# THE DEBATES BETWEEN ASH'ARISM AND MĀTURĪDISM
# IN OTTOMAN RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP:
# A HISTORICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

BY

Yahya Raad Haidar

March, 2016

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of the Australian National University

DISCLAIMER

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted before to any institution for assessment purposes.

Further, I have acknowledged all sources used and have cited these in the reference section.

..................................                            ...............................

Yahya Raad Haidar                                           Date

ABSTRACT

The intellectual life during the Ottoman Empire – which came to dominate large parts of the Muslim world from the fifteenth to the end of the nineteenth century CE – has received relatively limited attention in modern scholarship. This study is a historical investigation of an intellectual debate between the two major schools of Islamic theology (Ashʻarism and Māturīdism) which by the eighteenth century had become a prominent theme in Ottoman scholarly literature.

Māturīdism is one of two schools that dominated Islamic theology after the disintegration of the rationalist school of the Muʻtazilah. The other school, Ashʻarism, eventually became the common doctrine among followers of the Shāfiʻī and Mālikī schools of law, while Māturīdism became, almost exclusively, the theology of the Ḥanafis. Both schools wrote in the name of Sunnī orthodoxy (*ahl al-Sunna wa al-jamaʻa*) and took a middle course between the doctrines of the Muʻtazilah and the literalists, attempting to achieve a balance between reason (*ʻaql*) and revelation (*naql*). Despite the sheer similarity between the two schools in terms of overall objectives, pioneers of Māturīdism during the school's formative period (ninth – thirteenth century) methodically objected to Ashʻarī positions over a number of problems – including, the conception of faith (*imān*), doctrine of predestination (*qadar*), the punishment of sins, and God's active attributes (*ṣifāt al-ʻafʻāl*). By the end of the fourteenth century, Ashʻarism was recognized as the universal authority on mainstream theological discourses – having attracted the greater number of followers, and produced extensive and systematic theological canon which addressed problems from philosophy, logic and natural science.

Based on extensive historical and bibliographical research – including a number of previously unpublished manuscripts – this study traces Ottoman scholars' attitude towards the school of Ashʻarī in three phases. The first is the classical Ottoman phase (mid. fourteenth – end of fifteenth century) which saw the persistence of the Ashʻarī paradigm in Ottoman theological scholarship; this study found that – although Ḥanafism was the common and officially-sanctioned school of Law – early Ottoman Ḥanafī theological treatises display greater inclines to Ashʻarism rather than Ḥanafism's traditional doctrine of Māturīdī. The second phase covers the sixteenth century which witnessed a growing interest among Ottoman theologians to affirm the 'sound' doctrine of Sunnism in strict concord with the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa as presented in classical Māturīdī texts. The disputes with Ashʻarī were also brought into attention. But, in the absence of a new appraisal of theological problems from an exclusively Māturīdī perspective, on the disputes with Ashʻarī, Ottoman theologians remained largely within the radius of Ashʻarism. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, this situation is inverted at the hand of Istanbul-based scholar Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah who produced his influential *Ishārāt al-marām* – an extensive theological treatise which sought to defend Māturīdism over fifty disputed problems with Ashʻarism and to restore the status of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as the foremost theologian of Islam. The third phase covers the period between the early seventeenth century, towards the final years of the empire in the end of the nineteenth century whereby Ottoman scholars produced numerous works – varying in size and scope – with Ashʻarī-Māturīdī debates as their primary subject-matter.

This study begins with a comparative historical background of the emergence of Ashʻarism and Māturīdism, followed by a discussion of key theological disputes as presented in authoritative pre-Ottoman texts. It then attempts to examine the extent to which Ashʻarism influenced early Ottoman theological discourses, and the intellectual context which saw the emergence of a late Ottoman Māturīdī canon. Finally, the study documents nearly forty works on Ashʻarī-Māturīdī disputations that were produced between the seventeenth and late nineteenth century, amounting to the establishment of a novel genre of later Islamic theological literature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

## I. Topic and Scope

This study concerns the doctrinal differences between two schools of Muslim theology, Ashʿarism and Māturīdism, and their forming into a prominent discourse in the later period of Islamic intellectual history – particularly during the later Ottoman period (from the tenth/sixteenth to the thirteenth/nineteenth century). The area of study is the Islamic scholarly discipline of ʿIlm al-kalām – which literally translates as the science of speech or discourse, and is the closest in meaning to the word "theology".[1] Historian Ibn Khaldūn defines *Ilm al-Kalām* as 'the science that involves rational proofs for defence of the articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate from the beliefs of early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy.'[2] Historically, however, the scope of *kalām* has encompassed topics from beyond "theology" – i.e. principles of legal theory, scriptural exegeses among others. This looseness of the definition is further reflected in the other names it is known by, such as: *ʿuṣūl al-dīn* (the Principles of Religion), *ʿIlm al-tawḥīd* (science of Monotheism), and *ʿilm al-ʿasmāʾ wa al-ṣifāt* (science of Divine Names and Attributes).[3] Nevertheless, its focal point is the study of religious creeds. And given the centrality of creed to the Muslim worldview, it is no surprise that notable Muslim intellectual have often treated *ʿIlm al-Kalām* as 'the most noble of the sciences.'[4]

Māturīdism is one of two schools that dominated Islamic theology after the disintegration of the rationalist school of the Muʿtazilah. The other school, Ashʿarism, eventually became the common doctrine among followers of the Shāfiʿī and Mālikī schools of law, while Māturīdism became, almost exclusively, the theology of the Ḥanafis. The eponymous founders of the two chief schools of Sunnī theology, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, were contemporaries who lived in the fourth/tenth century. The theology of Ashʿarī proved controversial even during his lifetime; it was quickly

---

[1] Frank, R. M., "the Science of Kalām" In *Arabic Science and Philosophy 2* (1992), pp.7–37.

[2] Ibn Khaldūn, Abd al-Raḥmān *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn* (edited by Abdallah M. al-Darwish), Damascus: Dar Yaʾrub, 2004 [2 vols.], v.2, p.205; see alternative translation in Rosenthal, Franz *The Muqaddimah: an introduction to history; in three volumes*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, v.3, p.34.

[3] Opinion is divided over the meaning and scope of *kalām* among Muslim theologians. For a study of the names of *Ilm al-Kalām* see: al-Shāfiʿi, Ḥasan *Al-Madkhal ila dirasat ʿilm al-Kalām,* Karachi, Idarat al-Qurʾān wa al-Uloom al-Islamiyyah, 2001.

[4] Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid M. *al-Mustaṣfa* (edited by Muḥammad Abd al-Salām al-Shafi), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1993, p.6 and al-Taftāzānī, Masʿud ibn ʿUmar *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (translated with notes and introduction by Earl Edgar Elder) Columbia, Columbia University press, 1950, p.10.

noticed and opposed by contemporary Mu'tazilī theologians, as well as traditionalist Sunnīs, especially the Ḥanābilah. In the face of such resistance, Ash'arism rapidly spread beyond its original home in Baghdād: eastwards to centres of Shāfi'ī legal learning of Persia, and westwards into Mālikī centres of the Maghreb. Since the Seljuk period (mid. fifth/eleventh century), Ash'arism has become the dominant theology for follower of the Shāfi'ī and Mālikī schools. Māturīdism, on the other hand, did not attract the attention of other schools for over a century after the death of its founder – Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī. Al-Māturīdī lived and worked in Samarqand, and his doctrine was initially seen as that of school of Samarqand – but, in time, it was generally recognised as the ultimate authority on Ḥanafī theology. Both schools wrote in the name of Sunnī orthodoxy (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*) and took a middle course between the doctrines of the Mu'tazilah and the literalists, attempting to achieve a balance between *'aql* (reason) and *naql* (revelation).

Together with the sheer similarity between their two theological systems, Ash'arī and Māturīdī schools have been associated with mainstream Muslim orthodoxy. With the exception of the scholars who take an anti-*kalām* position (e.g. Literalists who accept no authority on doctrinal matters besides revealed sources), today when one speaks of orthodox Sunnī theology, the two schools are immediately invoked as having equal authority on theological problems.[5] However, the statement that Ash'arī and Māturīdī theologies are one and the same is complemented by the fact that the two schools have also diverged over a number of doctrinal differences. Disputes over conceptions of *imān* (faith), doctrine of the *qadar* (predestination), the punishment of sins, and *ṣifāt al-'af'āl* (God's active attributes), were commonplace during the early, formative period of Ash'arism and Māturīdism (4th/tenth – seventh/thirteenth c.).[6] However, with the advent of the eighth/fourteenth century – in what tends to defined as the later (or post-Classical) period of Islamic history – Muslim scholars began to take notice of the doctrinal differences which in time become central focus of numerous works of Muslim theology. The present study traces the phases development which led to such popularisation of a

---

[5] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and Muḥammad 'Abduh's *Annotations on the Creed of Ijī* contains important early twentieth century references to the debate between Ash'arism and Māturīdism, see: Khasrow-Shahi, Sayyid Hadi (ed.) *al-Ta'liqat 'ala sharh al-Dawwani lil-'aqā'id al-'Aḍudiyya,* Cairo: Maktabat al-Shuruq al-Duwaliyya, 2002, pp.164 and 465 [for example]. More detailed discussion is found in Abū Zahra, Moḥammad Aḥmad *Tarīkh al-madhāhib al-'islamiyya*, Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, [undated].
[6] Watt, W. Montgomery *the Formative Period of Islamic Thought* Edinburgh: University Press, 1973, pp. 315–316.

"discourse of Sunnī theological disputes", having reached the climax of maturation and influence during the later Ottoman period.

## II.    The Problem

The first point of departure in this study is the observation of Māturīdism's preoccupation with the school of Ashʿarī which is identified in the earliest writings of the pioneers and continued throughout the school's development. Opposition and critical engagement with Ashʿarī doctrines were part of parcel of the Māturīdīs' articulation of their theology. In the classical-formative period, this was generally one-sided. However, these intellectual encounters intensified in the post-Classical period – when Ashʿarism (after a period of apathy towards Ḥanafī theology when Ashʿarīs developed a tradition of "philosophical' theology) began to take greater notice of a doctrinal rival who, although agreeing on the use of *Kalām* and the fundamentals of Sunnism, opposed a number of definitive Ashʿarī doctrines. From the early eight/fourteenth century, this "interest" in the disputes took a bibliographical form when works solely dedicated to the examination of points of disputes between the two schools – now juxtaposed as equal authorities on orthodox Sunnī *Kalām* – begin to emerge.

And this is the second point of departure in this study: a bibliographical survey of works in this theme (i.e. the juxtaposition of Ashʿarism and Māturīdism and comparative analysis of their doctrinal differences) reveals a continuous stream of titles in this genre by leading scholars who flourished in Anatolia during the Ottoman period – and reaching a climax in the latter two centuries of the empire (twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries).

*Two Theological Discourses*

The following questions and inquiries will be addressed in the course of this historical and bibliographical study of Ash'ari and Māturīdī encounters. The first is: (1) did opposition to Ash'arism – which figures prominently in Classical Māturīdī writings – continue in   post-Classical Ottoman Māturīdī literature? In other words,  can opposition to Ash'arism be presumed as part and parcel of Māturīdism's self perception? Furthermore, (2) did Ash'arism and Māturīdism hold different approaches

to the disputes that occurred between them; that is, did post-Classical Ash'arīs continue their Classical tendency to minimize and trivialise the philosophical repercussions of the Disputes – as opposed to the Māturīdīs who, otherwise, insisted on them being integral to mindful and serious theological inquiry? The outcome of the above two lines of inquiry will serve to identify the extent to which each school represented a unique "intellectual discourse" and how the nature of opposition to the (rival) other was underpinned by varying sets of intellectual axioms and concerns.

*Ottoman Māturīdism*

In modern scholarship, the presence of Māturīdism in Ottoman Ḥanafī theological literature has not been brought into question. This is perhaps due to its pervasiveness in later Ottoman religious texts; indeed, the present study documents numerous works in defence of Māturīdī doctrines that were produced by later Ottoman scholars – particularly from the twelfth/eighteenth century onwards. But, the scarcity of such literature in the early/Classical Ottoman period begs the question of whether Māturīdism was consistently the commonly-held doctrine of Ottoman Hanafis. In other words, (3) to what extent did the increasingly-dominant post-Classical Ash'arī tradition influence early Ottoman *kalām* discourses that pre-date the great flow of disputation literature (i.e. from late ninth/fifteenth to late tenth/sixteenth century)?

*The Debates as a genre of Islamic Theological Literature*

The chronological arrangement of texts on the debates reveals a stark increase in the titles that deal exclusively with inter-theological discussions between Ash'arism and Māturīdism, especially upon the advent of the twelfth/eighteenth century. This was pioneered by Rūmī Ottoman authors (i.e. scholars from Anatolia and the Balkans), with reverberating Reponses from other parts of the Empire (especially the neighbouring Arab east). Emergence of similar titles continued steadily until the disintegration of the Ottoman polity in the end of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. This study provides (4) a biobibliographical survey – in chronological order – of the scholars who contributed to this comparative theological theme with descriptive annotations on the works and authors. As such, this body of literature is introduced and defined, with information on primary sources relating to the authors and (where relevant) the whereabouts of unpublished texts. Finally, the study probes into some of the distinctive thematic and methodological features of this

body of literature that may set it apart from other modes of authorship in Islamic theological literature; in other words, (5) does the whole bibliographic output on the debates between Ash'arism and Māturīdism represent a novel genre in Islamic theological literature quite unlike the more familiar genres of *kalām summae* (in varying sizes and scopes), summations of creed, polemics, rebuttals, and heresiography?

*Chapter Outline*

This historical and bibliographical study pursues the abovementioned five lines of inquiry, divided into five chapters:

Chapter I examines the origins of the problematic relation between Ash'arism – the dominant school of Sunnī theology – and its less-known rival Māturīdism by giving a sketch of the background to the emergence of the two schools, and elaborating some key encounters between them through the fourth/tenth to the end of the six/twelfth century.

Chapter II provides a descriptive outline of the theological controversies as presented in pre-Ottoman Māturīdī canons, with reference to some early engagements with Māturīdism by Ash'arīs where relevant.

