



Qur'an, Sufism and Social Culture Awakening of Medieval Türkiye: The Case of Akhism

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Abstract

Akhism, which flourished in Anatolia from the 13th to the 20th century, was a distinctive socio-economic and moral organization grounded in the ethical teachings of the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sufism. Beyond functioning as a guild for artisans, it served as a social and moral institution that fostered integrity, solidarity, and justice within the community. This study aims to examine how Qur'anic values shaped the ideological foundations and social functions of Akhism within the Ottoman context. Employing a qualitative approach with a cultural-historical focus, the research draws upon diverse sources, including historical documents, *Fütüvvetnâme* texts, the Qur'an, Hadith, and other records relevant to Akhism. The researcher acts as the primary instrument, applying data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing techniques to interpret findings. The analysis reveals that Akhism represented a dynamic synthesis of Qur'anic ethics and Sufi spirituality, operating simultaneously as a moral compass and a social regulator. This study finds that Akhism exemplifies how scriptural values can sustain social harmony, ethical discipline, and cultural resilience within medieval Turkish society.

Contribution: This study contributes to understanding the embodiment of Qur'anic ethics in socio-economic structures, offering Akhism as a historical model of Islamic ethical praxis in public life.

Keywords: *Qur'an, Sufism, Social Ethics, Turkish Culture, Akhism*

Abstrak

Akhisme, yang berkembang di Anatolia antara abad ke-13 hingga abad ke-20, merupakan organisasi sosial-ekonomi dan moral yang khas, berlandaskan ajaran etika Al-Qur'an, Hadis, dan Tasawuf. Selain berfungsi sebagai serikat pengrajin, Akhisme juga menjadi lembaga sosial dan moral yang menumbuhkan integritas, solidaritas, serta keadilan di tengah masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an membentuk landasan ideologis dan fungsi sosial Akhisme dalam konteks Kesultanan Utsmani. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang berfokus pada sejarah budaya, penelitian ini memanfaatkan berbagai sumber data seperti dokumen sejarah, teks *Fütüvvetnâme*, Al-Qur'an, Hadis, dan catatan lain yang relevan dengan Akhisme. Peneliti berperan sebagai instrumen utama dengan menerapkan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan untuk menginterpretasi temuan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa Akhisme merepresentasikan sintesis dinamis antara etika Al-Qur'an dan spiritualitas Tasawuf, yang berfungsi sekaligus sebagai kompas moral dan pengatur sosial. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Akhisme menjadi contoh nyata bagaimana nilai-nilai wahyu dapat menopang harmoni sosial, disiplin etis, dan ketahanan budaya dalam masyarakat Turki pada abad pertengahan.

Kontribusi: Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman tentang perwujudan etika Al-Qur'an dalam struktur sosial-ekonomi, dengan menghadirkan Akhisme sebagai model historis praktik etika Islam dalam kehidupan publik.

Kata kunci: *Al-Qur'an, Tasawuf, Etika Sosial, Budaya Turki, Akhisme*





Introduction

Since its inception, the Quran has significantly influenced and established itself as a pivotal force in shaping the cultural identity of the societies and nations it permeates.¹ The Quran encompasses a wide array of universal and specific information regarding divinity, humanity, nature, and society, making it a comprehensive source of guidance studied from various perspectives. Beyond its core principles aimed at human education, the Quran also serves as a guide for social institutions and systems, embodying fundamental values such as brotherhood, unity in diversity, benevolence, justice, and morality. Throughout history, numerous systems and institutions have functioned as controllers and regulators of state and social life. As a divine message intended to guide Muslims, the Quran has historically demonstrated a profound influence on the social, economic, and political order of humanity. A notable example is Akhism, an organization of labor and trade unions that significantly impacted the economy and politics, particularly during the Ottoman Turkish era.²

Akhism, integrated into the socio-economic and cultural framework, represents the formation of merchants' and craftsmen's unions grounded in fundamental principles such as mutual love, respect, assistance, care for the poor, viewing work as worship, adherence to religious and professional rules, and prioritizing societal interests.³ Akhism is regarded as one of the most influential socio-cultural institutions in Turkish society throughout thousands of years of Anatolian history.⁴ It exemplifies a trade union organization that merges morality with craftsmanship, significantly shaping and regulating the social and economic life of Anatolian society.⁵ The core principle of the Akhism organization is morality, which is widely believed to be rooted in the moral teachings of the Qur'an and hadith, the fundamental sources of Islam. Studying the impact of Quranic values on the Akhism organization is crucial for understanding and evaluating the Quran's role in shaping societal culture.

Several studies have explored the relationship between Quranic values and Akhism. Ekrem Erdem's article "A Review on The Sources of Futuwwa And Akhizm Studies" outlines the foundational sources and basic values that guide Akhism, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sufi

¹ Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Maḥmūd Al-Nas: Dirasah Fi Uḥūm al-Qur'an* (al-Markaz al-Tsaqafi al-Arabi, 2000).

