

Rethinking Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Mātūrīdism: Madhhabī Identity and Its Manifestations in the Provincial Context

ŞERİFE NUR ÇELİK*

Abstract

The policies implemented by the Ottoman polity in the sixteenth century in order to protect Sunni orthodoxy had an impact on the spread of Mātūrīdism as a theological identity in the seventeenth century. Mehmed Birgivi (d. 981/1573), a prominent Ottoman scholar, addressed the problem of free will in *al-Tarīqa al-muhammadiyya*, which he wrote for the spread of correct beliefs and religious practices and wherein he rephrased Sadr al-Sharī'a's (d.747/1346) argument of *al-muqaddimāt al-arba'* (four premises) on a theological ground through the concept of *al-irāda al-juziyya* (particular will). In the seventeenth century the discussion of free will in *al-Tarīqa* was on the agenda of scholars in the Ottoman provinces, and *madhhabī* identities were grounded on discussions of free will. While Birgivi's statements on this subject played an important role in shaping Ottoman Mātūrīdism, they were also at the center of Ash'arite scholars' criticisms of the Mātūrīdī tradition. This article reveals how scholars in the Ottoman provinces justified their Mātūrīdī identity based on the *al-irāda al-juziyya* treatises in a *mecmūa* compiled by Abdurrahmān b. Ramazān, who lived in and around İzmir. This article argues that in these treatises, Mātūrīdite identity is constructed as a theological identity while responding to the criticisms directed against the Mātūrīdī tradition centered on Birgivi. These treatises, written around Birgivi's *al-Tarīqa*, are analyzed in the intellectual, political and historical context of the period in connection with the role they played in the course of Mātūrīdism in the Ottoman provinces.

Keywords: Seventeenth century Ottoman intellectual thought, Ottoman Mātūrīdism, particular will, Mehmed Birgivi, *al-Tarīqa al-Muhammadiyya*.

Osmanlı Mātūrīdiliğinin XVII. Yüzyılını Yeniden Düşünmek: Mezhebī Kimlik ve Taşra Bağlamındaki Tezahürleri

Özet

XVI. yüzyılda Osmanlı yönetici elitlerinin Sünnî inancının ve pratiklerinin muhafazası amacıyla uyguladığı politikalar, XVII. yüzyılda Mātūrīdiliğin itikadi bir kimlik olarak

* Arş. Gör. Dr., Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi, İlahiyat Fakültesi, Temel İslam Bilimleri Bölümü / Research Assistant, PhD, Bolu İzzet Baysal University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Basic Islamic Sciences. Bolu, Türkiye. ORCID: 0000-0001-6388-4948 e-posta: demirci.serifenur@gmail.com

DOI: ORCID: 10.26570/isad.1618595 • Gelis/Received 13.01.2025 • Kabul/Accepted 28.04.2025

Atıf/Citation Çelik, Şerife Nur, "Rethinking Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Mātūrīdism: Madhhabī Identity and Its Manifestations in the Provincial Context", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 54 [2025]: 77-98.

yaygınlaşmasına etki etmiştir. Osmanlı âlimlerinden Mehmed Birgivî, (ö. 981/1573) sahih itikadın yerleşmesi ve dinî pratiklerin doğru şekilde uygulanması için kaleme aldığı *et-Tarikatü'l-Muhammediyye* adlı eserinde, özgür irade problemini de ele almıştır. Birgivî burada Sadruşşerîa'nın (ö. 747/1346) mukaddimât-ı erba' argümanını *irâde-i cüz'îyye* kavramını merkeze alarak itikadî bir zeminde yeniden ifade etmiştir. XVII. yüzyılda *et-Tarika*'nın özgür irade ile ilgili bahisleri Osmanlı taşrasındaki âlimlerin gündeminde yer almış ve mezhebî kimliklerin temellendirilmesinde öne çıkmıştır. Birgivî'nin bu konudaki görüşleri Osmanlı Mâtürîdîliğinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynarken, aynı zamanda Eş'arî âlimlerinin Mâtürîdî geleneğine yönelttiği eleştirilerin de merkezinde yer almıştır. Bu makale, İzmir ve çevresinde yaşayan Abdurrahman b. Ramazan'ın istinsah edip derlediği bir mecmuadaki irâde-yi cüz'îyye risalelerinden hareketle Osmanlı taşrasındaki âlimlerin Mâtürîdî kimliğini nasıl temellendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bahsi geçen risalelerde Birgivî merkezinde Mâtürîdî geleneğine yöneltilen eleştirilere cevap verildiği ve Mâtürîdîliğin itikadî bir kimlik olarak inşa edildiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda Kadızadeli hareketiyle eş zamanlı ve fakat ondan bağımsız bir şekilde, Osmanlı taşrasında Mâtürîdî aidiyetinin güçlü bir şekilde dile getirildiği görülmüştür. Makalede, mezhebî aidiyetlerin şekillenmesinde Birgivî'nin oynadığı rol, dönemin entelektüel, siyasi ve tarihi bağlamıyla irtibatlı olarak ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: XVII. Yüzyıl Osmanlı entelektüel düşüncesi, Osmanlı Mâtürîdîliği, irâde-i cüz'îyye, Mehmed Birgivî, *et-Tarikatü'l-Muhammediyye*.

Introduction

The Ottomans exhibited a dynamic interplay of intellectual trends and theological *madhhabî* identity that evolved throughout their history. During the formative years of the Ottoman Empire theological madhhabî affiliations were largely overshadowed by the rise of Islamic philosophy and the *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of existence).¹ The Ottoman scholars' weak emphasis on the theological madhabs in this period has led to the intellectual tendencies of this period being described as "metadoxy".² However, by the seventeenth century scholars increasingly sought to replace a madhhab-centered understanding of religion with a more intensive perspective. The critiques articulated by Kadızadeli preachers towards Sufis who embraced the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, along with their endeavors to supplant the Hanafite-centered religious paradigm, signify a pivotal epoch in the emergence of theological madhhabî affiliations and the proliferation of Mâtürîdism within the Ottoman Empire.³

- 1 Kalaycı, "Mâtürîdî-Hanefî Aidiyetin Osmanlı'daki İzdüşümleri", 15-16.
- 2 Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 76; Balıkcıoğlu, *Verifying the Truth on Their Own Terms*, 6-10; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnization", 302-303.
- 3 Kalaycı, "Birgivî Mirasının Toplumsal ve Metinsel Taşıyıcıları", 445-447; Terzioğlu, "Bid'at, Custom and the Mutability of Legal Judgments", 327.

Historical sources and academic works have extensively documented the intellectual and social tensions that arose between the Kadizadelis and Sivâsis within the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Istanbul, its capital.⁴ These tensions frequently manifested in public debates and intellectual discourse. In addition to the studies on Kadizadelis, in the field of Ottoman intellectual history, the madhhabî inclinations of Ottoman scholars and rulers have often been analyzed within the framework of tensions between Sunnism and Shiism or between Sunnism and Sufism.⁵ In this context, official policies or the debates around the Kadizadelis have been at the center of academic studies.

Another field of study on Ottoman Sunnitization and madhhabî affiliations is the emphasis on the Mâtûridî tradition in the Ottoman intellectual circle. In this context, Mehmet Kalaycı and Nabil al-Tikriti have made important observations in their articles. In his article “Hanefî-Mâtûridî Aidiyetin Osmanlı’da İzdüşümleri” Mehmet Kalaycı traced the development of Hanafî-Mâtûridî affiliation in the Ottoman intellectual circle and traced this process from the the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum onwards.⁶ Nabil al-Tikriti, on the other hand, centered his study on the theological work of Şehzâde Korkud and discussed the Mâtûridî affiliation based on the tension between Ash’arism and Mâtûridism. In this study al-Tikriti, recognizing that Mâtûridism was the dominant sect of the Ottoman intellectuals, evaluated the Ash’arite advocacy of Şehzâde Korkud as an outlier.⁷

Research on Ottoman Sunnitization predominantly deals with Islamic orthopraxy (correct practice). While some studies exist on Islamic orthodoxy (correct belief), particularly those rooted in the Mâtûridî tradition, a substantial gap remains. There’s no existing research that examines Birgivi’s impact in the provinces, nor the madhhabî affiliations that developed alongside, but separate from, the Kadizadelis movement. Nevertheless, there remains a notable gap in the scholarly literature regarding the emphasis on Mâtûridism—a theological branch of Sunnism—and its influence on Ottoman intellectual circles and provincial contexts from the seventeenth century onward. However, the mecmûa 3772 within the Esad Efendi Collection offers crucial insights into the manifestation of Mâtûridî

4 For studies analysing the Kadizadelis and the debates that took place around them, see, Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety*; Zilfi, “The Kadizadelis”, 251-269; Çavuşoğlu, *The Kadizadeli Movement*.