Chapter III defines the origins and central features – as far as doctrinal affiliation with theological schools is concerned – of Ottoman theological discourses. The Ottomans who came to dominate large parts of the Muslim world from the tenth/sixteenth century were a Turkish dynasty which endorsed the legal school of Abū Ḥanīfa – already the more popular legal variant among the inhabitants of Anatolia. Nevertheless, it will be revealed that eminent Ottoman theologians were far more influenced by Ash'arī theological discourses than with Māturīdism. This can be observed to the end of the Classical Ottoman period (towards the end of the tenth/sixteenth century).

Chapter IV traces the changing face of Ottoman theological inquiry – as far as doctrinal affiliation with Māturīdism is concerned. We observe that at the turn of the eleventh century AH, Ash'arī hegemony on Ottoman theological writings begins to loosen, in tandem with a growing concern with "sound" creed in concord with the principles of the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa. Disputes with Ash'arī were beginning to be noticed and surface in theological writings. But, in the absence of a new and comprehensive appraisal of Māturīdism, the Ash'arī narrative on the disputes was still present in Ottoman accounts on

them. This, however, changes towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century at the hand of Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah who wrote a highly influential Māturīdī canon with anti-'Ash'arism as its raison d'être.

Chapter V defines the outlines of a late Ottoman genre of theological writing. Following Bayāḍīzādah, the twelfth/eighteenth century witnessed a continuous stream of titles in the field of Ash'arī-Māturīdī disputation by prominent Ottoman Ḥanafīs from al-Rūm (Anatolia) who invariably sought to define and defend Māturīdism against its Ash'arī rival. This chapter provides (in chronological order) a bio-bibliographical survey of titles that were contributed to this genre with relevant information on their authors. Indeed, writing on the Disputes was not confined to the Rūmī Ottoman scholars (though they were certainly the pioneers). Already in the twelfth/eighteenth century, we observe varying reactions and perceptions of the Ottoman literature and – as a result – a number of works were produced by scholars who flourished in the learning centres of al-Shām, Egypt, Mecca, and Madīna. By the thirteenth/nineteenth century, the disputes between Ash'arism and Māturīdism had become an established genre with an accumulative body of precedents formed in the previous century.

## III. Methodological Issues

*A Descriptive Chronicle of Ash'arī-Māturīdī Encounters*

This study describes a theological debate as an intellectual phenomenon which is manifested and articulated in Islamic religious texts. As such, it is not a philosophical study of theological concepts – in the sense of testing the validity and soundness of arguments – but, an investigation of the unfolding of a "discourse on Disputes" and how it eventually forms a prominent genre in Islamic theological literature. By definition, a descriptive study of a trail of ideas and succession of scholarly texts leaves little room for possible social, cultural and political contexts which may have played a role in the shape of a particular "history of ideas". While this study focusses on "what", "when", and "how" notions, arguments, and texts emerged concerning the relation between the two schools – which leads to the identification of an intellectual phenomenon reflected in the emergence of a mode of scholarly authorship –, it deals with the question "why" primarily in intellectual terms. Accepting one or more of the conclusions of this study, such as the increasingly doctrinaire Māturīdism of later Ottoman theologians – which paralleled a degree of aversion

towards later philosophical Ash'arism – may well be partly justified by analyses of socio-political factors from the post-eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman history. Evidently, establishing the existence of an intellectual phenomenon in the first place is prior to probing into a wide range of dynamics which may have had an impact on its trajectory of development. These dynamics could include: tensions between Sufi orders, emergence of new governing and economic elites, foreign military and ideological challenges, relation and inter-dependence between ruling and scholarly classes, and so on.

This study covers much ground of a scholarly motif which was to a great extent a distinct feature of later Ottoman religious literature. However, further studies of the *kalām* literature produced in other contemporary flourishing centers of Ḥanafī learning – especially from the Indian subcontinent, and Central Asia – may reveal akin tensions between the two schools of Sunnī theology and which may well have developed into recognizable textual and intellectual phenomena. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that the great Ottoman interest in Disputes would have had repercussions in other parts of the Muslim worlds – much of which already under Ottoman dominion.

*Texts and Authors*

The starting-point of this research was the collection (to the best of one's ability given the timeframe of doctoral candidacy; from 2012 to 2016) of relevant texts through surveying catalogues of specialist libraries in Islamic Studies, and manuscript collections (focusing on extant Turkish collections). Following the chronological arrangement of these texts, a " bibliographic phenomenon" is noticeable; a sudden resurgence of interest in Ash'arī-Māturīdī disputations is set afoot from the late eleventh/seventeenth century and continues right to the end of the end of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

Evaluating later Ottoman interests in the Disputes is relatively straightforward given its bibliographic nature. As for earlier periods, when such literature was not common, I selected a number of *kalām* texts by leading Ottoman theologians – in particular commentaries and super-commentaries on earlier *Kalām* classics – and conducted an intertextual study of the instances where Ash'arī doctrines come up and a (purportedly) Māturīdī theologian is expected to make a judgment on whether to affirm the Māturīdī view

(as is the case in later Ottoman works) or follow Ashʿarism (as would appear in the Classical Ottoman period). A particular text is considered "prominent" if (a) it has been described as such in posterior biographical and historical sources; (b) if it figures frequently in later texts; or, (c) if it was widely-disseminated. A useful source of information on the latter is the bibliographic presence of a certain title in manuscript form (i.e. if numerous copies are documented), or if it invited early publication in print-form.[7]

This descriptive historical study, then, deals with theological texts as focal-points around which a narrative is woven, and certain trends are extrapolated and described. These texts – along with their authors – are contextualized in view of the leading questions of this study. In general terms, biographical information is determined by the following factors:

(1) The scholar's attitude towards rational sciences –  in particular the science of *Kalām* – but also including Logic and philosophy.

(2)  Position on "later philosophical Ashʿarism".

(3) The scholar's other works which point to his overall theological outlook (i.e. type, methodology, scope, style, intentions, etc.).

(4) The scholar's doctrinal affiliation with Ashʿarism or Māturīdism. And, whether or not (and to what extent) his theological orientation is concerned with doctrinal affiliation.

(5) The scholar's teachers, students, place of residence, travels and similar biographical information which may shed light on the four points above.


Madhhab

A key concept in the discussion of the disputes between Ashʿarī and Māturīdī schools is *madhhab* – a technical Arabic terminology which literally means "the place of going", and

---

[7] Both indicators of "prominence" (i.e. presence of numerous manuscript versions and the the fact it was published in print-form) are issues of Discourse Analysis. However, the gaps in modern literature on the history of later *kalām* make substantiating a sub-narrative untenable for the present study.

translated here as "school" or "doctrine". Writing in the second half of the fourth/tenth century, Iraqi geographer al-Muqaddasī specifies in his *Ahsan al-taqāsīm* (Best of Divisions) that there were four *madhhabs* of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), four of theology (*kalām*), four boasting the correlation of the two, four belonging to tradition, four have been absorbed into other four, while four exist only in rural districts.'[8] The *madhhabs* of theology of his time were: al-'Asha'ira, al-Jahmiya, al-Mu'tazilah and al-Sālimīya; while the *madhhabs* of jurisprudence included Ḥanafi, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī and Dawūdī (Ẓāhirī, or Literalist). Al-Muqaddasī's use of the word *madhhab* was deliberate as he says later in the same book that he was careful not to confuse the word *madhhab* with *firqa* (sect), and that his narrative was an outline of current *madhhab*s and not a new division of Muslim sects.[9]

*Madhhab* is the term used for school in legal and theological contexts. But, the hierarchy of authority, as well as the extent to which a follower of a particular *maddhab* is free to move beyond its parameters are different in theological and legal contexts. In law, adherence to a particular school presupposes acceptance of a hierarchy of authority which affects the dynamics of legal reasoning.[10] In theology, *madhhab* assumes a less technical meaning.[11] As such, following a theological *madhhab* has been controversial – even heretical – according to some variants of Islamic thought. An early traditionalist criticism of Ash'arism was that they had invented a fifth *madhhab* additional to the four canonical Sunnī schools of law. This "innovation" led to the accusation that the followers of a theological *madhhab* did

---

[8] Al-Muqaddasī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-'aqalim*, Leiden: Brill, 1877, p.37.

[9] Muqaddasī says: 'we have sought precision by saying "the common schools (*madhāhib*)" and did not say "sects (*firaq*) of Muslims"' in response to a rhetorical question that he had suggested in his book an un-convensional four-fold division of Muslim schools and variants (al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm,* pp.41-42).

[10] Kamālpashazade's short epistle on the hierarchy of the *mujtahids* within a school of jurisprudence, in this case Ḥanafism outlines seven levels of authority. At the top sits the *mujtahid fi al-shar'* (roughly translated: founding scholar) who lays down the fundamental principles of the school, such as the four Imāms of the Sunnī schools of law; second, *al-mujtahid fi al-madhhab*, who may differ with the founders of the school's opinions, but follow their logic of reasoning; the third level includes the scholars who give their opinion on matters untouched by founders of the school; the fourth level is the *Aṣḥāb al-Takhrīj mina al muqallidīn*, the imitators of the schools but know the origins of narrated opinions; five, *Aṣḥāb al-Tarjīḥ mina al-Muqallidīn,* the imitators who do not know the origin of opinions, but are able to pass judgement on the best of judgements; six, the *muqallids* who are able to tell a strong from a weak opinion in the given school; finally, the seventh level includes the blind imitators whose jobs is the uninformed amassing of information, with little verification. For an analysis and criticism of Kamālapashazade's short epistle on Ḥanafī *Ṭabaqāt* see: al-Mutī'ī, Muḥammad B. (1854 – 1935; Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar in Egypt) *Risāla fi bayan al-kotob al-laty yu'awwal 'alayha wa bayan Ṭabaqāt ulama al-madhhab al-Ḥanafī wa al-radd 'ala Ibn Kamāl Pasha,* Damascus: Dar al-Qādirī, 2008.

[11] Ibn 'Asākir's enumeration of the first five generations of Ash'arītes is done in the following hierarchical division: the first generation (*ṭabaqa*) is of Ash'arī's immediate companions; the second, of the students of Ash'arī's companions 'who followed his method in theology and learned its arts'; the third, of those who 'met the students of his companions and acquired religious knowledge from them'; the fourth, of 'the prominent scholars who have emulated Ash'arī and followed his delineation of theology'; and the fifth, of those who were contemporary of the author (mid-sixth/twelfth century).

not believe the founders of the legal schools – who are held in high-esteem – provided sufficient theological foundations.[12] Early Ash'arīs rationalised the use of Ash'arism as a doctrinal title by saying that it served the practical purpose of distinguishing them from other heretical groups.[13]

Strict doctrinal affiliation with a school of theology has certainly been more problematic in comparison with affiliation with a school of law. While this was a definite feature of scholars with leanings to the literal interpretation of religious texts (or that the primary sources of Religion are self-sufficient, and the aide of a rational science such as *kalām* is a needless intellectual occupation), it is a tendency also observed in prominent Sunnī theologians who thought highly of the discipline of *kalām.* Renowned Ṣūfī and Ash'arī theologian Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) – in challenging the strict adherence to a school of theology – gives us an insight into the nature of a theological *madhhab.* In *Fayṣal al-tafriqa*, Ghazālī writes:

> How was it proven to him (the dogmatic theologian) that Truth is his sole property? That he must consider al-Bāqillānī (early Ash'arī Master) to be a disbeliever when he had opposed him (al-'Ash'arī) over the attribute of Eternity, claiming that it is not an attribute which is additional to His essence? And why al-Bāqillānī should more rightly be called a non-believer than al-'Ash'arī himself? Why is Truth with one and not the other? Is it because one preceded the other in time? Well, the Mu'tazilah predated al-'Ash'arī; then let truth be with the predecessor! Or was it because of disparity in worth and knowledge? If so, then on what scale has worth been measured that made him determine that no one in existence is better than the person he follows and imitates? And if al-Bāqillānī is given special permission to disagree with al-'Ash'arī, then why only him? And what is the difference between al-Bāqillānī, [and other theologians such as] al-Karabisi and al-Qalānisī and others? And what is the limit for the allocation of this privilege? [...] Then, how can he say: you must follow me to the letter, or you must think; but you must also not realise anything except that which I have realized, and everything which I have realised is conclusive proof and you must believe it as such... And, where is the difference between saying: imitate me in the principles of my school and saying: follow me in both my school and doctrine? Is that not contraction?[14]

Ghazālī's inquisitions of the problematic nature of adherence to a "theological maddhab" resounds a personal aversion towards "dogmatism" – an expected instance of doctrinal affiliation. But, in varying degrees, doctrinal affiliation with Ash'arism and Māturīdism has been commonplace among majority of Sunnī scholars through the

---

[12] Ibn 'Asākir, Ali b. al-Ḥasan, *Tabyīn kathb al-muftarī fi ma nusiba 'ila al-Imām al-Ash'arī* (edited by Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī), al-Tawfiq Press, Damascus, 1347[1928], p.359.
[13] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn,* p.362.
[14] Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid, *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayn al-'Islam wa al-Zandaqa,* edited by Mahmoud Bijou, 1993, p.19. – 23. See also, Jackson, Sherman A., *On the boundaries of theological tolerance in Islam: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghāzalī's faisal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islam wa al-Zandaqa,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

centuries of the history of Islam. This is more readily noticeable in Ashʻarī contexts: whereby advocates of the school voiced unambiguously their affiliation with Ashʻarism, as opposed to other doctrines which they rejected – in particular of the Muʻtazilah and the Literalists. Ḥanafism, however, is more vague when it comes to the strict affiliation with the school of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, on the one hand, or with the "original" theology of Abū Ḥanīfa, on the other. As will be shown in the course of this study, this was due to the nature of the theology of Māturīdī who saw himself as nothing but a delineator (even a commentator) of the theological opinions of the school's ultimate master Abū Ḥanīfa. Furthermore, as will be shown in the present study, a certain ambivalence towards the science of *kalām* – a feature of early traditionalist Ḥanafism – persisted to some degree among Māturīdī scholars.