² Muzaffer Aydemir, "Osmanlı Küçük İşletme Grupları Olarak Ahilik: Tarihsel Bir Değerlendirme," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 20, no. 2 (2019): 230–47.

³ Ferhat Erarı, "Ahilik ve Ahilik Kültürünün İktisadi Hayatımızdaki Anlam ve Önemi, II," *Uluslararası Ahilik Kültürü Sempozyumu*, 1999, 118.

⁴ Kadir ARICI, "Bir Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu Olarak Anadolu Ahiliği (Ahiyan-ı Rum)," *II. Uluslararası Ahilik Kültürü Sempozyumu Bildirileri, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 1999*, 38.

⁵ Ahmet İnandır, "XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Fetvalarında Ahilik," *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 36 (2014): 113.





works. This research highlights the diverse global sources that inform Akhism's guidelines.⁶ Another article, "Ahilik Öğretilerine İlham Olan Ayetler" by Abdulkadir Karakuş, identifies the Qur'anic verses emphasized in Akhism teachings and *Fütüvvetname*, and examines their impact on the success of Akhism institutions.⁷ However, this article primarily focuses on the Qur'anic verses related to Sulami's *Fütüvvetnâme*. The article entitled "Kur'ânî Değerlerin Ahilik Kültüründeki/Ahlakındaki İzdüşümleri ve Günümüz Yansımaları (The Projection of Qur'anic Values in the Culture/Ethics of Akhism and Its Current Reflections)" by İsa Kanik tries to examine the Qur'anic values in the culture-morals of Akhism and the implementation of these values in today's culture. In addition to examining the influence of the Qur'an on Akhism, İsa offers the implementation of these values in the contemporary era.⁸ While previous studies have examined specific aspects of Qur'anic influence on Akhism—such as individual verses, particular *Fütüvvetnâme* texts, or their modern reflections—there remains a lack of comprehensive research that analyzes this relationship holistically. This study fills that gap by exploring the overall influence of Qur'anic values on the ideological, ethical, and institutional foundations of Akhism in a more integrated manner.

This study employs a qualitative research design with a focus on cultural history to explore the influence of Qur'anic values on Akhism. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of historical and textual contexts by analyzing written and archival materials. The primary data sources include the Qur'an, Hadith, and *Fütüvvetnâme* manuscripts, alongside historical documents and scholarly works related to Akhism and Ottoman social institutions. Data collection involves textual examination and thematic categorization of these sources to identify patterns of Qur'anic influence within Akhism's ethical and institutional structures. The researcher serves as the main research instrument, applying Miles and Huberman's model of qualitative data analysis—comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involves selecting and coding relevant textual units; data display organizes themes into analytical categories; and conclusion drawing interprets the interrelation between Qur'anic values and Akhism's moral framework. This process ensures that findings are grounded in both historical context and textual evidence.

⁶ Ekrem Erdem, "Fütüvvet ve Ahilik Çalışmalarının Kaynakları," *Bilgi Ekonomisi ve Yönetimi Dergisi* 16, no. 2 (2021): 173–98.

⁷ Abdulkadir Karakuş, "Ahilik Öğretilerine İlham Olan Ayetler," *Uluslararası Ahilikte İş ve Ticaret Ahlakı Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, 2018.

⁸ İsa Kanik, "Kur'ânî Değerlerin Ahilik Kültüründeki/Ahlakındaki İzdüşümleri Ve Günümüz Yansımaları," *VI. Uluslararası Ahilik Sempozyumu* 1 (n.d.): 261–302.





Akhism: An Overview

Akhism, known as Ahîlik in Turkish, refers to a guild of merchants and artisans in Anatolia that is believed to have originated in the 13th century AD and continued until the early 19th century.⁹ Akhism is often described as an institution that guided the arts, economy, and social order of Anatolian society.¹⁰ A prevalent view is that the word Ahîlik derives from the Arabic term “akhi,” meaning “my brother,” indicating a close relationship between individuals based on blood ties or friendship.¹¹ In this context, “akhi” also signifies people in metaphorical relationships through ethnicity, religion, social interactions, and affection, denoting closeness and camaraderie.¹² Another perspective suggests that Ahîlik comes from the Turkish word “aki,” meaning “generous” and “magnanimous.”¹³ The term Ahîlik is also linked to “ukhuwwah,” meaning “brotherhood” in Sufism, highlighting the influence of Sufi moral principles on the organization.¹⁴ Akhism is portrayed as a system that regulated economic and social life, promoting the values upheld during the Seljuk and Ottoman eras.¹⁵

In order to understand Akhism in more detail and holistically, it is also necessary to study the Futuwwa organization that first existed and grew and developed since the early Islamic period. This organization was a forum for Sufism activists which later transformed into a social, economic and political institution.¹⁶ Although Akhism appears to be a different organization from Futuwwa in some respects, with its unique structure and long-term impact on society, there is no denying the strong connection between Akhism and Futuwwa. Even on some technical aspects of certain activities, Ahîlik adopts from Futuwwa.¹⁷ The institutional structure of Ahîlik is thought to be influenced by Futuwwa, as a more advanced and established socio-economic organization, and Ahîlik is strongly suspected of adopting some of its principles in addition.¹⁸ Futuwwa institutions came under a variety

⁹ Teoman AKPINAR and Nazlı Çağır KÜÇÜKGÖKSEL, “Esnaf Ahilik Sandığı Sigortası,” *Cataloging-In-Publication Data*, 2017, 10; İlhan Eroğlu and Çetin BEKTAŞ, “İKTİSADİ, SOSYAL VE EĞİTİM PERSPEKTİFİNDEN AHİLİK KURUMUNA GÜNCEL BİR BAKIŞ,” *Ekonomi Bilimleri Dergisi* 14, no. 2 (2022): 158–75.

¹⁰ Eren Sarı, *Ahilik: Ahilik, Anadolu Halkının Sanat, Ekonomi ve Sosyal Düzenine Yön Veren Bir Teşkilat Olmasıyla Da Bilinen Bir Kurumdur*, (noktaekitap, 2016), 3.

¹¹ Abu al-Faḍl Jamāluddīn Muhammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān Al-‘Arab*, 15 vols. (Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n.d.), 40; Abū Mansūr Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Azharī, *Tahzīb Al-Luḡa* (al-Muassasa al-Misriyya al-Amma, n.d.), 626; Ab al-Tāhir Majduddīn Muhammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Firūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* (Muassasah al-Risalah, 1426), 1258.

¹² Raghib al-Asfahani, *Al-Mufradat Fi Gharib al-Qur’an* (Mustafa al-Babī’l-Halabī wa Awladihi, n.d.), 68.

¹³ Yakup Karasoy, “Ahi Kelimesi ve Türk Kültüründe Ahilik,” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 14 (2003): 1–23.

¹⁴ Saffet Sancaklı, “Ahilik Ahlâkının Oluşumunda Hadislerin Etkisi,” *İnönü Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (2010): 3.

¹⁵ Ahmet Ünsür, “Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi,” *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi* 18, no. 39 (2020): 297–337.

¹⁶ Süleyman Uludağ and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Fütüvvet,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 13 (1996): 259–61.

¹⁷ Karasoy, “Ahi Kelimesi ve Türk Kültüründe Ahilik,” 20.

¹⁸ Ayşe Betül Oruç, “Ahilik Teşkilatı’ndaki Denge İlkesinin Kur’ânî Temelleri,” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no. 48 (2022): 129–41.





of different names such as Civanmerd, Ayyâr, and Fetâ, where their influence was widespread among merchants and artisans in the regions of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkestan, Samarkand, Andalusia, North Africa, and Egypt. Since accepting Islam and settling in Anatolia, the Turks have adopted the Futuwwa organization and collaborated its principles with their own distinctive culture, such as courage, generosity, and heroism.¹⁹

One of the main reasons for the emergence of the Akhism Organization was the migration of Turks from Central Asia due to Mongol pressure. In this forced migration, merchants and artisans were among the first to leave for Anatolia and began to make the region their home. Even after the migration, the pressure on the Turks remained as the Mongol threat expanded into Anatolia over time. As a result of the need to associate and organize to protect against these threats, the Ahi Organization emerged. Şeyh Nasîrüddin Mahmûd (d. 1262), later known as Ahî Evran, is credited with pioneering the establishment of the Akhism organization in Anatolia.

The widespread migration of Turks in the later era was filled with prominent people, religious thinkers, merchants, craftsmen and philosophers who later joined the organization. They also made significant contributions to the Akhism organization in their respective fields according to their professions. The people who formed this organization then established a production house along with tools and for the sake of production as well as a learning center for their arts and skills with the aim of earning halal money by their own sweat. In addition, the Ahi Zawiyas multipurpose building was built, which can be an educational center, a guesthouse, and sometimes a meeting center. Under the auspices of this union, the principles of cooperation and solidarity are upheld as basic principles and work ethics that are adopted by every member of the organization and practiced in the workplace. Under the auspices of the Ahi Organization, the education provided not only pivots on economic aspects such as professions and trades, but also on aspects governing religiousness in daily life such as Islamic sciences, knowledge of the Qur'an, and Hadith. Art education such as music and painting is also a concern within the Akhism organization.²⁰

Basic Values in Akhism

It has been explained previously that Akhism has a close relationship with the long-established Futuwwa organization. Futuwwa itself is an economic and social organization that makes the

¹⁹ Ziya Kasıcı, "Ahilik," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 1:540.