5 For studies focusing on the tension between Sunnism and Shi’ism or between Sunnism and Sufism, see Vefa Erginbaş, “Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History”, 451-478; Sünnetçioğlu, “Attendance at the Five Daily Congregational Prayers”, 341-375.

6 Kalaycı, “Mâtûridî-Hanefî Aidiyetin Osmanlı’daki İzdüşümleri”, 9-72.

7 Tikriti, “A Contrarian Voice” 62-100.

identity in the Ottoman provinces, particularly those centered around Sadr al-Sharī'a and Birgivi. The treatises of this mecmūa, primarily written by scholars residing in and around İzmir, are of significant importance due to their inclusion of *al-irāda al-juziyya* (particular will) debates, particularly those found within Mehmed Birgivi's *al-Tariqa*.

The seventeenth century witnessed the rise of the mecmūa, a genre that encompassed diverse scholarly and literary works. These mecmūas not only showcased the intellectual richness of the period but also reflected the evolving social, cultural, and literary landscape of the Ottoman Empire.⁸ The seventeenth-century mecmūa compiled in and around İzmir, a provincial region within the Ottoman Empire, not only reflects the theological and intellectual milieu of its era but also offers valuable insights into the regional manifestations of Māturīdī thought within the Ottoman provinces. Evidently, *mustansih* (the compiler)⁹ of this collection amassed a compendium of short treatises authored by scholars residing in and around İzmir, encompassing contemporary jurisprudential and theological discourses. This mecmūa provides valuable information on the intellectual currents prevalent in the Ottoman provinces during this period. Moreover, an important feature of this collection is its capacity to illuminate the spread of the Māturīdī tradition in the Ottoman periphery through a large corpus of treatises centered on Mehmed Birgivi's *al-Tariqa*. This mecmūa underscores the significance of the Kadizadelis madhhab-centric approach to religious understanding, demonstrating its influence not only in the Ottoman Empire's core land but also in its periphery. This contribution is crucial for elucidating the specific manner in which Māturīdism was interpreted within the Ottoman context and identifying the key texts that shaped this understanding.

This study will investigate the manner in which seventeenth-century Ottoman authorities articulated their adherence to the Māturīdī school of thought and examine the role of Birgivi's *al-Tariqa* in shaping this articulation. This analysis will commence with an examination of Sadr al-Sharī'a's perspective on particular will, including an assessment of Birgivi's significant contributions to this understanding. Furthermore, the study will investigate how the Māturīdī tradition utilizes the concept of *al-irāda al-juziyya* to articulate its theological position in opposition to Ash'ari doctrines. Following an examination of the madhhab-centric debates surrounding the concept of particular will, the study will proceed to

8 Kafadar, "Sohbete Çelebi, Çelebiye Mecmua", 45-46.

9 Abdurrahmān b. Ramazān, who collected and reproduced the treatises in this mecmūa, not only aimed to reproduce the works but also compiled the works for his own scholarly agenda. For this reason, the word *mustansih* is used as *compiler* instead of *scribe*.

analyze the structure of the aforementioned mecmûa and assess Birgivi's crucial role in shaping the contours of Ottoman Mâturidism.

The main claim of this study is that Birgivi not only triggered the theological and jurisprudential debates that emerged in Istanbul through the Kadizadeli movement, but also that an intellectual group fed by Birgivi's legacy defended the Hanafi-Mâturidi-centered understanding of religion in the Ottoman provinces. To this end, this collection will be analyzed within the historical context in which it emerged, and the issues addressed in the treatises on al-irâda al-juziyya will be examined in terms of the role they played in the construction of theological identities.

1. From Sadr al-Sharî'a to Birgivi: Debates on Particular Will in Ottoman Empire

One of the central issues in Ottoman intellectual thought, particularly within the tension between Ash'arism and Mâturidism, is the debate over human will and the nature of good (*husn*) and evil (*qubh*). These topics became the focus of attention among Ottoman scholars in the fifteenth century, and they wrote glosses especially on Sadr al-Sharî'a's argument of *al-muqaddimât al-arba'*,¹⁰ in which he argued for human free will against Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî's argument for *jabr* (compulsion). In these glosses scholars such as Hayâlî (d. 875/1470), Kesteli (d. 901/1496), Hatibzâde (d. 901/1496), and Hasan Çelebi Fenârî (d. 891/1486) discussed Sadr al-Sharî'a's argument through al-Taftâzânî's (d. 792/1390) interpretations and criticisms.¹¹ However, in this century, the concept of free will was not primarily explored through the lens of *al-muqaddimât al-arba'*, but was instead examined on a more philosophical and theoretical level with a focus on the arguments that substantiate the notion of free will.¹² The transformation of the argument put forth by Sadr al-Sharî'a into a madhhab-centered issue in the Ottoman Empire occurred when Birgivi reinterpreted this argument in *al-Tariqa*, analyzing it from a theological perspective.¹³

While Birgivi sought to apply the Hanafi tradition to practical matters, he also placed a strong emphasis on Mâturidism in the realm of theology. In *al-Tariqa* Birgivi addressed the concept of human will under

10 Sadr al-Sharî'a put forward four premises in order to prove a human's responsibility for his/her actions and to prove the invalidity of Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî's argument of determinism. As a result of these premises, he argues that man makes a choice with his will and is responsible for this choice. For the explanation of these four premises, see Bruckmayer, "At the Intersection of Usûl al-Fîqh and Kalâm", 24-29.

11 Köksal, "İslâm Hukuk Felsefesinde Fiillerin Ahlâkîliği Meselesi", 6-7.

12 Çelik, *XV. Yy Osmanlı Düşüncesinde Telvîh Haşiyeleri*, 94-95.

13 Çelik, "The Intellectual Interaction of a Hijazi Scholar", 79.

the title “Tricks of Satan” (*hiyel al-Shaitan*) examining the argument of *al-muqaddimāt al-arbaʿ* and he approached this discussion from a more theological perspective. Birgivi, in agreement with Sadr al-Shariʿa, contended that the human will lacks ontological existence and immateriality. Consequently, he argued that God did not create it. Birgivi further refined Sadr al-Shariʿa’s philosophical and theoretical arguments supporting this position. Similar to his predecessor, Birgivi critiqued the Ashʿarite doctrine of compulsion, seeking to reconcile the all-encompassing nature of divine knowledge and will with human freedom of choice. Thus, he argued that religious responsibility is realized through the human choice of actions.¹⁴

Birgivi’s *al-Tariqa* was composed with the aim of guiding the public towards a virtuous life by elucidating the correct path in terms of practical, ethical, and theological matters. Theologically, Birgivi adhered to the principles of the Hanafi-Maturidi school of thought, as evidenced by his discussions on the human will, among other topics.¹⁵ Birgivi’s work achieved significant popularity and exerted considerable influence on Ottoman intellectual thought shortly after its publication. The theological framework advocated by Birgivi, rooted in the Hanafi-Maturidi school of thought, became widely adopted within the lands of Rüm.¹⁶

Ottoman policies in the sixteenth century facilitated the spread of Birgivi’s theological perspectives in the central lands of the Empire and contributed to an increased emphasis on madhhabī distinctions. The rise of the Safavid dynasty in eastern Anatolia and their active promotion of Shiism compelled the Ottomans to implement a series of military and religious countermeasures.¹⁷ In response to this perceived threat, the Ottoman political authorities actively sought to propagate Sunni orthodoxy among

14 Sadr al-Sharia, *al-Tawzih ‘alā al-Tanqih*, I, 401-402, Birgivi, *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*, 99-201.