*Note on Periodization*

In any historical study, the division of certain chronological trajectories into periods and phases is inescapable. Indeed, the question of periodization remains unresolved in Islamic history – particularly its "intellectual" facets. The latter has been foreshadowed in Western scholarship by a long-held paradigm whereby Islamic history is presumed to have witnessed a Classical-formative age (noted for its intellectual and scientific flourishing), which is followed by a post-Classical period that merely thrived on the legacy of the former ("golden") age and boasted no tangible intellectual achievements of its own. Although the past few decades saw the emergence of a growing corpus of scholarship (from Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, post-Colonial Studies, as well as Intellectual and Social History) which attempt to revisit this overarching historical judgement, the old paradigm maintains a degree of authority nonetheless.

An integral approach in the methodology of the present study is the discernment between early and later (in certain places also termed Classical and post-Classical) periods. These periods are exclusively defined in view of the development of the Islamic scholarly discipline of *kalām,* drawing on the historical sense of "periods" and "phases" held by the practitioners and historians of *this* discipline. The following four divisions are central to the arguments of this study:

(1) Early/Classical Theology (1ˢᵗ/7ᵗʰ to early seventh/thirteenth century).

11

(2) Later/post-Classical Theology (early seventh /thirteenth to end of 19[h] c.)

(3) Early/Classical Ottoman Theology (late eighth/fourteenth to end of tenth/sixteenth c.)

(4) Later/post-Classical Ottoman Theology (early eleventh/seventeenth to end of nineteenth c.)[15]

## V.    Primary Sources

The present study uses a number of unpublished manuscripts, some of which were acquired during the author's fieldwork trip to Turkey in early 2015.[16] When possible, I have used two copies of the same volume for the sake of philological accuracy.[17] For the origins of Māturīdism and the early Ḥanafī attitude towards the science of *kalām*, I took as a lead al-Muqaddasī's *Best of Divisions* – a geographical survey which contains invaluable references to doctrines and sects towards the end of the fourth/tenth century. I have also used biographical sources on Ḥanafī scholars, in particular al-Qurashī's *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyya* and a manuscript copy of the *ṭabaqāt* of Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān al-Kafawī – one of the most extensive works of its type. The classics of Ashʿarism used in this study include works by: Ashʿarī, Bāqillānī, Ibn Fūrak, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The following scholars represented Classical Māturīdism: Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī, Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī, Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Nasafī, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣabūnī, al-Khabbāzī and Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī. Early post-Classical scholars include: Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, Ibn Taymiyya, Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī, Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, and Ibn al-Humām.

For the origins of Ottoman theology, I took as my lead Ṭāshkubrīʹzādah's *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmāniyya* – a primary source on Classical Ottoman religious history and biography. This is interlaced with references from other relevant texts from Ottoman studies – including modern works such as: Khalīl Inalcik's *The Ottoman Empire: the Classical Period*. My guide for

---

[15] Section III of Chapter One in this thesis is dedicated to the study of existing narratives on the history of Islamic theology as they shed light on the development of a major debate that occurred within its bounds, namely the Ashʾari-Māturīdi debate.

[16] Other manuscript copies were acquired from the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt.

[17] Refer to Bibliography section at the end of thesis for specific titles of the authors mentioned below.

the beginning of the following chapter is Kātib Chelebī's *Balance of Truth* – a description of religious life in eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman Turkish (Anatolian-Balkan) milieu. Finally, in describing the resurgence of the Disputes a prominent genre in Ottoman religious literature, I draw on a number of Ottoman biographical sources, in particular Bursali Mehmed Tahir's *Osmanli Müellifleri* – a three-volume compendium of biographies of Ottoman scholars with information on twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth century scholars not found elsewhere. In general, the more contextually-significant a scholar is, the more sources on his biography are given – in chronological order – in the footnote. For secondary personages, I confined to giving recent sources, in particular Isma'īl al-Baghdādī's *Hadiyyat al-'Ārifīn* and Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī's *al-A'lām.* Needless to mention biographical sources such as Kātib Chelebī's *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* and its addendums – an indispensable source throughout this investigation.

One of the goals of this study is the disentanglement of two parallel (Ash'arī and Māturīdī) "theological discourses" that were at play in the contexts of the intellectual controversies that occurred between them. However, the primary *kalām* sources used in this research come with their own set of discursive issues – in terms of format, content, and intended audience. Evidently, these issues become changing and interrelated variables in each text. The following parameters have been taken into consideration upon the utilization of primary theological sources:

(1) **Format:** a critical issue in terms of formal analysis is determining whether a theological work is an extensive manual of *kalām* (providing a comprehensive *summa* of theological problems), or a thmatically-focussed treatise centred around the engagement or refutation of a particular theologian, book, or doctrine. Navigating through extensive *kalām summae*, more common in the Classical period, without a detailed plan of their framework, may lead to mislocation of pertinent units of inquiry. Applying formal analysis to Commentaries and super-Commentaries is rather less problematic when the original texts are used to map and locate concerned units of inquiry.

(2) **Content:** the question of originality is a rather familiar methodological challenge when approaching technical religious scholarship. Knowing when and to what extent a particular treatise is representative of the opinions of the author can be quite elusive.

Compiling lists of cited sources, and approximating the number of references to each one of them helps in this manner. This process is further aided if it is coupled with thematic and chronological arrangement of the cited sources as it sheds light on the intertextual itinerary of concepts. Misperception of terminologies is a greater concern in Classical *kalām* – and relates to the inner dialectics of a particular doctrinal discourse (among the research questions of this study). That a certain concept may have two or more cross-textual philosophical meanings and repercussions is part and parcel of a theological debate. However, this misperception of terms and concepts is more acutely felt in  Ash'ari and Māturīdī theological texts from the Classical period – as opposed to post-Classical period which exhibit a better sense of a commonly-shared technical diction.

**(3) Intended audience:** drawing a line of demarcation between technical theological works which are intended for a class of specialist scholars, and treatises that target a wider readership, reveals stark divergences in terms of scope, methodology and use of language. Even within a given scholastic milieu, intended audiences of selected texts range from beginners to advanced students. As such, knowing whether a treatise targets non-scholarly laymen, early (or advanced) learners, or the *ulama* community, necessitates alternative approaches to texts. For example, the critical approach to an extensive post-Classical super-commentary in *kalām* that draws on a wide range of sources markedly differs from a later Ottoman expression of creedal positions (*'aqīda*) which – in order to reach a (specific) broader class of readers – is composed in common Turkish language and stays clear of scholarly references and citations.

## VI.    Literature Review

This study relates to two fields of Islamic intellectual history: the history of *'Ilm al-Kalām,* and Ottoman intellectual history.[18] In Western scholarship, Ash'arism has generally received greater attention in comparison with Māturīdism. Early studies of Māturīdism in Orientalist scholarship have been sufficiently outlined in Ulrich Rudolph's Introduction to his seminal book *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand* (published in German in 1997).[19] Interestingly, it appears that the earliest reference to Māturīdī dates back to Wilhelm

---

[18] Sources on Ottoman intellectual history are discussed in the Introduction to Chapter III.
[19] Rudolph, Ulrich *al-Māturīdī and the development of Sunnī theology in Samarqand* (translated by Rodrigo Adem), Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2015, pp.11-23.

Spitta (d. 1876) who – in his study of Ash'arism[20] – referred to Abū ʿAdhaba's *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya*: a twelfth/eighteenth century comparative analysis of the disputes between Ash'arism and a "lesser-known" theologian named al-Māturīdī.[21] Rudolph provides the following itinerary on the status of Māturīdī studies towards the middle of the twentieth century:

> On the basis of Abū ʿUdhba,[22] Spitta listed the thirteen known points of disagreement between the two theologians. Along with this list, he adopted the thesis that al-Māturīdī and al-Ashʿarī had, all in all, professed the same teachings, and differed from each other only in small details. [Jean] Spiro (1904) was then to discover shortly after the turn of the century that Abū ʿUdhba had merely been a later compiler. As he was able to prove, the idea of the analogy between the two systems went as far as al-Subkī, i.e., the eighth/ fourteenth century. However, this only accorded the idea more authority, and it was henceforth considered more or less proven that two nearly identical kalām schools had developed in Sunnī Islam. Even [Ignác] Goldziher (1910) somewhat tersely pronounced: "It is not worth addressing the small differences between these closely related doctrinal views in more detail." And after him a number of authors pronounced similar verdicts, their evidence inevitably being the list of the thirteen points of difference. This is the case, to various degrees, for [Max] Horten (1912), [D. B.] MacDonald (1936), [W. C.] Klein (1940), and [A. S.] Tritton (1947). This same tendency was, in a certain way, even represented in the generally more astute observations of [Louis] Gardet and [George] Anawati (1948).[23]

Following the publication of a critical edition of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's masterwork *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (by Fathallah Kholeif in 1970),[24] a number of examinations of Māturīdī theological doctrines emerged.[25] On the history and spread of Māturīdism (of greater relevance to the present study), the studies of Wilfred Madelung remain of seminal importance. In his "The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks" (1971), Madelung provides the most extensive survey to date of the early spread of Māturīdism. The survey, however, terminates with the early post-Classical period in which he observes the advent of the early

---

[20] Spitta, Wilhelm. *Zur Geschichte Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Aśʿarî's.* Leipzig, 1876.
[21] Ibid, p.12.
[22] Henceforth I follow Khayr al-Dīn al-Zirkli's vocalisation of the name (in *al-Aʿlām* v.2, p.198) as "Abū ʿAdhaba", which – unlike the rather peculiar "'Udhba" – refers to the free end of a Muslim turban.
[23] Ibid., pp.12-13.
[24] *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (edited by Fathalla Kholeif) Bayreuth: Dar el-Machreq, 1970.
[25] Note especially: Frank, Richard M. "Notes and Remarks on the taba'iʿ in the teaching of al-Māturīdī" in *Melanges d'islamologie a la memoire d'Armand Abel.* Ed. P. Salmon. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974. 137-149; Pessagno, J.Meric , "Intellect and Religious Assent: The View of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī." *Muslim World* 69 (1979): 18–27, "Irāda, Ikhtiyār, Qudra, Kasb: The View of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 177–191, and "The Uses of Evil in Māturīdīan Thought." *Studia Islamica* 60 (1984): 59–82; Watt, W. Montgomery "The Problem of al-Māturīdī." In *Mélanges d'Islamologie: Volume dédié à la mémoire de Armand Abel par ses collègues, ses élèves et ses amis,* edited by P. Salmon, 264–269. Leiden, 1974; Cerić, Muṣṭafa. Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islam: A Study of the Theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944). Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995;

Ashʿarī-Māturīdī encounter in the Mamlūk figure of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī. Madelung concerning the eight/fourteenth century writes:

> The idea of the equality and full orthodoxy of the four Sunnite *madahib* thus was officially sanctioned and palpably implemented by the Mamluk regime as never before. Conformist Sunnite solidarity against the infidels, against Shiism, Muʿtazilism, and *falsafa* dominated the intellectual life. There were, to be sure, still some frictions between the officially recognized *madhāhib*. Yet, no one could question their basic equality in Sunnite orthodoxy. It was in this intellectual atmosphere that Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370) composed his *Nūniyya* poem on the points of difference between al-'Ashʿarī and "Abū Ḥanīfa" as interpreted by the Māturīdites. Al-Subkī found thirteen such points, seven of which, in his view, were merely terminological (*lafẓiyya*), the remaining six objective (*maʿnawiyya*), but so minor that they could not possibly justify mutual charges of infidelity or heresy (*tabdī*). With this in mind, al-Subkī, ardent apologist of Ashʿarism, could maintain that most Ḥanafites were in fact Ashʿarites, except for the few who joined the Muʿtazilites or the Hanbalites.[26]

According to Madelung, this "atmosphere of tolerance" which was "adopted by the Sunnite community" as exemplified in al-Subkī's treatment of Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs as equals '[draws] a line underneath centuries of bitter antagonism between Ashʿarite Shāfiʿīs and Māturīdite Ḥanafīs.'[27] Madelung made these conclusive remarks towards the end of his historical survey because – in practical terms – his focus was the spread of Māturīdism in the Classical period. As will be shown in this study, while Ashʿarism and Māturīdism were certainly intellectual rivals, their relation was not free from mutual tolerance and acceptance even during the Classical period – and Madelung's unqualified "bitter antagonism" is rather excessive. Furthermore, it will also be shown that al-Subkī's *Nūniyya* is consistent with the common Ashʿarī approach to the disputes with Māturīdī –described in this study as "minimalist and conciliatory", in comparison to Māturīdism whereby affirmation of disputes was to a great extent part and parcel of the school's self-perception.

Madelung includes a few lines on Ottoman Māturīdism – again falling out of the scope of his survey. He writes: 'the Ottomans, who gave the Ḥanafite legal doctrine a preferential status as the official law of the state, also furthered Māturīdīte theology as an equally orthodox alternative to Ashʿarism,'[28] and that this favoring of Māturīdism 'was merely a

---

[26] Madelung, Wilferd "The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks." *In Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam,* Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate Pub. Co., 1992, no.ii, p.166 (article originally published in *Actas do iv Congresso de Estudos Árabes e Islâmicos, Coimbra-Lisboa 1968. Leiden*, 1971. 109–168).
[27] Ibid, p.167.
[28] Ibid, p.109.

tribute to the traditional attachment of the Turks to the school of Samarqand.[29] Again, while Madelung's statement may be largely true for the later Ottoman period, but – as will be shown in the course of this study – during the Classical Ottoman period (mid. ninth/fifteenth towards the end of tenth/sixteenth century) Ashʿarī texts were greatly popular and officially endorsed in the curricula of state-funded madrasas. Madelung further scrutinized the relation between the two schools in his article: "Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī and Ashʿarī theology" (2000),[30] which provides insightful analyses of the attitude of a leading early Māturīdī pioneer towards Ashʿarism.

Rudolph's 1997 study is the next significant contribution to the history and early development of Māturīdism. On the relation of Māturīdism towards Ashʿarism, Rudolph is consistent with Madelung and much of the common wisdom on the Disputes: he begins with a discussion of al-Subkī's *Nūniyya* and its relation with Abū ʿAdhaba's *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya*,[31] followed by examination of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1730) – who, like Subkī, was an ardent Ashʿarī.[32] The thematically-related texts from the Ottoman period which Rudolph mentions are: Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt al-marām*,[33] Shaykhzād's *Naẓm al-farāʾid*,[34] and Khaled al-Baghdādī's *al-ʿIqd al-jawharī* and its Commentary *al-Simṭ al-ʿAbqārī*.[35]

A noteworthy and useful contribution to studies on Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputes is Edward Badeen's *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit,* which – although entitled 'Sunnī Theology in the Ottoman' period – is perhaps the first entire book in Western scholarship (published in 2008) which chiefly focusses on the theme of the doctrinal differences between the two schools.[36] Much of Badeen's book is comprised of eight critically-edited texts (some

---

[29] Ibid, p.168.

[30] Madelung, W., "Abu'l Muʿīn al-Nasafī and Ashʿarī Theology" in C. Hillenbrand (ed.), *Studies in honour of C. E. Bosworth, The sutlan's turrent: studies in the Persian and Turkish culture,* Leiden: Brill, 2000. This work also provides good explaination and translation of disputes-related terminology from Arabic.

[31] Rudolph, 2015, pp.7-9.

[32] Ibid, p.10.

[33] Ibid, p.11. In the first Egyptian edition of the *Isharāt* he is named Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bayāḍī. In Ottoman sources, he is better known as Bayāḍīzādah (Bayāḍīzādah) - i.e. son of Bayāḍī. Al-Bayāḍī is the surname of his father (see Chapter IV).

[34] Ibid, p.10.

[35] Ibid. In the footnote, Rudolph write: 'Besides the texts named here, an additional three texts have the same theme: 1) Kamālpashazāde (d. 940/1533), *Risāla fī ikhtilāf bayna al-Ashāʿira wa-l-Māturīdīya*; 2) Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī b. Naṣūḥ Nawʿī (d. 1007/1598), *Risāla fī l-farq bayna madhhab al-Ashāʿira wa-l-Māturīdīya*; 3) Muḥammad al-Isbarī Qāḍizāde (c. 990/1582), *Risāla Mumayyiza* (or *Mumayyizat*) *madhhab al-Māturīdīya ʿan al-madhāhib al-ghayrīya*' (Ibid, pp.10-11, fn.43).

[36] Badeen, Edward *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit* Orient-Institut: Instanbul, 2008. This book is also a primary source for Rudolph's discussion on the Disputes in the translated version (published in 2015).

for the first time) related to the disputes, including: Subkī's *Nūniyya;* a shorter treatise by Naw'ī Efendi; *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* by Ḥasan Ākhiṣārī; *Mumayizat madhhab al-Māturīdīyya 'an al-madhāhib al-ghayriyya* of Qāḍīzādah; *Taḥqīq al-'intiṣār* of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī; and finally *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya* of Abū 'Adhaba. Nevertheless, an immediate problem in this list is the inclusion of Ash'arī texts that did not in fact fit in with the Ottoman Māturīdī narrative. Philipp Bruckmayr wrote two further works related to the present study. The first is an attempt to expand on Madelung's article on the speared of Māturīdism to include the post-Classical period (2009);[37] and the other is a study which investigates the legacy of renowned Ottoman scholar al-Birkawī on theological writings of Ottoman scholars affiliated with Naqshbandī Ṣūfism. In the latter, Bruckmayr observes – in agreement with the present study – the emergence of a new terminology on human agency in late Ottoman theology.[38] A good comparison between Ash'arī and Māturīdī concepts is found in Hikmet Yaman's "Small theological differences, profound philosophical implications: notes on some of the chief differences between the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs" (2010), which draws primarily on the Ash'arī Abū 'Adhaba's *al-Rawḍa* and the Māturīdī Shaykhzādah's *Naẓm al-farā'id*.[39]

## VI.    Note on Terminology, Citation, Transliteration, and Dates

For the translation of relevant Arabic *kalām* terminology, I have benefited from the works of Wilfred Madelung – in particular his "Abu'l Mu'īn al-Nasafī and Ash'arī Theology" (2000), as well as Hikmet Yaman's "Small theological differences, profound philosophical implications" (2010). In various instances, I provide my own translation of Arabic terminology and sought to maintain consistency throughout the thesis. Depending on the context, theological "debates" may be referred to as "Differences", "Disputes" or "Disputations". Likewise, in the words *madhhab* ("school", "doctrine" "creed", or "creedal position"), and *'Ilm Kalām* ("science of *kalām*", "*kalām*", or "theology"). In terms of citation, in the first time a book is cited, I provide the full name of the source as stated in the bibliography at the end of the thesis. From there, the book is cited by giving the name or

---

[37] Bruckmayr, Philipp "The Spread and Persistence of Māturīdī Kalām and Underlying Dynamics" *Iran and the Caucasus*, v. 13 no. 1, pp. 59-92, 2009.
[38] "The Particular Will (*al-irādat al-juz'iyya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in *Kalām* Terminology on Human Agency and its Position in Naqshabandi Discourse" *European Journal of Turkish Studies,* Vol 13, 2011, [online].
[39] Yaman, Hikmet "Small theological differences, profound philosophical implications: notes on some of the chief differences between the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs", in *Ankara universitesi ilahiyat fakultesi dergisi,* 51:1 (2010), pp.177–194.

surname of the author, followed by a shortened title of the source in italic font. This is observed throughout the thesis and includes manuscripts, old prints and secondary sources. Not every source cited in the footnote has been included in the Bibliography at the end of the thesis – this includes some sources which are cited or quoted as "further reading" or for supporting evidence.

Transliteration of scholars' names, geographical places, and phrases and expressions from the Arabic is largely based on the system employed in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Gentium font). As for dates, I have only given the death-date of scholars mostly in the first time their name appears in the text. However, the death-date of a scholar may be repeated in the course of the thesis depending on the context. To avoid clumsiness given the bibliographical and bio-historical nature of this work, I have confined to providing the year without specifying the month or day, even if it is known. Throughout the thesis, when a date occurs it is provided in Hijrī form followed by an approximation of the corresponding date in the Gregorian calendar.

# PART I

CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL DISCUSSIONS

When one speaks of the Ashʿarī *madhhab*, it is relatively safe to assume a sense of homogeneity: scholars who mainly follow the Shāfiʿī or Mālikī legal schools – in the name of Sunnī orthodoxy – espouse a theological position which is critical of rationalism and literalism, and avow allegiance to Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī as their master. (Only four decades following the death of Ashʿarī, geographer al-Muqaddasī spoke of al-ʾAshʿariyya as one of four theological *madhhabs* of Islam; and, Abū Bakr (Ibn) al-Bāqillānī, an early and arguably most prominent Ashʿarī after Abū al-Ḥasan, acquired the nickname "al-ʿAshʿarī" – i.e. Ashʿarite – during his life time.[40]) The school of Māturīdī is different, and one is led off-track if the point of departure to make sense of the early Māturīdī *madhhab* is the position taken by later Ashʿarī and Māturīdī theologians. Strictly speaking, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī was not the founder of a new theological tradition, nor was he seen as such by followers of the school to which he belonged, namely the Ḥanafī school of Samarqand. He saw himself as a delineator of the original theology of renowned jurist Abū Ḥanīfa, corresponding to a strong sense among Ḥanafīs in considering Abū Ḥanīfa to be their ultimate point of reference in legal and theological matters alike.

This chapter is divided into three sections and a conclusion: Section One attempts to give a historical sketch of the background leading to the emergence of Māturīdism as a prominent school of Islamic theology. In doing so, this section scrutinizes the critical confluence between the use of *Kalām* and upholding traditionalist doctrinal leanings among pioneers of the Ḥanafī legal school in major centres of learning in classical Islam. Section Two inspects some early encounters between Māturīdism and its more influential counterpart, Ashʿarism – a school of theology which had come to dominate theological discourses of the time. These encounters include a look at the place of Ashʿarism in classical Māturīdī writings, and the attitude of early Ashʿarīs – including the founder of the school – towards Māturīdī scholars and Ḥanafism in general. Section Three studies the post-Classical theological tradition, beginning with modes of periodization of the history of *kalām.* This section proposes two senses of "later theology" – a philosophical tradition pioneered by prominent Ashʿarīs in the tradition of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and another by a class of scholars

---

[40] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tabyīn,* p.217.

21

who – although belonged to the same 'later' historical period – could not be identified as practitioners of philosophical *kalām.* Finally in this section, I introduce three scholars from the early post-Classical period who – in light of extant historical sources – appear to be the first to compose single works that exclusively deal with the theme of Ash'arī-Māturīdī disputations; followed by a fourth scholar – a ninth/fifteenth century historian from Egypt – who provides one of the earliest expositions  of the Debates in non-religious literature.

## 1.1 Historical Origins

### 1.1.1        *Early Ḥanafism and the Science of* Kalām

Ḥanafī law emerged from the school of Iraq which was renowned for its greater use of individual reasoning (*ra'y*) in legal judgement. Followers of the Iraqi school of law – a nomenclature would then be used interchangeably with  Ḥanafism – were also referred to as *Aṣḥāb* (people of) *al-Ra'y*, a title used in opposition to *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*, or traditionalists who flourished in the Ḥijāz.[41] The science of *kalām,* however, was developed by the Mu'tazilah, a school of rationalist theology emerged out of inter-religious debates in early Islam and generally famed for emphasising reason (*'aql*) over revelation (*naql)*. However, the relation of the Ḥanafī school of law – eventually the dominant, state-sponsored legal variant under the Abbāsids (second/eighth to mid seventh/thirteenth century) – with the use of *kalām,* was problematic vis-à-vis other major variants of jurisprudence. Historically, the association of Ḥanafism with Mu'tazilī theology has been greater than the other three canonical Sunnī schools of law (i.e. of Mālik, Shāfi'ī, and Ibn Hanbal).

This incline to *ra'y* by Ḥanafīs has been cited as one reason for their propensity to rationalist theology.[42] Abū Ḥanīfa, founder of the school, was above all a jurist and his relation with the science of *kalām* was one of ambivalence. Various reports show that he briefly engaged in *kalām* in the early years of his career, but – nevertheless – firmly rejected it later in his life.[43] Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī (d. 319/931), head of the Baghdādī branch of the

---

[41] Melchert, Christopher *The formation of the Sunnī schools of law, 9ᵗʰ – 10ᵗʰ centuries C.E.,* Brill, Leiden, 1997, pp.1-41 and Watt, *formative,* p.285. For a critical examination of this distinction see al-Kawtharī, M. Zāhid *Fiqh ahl al-Iraq wa Ḥadīthuhum,* Cairo: Dar al-Basa'ir, 2009.

[42] Watt, *formative,* p.286.

[43] According to reports from later Ḥanafī histories, as a student Abū Ḥanīfa had an interest in *kalām* and deemed it 'the most dignified of sciences' (al-Kardarī, Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa,* Hayderabad: Dar al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1311H, p.137). However, various other reports indicate a change in Abū Ḥanīfa's attitude towards *Kalām* such as the fact he cursed the Mu'tazilite 'Amr b. 'Ubayd for 'engaging in useless discussions' (al-Harawī, *Dhamm al-Kalām,* pp.28-31) and warning his notable student Abū Yūsuf from employing theology when talking

Mu'tazilah, confirms two of Abū Ḥanīfa's immediate students – Zufar b. al-Huthayl (d. 158/775)[44] and Abū Muti' al-Balkhī (d. 199/814) – as being jurists who accepted Mu'tazilī doctrines.[45] On the other hand, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī – most influential immediate students of Abū Ḥanīfa – appear to oppose to the use of *kalām*, which seems (at their time) an exclusive feature of the Mu'tazilah.[46] Given the stature of these scholars – and prior to the short-lived adoption of Mu'tazilī doctrines by the 'Abbāsid state in the early third/ninth century – we can presume a predominance of traditionalism (i.e. anti-Mu'tazilī theology) in the Ḥanafī intellectual milieu. Below is s brief survey of the attitude of prominent Ḥanafīs who flourished in the leading centres of Ḥanafī learning towards *kalām* – in the period spanning the third/ninth to the fifth/eleventh century. [47]

It will be shown that – until the mid-fifth/eleventh century (the tentative period when the spread of Māturīdī theology began to be noticed beyond its Transoxanian threshold) – Ḥanafism could not be said to have a uniform theological doctrine. More importantly, with the exception of parts of Khorāsān and Transoxania, the use of *kalām* among leading Ḥanafīs had an overly Mu'tazilī association, whereby non-Mu'tazilī Ḥanafīs did not engage in it in fear of falling into heresy. The alternative to Mu'tazilī teachings was a form of Ḥanafī traditionalism based on the transmitted creedal statements of Abū Ḥanīfa.[48]

---

to laymen as it may lead to their engagement in it (al-Makkī, *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa,* [printed together with al-Kardarī, *Manāqib abi Ḥanīfa,* Hayderabad, 1311H, p.373). When he forbade his son Hammaad from practicing *Kalām* the latter retorted: 'I have seen you engaging in *Kalām*, why then are you forbidding me from it.' Abū Ḥanīfa's response was: 'we used to discuss theology as if swords were at our heads in fear of erring, while you [now] debate in order to refute your associates and to ascribe them to disbelief (Qāḍī-Khān, cited in El-Kefevî [al-Kafawī], Muhmud b. Sulaymān *Katā'ib A'lām al-akhyār* [*Ṭabaqāt al-Kafawī*], Iran Kitābkhānah-i Majlis-i Shura-yi Mill, MS 4133, fol.108b; same story with variation in Makkī, *Manāqib,* pp.183-184).

[44] Al-Nadīm's hint that Zufar was 'overly inclined to reason' (*ghalaba 'alayhi al-ra'y*) may corroborates the claim of his Mu'tazilī tendency (al-Nadīm, Abū Faraj Muḥammad, *al-Fihrist* (edited by Ayman Fu'ad al-Sayyid), [4 volumes], London: Mu'assasat al-Furqan, 2009, v.2., p.18).

[45] Al-Ka'bī, "Maqālāt" in Al-Asadabadi, Abd al-Jabbar b. Aḥmad, *Faḍl al-I'tizāl wa Ṭabaqāt al-mu'tazila,* edited by Fu'ad al-Sayyid, al-dar al-Tunisiyya lil nashr, Tunis, [date unknown], p.104-105; Watt, *formative,* p.286.

[46] Abū Yūsuf is reported to have been angered by his student Bishr al-Marīsī's (d. 218/833) engagement in *Kalām* (al-Ka'bī, "Maqālāt" In *Faḍl al-'I'tizāl,* pp.196-199).

[47] Based on Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī's *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm* and Ḥanafī biographical compendia - an approach inspired by Wilfred Madelung's "The Spread of Māturīdism among the Turks" in *Religious and ethnic movements in medieval Islam* Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate Pub. Co., 1992.

[48] This theological canon consists of five works attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa and transmitted through Abū Ḥanīfa's students. They are: *al-'Alim wa al-muta'allim* by Abū Muqātil al-Samarqandī; *al-Risāla to 'Uthman al-Batti* and *al-Waṣiyya,* both by Abū Yūsuf; *al-Fiqh al-'akbar* by Hammaad b. Abī Ḥanīfa and *al-Fiqh al-'absat* by Abū Muṭī' al-Balkhī (al-Kawtharī, "Introduction" to Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-'Alim wa al-muta'allim,* edited by Muḥammad Z. al-Kawtharī, 1368, 3-7). Importantly, Mu'tazilite Ḥanafīs did not accept the soundness of these works, which generally abhorred the practice of *Kalām.* They claimed that Abū Ḥanīfa did not author any work on theology, this corpus is falsely attributed to him (Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* fol.92r).

### 1.1.1.1 Baghdād

In Baghdād, foremost centre of Classical Ḥanafī learning, *miḥnat khalq al-Qur'ān* (Inquisition of the created Qur'ān)[49] – lasting between 218/833 and 234/848 – showed Ḥanafīs as having different, and even opposing, theological positions. We know that official judges (*qaḍīs*) who oversaw the persecution of non-conformist *ulama* during the Inquisition were Ḥanafīs – notably chief judge Aḥmad Ibn Abī Du'ād (d. 240/854).[50] But, the camp strongly opposed to the official doctrine also included prominent Ḥanafīs – such as the *qāḍī* Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī (d. 238/852) who was put under house arrest by the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim (r. 218/833 – 227/842),[51] and the *qāḍī* al-Ḥasan b. 'Uthmān al-Ziyādī (d. 242/856) who later biographical sources describe as a traditionalist (*min Aṣhāb al-Ḥadīth*).[52]

This division persisted well into the fifth/eleventh century; biographical sources give information on two pioneers of fourth/tenth century Iraqi Ḥanafism who adhered to Mu'tazilī doctrines: Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī (d. 340/951), and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 370/981).[53] Interestingly, the doctrine of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khawārizmī (d. 403/1013) – a student of the Mu'tazilī Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and his successor as leading Ḥanafī scholar of Baghdād – is described by Ḥanafī biographer al-Qurashī as "sound" (i.e. non-Mu'tazilī) and that he

---

[49] *Khalq al-Qur'ān*, or the assertion that the Qur'ān (i.e. God's Speech) was created and therefore temporal and not eternal, was a historically significant theological debate in early Islam. It is said to have originated among the Qadarites, esp. al-Ja'd ibn Dirham (d. 118/736) (*al-A'lām*, v.2, p.120; Ibn Kathir, *History*, year 125; Watt, *formative*, p.242). The more systemized theology of the Mu'tazila made it one of its central doctrines, and its unparalleled infamy came during the *mihna* or Inquisition whereby Abbāsid authorities compelled scholars to confess it, a policy which was met with opposition by a number of scholars – most famously the traditionalist Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.

[50] At least six of them are known to be Ḥanafīs (Watt, *formative*, p.286); On Ibn Abī Du'ād see al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.56-57; al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, v.1, p.589.

[51] Al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.167 ; al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, v.2, p.21.

[52] Al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.197.

[53] Althoguht al-Hakīm al-Jashmī includes Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzī in the twelfth generation, *ṭabaqa*, of the Mu'tazila (Jashmī, *Sharḥ uyoon al-masa'il*, edited by Fu'ad al-Sayyid, 1947, 391; Madelung, *Spread*, p.112) and al-Dhahabī refers to his "inclination to Mu'tazilī teaching" (Dhahabī, *Siyar*, v.15, p.426), his being a Mu'tazilite is far from final. In a recent study, Haytham Khazna outlines three points in the counter argument: a.) reference to al-Rāzī's *I'tizāl* is missing from the majority of his biographical sources, especially of the Ḥanafīs; b.) the absence of Mu'tazilite elements from his works on *Uṣūl* and the presence of statements to the contrary; c.) the fact he inclined to Mu'tazilite teachings (such as the denial of human vision of God mentioned by al-Dhahabī) is not sufficient to corroborate his being a Mu'tazilite (Khazna, Haytham *Ikhtilafat al-Uṣūliyya bayna madrasatay al-Iraq wa Samarqand wa atharuha fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Hanafī*, PhD Thesis [Supervised by Maḥmūd S. Jabir]*,* Amman: al-Jami'a al-Urduniyya, March 2004, pp.26-30). We find a more definite statement by al-Muqaddasī that al-Rāzī did not use *kalām* in line with orthodox Ḥanafī practice (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, p.24, n. 2). It seems that al-Rāzī's label as a Mu'tazilī by al-Dhahabī and al-Jashmī was due to the former's rigid traditionalism and the latter's Mu'tazilite zeal.

explicitly rejected *kalām*.[54] Again, a student of Khawārizmī who would become his successor as foremost Ḥanafī in Baghdād is Abū ʿAbd Allah al-Saymari (d. 436/1045) was a renowned Muʿtazili.

Although agreeing on legal matters, leading Iraqi Ḥanafīs were theologically divided over affiliation with the teaching of the Muʿtazilah; teachers and students of Ḥanafī law, while accepting one legal method, differed considerably on matters of creed. Interestingly, it was in this time and locality that Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī abandoned Muʿtazilī teachings and became a (Hanbalī-Shāfiʿī) traditionalist. If the Ḥanafī books of *ṭabaqāt* are correct in assuming Ashʿarī's Ḥanafism due to his studentship of Abū ʿAli al-Jubbāʾī (a follower of Ḥanafī law), then the fact Ashʿarī at once relinquished both Ḥanafism and Muʿtazilism is in line with the association of Ḥanafism with Muʿtazilī doctrines in central Islamic lands which is discussed here.[55]

### 1.1.1.2 Al-Maghreb and Egypt

Beyond Iraq, the Maghreb was the westernmost outpost of Ḥanafism. But the school soon disintegrated due to Fāṭimid Shīʿa rule (from 297/909 to 567/1171) and the predominance of Mālikī jurisprudence. The Ḥanafīs in the Maghreb shared with their Mālikī counterparts their indifference to *kalām*.[56] In Egypt, despite a number of Muʿtazilī-Ḥanafī judges sent by the ʿAbbāsids in Baghdād, one can presume a predominance of traditionalism in Egyptian Ḥanafism. The earliest entry of Ḥanafism there was with the appointment of the first Ḥanafī *qāḍī* of Egypt – ʿIsmāʿīl b. al-Yasaʿ al-Kindī – by Caliph al-Mahdī in 164/781. A contemporary of al-Kindī reports that the Egyptians disliked the new *madhhab* as they were unfamiliar with it. Al-Kindī soon fell into disfavour with prominent local traditionalist al-Layth b. Saʿd (d. 175/792) who asked for the new Ḥanafī judge to be removed. [57]

---

[54] Khawārizmī abhorred *kalām* and preferred to follow a Ḥanbalite in prayer. When asked about his doctrine in creed, Khawārizmī responded that 'it is the religion of the elderly women and we have nothing to do with *kalām*' (al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.135).

[55] Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.353 and v.2, p.274; Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v.1, fol.175a.

[56] The earliest use of *Kalām* by scholars of the Maghreb was with the advent of Ashʿarīsm in the fifth/eleventh century at the hand of Abū Dharr al-Harawīi, student of the second master of Ashʿarīsm Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī. Prior to that, Al-Dhahabī writes, 'the ulamaʾ of the Maghreb did not use *Kalām* but only mastered [the sciences of] jurisprudence, *Ḥadīth* and Arabic language and did not engage in the rational sciences (*al-maʿqulat*)' (Dhahabī, *Siyar*, v.17, p.557). Al-Muqaddasī, speaking of the same period, marvels at the harmony between the Ḥanafīs and Maliktes of Qayrawan (*Jawāhir*, p.225).

[57] Al-Kindī, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-wulat wa k. al-Qudat* (edited by Al-Mazidi and ʿIsmāʿīl), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿilmiyya, 2003, p.268.

The chronology of judges of Egypt compiled by Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kindī (died after 355/966)[58] provides information on the Ḥanafī judges appointed from 204/820 towards the end of the *miḥna*. They are described as ill-famed for going to extremes in implementing the ʿAbbāsid enforcement of Muʿtazilī theology.[59] A turning point for Ḥanafism in Egypt came during the reign of al-Mutawakkil who – unlike his predecessors – was known for his traditionalist leanings and put an end to ʿAbbāsid state-sponsorship of Muʿtazilī theology. In the year 237/852, he appointed *ḥadīth* scholar and former prisoner of the *miḥna* al-Ḥārith b. Miskīn (d. 250/864) to the position of *qāḍī* in Egypt who would set afoot a series of religious reforms.[60] However, it was not until the appointment of the Ḥanafī *qāḍī* Bakkār b. Qutayba in 246 that Ḥanafism begins to acquire its traditionalist character. Bakkār was a traditionalist who stayed in the office of *qāḍī* for twenty four years (until his death in 270/884) during which he attracted a large student following. Prominent Ḥanafī traditionalist Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933) belonged to the next generation of Egyptian Ḥanafīs. He studied under Abū Jaʿfar al-Baghdādī,[61] a student of anti-Muʿtazilī Bishr al-Kindī, and he also narrated *ḥadīth* from Bakkār b. Qutayba.[62] Taḥāwi's *bayān al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*, a Ḥanafi-traditionalist creed close to Hanbalī traditionalism in its rejection of *kalām*, would continue to be the foremost creed among Egyptian Ḥanafīs until mid-fourth/tenth century when Egypt came under the Fatimid Shīʿa rule which further diminished the presence of Ḥanafism there.[63]

### 1.1.1.3 Al-Shām and Northern Regions

In al-Shām, the Ḥanafīs towards the end of the fourth/eleventh century were a minority and the leading schools of law were of al-Shāfiʿī and *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* (specialists in Prophetic traditions). However, the pervasive local doctrine is described by al-Muqaddasī as being the 'sound doctrines of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*.'[64] The Muʿtazilah are said to be few in

---

[58] *Al-Aʿlām,* v.7, p.148.
[59] They are Ibrāhīm b. al-Jarraḥ (in office: 204/820 – 211/826); (al-Kindī, p.306); Harūn b. ʿAbd Allāh (in office 217/832 – 226/841) (al-Kindī, p.320); Muḥammad b. abi al-Layth (in office 226/841 – 237/852) (al-Kindī, p.330).
[60] During his seven years in office, al-Ḥārith b. Miskīn attempted to marganalize the Ḥanafīs and Shāfiʿīs by 'ordereing their ejection from the [great] mosque' (al-Kindī, p.334). More on Ḥārith b. Miskīn see al-Kindī, pp.333-339; Dhahabī, *Siyar,* v.12, pp.55-58.
[61] *JM,* v.1, pp.127-128.
[62] For Bakkār b. Qutayba see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar,* v.2, pp.599-605, for al-Ṭaḥāwī see: Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.1, pp.102-105.
[63] Ḥanafism had already started to disintegrate in the Maghreb under Fatimid rule which had begun in 297/910. By the end of the fourth/tenth century, Egyptian jurists were Malikites but official law was Fatimid Shi'ite (Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* p.202).
[64] Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm,* p.179.

numbers and "in hiding".[65] Nearby – in what al-Muqaddasī refers to as the region of Aqūr (the greater provinces of Mosul, Raqqa and Diyārbakir) – the jurists were divided between Ḥanafism and Shāfi'ism. They, too, were described as orthodox Sunnīs and did not engage in *kalām*.[66] Further north – in the greater provinces of al-Rān (Georgian), Armenia and Azerbaijan – the Ḥanafīs were outnumbered by the traditionalist Ḥanābilah, and were only a majority in the city of Dabīl (Dvin) in Armenia. Here too the common doctrine is described by Muqaddasī as sound and the jurists did not partake in speculative theology.[67]

### 1.1.1.4 Al-Rayy

East of the ʿAbbāsid heartland, the Ḥanafīs of al-Rayy (modern-day Tehran) give us an insight into the doctrinal division among Ḥanafīs of the Classical era. In the early third/ninth century, al-Rayy was home to Ḥanafī traditionalism. Prominent among them was Hisham b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Rāzī (d. 221/835) who declared that the Qur'ān was not created, and was the most highly-respected jurist there.[68] An earlier Ḥanafi, from al-Rayy but moved to Baghdād, is Muʿalla b. Manṣūr al-Rāzī (d. 211/826) even deemed those who say the Qur'ān is created to be disbelievers.[69] However, by the end of the fourth/tenth century, they were predominantly Najjāriyyah[70] – i.e. followers of the Muʿtazili-Mujabbirī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Najjār (died in Basra before 221/835).[71]

---

[65] Ibid.

[66] Muqaddasī says: 'their hearts were not divided by false creeds and their jurists did not engage in *Kalām* (*lam tuqassim al-'ahwā' qulubahum wa la yata'ata al-Kalāmu fuqahā'uhum*), (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, p.142). Muʿtazilite teaching had little following in this region, except in one town called ʿĀna (in Iraq) which reportedly was home to 'numerous Muʿtazilites' (ibid).

[67] Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm,* pp.378-379. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusain al-Barda'ī al-Asrushanī (d. 317/929) from Barda' in Azerbaijan was a renowned Muʿtazilite who had studied under Mūsa b. Naṣr al-Rāzī (d. 263/876), described as a 'one of the sages of al-Rayy' by Ibn Ḥajar (Ibn Ḥajar, Aḥmad b. Ali *Lisān al-Mizān*, Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Aʿlāmi, 1971, v.6, p.134). His biographers emphasise that his debates in Baghdād with Dawūd al-Ẓāhirī (literalist) indicating his use of *Kalām* (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.166). He was a teacher of prominent Muʿtazilī al-Karkhi.

[68] Ḥadīth scholar Abū Ḥātam al-Rāzī reportedly said: 'I have not seen [a scholar] of greater esteem than him in al-Rayy [*ma ra'aytu a'dama qadran minhu bi al-Rayy*] (al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad *Mizān al-I'tidal fi naqd al-rijal* [ed. Ali M. al-Bijawi], Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifa, 1963, v.4, p.300). Abū Ḥanīfa's student and then *qāḍī al-quḍāt* under al-Rashīd, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan died in his house while in al-Rayy (al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.205).

[69] *Kan yukaffir al-qa'ilin bi Khalq al-Qur'ān* (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.178). Other traditionalist Ḥanafīs were Abū Sahl Mūsa al-Rāzī (d. early 3rd c.) (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.188); Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 248 or 249/862-3) the judge of al-Rayy (Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.2, p.134).

[70] Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, p.145.

[71] The theological identity of al-Najjār has been difficult to determine. The Ḥanafī-Māturīdī theologians considered the school a definite branch of Muʿtazilism (Bazdawī, *UD*). The Ash'arītes were reluctant and considered them to be of the Mujabbira-compulsionists (al-Shahrastānī, *Milial*, v.1, 88) or as a category on its own (al-'Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p.24; al-Baghdādī, Abd al-Qāhir *al-farq bayna al-firaq*, Cairo: Maktabat Nashr al-Thaqafa al-Islamiyya, 1948, pp.207-211). Al-Nadīm, a Muʿtazilite and Shi'ite, considered al-Najjāriyya to be Mujabbira (*ihrist*, p.223). Al-Najjār's theology is close to that of al-Marīsī, the student of Abū Ḥanīfa's successor Abū Yūsuf, which gives him the Ḥanafī connection (although al-Ṣāḥib promoted Najjāriyya as a Zaydī school [al-Tawḥīdī,

The entry of Najjāriyyah to al-Rayy possibly began at the behest of Būyid vizier and patron of Muʻtazilism, al-Ṣaḥib b. ʻAbbād (d. 385/995). He took residence in al-Rayy and promoted the spread of al-Najjāriyyah in the city [72] – in particular the inflammatory doctrine that the Qur'ān is created.[73] The Ḥanafīs of the rural provinces (*rasātīq*) of al-Rayy – however – strongly opposed this doctrine. Instead they followed Abū ʻAbd Allāh al-Zaʻfarānī who had taken an intermediary position (did not affirm or deny the doctrine of the created Qur'ān).[74] Under al-Ṣaḥib b. ʻAbbād, al-Rayy became a leading centre of Muʻtazilī learning, especially when chief Muʻtazilī theologian ʻAbd al-Jabbar al-Asadabādī (d. 415/1024) settled there under auspices of al-Ṣaḥib.[75] Najjāriyyah continued to be strong in al-Rayy and its surrounds well into the sixth/twelfth century.[76] In the nearby region of al-Daylam [77] – parts of which still under Būyid domination around the end of the fourth/tenth century – the prevalent Sunnī schools of law where Shāfiʻī and Hanbalī. However, Ḥanafism was predominant in its capital province Jurjān, were many were again followers of the Najjāriyyah.[78] In Jurjān, Karramite anthropomorphists, followers of al- Muḥammad b. Karrām (Kirām) al-Sijistānī (d. 255/868), were also affiliates of Ḥanafī jurisprudence.[79]

### 1.1.1.5 Khorāsān

In Nīsabūr (western Khorāsān), the most prominent Ḥanafīs were traditionalists in creed, although – like Baghdād – there were prominent Ḥanafīs who followed Muʻtazilī

Abū Ḥayyān *Mathālib al-wazirayn* (ed. Muḥammad T. al-Tanji), Beirut: Dar Sader, 1992, p.167] it was likely for political ends as the Būyids werer Zaydite Shīʻa and al-Ṣāḥib had a good relation with the ʻAlawī ruler in nearby Ṭabarastān who was Zaydite too). For more on Najārriyyah see William M. Watt "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition" In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 75 (1943), pp 234-247. Also see entry on al-Najjār in al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p.223.

[72] Al-Tawḥīdī, *Mathālib,* p.167.

[73] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.395.

[74] This group became a subset of Najjāriyya, although the founder al-Zaʻfarānī was disowned by his followers for taking the formal Najjārite view (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.395). Al-Muqaddasī cites some of the missionaries of al-Ṣāḥib saying that although the provinces inclined to the general principles of Muʻtazilit-Najjārite doctrine, they would not be swayed to assent that the Qur'ān is created (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.395).

[75] Ibn al-Murtaḍa, Aḥmad b. Yahya *al-Munya wa al-amal fi Sharḥ kitāb al-milal wa al-Niḥal,* Hyderabad: Dar al-Ma'arif al-Sultaniyya, 1316H, p.194.

[76] Al-Shahrastānī says: 'the majority of the Muʻtazilah of al-Rayy are his followers (al-Najjār), but now they have divided into sects although they did not differ over the principles [of Najjāriyya] (Al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. Abd al-Karim *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (edited by Muḥammad S. al-Geylani), Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1975, v.1, 88). This presence further continued to the ninth/fifteenth century according to Zaydite theologian Ibn al-Murtaḍa (d. 840/1437); see Ibn al-Murtaḍa, *al-Munya,* p.35 and 109.

[77] Includes the greater provinces of Qumis, Jurjān, Shahrastān, Tabaristān, Daylamān and al-Khazar (al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* pp.353-373).

[78] Al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.365.

[79] In response to a rhetorical question as to why al-Muqaddasī did not label the Karramites as heretics he says: 'the Karramites are people of asceticism (*zuhd*) and worship (*ta'abbud*), and their point of reference (*marji'uhum*) is Abū Ḥanīfa' (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.365); he goes on stating that the followers of the four schools of Sunnī law who kept to the way of these jurists were not heretics.

teachings.[80] Al-Qurashī points to two scholars – Abū Sahl al-Zajjājī (d. around mid-fourth/tenth century) and Abū al-Ḥusayn Qāḍī al-Ḥaramayn (d. 351/962) – who flourished in the first of half of the fourth/tenth century as founders of Ḥanafism in Nīsabūr, but he does not explicitly mention their theological orientation.[81] Chief among the Ḥanafīs of Nīsabūr in the early fifth/eleventh century is the *qāḍī* Sa'īd b. Muḥammad al-'Ustuwā'ī (d. 432/1040) of whom a non-Mu'tazilī Ḥanafī work on creed survives. This work is a distinctly Ḥanafī traditionalist creed based on the creedal statements attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa. However, It is further apart from Hanbalī traditionalism than al-Ṭaḥāwī's creed, albeit shares with it its suspicious view of *kalām*.[82] Importantly, al-'Ustuwā'ī was the first in an illustrious lineage of Ḥanafī scholars – the Ṣā'idīs – who in some reports were up to 'seventy, all of whom assented to the sound doctrine of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a.'*[83] Nevertheless, Mu'tazilism continued in Nīsabūr until the early Seljuk era with the emergence of Ḥanafī jurist and Mu'tazilī theologian Abū al-Ḥasan 'Ali al-Ṣandalī (d. 484/1091) – a close associate of the Seljuk Tugrul-Beg who debated in Nīsabūr with the Shāfi'ī-'Ash'arī theologians Abū Muḥammad al-Juwaynī and his son Abū al-Ma'ālī (better known as Imām al-Ḥaramayn; influential Ash'arī theologian and teacher of al-Ghazālī).[84]

In eastern Khorāsān,[85] the cities of Marw and Balkh were leading centres of Ḥanafism from the time of Abū Ḥanīfa. A student of Abū Ḥanīfa by the name of Nūḥ b. Abī Maryam was appointed by the 'Abbāsid al-Manṣūr as *qāḍī* of Marw while Abū Ḥanīfa was still alive (before 150/767).[86] Balkh became a radiant centre of Ḥanafī learning, only second in importance after Baghdād. In Balkh, as in Marw, another student of Abū Ḥanīfa – Abū Mutī' al-Balkhī (d. 199/814) – became chief judge and teacher, and founder of Ḥanafism there.

---

[80] Al-Muqaddasī suggests that 'the Mu'tazila were present but not prominent' (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, p.323). See list of Ḥanafī Mu'tazila from Nīsabūr from the Abd al-Ghāfir's abridgement of the *History of Nīsabūr* in Madelung, *Spread*, p.114, fn.21.

[81] Both of them studied in Baghdād under the Mu'tazilite Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī. Al-Qurashī makes particular mention of al-Zajjājī's ability in rational debates (*majālis al-naẓar*), which receives the praise of the Mu'tazilite al-Ṣāḥib b. 'Abbād (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.254). On Qāḍī al-Haramayn see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, v.16, p.25.

[82] The book is published as: al-Ustuwā'i, Sa'īd *Kitāb al-'I'tiqād* (edited by Sayyid Ḥusain Bahgivan), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 2005. Analysis of content is based on Madelung Madelung, *Spread*, pp.114-115.

[83] Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt*, v.1, fol.218b.

[84] Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.357-359.

[85] Presence of the Mu'tazilah in Khwārizm has been noted in modern scholarship. See for example: Watt, W Montgomery *Islamic philosophy and theology: an extended survey*, Edinburgh: University Press, 1985, p.70. More on this and the Mu'tazilah in general, see Chapters 7, 8, and 9 in Schmidtke (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (2017).

[86] He would serve in this position until his death in 173/789, and would exert wide-reaching influence as the first collector (*al-Jami'*) of Abū Ḥanīfa's legal opinions; he was known for his strong anti-Jahmite stance (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.176).

Ḥanafism in this region seems to have been predominantly traditionalist in theology and no immediate reports point to the presence of Muʿtazilī scholars towards the end of the fourth/tenth century.[87] But, we can only presume – in view of such predominance of non-Muʿtazilī traditionalism – whether engagement in *kalām* was free from Muʿtazilī association. Al-Qurashī mentions that prominent Ḥanafī of Balkh Shaddād b. Ḥakīm (d. 210/825) – a student of Zufar and Abū Yūsuf (immediate students of Abū Ḥanīfa) – was versed in *kalām*. Nevertheless, Abū Yūsuf – known for his aversion to the Muʿtazilah – praised Shaddād's mastery in *kalām*.[88] The figure of Shaddād b. Ḥakīm, then, gives us an early example of Ḥanafī use of *kalām* without decried Muʿtazilī associations. Nevertheless, until the end of the fourth/tenth century, engagement in *kalām* was not prevalent among the Ḥanafīs of Khorāsān. Renowned scholar of Balkh Abū Bakr al-ʿAʿmash (d. 348/959)[89] gave the following answer to a question on the nature of the Qurʾān,

> Suppose that a King had subjects and a village in which he settled them; then he sent them a book containing orders and prohibitions. Upon the arrival of the book, is it required of them to know how the book was written, of what material [or] whence its paper came? And so is the Qurʾān; it is the Book of God and you are His slaves, therefore abide by Him and do not engage yourself in what is of no concern to you.[90]

### 1.1.1.6 Bukhārā

Bukhārā was an early stronghold of Ḥanafism in Transoxania and boasted a characteristic local version of Ḥanafī traditionalism in the third/ninth century – beginning with Aḥmad b. Ḥafs (d. 217/832) who is better known as al-Kabīr (the Elder) to distinguish him from his son Abū Ḥafs al-Ṣaghīr (the Younger) who died in 264/878. Abū Ḥafs al-Kabīr was a student of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, and Ḥanafī works of *ṭabaqāt* state that he was described as chief scholar of all Transoxania (*Shaykh Mā warāʾ al-Nahr*). That the traditionalism he endorsed was distinctly of the Ḥanafī jurists is borne out by the fact he was famous for his ability in juridical reasoning (*al-raʾy*) – a distinctive feature of Ḥanafism – and, is further corroborated by his uneasy relationship with other traditionalists – most famously with illustrious traditionalist Muḥammad b. ʿIsmāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), compiler of the

---

[87] Al-Muqaddasī. *Aḥsan*, p.323.

[88] According to Ibn Ḥajar, he was a Murjiʾ, sound in tradition and trustworthy (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mizān,* v.3, p.140). Abū Yūsuf's dislike of *Kalām* was already mentioned in the course of his reaction to Bishr al-Marīsī. The fact he praised Shaddād is perhaps indicative of a different form of theology which he engaged in (on Shaddād b. Ḥakīm see al-Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.1, p.256).

[89] Student of prominent shaykh of Balkh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū Bakr al-ʿIskaf (d. 334) (Qurashī, *Jawāhir*, v.2, p.239).

[90] Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, *kitāb al-Nawazil*, MS quoted in al-Mudarris, Muḥammad M., *Mashāyikh Balkh mina al-Ḥanafiyya wa ma infaradū bihi mina al-masāʾil al-Fiqhiyya,* Baghdad: Wazart al-Awqaf al-Iraqiyya, 1978, v.1, p.127.

authoritative *ḥadīth* collection known as *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*. Abū Ḥafs al-Kabīr had numerous students, some of whom presumably lived and taught beyond the locality of Bukhārā through the third/ninth century. Most prominent among them was his son Abū Ḥafs al-Ṣaghīr who continued the tradition of Bukhāran Ḥanafism and was appointed *qāḍī* of Bukhārā. His refutation of the *lafẓiyya* – the view that while the Qurʾān is not created, the verbal utterance (*al-lafẓ*) is *part of* creation – suggests that he continued his father's critical position towards traditionalists (including al-Bukhārī, author of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, who had been accused of accepting it).[91]

The Sāmānids, who ruled over Khorāsān and Transoxania from 266/888 to 389/999, favoured Ḥanafism over other schools of law and Sunnī traditionalism as a *madhhab* in creed. Scholarly contact increased between Bukhārā and other centres of Ḥanafī learning in Khorāsān[92] To this effect, Bukhārā became home to leading Ḥanafī rationalists, including:

(1) Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥakīm al-Shahīd. Author of *kitāb al-kāfī*, an indispensable manual of Ḥanafī law only second in importance to the works of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan. Born in Balkh, he travelled as far as Egypt to collect *ḥadīth* traditions before ascending to the position of Qāḍī of Bukhārā. He was then appointed vizier to the Sāmānid al-Ḥāmid, ruler of Khorāsān, who would later have him killed at Marw in 334/946 (hence acquiring the title *shahīd*, or martyr).[93]

(2) ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Sabdhamūnī al-ʿUstādh (d. 340/951).[94] Ḥanafī *Ḥadīth* scholar who offers an insight into the doctrine of faith held by early Bukhāran Ḥanafis. In his book on the virtues of Abū Ḥanīfa (*manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa*) he narrates a tradition that the Prophet's companion ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar had considered those who doubt their faith to be disbelievers, supporting the Ḥanafī view and inadvertently ascribing infidelity to the contrary doctrine of faith: that no person is perfectly of their faith – which was held by the Shāfiʿīs and the Ḥanābilah.[95]

---

[91] Dhahabī, *Siyar,* v.12, pp.454-461.
[92] The Sāmānids were evidently champions of Ḥanafism. We also know Sāmānids were promptly welcomed as new rulers by local Ḥanafīs of Bukhārā. Al-Narshakhi mentions that when prince ʿIsmāʿīl – founder of the dynasty – entered Bukhārā for the first time in 260/874, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ṣaghīr headed a dignified convoy made up of Arab and non-Arab nobility and ordered the decoration of the city in order to give a suitable welcome to the new ruler (al-Narshakhi, *Tarkih Bukhārā* [edited by Amin Badawi and Nasr Tarrazi], Cairo: Dar al-maʿarif, 3rd ed, 1993, p.115).
[93] Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.2, pp.112-113.
[94] Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.1, pp.289-290.
[95] Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* fol.170.

(3) Abū Hāmid Ibn al-Ṭabarī (d. 377/984). Renowned as memorizer of *ḥadīth* and master of *ra'y* (analogical reason), Ṭabarī represents the combination of *ḥadīth* scholarship and Ḥanafī jurisprudence which became a marked feature of Bukhāran Ḥanafism in this period. He travelled to Baghdād and studied under (Mu'tazilī) Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī and received the praise of *ḥadīth* authority Abū al-Ḥasan al-Daraquṭnī. He also studied in Khorāsān (Marw) where he later served as *qāḍī*.[96]

Importantly, no immediate evidence points to the extensive use of *kalām* by the Bukhāran Ḥanafīs until the middle of the fifth/eleventh century.

*1.1.2   Traditionalism Triumphant*

### 1.1.2.1  Māturīdism at Samarqand

Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) pursued his scholarly career and lived his entire life in third-fourth/ninth-tenth century Samarqand – then under Sāmānid rule. Ḥanafī histories offer scant information on the life and career of al-Māturīdī, and he has been passed over in silence in the majority of biographical and historical works where he is expected to be found.[97] But in the course of this historical survey of the Ḥanafī relation with the science of *kalām,* al-Māturīdī presents a genuine shift in Ḥanafī theological thought. (We know the names of eleven works by al-Māturīdī, which were mostly rebuttals of Mu'tazilī teachings; one book against the Shī'a and another against the Qarāmiṭa Ismā'īlīs.[98] Two of his works have reached us: his theological magnum opus *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*[99] - *Book of Monotheism* – and exegesis of the Qur'ān, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunna*[100]). Suddenly, we have

---

[96] Al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad *Tarīkh Baghdād wa dhuyūlihi*, Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyya, 1996, v.4, p.407; Ibn al-Jawzi, al-*Muntadham*, Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyya, 1992, v.7, p.137; Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.1, p.65. Khorāsān in this context may have been intended to refer to the region's leading city at the time: Merv.

[97] The the major biographical works that do not mention al-Māturīdī are: Ibn al-'Athīr (d. 630/1232) in *al-Kāmil fi al-tārīkh,* Ibn Khillikān (d. 681/1282) in his *wafayāt al-A'yān,* al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) in his *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā', al-'ibar* and *al-Mizān,* Ibn Shākir (d. 764/1362) in *fawat al-Wafayāt,* Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372) in *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya,* Ibn Khaldūn (d. 809/1406) in the *Muqaddima.* He was also passed over in silence by geographers such as al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094) and Yāqūt al-Hamwī (d. 626/1228), al-Qazwini (d. 682/1283), al-Himyari (d. 727/1326). Despite being author of a major *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'ān) he is excluded from the *Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn* (biographies of exegetes of the Qur'ān) by al-Ṣuyūtī (d. 911/1505) and al-Dawūdī (d. 945/1538). He is also missing from al-Nadīm's (d. 380/990) *Fihrist* and the histories of Jurjān (al-Sahmī, d. 428/1036), Isfahan (Abū Nu'aym, d. 430/1038), Baghdād (al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, d. 463/1070), Damascus (Ibn 'Asākir, d. 571/1175). See al-Afghānī, Shams al-Dīn *'Ida' al-Māturīdīya lil 'aqīda al-Salafiyah,* al-Ta'if: Maktabat al-Siddiq, 1998, pp.240–241.

[98] Ibid, p.472 and Watt, *Formative*, pp.312-314.

[99] Al-Māturīdī, Abū  Manṣūr Muḥammad *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (edited by Fathalla Kholeif) Bayreuth: Dar el-Machreq, 1970.

[100] Al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr, *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunna* (edited by Majdi Basaloum), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 2005. [10 volumes]

a Ḥanafī jurist who produces numerous systematic works of *kalām* in defence of traditionalist Ḥanafī theology as exemplified in the works of Abū Ḥanīfa. Strictly speaking, his theology was neither Muʻtazilī nor traditionalist.

Al-Māturīdī acquired knowledge of Ḥanafī law from Abū Bakr al-Jūzjānī (from the town of Jūzjān near Balkh), who had studied under Abū Sulaymān al-Jūzjānī, a student of Abū Ḥanīfa's companion Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan. Ḥanafīs at Samarqand had a marked interest in theoretical sciences (*ʻuṣūl*) in addition to knowledge of the practical side of the law (*furūʻ*). Abū Bakr al-Jūzjānī, who flourished around the middle of the third/ninth century, is described as a master of *ʻuṣūl* and *furūʻ*.[101] Al-Māturīdī also studied under Abū Naṣr al-ʻIyāḍī, another student of Jūzjānī,[102] who was a master of *kalām* having produced an anti-Muʻtazilī polemic on Divine Attributes (*al-ṣifāt*).[103] Despite some opposition – such as by Abū al-Layth al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Samarqandī (contemporary of al-Māturīdī) who disallowed the use of *kalām* in religious scholarship[104] – al-Māturīdī and his followers would establish through the fourth/tenth century a characteristic Ḥanafī tradition at Samarqand with *kalām* as its focal point. This distinct Ḥanafī theology of Samarqand is shown in the works by al-Māturīdī's most influential student Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥakīm al-Samarqandī (d. 342/953) which consisted of summation 'sound' Sunnī creeds and a commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-ʻakbar.*[105] It is important to note that interest in speculative theology by the post-Māturīdī Ḥanafīs of Transoxania did not only affect their theological orientation but it had a parallel affect on their theories of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, *ʻuṣūl al-fiqh.*[106] Māturīdī's student Abū al-Ḥasan al-Rustugfani authored a book of theology entitled *al-ʼIrshād*[107] and his theological opposition to the Muʻtazilites manifested itself in his legal judgement; for example, the Ḥanafī Muʻtazilah

---

[101] Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.1, p.144. Abū Bakr al-Jūzjānī was probably based in Samarqand. Other teachers of Māturīdī were: Muḥammad b. Muqātil al-Rāzī, d. 248/862, judge of al-Ray; Nasir b. Yahya al-Balkhi, d. 268/882 (Bayāḍīzādah, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan *Ishārāt al-maram min ʼIbārāt al-Imām* (edited by Yūsuf Abd al-Razzaq), Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, 1949, 23; Al-Zabidi, Murtaḍa *Ithaf al-Sada al-mutaaqqin fi Sharḥ ihyaʼ ʼUlūm al-din,* Dar al-Kotob al-ʻIlmiyah: Beirut, 2002*.,* v.2, p.5).

[102] Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.1, 562.

[103] Al-Nasafī, Abū al-Muʻīn Maymoun b. Muḥammad, *Tabṣirat al-ʼAdilla fi ʼUṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Husayn Atay), Ankara, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1993*,* p.469.

[104] He is reported to have said that 'the person who engages in *Kalām* should have his name erased from the register of scholars' (al-Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fols.108b and 167a).

[105] Katib Chelebī in *Kashf al-ẓunūn* attributes three works of *Kalām* al-Hakīm al-Samarqandī: *al-Sawād al-ʼaʻẓam* (v.2, 1008); *ʻaqīdat al-ʼImām,* the creed of the Imām (v.2, 1157) and *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar li ʼAbī Ḥanīfa* (v.2, p.1287). Authenticity of the current version of *al-Sawād* has been called into doubt; see Muhammed b. Tavit et-Tanci, "Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī" In *A. Ü. İlahiyat Fak. Dergisi,* 1955, I-II, 1-10, fn.58.

[106] The early spread of Māturīdism beyon Transoxania is not part of the present study, but the role of non-*kalām* discourses – particularly the science of *uṣūl al-fiqh* – in it deserves attention.

[107] Katib Chelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūnʼ ann asami al-kotob wa al-funūn,* Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthanna [reprint], 1941, v.1, p.70.

ruled, in line with their doctrine that matter is infinitely divisible into parts, that performing ablution with running water is invariably better than with water kept in containers as the latter is more likely to be fully polluted with a single drop of an impure substance. Al-Rustghafnī makes special reference to the debate with the Mu'tazilah over the question of "the indivisible part" (*al-juz' al-ladhī la yatajazza'*) when issuing a *fatwā* to the contrary.[108]

More elusive however is the early spread of Māturīdism beyond Samarqand and eventually to other Ḥanafī circles in the Muslim world. To be sure, interest in theology was not confined to al-Māturīdī; another relatively prominent scholar from the generation, *ṭabaqa*, of Māturīdī and who is not mentioned among his students is Abū Bakr al-Samarqandī also produced what appears to be two complete *kalām* manuals and a polemic against the Karrāmites, deemed to be the first of its kind.[109] Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī's valuable snippet on the history of Māturīdism mentions that forty students of Abū Naṣr al-'Iyāḍī, in addition to al-Māturīdī and al-'Iyadi's two sons, were representatives of the same doctrinal school of the Ḥanafīs of Samarqand.[110]

The fact that al-Māturīdī belonged to an earlier tradition of theological Ḥanafism confirms that he was not the founder of a new school of theology. The uniqueness of the Ḥanafī school of Samarqand – in light of this brief survey of theological doctrines among leading Ḥanafīs until the fourth/tenth century – is in the fact it represented a *kalām*-centred theological tradition based on the transmitted statements by Abū Ḥanīfa. What explains the later significance of Māturīdī is that he became the representative of the Ḥanafism of Samarqand; in the same way that Abū Ḥanīfa became the embodiment of the Iraqi school of *ra'y*, al-Māturīdī became the epitome of the theological school of Samarqand. As far as the use of *kalām* is concerned and in the face of the rapid spread of Ash'arism as foremost school of Sunnī theology, later Ḥanafī histories could justifiably boast of al-Māturīdī as their foremost theologian – *Imām al-Mutakallimīn.*[111]

### 1.1.2.2 Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī in Baghdād

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī bin 'Ismā'īl al-'Ash'arī was born in Basra in 260/874 but moved Baghdād – then a centre of Islamic intellectual activity – where he resided until his death in

---

[108] Qurashī, *Jawāhir,* v.2, p.310; Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.186b.
[109] Abū l-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* p.471; Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.192a.
[110] Abū l-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* pp.469-470.
[111] Al-Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.174a.

324/936. Ashʿarī studied under renowned Muʿtazilī theologian Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Jubbāʾī (d. 302/915) and continued to espouse Muʿtazilī creed until he was forty years of age. A key point concerning his intellectual development is his conversion to 'traditionalist' or mainstream Sunnī theology – the nature and extent of which has been subject to debate in later centuries. The new theology of al-Ashʿarī was defined by special opposition to Muʿtazilī rationalism. But he invariably engaged in refuting the "heretical" opinions of *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth* (Traditionalists), the *Ẓahirīs* (Literalists), and *Mujassima* (Corporealists).[112] Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 380/990) biography of Ashʿarī – the earliest we have on him – offers the following account of the converted Ashʿarī,

> Then he (al-Ashʿarī) repented from confessing the [Muʿtazilī] creed of Divine Justice and the created Qurʾān in the grand mosque of Basra on Friday. [He then] ascended upon a chair and announced at the top of his voice: "those who have recognized me, then they know [of] me, but those who do not recognize me, I shall let them know who I am: I am such and such. I used to confess that the Qurʾān is created, that God is not visible to our eyes, that I am the doer of my evil acts. But, I [hereby] repent, relinquishing [Muʿtazilī] creed... [and I hereby embark] to refute the Muʿtazilah, exposing their scandals and faults".[113]

The theology of Ashʿarī proved controversial even during his lifetime; it was readily noticed and opposed by contemporary Muʿtazilī theologians, as well as traditionalist Sunnīs, especially Ḥanbalīs. In the face of such resistance, and owing to his numerous followers, Ashʿarism rapidly spread beyond its original home in Baghdād: to the east into Shāfiʿī circles of Persia and west Khorāsān – and even as far as al-Shāsh (Tashkent) in Transoxania. Westward, Ashʿarism would eventually become a pivotal doctrine in Mālikī centres of the Maghreb.[114]

Ashʿarī's biographers agree on the prolific nature of Ashʿarī's scholarship. His chief biographer Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1175) recounts the names of around one hundred of Ashʿarī's books – and, even concedes to a report that they were up to three hundred odd volumes.[115]

---

[112] Outlining the wayward groups of his time, al-ʾAshʿarī offers a ten-fold division of Muslim sects in his *Maqālāt al-ʿIslamiyīn.* He writes: 'the Muslims have [been] divided into ten types: the Shīʿa, Kharījīs, Murjiʾa, Muʿtazilī, Jahmaites, Ḍirārī, Husaynīs, the Commoners (*al-ʿamma*), the traditionalists (*Aṣḥāb al-Hādīth*) and the Kullābī, associates of Abd Allah bin Kullāb al-Qaṭṭān'. See al-ʿAshʿarī, Alī bin ʿIsmāʿīl, *Maqālāt al-ʿIslamiyeen wa ikhtilaf al-Mussallin,*Saida: al-Maktaba al-ʿAsriya, 2009, p.25.

[113] Al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, v.1, pp.648–649. Quoted by Bashar Awwad Marouf in "Biographies of Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī until the eighth century AH." In *al-Jadhwa*, v.1, April 2003.

[114] Makdisi, George 'Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarītes in Islamic Religious History I' *Studia Islamica,* No. 17 (1962), pp. 37 – 80.

[115] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tabyīn*, p. 136. Ibn ʿAsākir gives two references to his sources: the first is Ashʿarī's book *al-ʿAmad* (a work on the problem of visibility) wherein around seventy books which he authored before the year 320/932 (i.e. four years before his death) are named. The second is Ibn Fūrak 's (d. 406/1015) *Addendum*, a list of twenty

But despite his impressive theological output, the claim that he eventually resorted to traditionalist theology, especially Hanbalī, provoked a major debate in Ash'arī studies. At the heart of this controversy is one of the few of Ash'arī's works that have reached us. The book is entitled *al-'Ibāna 'an 'uṣūl al-diyāna* (elucidation of the principles of religion), and in it Ash'arī seems more inclined towards traditionalist theology – to the extent it is irreconcilable with his other works, in particular *al-Luma'*.[116] Ash'arī, then, emerges in Islamic intellectual history as a scholarly personality split in half. This unresolved final-doctrine of Ash'arī left the door open for interpretation, and for opposite sects to claim him as their own – something that will have significant bearings in later perception of Ash'arī by its Māturīdī counterpart.

Compared to Māturīdī, Ash'arī had a more controversial and turbulent intellectual life. As already noted, al-Māturīdī saw himself as a delineator of Abū Ḥanīfa's theology in its true spirit; his theology was founded on that of Abū Ḥanīfa, and the fact that the name of al-Māturīdī is found in the chain of transmission of Abū Ḥanīfa's creedal canons is further affirmation of this fact.[117] Therefore, affiliates with the Māturīdī school have been almost completely followers of the Ḥanafī School of law, which continues to the present day. On the other hand, Ash'arism enjoyed a more diverse following. Ibn 'Asākir's *Tabyīn* includes biographies of the prominent Ash'arīs of the first five generations (*ṭabaqāt*) after his death in 324/935. Of the eighty one of Ash'arī's students and followers towards the end of the second half of the sixth/twelfth century, only two are confirmed as Ḥanafīs by Ibn 'Asākir, while the

---

six books he authored in the subsequent four-year period. Ibn 'Asākir adds three further titles to the list. In addition to six books from Ibn al-Nadīm's list, the total number of works attributed to Ash'arī is around one hundred and six. See: McCarthy, Richard J. *The theology of al-'Ash'arī,* Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953, pp.211-230.

[116] The *'Ibāna* has been controversial among Muslim and western scholars alike. The arguments range from doubting its authorship by Ash'arī (McCarthy, 1953, p.232); suggesting that the *Luma'* and the *'Ibāna* were targeting different audiences, the Mu'tazilis and the Ḥanbali traditionalist respectively (Michel Allard's argument accepted by W. Watt, in Watt, *Formative*, p.306). Among Muslim scholars, the debate was mostly over when the *'Ibāna* was authored by Ash'arī in the continuum of his intellectual development, and whether he died on the creed of the traditionalists, i.e. dismissing the engagement in *kalām,* or that he wrote it once he relinquished his Mu'tazilism, dating his more speculative works towards the end of his life. Another argument is found in Wahba S. Ghawji, *Nathra 'ilmiya fi nisbat kitāb al-'Ibāna Jami'uhu 'ila al-Imām Abi al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī,* Beirut: Dar ibn Hazm, 1989, whereby Ghawji doubts the attribution of the book of *'Ibāna* to Ash'arī in its current version.

[117] Al-Habashi, Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad *Jāmi' al-shurūḥ wal-ḥawashi,* Abū Dhabī: al-Majma' al-Thaqafi, 2004, p.1327; al-Kawtharī, "Introduction" to Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-'Alim wa al-muta'allim.* On the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa, see Watt, *Formative*, pp.131-134.

rest are mostly Shāfi'īs, and to a lesser extent Mālikīs. If jurisprudential affiliation was omitted, early Ash'arīs are either traditionalists or Sūfīs.[118]

Another noteworthy comparative observation is the two school's divergent attitude towards the science of *kalām.* As already noted, traditionalist Ḥanafism was reserved towards the use of *kalām* – this also resonated in Transoxania, the home of Ḥanafism's foremost theologians. On the use of *kalām* by the Māturīdīs, Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī (renowned early Māturīdī theologian) wrote that 'the great majority of our jurists and religious leaders in our lands (Transoxania) forbade people from practicing theology in public so as not to give publicity to the doctrines of the heretics.'[119] Therefore, the Ḥanafīs had a greater interest in jurisprudence and they strongly believed in the adherence to Abū Ḥanīfa in theoretical and practical (theological and jurisprudential) aspects of the law. Their view of a "theological system" has at its heart the spirit of commentary. Al-Nasafī, having named prominent Ḥanafī scholars going back to Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805) – Abū Ḥanīfa's foremost student – as having the same sound theology of *ahl al-sunna wal-jamāʿa*, suggests in his *Tabṣira* that if there had been only al-Māturīdī, he would have sufficed for all of them.[120] Abū al-Yusr argues on the reason for writing his major work of *kalām*: that had the *Book of Monotheism* by al-Māturīdī not been long and impenetrable in parts, he would have been contented with it.'[121]

Although Ash'arī and Māturīdī were contemporaries, no evidence points to them meeting each other. The obscurity of Māturīdī and his early followers is understandable, if not justified, from the Iraqi-'Ash'arī standpoint. While Māturīdism was confined to Ḥanafī circles of Transoxania, Ash'arism was closely associated with both Shāfi'ī and Mālikī schools of law and came in a time when Iraqi Ḥanafism showed theological inclinations that were at least problematic and controversial from a traditionalist Sunnī standpoint. This is reflected in Ash'arī's own view of Ḥanafism, which will be discussed in the next section on early Ash'arī view on Ḥanafī-Māturīdī theology.

---

[118] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn*, pp.177-330.
[119] Al- Bazdawī, Abū al-Yusr *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Hans Peter Lans), Cairo: al-Maktaba al-'Azhāriyya lil-turath, 2003, p.15.
[120] Abū al-Yusr, p.471.
[121] Abū al-Yusr, p.14.

## 1.2 Classical Ash'arism and Ḥanafī Theology: Early Encounters

### 1.2.1 Fourth/Tenth Century

Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī was critical of Abū Ḥanīfa, and more so of the Ḥanafīs of his time. He considered him to be a Murji' (lit. postponer) because of his definition of faith (*imān*) as merely knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and confession (*'iqrār*), to the exclusion of actions which were postponed, or "put after", faith.[122] This definition is especially problematic for Ash'arī as it did not necessitate "rational justification" on the part of the believer – according to Ash'arī, it is abstract belief without substantiation (*fī al-jumla bidūn al-tafsīr*).[123] He even relates a report in his *Maqālāt* whereby a Mu'tazilī by the name of 'Umar al-Shimzī[124] questions Abū Ḥanīfa over his concept of *imān*. One of the questions is whether Abū Ḥanīfa would consider a believer the person who confesses belief in the Islamic obligation of pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, but is not sure if it is in the city of Mecca or elsewhere; Abū Ḥanīfa answered in the affirmative. Ash'arī, then, points out other related formulations by Abū Ḥanīfa: that belief is not divisible into parts, that it does not increase or decrease and that people are equals in it.

It is important to remember that the charge of *'irjā'* was commonly attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa and Ḥanafīs in the early Classical period.[125] The Mu'tazilah objected to the above definition of *imān* as it implicated that the 'grave sinner' (*murtakib al-kabīra*) was a believer, who they held to be in an intermediary state (one of the five pillars of Mu'tazilī doctrine).[126] Ash'arī gives six opinions of the Mu'tazilah concerning the meaning of *imān*, and all of them

---

[122] *'Irjā'* in Islamic thought refers to at least three different meanings. The first, perhaps earliest, was put forward by al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya who used *'irjā'* to mean 'putting 'Alī (Prophet's cousin) down to fourth place in succession to Prophet Muḥammad.' The other two, as al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) explained, are to 'postpone' or 'delay', and it applies to putting human actions after faith (*iman*) and assent (*taṣdīq*). The last sense of *'irjā'* is that of 'giving hope', articulated in the assertion that 'where there is faith, sin does no harm' (Watt, *Formative*, p.120; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, v.1, p.139).

[123] Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, p.119.

[124] A student of Amr b. 'Ubayd (was one of his scribes) and Wasil b. 'Ata' (Dhahabī, *Siyar*, v.6, p.105; Ibn Makula, *al-'ikmal fi raf' al-'irtiyab 'an al-mu'talif wa al-mukhtalif min fi al-asma' wa al-kuny wa al-'alqab*, edited by Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yamani and Nayif al-Abbasi, Hyderabad: Majlis da'irat al-ma'arif al-'Uthmaniya, 1963, v.4, p.532).

[125] Joseph Givony's study shows how Murji'a developed from being a political movement which aligned itself with orthodoxy and the Omayyad political order (contra Kharijaites, Shī'a and Qadarites) to articulation by the theological school of Abū Ḥanīfa and his associates (Givony, Joseoph, *The Murji'a and theological school of Abū Ḥanīfa,* PhD thesis, Durham University, 1977). Later Muslim heresiographers called this the Early Murji'a, to set it apart from later heretical Murji'a sects. Until the time of Ash'arī – possibly even until the end of the fourth/tenth century – designating Abū Ḥanīfa and his associates as a Murji'a sect was commonplace. This will change among the later Ash'arīs as will be shown below.

[126] Al-Nadīm touches on the controversy between the Murji'a and the Mu'tazila: the Murji'a, while maintaining the Mu'tazila as believers, considered them to be grave sinners (*hum mu'minūn muslimūn lākinnahum fussāq*) (al-Nadīm, *Fihrist,* v.1, p.556).

agree on defining it as "the fulfilment of religious duties", and exclude knowledge or assent from it.[127] The traditionalists were also critical of Abū Ḥanīfa.[128] In fact, their doctrine – as articulated by Aḥmad b. Hanbal – was the exact contrary to Ḥanafīs. According to Ibn Hanbal: *imān* is words and acts (*qawlun wa ʿamal*), increases and decreases (*yazīd wa yanqus*) and that faith of a person can be superior than that of another.[129] Ashʿarī pronounced allegiance to Aḥmad b. Hanbal's theology in his *ʿIbāna,*[130] and – as such – held the traditionalist definition of *imān.*[131]

Given this is a study of the relation between Ashʿarī and Ḥanafī-Māturīdī doctrines, the fact the founder of Ashʿarism made Ḥanafīs a subset of the Murjiʾa in his book of heresiography is significant. [132] While clearly critical of Abū Ḥanīfa's views on faith, Ashʿarī was possibly specially referring to the Ḥanafīs of his time. In fact, at the end of the concerned entry, he turns to the Ghassāniya – a sect which replaces Ḥanafīs as the more proper subset of Murjiʾa among later Ashʿarī heresiographers.[133] Ashʿarī writes: 'and as for Ghassān and most of the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa, they narrate from their predecessors that faith is confession, love of God, glorification and fear of Him, and refrain from disparaging his right; and that it does not increase or decrease.'[134] In terms of this definition, "most of the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa" here may well have been intended by Ashʿarī to refer to the Ghassāniya and contemporary Ḥanafīs (and not Ḥanafīs in absolute terms). That the followers of Ghassān attributed their definition of faith to Abū Ḥanīfa is clear enough from Ashʿarī's statement. It seems that Abū Ḥanīfa's image of orthodoxy was marred by the existence of a mix of Muʿtazilī and Murjiʾa sects (such as Marīsiyya[135] and Najjāriyyah[136]) whose affiliation with Ḥanafī law

---

[127] The Muʿtazilah differed over the ramifications of this assertion in terms of division of sins into minor and major (al-Naẓẓām for example saw faith as the avoidance of major sin) and the distinction between faith in God (*iman billah*) and faith for God (iman *lillah*) (Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* pp.211-214).

[128] Abū al-Qāsim Hibatu Allah al-Lalakāʾī (d. 418/1072) exposition of the traditionalist creed strongly condemns the Murjiʾa, esp. Abū Ḥanīfa (al-Lalakāʾī, Abū al-Qāsim Hibatu Allah, *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa,* Dar Tayba, Saʿudi Arabia, 9 v., 2010, v.5, pp.1058-1169).

[129] Watt, *Formative,* p.123.

[130] Ashʿarī, Abū al-Ḥasan *al-ʿIbāna ʿan Uṣūl al-diyana* Beirut: Dar Ibn Zaydun, [undated], p.9.

[131] Ashʿarī, ʿIbāna, p.11, *Maqālāt,* p.229; Madelung, W., "Early Sunnī doctrine concerning faith as reflected in the *kitāb al-iman of* Abū ʿUbaid al-Qāsim b. Sallam (d. 224/839)", *Studia Islamica XXXII,* Paris, 1970, pp.233-354.

[132] Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* p.119.

[133] To be discussed in the next section.

[134] Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* p.119.

[135] Followers of Bishr b. Ghiyath al-Marīsī (d. 218/833). It was said that most of the Murjiʾa of Baghdad were his followers. He was a student of Abū Yūsuf (Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* 120; al-Baghdādī, *farq,* 202; al-ʾIsfarāʾīnī, Abū al-Muẓaffar *al-Tabