with other members of the *futuwwa* as a symbolic act that would bind all the members with the initiated novice in terms of brotherhood, comradeship, mutual and spiritual obligations and responsibilities to help and support each other. It is assumed that this ceremony could have been adopted from the practice of ancient Persian aristocracy known as *shad-khārī*, of which glasses of wine are drink together on the honor of someone's name, usually a

famous and respected *'ayyār*, i.e., a member of pre-Islamic Persian military organization which had continued even after the conquest of the Sāsānid Empire by the Muslim army (Zakeri, 1995). And hence with the coming of Islam, the wine is being replaced with salt water. Some scholars also suggested that the girding ceremony could have also been imitated from the wearing of a *zunnār* (a waist-belt) of the Christians. Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1790 CE), an Arab linguistic scholar, who is famous for his classical Arabic dictionary, *Tāj al-'Arūs*, wrote in his dictionary the meaning of *kustīk* or *kustīj*: "*Kustīj* is a thick cord which is worn by the *dhimmī* above his dress under the *zunnār*." Here al-Zabīdī mistakenly assumed that the girdle of a Christian *dhimmī* is called *kustīj*, although al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956CE), the historian and geographer, had pointed earlier in his *Kitāb al-Tanbīh*, that "the wearing of *kustīj* by [Zoroastrians] in their waists is as the *zunnār* for the Christian" (Zakeri, 1995).

Moreover, a *futuwwa* organization in the early history of Muslim civilization has often been connected with the elite Persian military organization known as *'ayyārān*. They were members of elite Sāsānid soldiers who had converted to Islam after the conquest of the Sāsānid Empire by the Muslims. Even some scholars assumed that the meaning of the word *'ayyārān* reflected a chivalrous and brotherly attitude among its adherents. It is believed that the word *'ayyār* came from two words which are *ay* and *yār*, which means "O friend" in Pahlavi, and originally in Pahlavi it is combined as *adhiyār*. Another assumption is that the word *'ayyār* is related with the word *yār* which means "comrade," and sometimes it is written as *adyār*, referring to a group of chivalrous and courageous young men who often greeted each other with the word *yār* (Zakeri, 1995). Another theory also suggests that the members of this *'ayyārān* Persian military organization were descendants of another Sāsānid elite soldiers known as *asbārān*. These highly skillful and experienced soldiers were employed by Muslims as soldiers, bodyguards, and police in Baṣra, Kūfa, and other important cities in the Muslim civilization (Zakeri, 1995). Hence, these Persian military organization of *'ayyārān* and *asbārān*, became the foundation and the substance to lay down further principles and regulations governing a *futuwwa* organization. And thus the *futuwwa* was developed further and its principles and rulings were appropriated with the Arabic and Islamic elements to form various manifestations of *futuwwa* either in the military, in the Ṣūfīs's institutions, in the guilds of the artisans, or even among groups of cities' bandits and robbers.

Recognition of *Futuwwa* Organization by the 'Abbāsid Caliphate

Sometimes from the 12th to 13th CE of medieval Baghdad, when the central authority of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate began to weaken, these various forms of social manifestations of *futuwwa* began to develop more prominently. Even there were various groups of cities' thugs and bandits who would claim themselves to practice *futuwwa* principles and practices, and would refer to their groups as *'ayyārān* or *'ayyārūn*. They would usually rob the rich and wealthier merchant, or asking for protection money, and sometimes acted like a "Robin Hood" sort of modus operandi, i.e., taking money and wealth from the rich and giving what they have plundered to the poor and needy (Esposito, 1995). Thus they instilled fear in the hearts of the people, especially the wealthier members of the community, and life in general and business activities in particular could be threatened and became unproductive. Therefore Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allah (reigned 1181-1223 CE), the 34th caliph in the line of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate, decided in reforming the *futuwwa* organization sometimes in the beginning of the 13th century. He was considered as the first caliph to have initiated that the *futuwwa* to form more like a Ṣūfī organization with its own specific rites and rituals. Even though the *futuwwa* retained most of its military structure, its connection with various Ṣūfī orders or *ṭarīqa*s, which at this time many of the Ṣūfī orders had developed quite conspicuously, made it to become more like a Ṣūfī institution than of a military (Aščerić-Todd, 2007). Thus, the period in the beginning of 13th century is considered as the time when *futuwwa* has been officially recognized to have made the complete transition from what of which was its former self, which is a Persian military organization to become part of an important structure of a full-fledged Ṣūfī institution. It was also assumed that a Ṣūfī or a mystic had requested the Caliph to initiate this reorganization of the *futuwwa* institution (Arnakis, 1953).

***Futuwwa* as part of a Ṣūfī Organization and a Local Economic Institution**

Henceforth, in the early 14th century, the famous Muslim Berber traveler and scholar, 'Abū 'Abd al-Lāh ibn Baṭūṭah (d.1369 CE), met some young men of a local brotherhood while travelling around the Anatolian region which was less than a hundred years ago had been put under the authority of the newly founded Ottoman State. He arrived at Attalia (now known as Antalya, a modern Turkish city, which is situated in southwestern Turkey by the Mediterranean sea) in 1333 CE, where he met a young Turk who, without any hesitation, invited Ibn Batutah and his company of travelers to stay with him and his fellow

members of their brotherhood, of which food and lodging would be provided without any expenses to be expected from their guests-to-be. These highly hospitable and generous young Turkish men are part of the local brotherhood known as *Akhīya al-Fityān*, which means Brotherhood of Youth or sometimes also known as *Futuwwa*, and their members are called *fityān* and their leader is called *Akhī*, which literally means "brother," or "brethren" (Arnakis, 1953). In fact, the young man, who extended his generous invitation to Ibn Baṭūṭah, was a leader of a local *Akhīya al-Fityān*, whose members are around 200 and they involved in various trades, though the leader himself was a cobbler. At first, Ibn Baṭūṭah refused the young Turk invitation since it seemed to him that this young man must be poor since he was "wearing old clothes and had a felt bonnet on his head (Gibb, 2001)". Ibn Baṭūṭah in fact said to Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hamawī, the principal of the college mosque of Attalia, whom Ibn Baṭūṭah had stayed with earlier, "He is a poor man, and is not able to entertain us, and we do not like to be a burden on him" (Gibb, 2001). The shaykh, however, merely laughed at Ibn Baṭūṭah's sayings, and assured him that the young Turk was a *Akhī*, and Ibn Baṭūṭah's well-being and safety at Attalia is guaranteed by him and his fellow brethren. Ibn Baṭūṭah later agreed to follow the young Turk back to his hospice. This is how he described the hospice of the young Turk's *Akhīya al-Fityan* and the generosity that has been lavishly heaped upon him and his fellow travellers: "We found [ourselves in] a fine building, carpeted with beautiful Turkish rugs and lit by a large number of chandeliers of 'Irāqī glass. A number of young men stood in rows in the hall, wearing long mantles and boots, and each had a knife about two cubits long attached to a girdle around his waist…….In the center of their hall was a sort of platform placed there for visitors. When we took our places, they serve up a great banquet followed by fruits and sweetmeats, after which they began to sing and to dance. We were filled with admiration and were greatly astonished at their openhandedness and generosity" (Gibb, 2001).

Later, when he continued his journey to many other towns existed around Anatolia, Ibn Baṭūṭah met and lodged with more than a dozen of other local's *Akhīya al-Fityan* which existed in almost every town he visited. In one of the towns, known as Lādhiq (now known as Denizli, a modern Turkish town about 170 kilometres north of Antalya), he met with two young men, of which each of them is from two different groups of *Akhīya al-Fityan*, and both were arguing which of their brotherhood would entertain Ibn Baṭūṭah and his fellow travellers. As mentioned in his memoir of his travels, "As we entered the town we passed through a bazaar. Some men got down from their booths and took our horses' bridles, then some others objected to their action and the altercation went on so long that some of them drew knives. We of course did not know what they were saying and were afraid of them, thinking they were those brigands and that this was their town. At length God sent us a man who knew Arabic, and he explained that they were members of two branches of the "Young Brotherhood," each of whom wanted us to lodge with them. We were amazed at their generosity. It was decided finally that they should cast lots, and that we should lodge first with the winner. This being done the prior of the first hospice, Brother Sinān, conducted us to the bath and himself looked after me; afterwards they served up a great banquet with sweetmeats and many fruits" (Gibb, 2001). In other words, both of the young men of different brotherhood were so generous, to the extent that they were even willing to fight who should be the host and extend their generosity to Ibn Baṭūṭah and his fellow travellers.

In fact, Ibn Baṭūṭah had only praiseworthy words and gratefulness for all the brotherhood of these various *futuwwa* organizations that had entertained him and his fellow travellers: "Nowhere in the world are there to be found any to compare with them in solicitude for strangers, and in ardor to serve food and satisfy wants……[They] work during the day to gain their livelihood, and after the afternoon prayer they bring…..their collective earnings; with this they buy fruit, food, and the other things needed for consumption in the hospice. If, during that day, a traveller alights at the town, they give him lodging with them; what they have purchased serves for their hospitality to him and he remains with them until his departure……Nowhere in the world have I seen men more chivalrous in conduct than they are" (Aščerić-Todd, 2007). Henceforth, the brotherhood's lodges or hospices, which are known as *zāwīya* or *tekke*, became a place, not only for the groups' social, economic, and spiritual gatherings, but also as a place where the doors were always opened for the poor and the needy, and the weary and tired strangers and travellers that passed through their town.

In fact, the various *futuwwa* organizations that existed quite dominantly in this Anatolian region carried three different and connected roles in their respective community: religious, socioeconomic, and political. A historian has noted that "when the Turks were expanding into Christian areas, the religious phase seemed to take precedence to such a degree as to lead one into thinking that the *Akhīya al-Fityan* was primarily devoted to the spread of Islam. At times they took up arms in defense of the Moslem faith, though they were by no means a military organization……Ibn

Baṭūṭah reports that in towns where there was no "sulṭān" or emir, one of the *Akhī*s acted as governor, having the same authority and enjoying the same prestige as the ruler"(Arnakis, 1953). In fact, due to their reputation as being knowledgeable and pious, made them to be the likely candidate to lead their local community. Moreover, most of the *Akhīya al-Fityan* around Anatolia was related to either one of the three Sūfī groups: the Mevlevi, the Khalveti, and the Bektashi orders. Of all the orders, the Bektashi Sūfī order has more following among the *Akhīya al-Fityan*, as a historian said, "The Bektashiye is the spiritual successor of the *Akhīya al-Fityan*"(Arnakis, 1953). However, Ibn Baṭūṭah related that he had met a brotherhood at Qūniya or Konya, who claimed that they have spiritual connection with the founder of the Mevlevi order, Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (d. 1273 CE), and that their brotherhood was called Jalālīya after the name of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Gibb, 2001). Moreover, other than having a strong and prominent religious and spiritual character, the *Akhīya al-Fityan*, were also known to be hardworking entrepreneurs working in various craft guilds such as blacksmiths, sword-smiths, saddlers, cobblers, tailors, cotton-carders, bakers, butchers, *helva*-sellers, tanners, carpenters, builders and many other professions that make these Anatolian towns thriving in its economy. In fact, the organization of these various brotherhood were the backbone of the Anatolian economy up until the 19th CE, just a few years before the entire region of the Ottoman Empire crumbled with the onslaught of the European nations.

Conclusion

Although the *futuwwa* traditions appeared in many forms either as a military organization, a Sūfī brotherhood, or as a professional guild, or sometimes the *futuwwa* traditions appeared as a combination of all those three social organizations, they all shared the same characteristic of being generous, hospitable, possessing altruistic values, hardworking, brave and staunch supporters in defending Islam. All these noble characteristics are inherited from the Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.) himself and his noble Companions, and the *futuwwa* traditions undeniably can be linked back to his teaching and practices. Later as time progresses, the *futuwwa* is being reorganized not so much to focus on its military aspect, but as a platform where Islam was able to be propagated peacefully in the form of Sūfī institution and an economic organization. For example, this conversion towards Islam occurred rapidly in the Balkan region around the period of 15th and 16th century. Places that are known today as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Macedonia, and of which the majority of the people there were once Christians, rapidly accepting Islam once these areas had been established under the Ottoman Empire. The *futuwwa* traditions, in fact, not only introduced Islam and the various Sūfī orders into these regions, but also the various types of professional guilds that made the local economy to progress rapidly. In fact, the *futuwwa* traditions not only changed the religious landscape of the Balkan area, but the *futuwwa* even transformed the local economy and developed many new townships. As one historian observed, "Already within the first few decades of Ottoman rule Bosnia underwent a rapid urban development and together with Anatolian-style towns saw the formation of an Anatolian-style urban economy, the cornerstone of which were crafts and their trade-guilds. The earliest information on the development of crafts in Bosnia is from 1489, by which time there were already some twenty different crafts established there: blacksmiths, sword-smiths, saddlers, boot-makers, tailors, cotton-carders, bakers, butchers and *helva*-sellers being some of them (Aščerić-Todd, 2007). By the middle of the 16th century, Bosnia had many new towns with flourishing urban Islamic institutions and economies, and the above mentioned craftsman were joined by many others, including tanners, sandal-makers, locksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters and barbers (Aščerić-Todd, 2007). Together with the crafts, the Ottoman rule brought their trade-guild organization and with it the age-old tradition of "spiritual chivalry" passed on from the *Akhī* associations." In fact, these *futuwwa* guild associations of the Balkan area were officially connected and supervised by other *futuwwa* guild associations from the Anatolian region. It is reported that a *futuwwa* leader from Anatolia, with the title of *Akhī-baba*, would regularly visited the Bosnian guilds, with the last visit recorded was in 1888 (Aščerić-Todd, 2007).

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