15 Scholars have previously suggested that Birgivi’s critical perspective and emphasis on sharia-centered discourse reflected an influence from Ibn Taymiyya, implying a fundamentalist approach to religion. However, recent research has demonstrated a lack of direct engagement between Birgivi and Ibn Taymiyya. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Birgivi’s theological framework was grounded in Hanafism, and his criticisms of contemporary practices were rooted within this tradition. See Kalaycı, “Birgivi Mirasının Toplumsal ve Metinsel Taşıyıcıları”, 136-142; Arkan, “On the Probability of the Creation of the Ibn Taymiyya School of Ottoman Thought”, 147-180.

16 In his seventeenth-century treatise *Jilāʾ al-anzār*, İbrāhīm Kurānī, who lived in Hijaz, criticized the Hanafi-Maturidi views on human actions through the arguments and ideas of Sadr al-Sharia and Birgivi. This fact indicates the influence of these two scholars on Maturidi thought in Anatolia in the seventeenth century. See Çelik, “The Intellectual Interaction of a Hijazī Scholar”, 96-97.

17 Atçıl, “The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority”, 296.

their subjects, aiming to solidify Sunni identity and curtail the spread of Shiism within its territories¹⁸

Birgivi's *al-Tariqa* serves as a reflection of the dominant theological and religious landscape of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Given that Hanafism constituted the prevailing school of jurisprudence in lands of Rûm, Birgivi primarily focused his religious guidance on this legal framework. In this context the Ottomans' efforts to counter the influence of Shiism, emanating from the Safavid Empire, manifested in a renewed emphasis on Sunni orthodoxy.¹⁹ This emphasis was reflected in legal matters through adherence to Hanafism, while in matters of theology it was expressed through the promotion of Mâturidite thought, a prominent theological school within the Hanafite tradition. While Imam Mâturidî's theological perspectives gained prominence within the Hanafite school of jurisprudence, and Mâturidite thought came to be identified as the theological foundation of Hanafism in its early periods,²⁰ a pronounced emphasis on Mâturidism as a theological madhhabi identity emerged primarily after the sixteenth century.²¹

Birgivi's emphasis on Sadr al-Sharî'a's *al-muqaddimât al-arba'* played a pivotal role in shaping Ottoman debates on human action. Birgivi's analysis of human actions by centering on the Mâturidî approach inherited from Sadr al-Sharî'a was the source of discussions among intellectuals on free will in the seventeenth century.²² During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sadr al-Sharî'a and Birgivi emerged as primary authorities for Ottoman scholars who vigorously asserted their Mâturidite identity

18 Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 304-305.

19 Krstic, "Can We Speak of 'Confessionalization'", 35-39.

20 Taftâzânî identified the Ash'arî and Mâturidî schools of thought as constituting the *ahl al-sunnah*. It is significant to note that Imam Mâturidî, whom Taftâzânî recognized as the founder of Mâturidî thought, was a fourth-generation student of Imam Abu Hanîfa and thus maintained a strong connection to the Hanafite tradition. Taftâzânî, *Sharh al-Maqâsîd*, III, 464-465.

21 Despite defending the concept of *waḥdat al-wujûd* (unity of existence) in his treatise on human action, Şeyh Şaban al-Mudurnî, a late sixteenth-century scholar and Sufi, explicitly stated his adherence to the Mâturidî school of thought. These assertions by al-Mudurnî suggest an emerging emphasis on Mâturidî identity in the late sixteenth century. However, a more pronounced and intensive expression of this emphasis became evident in the seventeenth century and beyond. See Mudurnî, *Risâlah fî al-qadâ' wa al-qader*, 250.

22 It is important in this respect that some of the works dealing with the disputes between Ash'arism and Mâturidism are limited to the problem of particular will. The scholars who put the accepted view of the particular will at the basis of the madhhabi divergence brought this issue to the agenda as one of the main topics of debate between the two sects. See Marashî, *al-Risâlah al-Munjiyah*, 17-98.

in discussions of free will. These scholars engaged with the problem of human action through the lens of these two figures, considering the acceptance of *al-irāda al-juziyya* as a fundamental point of divergence between Māturidite and Ash'arite thought.

The Kadizadelis, an influential religious movement in Istanbul, played a crucial role in disseminating Birgivi's ideas and shaping Ottoman madhhabi identity. Because their emphasis on Hanafi jurisprudence was compatible with Birgivi's theological framework. This alignment prompted the Kadizadelis to frequently reference and advocate for Birgivi's works, thereby integrating his thought into their religious discourse and enhancing his enduring impact within the Ottoman Empire.²³ Concurrently, they promoted a form of asceticism deeply rooted in sharia, aligning with the principles outlined in Birgivi's *al-Tariqa*.²⁴

The Kadizadelis and their followers significantly contributed to the establishment of a dominant Hanafi-Māturidī theological framework within the Ottoman Empire, centered in Istanbul. However, Birgivi's influence extended beyond the Ottoman capital. Notably, during the seventeenth century, *al-Tariqa* gained wide readership across the Islamic world.²⁵ The mecmūa examined in this study demonstrates the significant influence of Birgivi's theological perspectives within İzmir, which was located on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. As will be subsequently demonstrated, this mecmūa encompasses a substantial number of treatises dedicated to Birgivi's *al-Tariqa*. These works primarily focus on defending the Māturidī school of thought on the theological concept of *al-irāda al-juziyya*.

2. Defining the Intellectual Agenda of the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Impressions from the Compiler Abdurrahmān b. Ramazān

Seventeenth-century Ottoman mecmūas, a product of changing urban life and social shifts, exhibit a distinct character. While earlier mecmūas primarily served as anthologies of shorter works, often with a thematic focus, a notable trend emerged in the seventeenth century. Some scholars or intellectuals began compiling collections that encompassed a diverse range of texts, reflecting the multifaceted intellectual, social, and economic concerns of the era.²⁶ The mecmūa under investigation exhibits characteristics typical of other contemporaneous mecmūas. Compiled by

23 Kalaycı, "Birgivi Mirasının Toplumsal ve Metinsel Taşıyıcıları", 442-455.

24 Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law*, 90-92.

25 Çelik, "The Intellectual Interaction of a Hijazī Scholar", 92-95.

26 Kafadar, "Sohbete Çelebi, Çelebiye Mecmua", 45-47.

Abdurrahmān b. Ramazān, this mecmūa showcases not only theological debates centered on the concept of *al-irāda al-juziyya* but also encompasses treatises on Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and hadith addressing contemporary concerns. Furthermore, the mecmūa includes works on the plague, supplications for protection against it, and short exegesis on the Quran.²⁷ This mecmūa, which will be subjected to a more in-depth analysis, provides insights into the works of scholars within compiler Abdurrahmān intellectual circle, likely reflecting personal connections.²⁸ It also reveals the intellectual interests and predominant topics of discussion prevalent during this period.

Manuscript records indicate that this compiler comprises forty works produced in and around Izmir between 1095/1683–1684 and 1107/1695–1696.²⁹ The compiler organized the collection by subject matter, and meticulously noted instances where he included duplicate treatises.³⁰ The mecmūa commences with Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūti's (d. 911/1505) *Unmūdhaj al-labib fī hasāis al-habīb*,³¹ composed to establish the Prophet Muhammad's prophethood, followed by the *Risāla fī mu'jizāt al-nabī* by the same

27 Popular belief in predestination influenced the spread of plague in the seventeenth century. Especially merchants travelling to Ottoman lands stated that the peoples' belief in fate prevented them from taking precautions against the disease. Defoe, *History of the Plague in London*, 14. The emphasis on the human will and its determination of action was associated with the plague epidemic, especially in the *will-i cūziyye* treatises written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Özdiñç, *Akıl İrade Hürriyet*, 350. However, in the mecmūa examined in this study, neither the authors of the treatise on particular will nor the compiler have connected the subject of plague and destiny with each other. The treatises on particular will included in the mecmūa were mostly shaped by the legacy of Sadr al-Shari'a and Birgivi and were written to establish the Maturidi affiliation. Although the compiler considered these two issues related, he did not make any clear statements about them. This situation makes it difficult to connect the treatises on particular will and the treatise on plague based on the collection in question.