²⁰ Deniz Balcı, "Türk Devlet Geleneğinde Ahilik Teşkilatı'nın Yeri ve Önemi," *Uluslararası Yönetim Akademisi Dergisi* 6, no. 3 (2023):





principles of Sufism one of the basic values that guide or regulate the internal organization. These basic principles are mostly adopted from the works of Sufi scholars who are widely referred to by the name “*Fütüvvetnâme*” or “*Fütüvvetnâme*” in Turkish. Historically, various writings closely related to the concept of Futuwwa began to appear in Iraq and Iran in the 8th century. These works then exerted a strong influence in Sufi circles and professional organizations over time. Gradually, the concepts laid out in these works were transformed into an identity in the form of regulations and statutes in these organizations. In the beginning, the works appeared under various names. But often the main names were forgotten, and people referred to the works by the name *Fütüvvetnâme*. Among the works of early Sufi scholars that have been given *Fütüvvetnâme* are Muhammad b. Husayn al-Sulamî’s *Kitâb al-Futuwwa* (d. 412/1021), Qushayrî’s *al-Risâla* (d. 465/1072)’ and Hâja Abdullah Ansârî’s (d. 481/1089) *Fütüvvetnâme*. The chapter on *Fütüvvetnâme* is also found in Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabî’s (d. 638/1240) *al-Futûhât al-Makkiyya*.²¹ When connected with the history of the Ahîlik organization, it will be seen that the *Fütüvvetnâme* which contains the principles of the Futuwwa organization covered by the corridors of Sufism is also the source of the basic principles of Akhism. Taking into account the information written in the *Fütüvvetnâme* works, we can map out the main features of the Akhism Organization as follows:

1. Emphasizing Brotherhood

As the name implies, Akhism/Ahîlik is founded on the concept of brotherhood. This concept is important as it is stated in the Quran that Muslims are brothers in the unity of faith (Âl-i Imrân 3/103, 105; al-Hujurât 49/10). In the Akhism organization, the embodiment of the concept of Muslim brotherhood is understood as a means for unity and resource development. Brotherhood in Futuwwa is considered vital, even the existence of Futuwwa can be narrated as the existence of upholding and prioritizing the interests of his brothers above personal rights and interests. Futuwwa means prioritizing the comfort of one’s fellow brothers over one’s own comfort, and bearing the distress of one’s brothers. Even the bad that comes from one’s own brother should be repaid with good. In addition, the value of brotherhood also includes avoiding finding fault with friends, respecting and getting along with them well.²²

²¹ AHMET YAŞAR OCAK, “Fütüvvetnâme,” in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994), 13:264.

²² Oruç, “Ahîlik Teşkilatı’ndaki Denge İlkesinin Kur’ânî Temelleri,” 133.





2. Pivoting on the Teachings of Sufism

Being closely related to religious teachings and based on the values of Sufism is one of the most fundamental characteristics of the Akhism organization. In various sources of *Fütüvvetnâme*, the basic principles of morality derived from the Qur'an and hadith are explained in terms of concepts and practices. For example, in the explanation of the lives of the prophets, as mentioned in the Quran, *Fütüvvetnâme* presents the material in a down-to-earth and humane manner so that humans can implement these values in their daily lives. Especially the emphasis on the explanation that explains the moral maturity of the prophets. The Akhism organization seeks to form a system of balance between the world and the hereafter based on an understanding of the verses of the Qur'an and its implementation obtained from the traditions of the prophet. This is based on the understanding that the prophet's actions in daily life are an important source of reference.²³

An important value embraced by Akhism is an attitude that focuses not only on faith and worship, but is also concerned with the morals of society and upholds the spirit of working and being productive to earn halal income in the world. The balance between the worldly and the heavenly, or using the worldly as a means of attaining heavenly happiness is a key cornerstone of Akhism. The tendency of Sufism in Akhism can be detected from the aspect of moral values that are principled in generosity, honesty, keeping the eyes, heart, and tongue from haram things. Among the moral practices that they technically carry out are such as helping the poor, being friendly, not hurting anyone, and not hoarding wealth. They must also observe morals in eating, drinking, speaking, wearing clothes, walking on the street, visiting the sick, bathing, and sleeping.²⁴ The various morals in daily life are detailed in the *Fütüvvetnâme* that must be obeyed.

3. Upholding Productivity

One of the important values in Akhism is the obligation to work to earn a halal living. It states that a person should work unless there is an impediment that prevents him from working. This is the principle that underlies the ideals of the members of Akhism, the majority of whom were merchants and craftsmen. Vital professions in the context of the time such as blacksmithing and carpentry were so important to the continuity of social life that the various branches of the arts and professions were always maintained.

²³ Oruç, "Ahîlik Teşkilatı'ndaki Denge İlkesinin Kur'anî Temelleri," 132.

²⁴ Oruç, "Ahîlik Teşkilatı'ndaki Denge İlkesinin Kur'anî Temelleri," 134.





Members of Akhism stand out with the aspect of artistic expertise and they work to earn an income from their own hands. An Akhis is passionate about being a professional and working and tries not to depend on others. The hierarchical structure within the organization also ensures the development of manpower and commerce in accordance with the corridors of sound principles. Akhism developed balanced, moderate and moral principles to increase the influence of Muslims in the commercial life of Anatolia. With a structure based on the values of compromise and solidarity, Akhism focuses on the establishment of relations between rich and poor as well as producers and consumers as the main axis of effective economic operation. It is an effective principle of relationship for individuals, communities, and states to establish good relations.

4. Principles of Expertise and Creativity

The Akhism organization upholds a balance between knowledge, morality and action or productivity. Consistent education on various aspects of life in a holistic manner is a strict concern in the Akhism organization. Education has been acquired by Akhism members from an early age where the younger generation starts attending the Education academy with several relevant lessons that lead to cultural, craft and military aspects. Information obtained from *Fütüvvetnâme* regarding procedures and rules related to educational aspects reveals the importance of individual education and training in the Akhism organization. Literacy in this organization is so important that it is mentioned that people who cannot read and write are not considered members of Akhism.²⁵

Ahi Evran, as one of the figures in Akhism in his work *Latâif al-Hikma* states that knowledge comes before action, that action without knowledge will have no benefit, and that a person will gain useful value as long as he practices his knowledge.²⁶ When Ahi Evran arrived in Anatolia, he advised the sultan to prioritize education for the citizens, particularly vocational training. The governmental support he received facilitated his efforts to encourage people to diversify their skills from one craft to related arts. This initiative is seen as a significant contribution by Ahi Evran in transitioning Turkish society from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled one. He personally led the system by practicing as a tanner (leatherworker), took an active interest in both the religious and moral education of the Ahis, and their vocational training, and authored several works on these subjects.²⁷ Professionalism in Akhism is also a key feature in this organization, where members are required to be able to do the

²⁵ Hamdi Kızıler, "Osmanlı Toplumunun Sosyal Dinamiklerinden Ahilik Kurumu," *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 2 (2015): 408–23.

²⁶ Mikail Bayram, "Türkiye Selçukluları Döneminde Bilimsel Ortam ve Ahiliğin Doğuşuna Etkisi," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 10 (2001): 1–11.

²⁷ Ünsür, "Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi," 314.





job properly. While it is important to be knowledgeable about the work one is doing, it is also important to carry out the work in a professional and efficient manner.²⁸

Quran as the Main Influence

Fütüvvetnâme as a basic guideline in Akhism makes various sources of values to be adopted. The various sources are classified into two things, namely (1) Islamic sources such as the Qur'an, hadith, Sufism and other Islamic sciences, and (2) Values derived from Turkish traditions and customs. These two things work together to become the foundation of the Akhism organization.²⁹ Of the heavenly scriptures, the Quran is the only book whose name appears in which it is described as a book of true information.³⁰ It can be seen that one of the most important sources in *Fütüvvetnâme* is the Quran, which is widely quoted in various forms. Among *Fütüvvetnâme*'s quotes concerning the content of the Quran are phrases like: "kullu shay'in hâliq illâ wajhahû", "karramnâ", "allama al-asmâ", "qâba qawsayn", "adnâ", "danâ", "fa tadallâ", "rahmatan li al-âlamîn", "jâhidû fi'llâh", "innâ fatahnâ", "bardan salâm", "sami'nâ wa ata'nâ", "alastu", "lâ-uhubbu'l-âfilîn", "ayna mâ kuntum", "lâ takhaf aqbil", and "hal atâ".³¹

The Quran as a living book in the Akhism organization, in addition to learning its meanings, reading and listening to its recitation also became one of the agenda activities of the members of the organization. Ibn Battuta (d. 770/1368-69) described that in the Bursa region, on the Day of Ashura, the board of the Akhism organization held a party and invited military officials and the general public. In the evening after breaking the fast, memorizers of the Qur'an appeared to recite the Qur'an with melodious recitations. In another group at the same event, scholars gave lectures to the invited guests.³²

Qur'anic values in Akhism are implemented in various aspects, as follows:

1. Economic Aspects

One of the important values of Akhism that is heavily influenced by the Quran in the realm of theory and practice is that of economics and commerce. Economics and commerce as a part of the worldly world is considered to be a part of the world that must go in balance with the orientation of

²⁸ Oruç, "Ahilik Teşkilatı'ndaki Denge İlkesinin Kur'anî Temelleri."

²⁹ Balcı, "Türk Devlet Geleneğinde Ahilik Teşkilatı'nın Yeri ve Önemi," 956; Üniversiteler İşbirliğinde, *Ahilik Panelleri Kitabı* (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2022), 131.

³⁰ Mehmet Fatih KÖKSAL et al., eds., *Geçmişten Geleceğe Köprü Ahilik ve Ahi Evran Kitabı* (Türk Ocakları Eskişehir Şubesi Yayını, 2022), 338.

³¹ KÖKSAL et al., *Ahilik ve Ahi Evran Kitabı*, 347.

³² Üniversiteler İşbirliğinde, *Ahilik Panelleri Kitabı*, 160.





the hereafter.³³ The economic and commercial principles adopted from the Qur'an and socialized in the Akhism organization include the values of loyalty, honesty, safety, expertise in the arts, avoiding slander, and not storing excessive wealth. Other values that can be traced from *Fütüvvetnâme* are cheating, drinking alcohol, lying, breaking promises, eating haram food, gibah, and slander. At the same time, these negatives are among the actions that exclude a person from the institution of Akhism.³⁴ The concept of halal-haram in terms of materials and means of acquiring wealth is one of the most prominent Quranic concepts that is strictly implemented in the organization of Akhism. Many verses of the Quran, such as al-Baqarah 2/128, al-Maidah 5/88, al-Anfal 8/69, Yunus 21/59, and al-Nahl 26/114, explain the obligation to eat halal food. The concept of halal in the Qur'an is also not only seen from the food material, but also from the aspect of how to obtain food, where the Qur'an encourages to seek halal sustenance as in al-Baqarah 2/267. Seeking halal wealth in Akhism is very important, until in *Fütüvvetnâme* it is emphasized "whoever eats haram food is a robber".³⁵ Similar phrases, such as "eating halal food", "obtaining halal sustenance", and "pursuing halal sustenance" are important teachings in *Fütüvvetnâme*.³⁶

The implementation of halal values in obtaining sustenance is implemented with a standardization policy in the production process of a product. In addition, the distribution process until the sale to consumers is also regulated based on Sharia. There are deterrent sanctions for traders who commit wrongdoings such as deceiving consumers, hiding defects in their goods, cheating, selling goods of poor quality, dropping the image of other competitors' products, and committing fraud.³⁷ The discussion of Akhism's economic values demonstrates not only the historical embodiment of Qur'anic ethics but also their analytical relevance to contemporary economic thought. The emphasis on halal wealth, honesty, and social accountability within Akhism represents an early model of ethical economy that resonates with modern discourses on sustainability, transparency, and fair trade. The Qur'anic orientation toward balancing material pursuit with moral responsibility illustrates a timeless framework that challenges excessive consumerism and economic exploitation prevalent in today's global context. Moreover, the system of regulation in Akhism—such as product

³³ M. Kart and R. Yeşil, "Değer Eğitimi Modeli Olarak Ahilik," *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 7, no. 3 (2018); İhsan Cora, "Örgüt Kültürünün Temel Unsurları ve Ahilik Kültürü," *Sosyal, Beşeri ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 3, no. 8 (2020): 608–23.

³⁴ Kanik, "Kur'anî Değerlerin Ahilik Kültüründeki/Ahlakındaki İzdüşümleri Ve Günümüz Yansımaları."

³⁵ Dilaver Selvi, "Fütüvvet ve Ahilik Teşkilatlarının Ahlâkî İlkelerinin Oluşmasında Tasavvufun Öncülüğü," *İhya Uluslararası İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (2016): 21.

³⁶ Neşet Çağatay, "Fütüvvet-Ahi Müessesesinin Menşei," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (1952): 64.

³⁷ Hüseyin Kasım Koca, "Ahilik Kültürü: Ticaret Ahlakı Kazandırmaya Model Olması Açısından Eğitimsel Bir Değerlendirme," *Bilimname*, no. 46 (2021): 234.





standardization, fair trading practices, and sanctions against fraud — can be viewed as a precursor to modern business ethics and Islamic economic governance. Through this perspective, the principles of Akhism extend beyond descriptive historical narration, offering an analytical bridge between classical Qur’anic moral economy and the ethical challenges faced in contemporary socio-economic structures.

2. Aspects of Worship

The main point of the Quranic teachings is to invite people to worship one god, Allah, as stipulated in Zariyat 51/56. Forms of worship in the Quran include prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj, almsgiving, reading and understanding the Quran, and all actions as stipulated in the Quran and hadith. The values in the Quran regarding the complex aspects of worship are adopted by Akhism organizations and implemented in their lives. Worship, as mentioned in the Quranic contents, is seen as the main object and receives special attention in Akhism education. An example of worship in this case is the five daily prayers. The Quranic text on worship, which is one of the pillars of Islam, explicitly states the obligation to pray five times. This value is adopted in *Fütüvvetnâme* and is found in various phrases, such as “for the sake of the five daily prayers that are obligatory to perform...”³⁸ and “I perform the five daily prayers...”³⁹ On this basis, Akhism members maintain group discipline in the matter of praying in congregation together when it is time to do so.

After each prayer, the next activity is reading the Qur’an, as a form of implementation of carrying out Allah’s commands contained in verses about the importance of reading the Qur’an. This recitation of the Qur’an is not only aimed at reading the verses text only, but trying to understand their meaning and implement them in everyday life.⁴⁰ Reading the Qur’an is also understood as a means to remember Allah and talk with Him, along with remembering that Allah is the place to which all creatures will return later.⁴¹ The Qur’anic foundation of worship within Akhism illustrates a dynamic integration between spiritual devotion and social discipline, showing how ritual practices evolve into ethical systems that shape communal life. The implementation of worship values — such as collective prayers and Qur’anic recitation — reflects not only obedience to divine command but also a form of moral education that cultivates cohesion, humility, and spiritual accountability. In this sense, Akhism transforms worship from an individual act of piety into a collective ethical habit that

³⁸ KÖKSAL et al., *Ahilik ve Ahi Evran Kitabı*, 349.

³⁹ Salahaddin Bekki, “Ahiliğe Giriş Törenlerinin Bilmecelerle İlişkisi,” *I. Ahi Evran-ı Veli ve Ahilik Araştırmaları Sempozyumu Bildiri Kitabı*, GÜ Ahilik Kültürünü Araştırma Merkezi, C 1 (2005).

⁴⁰ KÖKSAL et al., *Ahilik ve Ahi Evran Kitabı*, 398.

⁴¹ Tok Fatih, *Sülemî’nin Kitabı’l Fütüvve’sinde Ortaya Koyduğu İnsan-Allah İlişkisinin Ayetlerle Temellendirilmesi*, 2017, 251.





reinforces solidarity and consciousness of divine presence in daily work. When viewed in light of contemporary discussions on spirituality and community ethics, the Akhism model offers an analytical framework that bridges ritual worship with social responsibility, emphasizing that worship in Islam extends beyond ritual formalism toward the creation of just and harmonious social order. Thus, the Akhism understanding of worship contributes significantly to the broader discourse of applied Qur'anic ethics in the modern era.

3. Moral Aspects

The Quran, which is described as the last holy book revealed to Muslims, is described as a holistic guidebook that covers all aspects of human life. Morals is one of the aspects that is the main focus in inviting people to goodness.⁴² The value of morals in the Quran is also inseparable from the efforts of the Akhism organization in terms of learning and implementation of organizational rules and rules of Akhism members. From very small things to big things, morals about behaving in everyday life are detailed in *Fütüvvetnâme* which is then implemented into the organization's movements. Manners in the community, including how to get along with family members, how to eat, drink, speak, dress, look, groom, are explained in detail. For example, when honoring a guest, the standards of conduct are: (1) dress cleanly and neatly, (2) display a smiling face, and (3) speak politely and warmly. When entertaining guests and serving drinks, the steps are: (1) tie a clean cloth around the waist, (2) hold the jug with the right hand, (3) support the right hand with the left hand under the jug, (4) turn the jug handle so the guest can take it with their right hand, (5) serve seniors first, (6) serve while sitting, placing the big toe of the right foot on the big toe of the left foot, (7) ensure the drink is clean, (8) if there is dirt in the water, remove it with a piece of white paper or similar, and (9) if water spills, dry it with a cloth.⁴³ From this description, we can see the implementation of values derived from the essence of the Qur'an, hadith, and local customs. The command to dress cleanly and neatly is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, Muddassir 74/4. Being friendly, polite, and soft-spoken are found in several verses such as Ali Imran 3/159, Thaha 20/44, and al-Tawbah 9/128.

The moral dimension of Akhism, rooted in Qur'anic ethics, demonstrates how Islamic moral teachings are operationalized into detailed behavioral norms that shape both individual character and communal harmony. By transforming abstract moral injunctions of the Qur'an—such as

⁴² Ahmad Tantowi and Ahmad Munadirin, "Konsep Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam Al-Quran Surat Al-an'Am Ayat 151 Pada Era Globalisasi," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies*, 2022, 354.

⁴³ Mehmet Dönmez et al., "Alevilik-Bektaşilikte Dâr," *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, no. 85 (2018): 183–98; Mehmet Şeker, "Ahiliğin Anadolu'nun Sosyal ve Kültürel Hayatındaki Yer," *Erdem* 8, no. 23 (1996): 599–620.





cleanliness, humility, and kindness—into tangible social etiquette, Akhism functions as a living embodiment of Qur’anic ethics within daily human interactions. The meticulous moral conduct outlined in the *Fütüvvetnâme*, from hospitality to speech and personal presentation, reflects an effort to harmonize divine commands with local customs, creating an ethical synthesis between revelation and culture. In a broader analytical context, this integration highlights how Akhism serves as a socio-ethical model where Qur’anic morality is not merely internalized but institutionalized, producing a sustainable moral framework that remains relevant for contemporary ethical discourse and community life.

4. Education Aspect

Various researches on the Quran on the theme of education have produced various information about the relevance of the Quranic concept of education to the education system. The first verse revealed, the command to read, is considered an important key in education, namely the transformation of knowledge.⁴⁴ The importance of literacy as part of the success of education is an important part of the organization of Akhism. Literacy education is a top priority, even people who cannot read and write are not considered as members of Akhism.⁴⁵ On a practical level, reading activities are widely applied in the Akhism education system such as the recitation of the *Fütüvvetnâme*, the Quran, hadith, tafsir, books of advice and various other important sources.⁴⁶ These activities are carried out at certain times, such as Friday, as a form of routine for Akhism members.⁴⁷

In addition to enhancing literacy, the success of education is believed to rely on appropriate teaching methods. The Quran offers a foundation for various educational methods that have been widely adopted, developed, and implemented in school systems. These methods include the lecture method, storytelling, question and answer, wisdom, advice, discussion, and demonstration.⁴⁸ The Akhism organization extensively incorporates these educational values into its system. The lecture method, for instance, is evident in the form of mauizah studies delivered by the shaikhs, both in

⁴⁴ Syamsul Kurniawan, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Samudra Biru, 2015), 31–32.

⁴⁵ Bekir Gökhan Doğan, “Gürsoy Akça’nın Akademik Çalışmaları Üzerine Bir İnceleme,” *NOSYON: Uluslararası Toplum ve Kültür Çalışmaları Dergisi*, no. 5 (2020): 168; Kızılar, “Osmanlı Toplumunun Sosyal Dinamiklerinden Ahilik Kurumu,” 417.

⁴⁶ Mustafa Tekin, “Bir Sosyal Kontrol Aracı Olarak Ahilik ve Toplumsal Dinamikleri,” *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 21, no. 21 (2006): 229.

⁴⁷ Ünsür, “Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi,” 317; Ayhan Karakaş, “Çok Yönlü Bir Sivil Toplum Örgütü: Ahilik,” *Uluslararası Batı Karadeniz Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (2017): 6.

⁴⁸ Mochamad Syaifulloh, “Metode Pendidikan Dalam Al-Qur’an (Kajian Tafsir Tematik),” *DINAMIKA: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 2, no. 1 (2017): 109; S. Nasution, *Tafsir Tarbawi: Melacak Kontruksi Pendidikan Dalam Alquran Dan Hadis* (Madina Publisher, 2022), 195–245.





regular gatherings and during special occasions.⁴⁹ The question-and-answer method is typically found within the combined approach of lectures that include Q&A sessions, referred to as “sohbet” in Turkish. In the Akhism education system, the sohbet method is considered the most crucial and is emphasized in the *Fütüvvetnâme*.⁵⁰ Sohbet activities can take place in various settings, such as knowledge assemblies (zawiyah), mosques, madrasas, workplaces, and homes.⁵¹ It is reported that some workplaces affiliated with Akhism hold annual events featuring sohbet activities, along with eating, drinking, and entertainment in outdoor locations. Additionally, Akhism members from farming communities are known to gather for sohbet sessions during the post-harvest period.⁵²

The educational framework of Akhism demonstrates a direct embodiment of Qur’anic pedagogical values, positioning literacy and knowledge transmission as both spiritual and social imperatives. Rooted in the Qur’anic command “Iqra” (Read), the Akhism organization integrates reading and learning as acts of devotion and as prerequisites for membership, underscoring education as a means of moral elevation and community refinement. Through structured literacy programs—recitations of the *Fütüvvetnâme*, the Qur’an, Hadith, and other classical texts—Akhism establishes a continuous cycle of knowledge renewal grounded in faith. Equally significant is its adoption of Qur’an-based teaching methodologies such as lectures (mau’izah), storytelling, and especially the sohbet (dialogic discussion), which transforms learning into an interactive, communal experience. These practices blur the boundary between formal and informal education, embedding pedagogy into daily life through mosques, zawiyahs, and workplaces. Analytically, Akhism’s educational system illustrates how the Qur’anic philosophy of knowledge—integrating intellect, ethics, and spirituality—can be institutionalized within social structures, offering a model of holistic education that bridges sacred learning with practical wisdom relevant to both historical and modern contexts.

Conclusion

This study finds that Akhism exemplifies the dynamic role of the Qur’an in fostering social and cultural revitalization across economic, political, and communal dimensions. Its theoretical and

⁴⁹ Alireza Moghaddam, “13.-15. Yüzyıllarda Anadolu’da Ahilik: Kurumsallaşma, Toplumsal Yapı ve İdeoloji” (Doktora Tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 2017), 156.

⁵⁰ Ünsür, “Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi,” 319.

⁵¹ Erol Eroğlu and Yavuz Köktan, “Ahilik Kültürü Ve Geleneksel Sohbet Toplantıları,” *The Journal of Turk-Islam World Social Studies* 2, no. 5 (2019): 343; Ünsür, “Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi,” 317.

⁵² Ünsür, “Ahilik Sistemi Değerleri Yönetim ve Eğitimi,” 317–19.





practical foundations are deeply rooted in Qur'anic values, interpreted through Sufi perspectives and harmonized with ethical traditions drawn from both Islamic teachings and Turkish cultural heritage. These principles were systematically formulated in the *Fütüvvetnâme* literature, which served as a moral and practical guide for Akhi communities. The Qur'an influenced Akhism not merely on a doctrinal level but also as a lived experience, shaping daily conduct, professional ethics, and communal relations. Qur'anic engagement was central to the life of Akhi members, as its teachings were continuously recited, internalized, and embodied in their social practices. Ultimately, this study finds that Akhism demonstrates how the Qur'an provides a framework for integrating material productivity with spiritual integrity, enabling individuals to achieve both worldly success and eternal salvation.

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