28 The fact that the compiler lived in the Ottoman province and probably did not hold a bureaucratic position makes it difficult to obtain information about his life. However, the information he provided in the transcription records about the places and dates where he copied the works makes it possible to obtain some partial information about his life. Abdurrahmān b. Ramazān lived in Izmir and its surroundings, was still living in 1107/1695–1696, and met Muhammad b. Hamza el-Aydinī and Güzelhisari in person, according to the minhuvat records.

29 Suyūti, *Risāla fī mu'jizāt al-nabī*, fol., 74^b; Aydinī, *Risāla fī al-Qīās*, fol., 147^b.

30 Aydinī, *Risāla fī radd al-shahādah*, fol., 144^b (the compiler's marginal note)

31 Suyūti was a prolific scholar who worked in Cairo and wrote many works in different fields. Suyūti's *Unmūdhaj al-labib* is a summary of his voluminous work entitled *al-Khasāis al-kubra*, in which he wrote about the Prophet Muhammad's miracles and his virtues and characteristics. Suyūti, *Unmūdhaj al-labib*, fol., 6^b–23^b; Yavuz, "el-Hasāisü'l-kübra", 276–277.

author.³² The compiler's deliberate selection of these texts on prophethood for the collection's outset is significant. In the previous century, Molla Kâbiz's claim that Jesus was superior to the Prophet Muhammad had a profound impact, reigniting debates surrounding the concept of *heretic* and concurrently placing the imperative of demonstrating the Prophet's superiority on the scholarly agenda.³³ The mecmûa includes two treatises by al-Suyûtî aiming to prove the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad through proofs and miracles. These works can be interpreted as a continuation of ongoing scholarly discussions on prophethood. The inclusion of these two treatises on the characteristics and miracles of the prophets suggests that the compiler may have been particularly interested in the scholarly discourse on prophethood that debated Ottoman intellectual thought during the sixteenth century.

Following two treatises by al-Suyûtî on prophethood, the mecmûa includes a commentary on Siraj al-Dîn al-Ushî's (d. 575/1179) *al-Amâlî*,³⁴ followed by two works authored by Suleyman Efendi al-Izmîrî.³⁵ The majority of the mecmûa, however, consists of short treatises authored by Muhammad b. Hamza al-Aydîni.³⁶ The compiler of the mecmûa, who assembled approximately fifteen of al-Aydîni's treatises, has included *minhuvât* notes alongside both the works of Suleyman Efendi al-Izmîrî and al-Aydîni.³⁷ These records indicate that the compiler personally met both al-Aydîni and al-Izmîrî.

The mecmûa also addresses the significant plague epidemic that afflicted the Ottoman Empire from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth

32 Suyûtî, *Risâla fî mu'jizât al-nabî*, fol., 24^b-33^b.

33 Kemalpaşazâde, a prominent scholar and *şeyhulislam* of the sixteenth century, authored two treatises on the preeminence of the Prophet Muhammad's prophethood. Kemalpaşazâde, *Risâla fî ef'âliyyat Muḥammad*, V, 327-344; Kemalpaşazâde, *Risâla fî tahqîq al-mujiza*, V, 293-326; Tezcan, "The Ottoman 'Mevalî' as 'Lords of the Law'", 385-386.

34 Siraj al-Dîn al-Ushî is famous for his work *al-Amâlî* on the Hanafî-Mâturidî creed. This work of al-Ushî was the subject of translations, commentaries and glosses by Ottoman scholars and was taught as an introductory work in the madrasa curriculum. Bekri, *Sharḥ al-Amâlî*, fol., 34^b-51^b; Özervarlı, "el-Emâlî", 73-75.

35 Unfortunately, there is no information about Suleyman Efendi al-Izmîrî's life. However, as it is understood from his *nisba*, he was from Izmir and lived in the same period as the compiler.

36 Biographical information about the life of Aydinî—who worked as a mufti, *muderris*, and *kadi* in Aydın for a long time—is limited. It is understood from the works of the author that he died after 1118/1706. It can be said that Aydinî, who wrote more than sixty treatises in different fields of Islamic sciences, especially *fiqh*, was a prolific scholar. See, Cici, "Muḥammed b. Hamza el-Aydîni", 302-304.

37 Minhuvât notes on folios 79^b, 84^a, 90^a, 104^a, 115^b, 118^a, 121^a, 124^a, 142^b-143^a, 145^b etc. indicate that he met with Aydinî and Suleyman Efendi al-Izmîrî.

centuries.³⁸ Following al-Aydinî's treatises, the compiler interjects a brief pause, introducing a short poem on plague protection. Subsequently, the mecmûa includes a treatise on the plague authored by a scholar identified as al-Rûmî.³⁹

Of particular significance to this study within the aforementioned mecmûa are the treatises on *al-irâda al-juziyya*. These treatises, situated consecutively towards the conclusion of the mecmûa, are arranged by the compiler in a specific manner. Initially, sources presenting the correct perspective are presented. Subsequently, treatises engaging with the subject matter are introduced, drawing upon these established viewpoints. Within this framework, despite lacking explicit attribution, the compiler advocated for a classification of human actions and endorsed the Mâturidî perspective. This assertion was supported by a passage he cited from an unnamed "kalâmî treatise."⁴⁰ Subsequently, he authored a chapter in Birgivi's *al-Tarîqa*, a seminal text within the discourse on free will. While quoting these two texts, he also included the relevant passages from 'Ali al-Qârî's commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar* and Hayâlî's gloss on *Sharh al-'Aqâ'id* in the marginal notes.⁴¹ The third work on human actions in the mecmûa is Birgivi's grandson Ismetî's translation of *al-Tarîqa*, which deals with free will.⁴² By strategically placing these three texts prior to the treatises on free will, the author achieves two significant objectives. First, he establishes a robust conceptual and theoretical framework for the ensuing discussions on free will. Second, this strategic placement reveals the author's intellectual stance within the broader discourse. Furthermore, the inclusion of these three works within the collection serves as a foundational introduction, facilitating a deeper comprehension of the subsequent treatises.

Following an extensive introduction outlining the perspectives of the Mâturidî tradition, with a particular focus on Birgivi, the compiler included a critical commentary by Shaykh 'Ali al-Tilimsânî, a Ash'arite scholar, on Birgivi's chapter on free will in *al-Tarîqa*.⁴³ Shaykh 'Ali al-Tilimsânî attributed his commentary on *al-Tarîqa* to the renowned reputation of Birgivi's work and the widespread desire for its elucidation. However, the commentator's primary objective appears to be to expose the perceived

38 Arıcı, "Silent Sources of the History of Epidemics", 133-134.

39 The author whom the compiler refers to as al-Rumi is Hasan al-Akhisârî. Akhisârî, *Risâla fî haqq al-tâun*, fol., 164^b-172^b.

40 Anonymous, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol., 211^b (the compiler's marginal notes)

41 Anonymous, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol., 211^a-211^b (the compiler's marginal notes)

42 Mehmed Ismetî, *Tercüme-i Tarikat-ı Muhammediyye*, (Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772), fol., 212^b-214^a.

43 Ali al-Tilimsânî, *Risâla 'alâ bahth al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol., 217^a-225^b.

contradictions within Birgivi's text and to refute his criticisms of Ash'arite theology.⁴⁴ Based on the vigorous defense of Ash'arism evident throughout his commentary, it can be inferred that he firmly adhered to Ash'arite principles in his scholarly career.⁴⁵

The mecmûa includes also two particularly noteworthy treatises on the problem of free will: the *talikât*⁴⁶ of Dervîş Efendi and the treatise of 'Abdî Efendi al-Tirevî. Both of these works can be interpreted as defenses of Imam Birgivi and the Mâturidî tradition from the intellectual circle of the lands of Rum. Dervîş Efendi's talikât were composed as a direct response to Shaykh 'Alî al-Tilimsânî's critique of Birgivi's views on particular will, articulated from an Ash'ari theological perspective.⁴⁷ Ibrahim al-Kürânî's *Jilâ' al-anzâr* contains a critique of Birgivi's perspective on the particular will, articulated within al-Kürânî's broader effort to reconcile *waḥdat al-wujûd* with Ash'arite theology. Abdî Efendi al-Tirevî, in his treatise, subsequently responded to and defended Birgivi against these criticisms⁴⁸ Shaykh 'Alî al-Tilimsânî, an Ash'arite scholar operating beyond the geographical confines of Rum, and Ibrâhîm al-Kürânî, a proponent of *waḥdat al-wujûd* with Ash'ari leanings, both employed Birgivi as a point of contention in their critiques of Mâturidite theology. Conversely, Dervîş Efendi and Abdî Efendi al-Tirevî in their respective defenses of Birgivi explicitly identified the scholars of Rum as "Mâturidite", thereby revealing their own adherence to this theological tradition.⁴⁹ Both the critical and

44 al-Tilimsânî, *Risâla 'alâ bahth al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, 217^a.

45 Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Senûsî's scholarly contributions, particularly in Ash'arite theology and logic, significantly stimulated intellectual interest in these disciplines within North Africa, with a notable impact on the region of Tilimsân. Historical records indicate the presence of a vibrant intellectual community in seventeenth-century Tilimsân, characterized by a strong adherence to Ash'arite theology. While biographical details regarding Shaykh 'Alî al-Tilimsânî remain elusive, his commentary on Birgivi's *al-Tariqa* clearly reveals his North African origins and his unwavering commitment to the Ash'arite tradition prevalent in the region. See Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 131-170.

46 *Talikât* in scholarly activity refers to "appending upon ('ala)" a text or "deriving from ('an)" an author and then to the resulting notes, glosses, comments, excerpts and appendices. Similar in a way to *ḥāshiya*, it is, however, much less firmly anchored in manuscripts than *ḥāshiya* was originally." See Rosenthal, "Ta'lik".

47 Dervîş Efendi, *al-Talikât*, fol., 214^b.

48 Tirevî does not explicitly mention the name of Ibrahim al-Kürânî. The criticism of Birgivi by a great scholar from Hijaz, which Tirevî cites, is found in al-Kürânî's treatise *Jilâ' al-anzâr*. Considering that the manuscript was copied in the seventeenth century, it can be said that the person mentioned here is al-Kürânî. See Kürânî, "Jilâ' al-anzâr", *Majmû' Resâil Ibrâhîm al-Kürânî*, , III, 539-549; cf. Abdî Efendi al-Tirevî, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî* (Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772), fol., 229^b.

49 al-Tirevî, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol. 229^b.

defensive treatises concerning Birgivi's work centered on the pivotal issue of human agency and its impact on action. Furthermore, divergent perspectives on this matter were widely recognized as a defining factor in distinguishing between theological schools of thought.

Following the inclusion of Birgivi's *al-Tariqa* and the subsequent scholarly discourse surrounding this work, the manuscript concludes with a fatwa issued by Şeyhulislām Ebussuūd Efendi on the theological concept of predestination, along with further treatises on the human will. Ebussuūd Efendi, a contemporary of Birgivi, addressed the problem of free will as presented in *al-Tariqa* within the framework of a fatwa. The subsequent response to this inquiry evolved into a distinct treatise. Ebussuūd Efendi's treatise on predestination exhibits notable parallels with *al-Tariqa* in its exploration of human action. Central to both works is the intricate interplay between the comprehensiveness of divine knowledge and power and the exercise of human free will. While Ibn Sinā and Rāzī grappled with this complex issue through philosophical and theoretical frameworks, attempting to resolve the apparent paradox of human action occurring under divine compulsion, Ebussuūd Efendi, mirroring the approach of his contemporary Birgivi, analyzed the matter from a distinctly theological perspective. He eschewed elaborate philosophical debates and remained firmly grounded in the principles of the Māturidī tradition.⁵⁰

In the concluding section of the mecmūa, the compiler, recognizing the need to maintain thematic coherence, included a brief selection of disparate works. These include a supplication concerning the plague (*tā'ūn*), Yusuf al-Shirwānī's *Risāla fī al-sa'āde wa al-shaqāwa*,⁵¹ and a commentary on Sura al-Qadr and Sura al-Ikhlās.

This manuscript collection reveals a multifaceted perspective, reflecting both the intellectual pursuits of its compiler and the prevailing socio-religious discourse of the seventeenth-century Ottoman context. The inclusion of diverse works suggests the compiler's engagement with a learned community, likely centered around Izmir, and demonstrates the significant influence of Birgivi's intellectual tradition on shaping madhhabi identities within the Ottoman provinces. The presence of al-irāda al-juziyya treatises within the mecmūa provides evidence that madhhabi propaganda, while arguably influenced by the Kadizadeli movement in Istanbul, also appeared independently in the Ottoman

50 Unlike the later Ash'arites, Māturidī scholars did not accept "teklif mā lā yutāq," and they also considered it possible for human beings to make choices with their will. Ebussuud and Birgivi defended the views of the Māturidī tradition on these two issues. See Ebussuūd, *Risāla fī al-qadā' wa al-qader*, fol., 246^b-247^a.

51 Shirwānī, *Risāla fī al-sa'āde wa al-shaqāwa*, fol., 249^a-249^b.

provinces. The inclusion of such works within this compilation suggests that seventeenth-century scholarly discourse continued to grapple with key theological and jurisprudential issues that had been central to debates in the preceding century. The sixteenth-century rise of Sunni orthodoxy within the Ottoman Empire witnessed a surge in the production of works grounded in Māturidism. Notably, this collection features numerous treatises on particular will, a central point of contention between Māturidī and Ash'arī schools of thought. This suggests that the compiler sought to define Māturidī theology by centering it on the interpretations of Sadr al-Sharī'a and Birgivi, two prominent figures within the tradition.

3. Particular Will and the Preeminence of Māturidī Theology

The seventeenth century witnessed a period of significant intellectual shifts within the Ottoman Empire. The activities of the Kadizadeli movement in Istanbul and the growing tensions with Sufi orders significantly impacted the intellectual landscape. However, these ruptures were not solely a product of the Kadizadeli movement. Kātip Çelebi's observation that sixteenth-century counter-Shiite measures were rigidly enforced by the Kadizadeli highlights the continuity of a legalistic approach to religion inherited from the preceding century.⁵² During the seventeenth century, the détente in Ottoman-Safavid relations coincided with a shift in the focus of religious orthodoxy. Instead of primarily targeting Shiism, the Ottoman authorities began to perceive certain groups within the state, particularly Sufis espousing *waḥdat al-wujūd* and deviating from Hanafi-Māturidī orthodoxy, as threats to the established religious order.

The Ottoman Empire's sixteenth-century emphasis on Sunni Islam, specifically the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, fostered the emphasis on Māturidī theology as a distinct theological tradition within ahl al-sunna.⁵³ This process, marked by the increasingly assertive articulation of Māturidite identity by Ottoman scholars, can be extended to the seventeenth century.⁵⁴ Scholars of this period explicitly identified themselves as Māturidite, drawing a distinction between their

52 Kātip Çelebi, *Mizān al-haqq fī al-ikhtiyār al-ahaqq*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1972) 22-23.

53 Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization", 310-311.

54 In texts written before the seventeenth century, Māturidism is used as a sectarian identity. For example, Şaban al-Mudurni, who lived in the late sixteenth century, stated that Sufis were Māturidis. However, the popularization of Māturidism as a sectarian identity and the production of thought based on the principles of the Māturidī sect took place in the seventeenth century. See Mudurni, *Risālah fī al-qadā' wa al-qader*, 250.

theological affiliation (Māturidism) and their adherence to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence. While seeking to establish Māturidism as a distinct theological tradition independent of Hanafism, these scholars simultaneously emphasized a connection between Imam Māturidī and Abū Hanīfa, attempting to legitimize Māturidī theology within the broader framework of Hanafi jurisprudence.⁵⁵

The inclusion of works on free will within this mecmūa provides compelling evidence for the emergence of Māturidism as a distinct scholarly identity among Ottoman intellectuals in the seventeenth century. Notably, the treatises of Derviş Efendi and al-Tirevî offer crucial insights into the historical context of debates surrounding divine predestination and human free will, specifically the concept of al-irāda al-juziyya. These works reveal how the emphasis on Māturidī theological identity became increasingly prominent within these discussions, shedding light on the evolving dynamics of intellectual and religious discourse in the Ottoman Empire.

Al-Tirevî composed his treatise on human action in response to specific inquiries, acknowledging an initial reluctance to engage with such a complex and potentially contentious subject. However, he ultimately felt compelled to address these questions, recognizing the prevailing intellectual and religious climate of his time. Prior to delving into free-will debates, al-Tirevî underscored the fundamental importance of *kalam* (theology). He emphasized the crucial role of sound theological understanding in safeguarding against religious innovation (*bid'at*) and misguided beliefs, particularly those pertaining to *jabr* (compulsion) and predestination, which he viewed as deviations from true faith.⁵⁶

While defining the true faith, al-Tirevî took the Hadith of 73 Sects, which is frequently mentioned in theological works, and tried to determine the boundaries of the ahl al-sunnah, which is on the right path. According to this hadith the Jews will be divided into seventy-one sects; Christians into seventy-two sects; and Muslims into seventy-three sects, and only one of these sects will be saved. Although there are differences in the interpretation of the hadith, Ash'arite and Māturidite scholars have stated that the ahl al-sunnah is the sect that attains salvation.⁵⁷ In this context, he stated that there are ten principles that distinguish the ahl al-sunnah from others. These ten principles mentioned by al-Tirevî point to the disagreements between the ahl al-sunnah and the Shiites on practical and theological issues. In addition to the matters of theological disagreement

55 Tirevî, *Risāla fî al-ikhtiyār al-juzî*, fol. 228^a; al-Taftāzānî, *Sharh al-Maqāsîd*, III, 464-465.

56 Tirevî, *Risāla fî al-ikhtiyār al-juzî*, fol. 226^a.

57 For the evaluation of this hadith, see Gömbeyaz, "The Influence of the 73 Sects Hadith", 245-258.

between the Twelver Shiite theology and the ahl al-sunnah, such as not mentioning any of the Companions in a bad light and not counting deeds as part of faith, jurisprudential practices such as wiping over leather socks and allowing prayer behind a sinful imam are also mentioned among the basic principles of the ahl al-sunnah.⁵⁸ In this section at the beginning of his treatise, the author has actually made a preliminary preparation before moving on to the main topic. This introduction, which points to the debates reflecting the tension between Shiism and Sunnism in the sixteenth century, actually draws a general framework for the true beliefs and practices that were intended to be popularized.

Al-Tirevî stated that those who do not accept these ten principles, which he mentioned in his definition of ahl al-sunnah, are *ahl al-dalâlat wa al-bid'at* (people of bad innovations and heresy). However, the author, who mentioned that the ahl al-sunnah was divided into two main groups within itself, stated that the disagreements between the groups within the ahl al-sunnah did not lead to *bid'at* (innovation) and *dalâlat*, (heresy) and that both groups were accepted into the *saved sect* mentioned in the hadith. He mentions that the branches of the ahl al-sunnah are the Ash'arites and the Mâturidites and states that these madhhab differ from each other on certain issues such as *taqwîn*, exception in faith, and the faith of the *muqallid*. Following al-Taftâzânî's explanations on the definition of ahl al-sunnah and the Sunni sects, al-Tirevî, on the one hand, mentions Imam Mâturidî's scholarly lineage from Abu Hanifa and, on the other hand, draws attention to the spread of both sects in different geographies.⁵⁹

Al-Tirevî stated that another difference between Ash'arism and Mâturidism concerns the issue of human actions. He stated that Ash'arism was actually closer to *Jabriyye* (upholders of *jabr*) and even a branch of compulsion. The author, who linked the Ash'arites' acceptance of idea of compulsion with their views on human power, argued that the Mâturidîs' views on human power were more in line with those of ahl al-sunnah. The author states that the Ash'arite theologians can be considered from Jabriyya due to their understanding of human power and that Jabriyye are from ahl al-bid'at. On the other hand, at the beginning of his work, he lists the ten principles necessary to be qualified as Sunni and states that according to these principles, the Ash'arites cannot be characterized with bid'at and dalâlat

In his marginal notes the compiler makes important references to the debates of the period by adding the Mu'tazilites' views on human power to al-Tirevî's distinction. In the early period of the Mâturidites' views on

⁵⁸ al-Tirevî, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol. 226^a.

⁵⁹ al-Tirevî, *Risâla fî al-ikhtiyâr al-juzî*, fol. 228^a.

power, Imam al-Māturīdī and Abū al-Muīn al-Nasafī stated that God's power is involved in the act in terms of creation, while man's power is involved in the act in terms of acquisition (*kasb*). However, Sadr al-Sharī'a's ambiguous statements on human power and al-Hayālī's equating these statements with al-Isferāyīnī's view that "divine power and human power are both of them instrumental in the human act" paved the way for Ottoman scholars to discuss the Māturīdī tradition's view of power.⁶⁰ Being aware of this ambiguity in the Māturīdites' views on human power, the compiler drew attention to the difference between the Māturīdites and Mu'tazilites views. While the Mu'tazilites stated that the human agent in action, that is, the creative and destructive power belongs to the human being, the Māturīdites did not accept the agent power.⁶¹

Al-Tirevī's views on human action, particularly free will, closely align with those of Sadr al-Sharī'a and Birgivi. He repeated their assertion that human will is neither inherently existent nor non-existent, thereby negating the necessity of divine creation for its existence. This understanding served as the foundation for al-Tirevī's emphasis on human religious and moral responsibility. Al-Kūrānī, who was a contemporary of al-Tirevī, found Birgivi's grounding of human will insufficient; he argued that when the immutability and comprehensiveness of divine knowledge and will are accepted, human will has no meaning.⁶² Al-Tirevī, who mentioned al-Kūrānī's criticisms as a challenge, tried to evade the question here by commenting on Birgivi's views.⁶³ After responding to this criticism, which he narrated without mentioning his name, al-Tirevī mentions that a "scholar from Hijaz" wrote a criticism of Birgivi's *al-Tarīqa*, and states that this scholar is consistent within his own school of thought in his criticisms, but inconsistent in terms of Māturīdism. If we return to the issues al-Tirevī mentioned at the beginning of his work, it should be remembered that Māturīdism expresses views that are more in line with the principles of the ahl al-sunnah on issues related to human actions. In this context, al-Tirevī, who considered Kūrānī's criticisms of the Māturīdī tradition invalid, defended Birgivi's views and expressed his own Māturīdite affiliation through these views.⁶⁴

Another work in this mecmū'a, which is the subject of this study, belongs to Derviş Efendi, who emphasizes Māturīdite identities in terms of the discussions on human actions. Derviş Efendi, like al-Tirevī, wrote his treatise based on Birgivi's views and the criticisms directed against him.

60 See Çelik, "İnsan Fiilinde Müessir Midir?", 281-284.

61 Tirevī, *Risāla fī al-ikhtiyār al-juzī*, fol. 228^a (marginal note from the compiler)

62 Kūrānī, "Jilā' al-anzār", 538-549.

63 Tirevī, *Risāla fī al-ikhtiyār al-juzī*, fol. 228^b-229^a.

64 Tirevī, *Risāla fī al-ikhtiyār al-juzī*, fol. 228^b-229^a.

As mentioned, Shaykh 'Alī al-Tilimsānī wrote a critical commentary on the relevant chapters of *al-Tarīqa* and criticized the views of free will from the Ash'arite perspective due to the widespread popularity of Birgivi's views on the will and the many questions asked about it.⁶⁵ Writing a *talīka* to respond to al-Tilimsānī's criticisms, Derviş Efendi aimed to correct "the matters distorted by an Ash'arite scholar."⁶⁶ In this context, he quoted each of al-Tilimsānī's criticisms, responded to them one by one, and heavily criticized al-Tilimsānī for making logical errors.⁶⁷

Derviş Efendi made a strong objection to al-Tilimsānī's criticism that the Māturidism had deviated from the Sunni. As the compiler Abdurrahmān also pointed out, the ambiguity in the Māturidites' views on power and al-Khayālī's claims that human power was effective became a subject of debate by both Ottoman and Ash'ari scholars.⁶⁸ While Ottoman scholars disagreed on determining the Māturidī tradition's view on power, Ash'arite scholars criticized it for its closeness to the Mu'tazila. Al-Tilimsānī also stated that the Māturidism shared the same view with the Mu'tazila based on the view that power is effective, and therefore they separated from the ahl al-sunnah. He also stated that the Ash'ari view was both more compatible with the view of the *salaf* (ancients) and more consistent in terms of reason and Islamic tradition.⁶⁹ Derviş Efendi, who criticized al-Tilimsānī for seeing the Māturidī scholars outside the ahl al-sunnah based on the issue of power, stated that the controversial issues between the Māturidism and the Ash'arism did not remove one of the schools from the ahl al-sunnah.⁷⁰

Conclusion

The theological maddhabī identities of the Ottomans witnessed different tendencies in the historical process of their existence. As stated in modern studies, during the formative period maddhabī identities remained in the background. However, the political developments that emerged in the sixteenth century and afterwards made it necessary for the Ottoman rulers to take some religious measures. In this process, Hanafism, which was dominant in the Ottoman lands, came to the forefront by centering the Sunni religious understanding, and the foundations of a madhhab-centered

65 Tilimsānī, *Risāla 'alā baḥṭh al-ikhtiyār al-juzī*, fol., 217^a.

66 Derviş Efendi, *al-Talikāt*, fol., 214^b.

67 Derviş Efendi claimed that al-Tilimsānī made mistakes in the syllogisms he used in his criticisms and that some of his claims were sophistry. Derviş Efendi, *al-Talikāt*, fol. 214^b.

68 Hanafi et al., *al-Majmū'at al-seniyyeh*, 388-389, 392.

69 Tilimsānī, *Risāla 'alā baḥṭh al-ikhtiyār al-juzī*, fol., 218^b.

70 Derviş Efendi, *al-Talikāt*, 215^b.

understanding were laid. In the seventeenth century the intellectual framework inherited from the previous period was continued, and thought production was carried out within this framework.

When maddhabi identities are considered from a theological point of view, Māturidism, which can be considered an extension of Hanafism, came to the fore in an emphasized way, and it was realized in the seventeenth century. In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman politicians engaged in deliberate propaganda to promote Sunnism, aiming to curtail the expansion of Shiism throughout land of Rum. This state-sponsored initiative had a significant theological impact, leading to the increased prominence and widespread adoption of Māturidism, a principal theological branch of Hanafism.⁷¹ In this context, the problem of free will, which was one of the controversial issues between the Ash'arites and the Māturidites, was discussed on the ground that Birgivi put forward by making use of Sadr al-Shari'a, and this issue became one of the main topics of debate in Ottoman theological thought.

Scholars who adopted Māturidism as a theological maddhabī identity accepted Sadr al-Shari'a and Birgivi as authorities, and the views of these two scholars determined the framework of the debates about free will. Birgivi's maddhab-centred ideas spread through the religious movement initiated by his student Kadizāde Mehmed in Istanbul. However, it is also true that a Birgivi-centered Māturidi understanding became a widespread discourse simultaneously in the Ottoman provinces. The treatises written by al-Tirevi and Derviş Efendi to justify Birgivi's views and to answer the criticisms levelled against the Māturidi tradition centered on Birgivi by al-Kūrāni and al-Tilimsāni, who belonged to the Ash'arite sect, are important in understanding how Ottoman Māturidism was reflected in the provinces. Both Derviş Efendi and al-Tirevi asserted Māturidism's status as a legitimate branch of ahl al-sunnah and a theological madhhab linked to the Hanafite school. They further contended that Māturidi perspectives, especially regarding the concept of particular will, demonstrated a greater alignment with the prevailing Sunni paradigm. They also found the criticisms of the Ash'arites against the view of free will inconsistent and stated that the views of Māturidism are more in line with the views of the predecessors.

In the core lands of the Ottoman Empire, Sunnism was centered on Hanafism in practical matters, while the principles of Māturidism were emphasized in theological matters. In the shaping of Ottoman Māturidism, Sadr al-Shari'a and Birgivi were accepted as scholarly authorities, and the views of these two scholars drew the basic framework in theological issues, especially on

⁷¹ Tikriti, "Kalam in the Service of State", 136-149.

the subject of particular will. The ideas put forward by the Kadizadelis in Istanbul, the capital of the empire, were nourished by Birgivi's thought. These ideas discussed in this period were also discussed by the provincial ulema simultaneously with the capital city, and again shaped by Birgivi's intellectual legacy. Hanafi and Māturidi-centred thought production also had an impact on intellectual tendencies, and the sect-centered attitude became dominant especially in the works produced in the field of theology.

Bibliography

- Akhisari, Hasan, *Risāla fī haqq al-tāun*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 164^b-172^b.
- Anonymous, *Risāla fī al-ikhtiyār al-juzi*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 211^a-211^b.
- Arıcı, Mustakim, "Silent Sources of the History of Epidemics in the Islamic World: Literature on Tā'ün/Plague Treatises", *Nazariyat: Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences*, 7/1 (2021): 99-158.
- Arıkan, Adem, "On the Probability of the Creation of the Ibn Taymiyya School of Ottoman Thought via Birgivi Mehmed Efendi - A Critical Approach -", *İlahiyat Studies*, 6/2 (2015): 147-180, <https://doi.org/10.12730/13091719.2015.62.130>
- Atçıl, Abdurrahman, "The Safavid Threat and Juristic Authority in The Ottoman Empire During The 16th Century", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49/2 (2017): 295-314.
- Aydini, Mehmed, *Risāla fī radd al-shahādah*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 134^b.
- Aydini, Mehmed, *Risāla fī al-Qisās*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 146^b-147^b.
- Balıkçıoğlu, Efe Murat, *Verifying the Truth on Their Own Terms: Ottoman Philosophical Culture and the Court Debate Between Zeyrek (d. 903/1497-98 [?]) and Hocazāde (d. 893/1488)*, Venezia: Fondazione Università Ca' Foscari, 2023.
- Bekri, Radiyy al-Din, *Sharh al-Amālī*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 34^b-51^b.
- Birgivi, *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*, ed. Muhammad Nazim al-Nadwi, Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2011.
- Bruckmayer, Philipp, "At the Intersection of Usūl al-Fiqh and Kalām: The Commentary Tradition on Sadr al-Shari'a al-Thāni's al-Muqaddimāt al-Arba'", *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, 14 (2023): 17-64.
- Cici, Recep, "Muhammed b. Hamza Aydinî" *DİA*, 2019, Ek-2, 302-304.
- Çavuşoğlu, Semiramis, *The Kadizadeli Movement: An Attempt of Seri'at -Minded Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1990.
- Çelik, İmam Rabbani, "İnsan Fiilinde Müessir Midir?: 18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı'sında Kudret Tartışmaları", *Osmanlı'da İlm- Ahlak*, ed. Ömer Türker - Eliman Aliyev, s. 277-294. İstanbul: İSAR Yayınları, 2024.
- Çelik, İmam Rabbani, *XV. Yy Osmanlı Düşüncesinde Telvîh Haşiyeleri: Teklife Dair Tartışmalar*, Ph.D. Diss., Marmara University, 2020.
- Çelik, Şerife Nur, "The Intellectual Interaction of a Hijazi Scholar with the Lands of Rum: İbrahim al-Kürani's Criticism of the Hanafi-Maturidi Tradition in His Treatise Jila' al-Anzar", *Nazariyat: Journal for the History of Islamic Philosophy and Sciences*, 8/1 (2022): 63-100. <https://doi.org/10.12658/Nazariyat.8.1.M0152+n>
- Defoe, Daniel, *History of the Plague in London*, ed. George Rice Carpenter, New York: Longsmans, Green and Co., 1896.
- Derviş Efendi, *al-Talikāt*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 214^b-216^b.
- Ebussuûd, Mehmed, *Risāla fī al-qada' wa al-qader*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 246^b-247^a.

- Erginbaş, Vefa, "Reading Ottoman Sunnism through Islamic History: Yazid b. Mu'âwiye in Ottoman Historical Writing", ed. Tijana Krstic - Derin Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire*, c. 1450-1750, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020, 451-478.
- Gömbeyaz, Kadir, "The Influence of the 73 Sects Ḥadith on the Classification of Theological Sects in Islamic Heresiographical Literature", *Ulum: Dini Tetkikler Dergisi*, 1/2 (2018): 245-258.
- Ivanyi, Katharina A, *Virtue, Piety and the Law: A Study of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi's al-Ṭariqa al-muḥammadiyya*, Leiden: Brill, 2020.
- Hanafi, Kül Ahmad et al., *al-Majmû'at al-seniyyeh 'alâ Sharh al-'Aqâid al-Nasafiyye*, ed. Miri Hasan al-Rasheed. Midyat: Dar Nûr al-sabâh, 2012.
- Kafadar, Cemal, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of The Ottoman State*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Kafadar, Cemal, "Sohbete Çelebi, Çelebiye Mecmua". *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VII Mecmûa: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*, ed. Hatice Aynur et al. İstanbul: Turkuvaz, 2012.
- Kalaycı, Mehmet, "Birgivi Mirasının Toplumsal ve Metinsel Taşıyıcıları: Kadızâdeliler ve Etrafındaki Ulema", *Sahn-ı Semân'dan Dârülfünûn'a Osmanlı'da İlim ve Fikir Dünyası (Âlimler, Müesseseler ve Fikri Eserler) - XVII. Yüzyıl*, İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2017.
- Kalaycı, Mehmet, "Mâtürîdî-Hanefî Aidiyetin Osmanlı'daki İzdüşümleri", *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi*, 20/2 (2016): 9-72, <https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.261679>
- Kemalpaşazâde, Ahmed, *Risâla fi ef'âliyyat Muhammad*, ed. Abd al-Javâd Hamâm, *Mejmu' Resâil Ibn Kemalpaşa*, I-VIII, İstanbul: Dâr al-lubâb, 2018, 327-344.
- Kemalpaşazâde, *Risâla fi tahqiq al-mujiz*, ed. Hamzah al-Bekrî, *Mejmu' Resâil Ibn Kemalpaşa*, İstanbul: Dâr al-lubâb, 2018. V, 293-326.
- Krstic, Tijana, "Can We Speak of 'Confessionalization' Beyond the Reformation?", ed. Tijana Krstic - Derin Terzioğlu, *Entangled Confessionalization? Piscataway*: Gorgias Press, 2022.
- Köksal, Asım Cüneyd, "İslâm Hukuk Felsefesinde Fiillerin Ahlâkîliği Meselesi -Mukaddimât-ı Erbaa'ya Giriş-", *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 28 (2012).
- Kürânî, İbrâhîm, "Jilâ' al-anzâr", *Majmu' Resâil İbrâhîm al-Kürânî*, ed. 'Alî Muhammad Zeynû, I-III, İstanbul: Dâr al-lubâb, 2020, 509-557.
- Marashi, Ahmad, *al-Risâlah al-Munjiyah*, ed. Mahmoud Nafisah, Kahramanmaraş: Özgü Press, 2021.
- Mudurnî, Şaban, *Risâlah fi al-qadâ' wa al-qader*, ed. Mustafa Borsbuğa, Coşkun Borsbuğa, "Mudurnulu Şeyh Şâban en-Nakşibendî'ye Ait Risale fi'l-kaza ve'l-kader Adlı Risalenin İnceleme, Tahkik ve Tercümesi", *Tahkik: İslami İlimler Araştırma ve Neşir Dergisi* 4/1 (2021): 203-284.
- Özdinç, Rıdvan, *Akıl İrade Hürriyet Son Dönem Osmanlı Dini Düşüncesinde İrade Meselesi*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2013.
- Özervarlı, M. Said, "el-Emâlî", *DİA*, 1995, XI. 73-75.
- Rosenthal, F., "Ta'lik", In P. Bearman (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*, doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7366
- Rouayheb, Khaled, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Current in the Ottoman Empire and Maghreb*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Sadr al-Sharia, Ubayd al-Allah, *al-Tawzih 'alâ al-Tanqih*, ed. Adnân Darwish, Beirut: Dâr al-arqam, 1998.
- Shirwanî, Yusuf, *Risâla fi al-sa'ade wa al-shaqâwa*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 249^a-249^b.
- Suyûtî, Jalâl al-Din, *Risâla fi mu'jizat al-nabi*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 24^b-33^b.
- Suyûtî, Jalâl al-Din, *Unmüzaj al-lebib fi hasâisi al-habib*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 6^b-23^b.
- Sünnetçiöğlu, H. Evren, "Attendance at the Five Daily Congregational Prayers, Imams and Their Communities in the Jurisprudential Debates during the Ottoman Age of Sunnitization", ed. Tijana Krstic - Derin Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire*, c. 1450-1750, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020, 341-375.

- Taftazāni, Sa'd al-Din, *Sharh al-Maqāsid*, ed. İbrahim Shams al-Din. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyyah, 2011.
- Terzioğlu, Derin, “Bid’at, Custom and the Mutability of Legal Judgments: The Debate on the Congregational Performance of Supererogatory Prayers in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire”, *Dimensions of Transformation in the Ottoman Empire from the Late Medieval Age to Modernity: In Memory of Metin Kunt*, ed. Seyfi Kenan - Selçuk Aksin Somel, Brill, 2021, 324-366, <https://brill.com/view/title/55793>
- Terzioğlu, Derin, “How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization”, *Turcica*, 44 (2012-2013): 301-338. <https://doi.org/10.2143/TURC.44.0.2988854>
- Tezcan, Baki, “The Ottoman ‘Mevali’ as ‘Lords of the Law’”, *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20/3 (2009): 383-407.
- Tilimsāni, ‘Ali, *Risāla ‘alā bahth al-ikhtiyār al-juz’i*, Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi, 3772, fol., 217^a-225^b
- Tikriti, Nabil, “Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy and the Defining of Ottoman Islamic Identity”, ed. Hakan Karateke - Maurus Reinkowski, *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005.
- Tikriti, Nabil, “A Contrarian Voice: Şehzāde Korkud’s (d. 919/1513) Writings on Kalām and the Early Articulation of Ottoman Sunnism”, ed. Tijana Krstic - Derin Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-1750*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020, 62-100.
- Yavuz, Yusuf Şevki, “el-Hasāisi’l-kübra” *DİA*, 1997, XVI, 276-277.
- Zilfi, Madeline C., “The Kadizadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 45/4 (1986): 251-269.
- Zilfi, Madeline C., *The Politics of Piety: the Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)*, Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988.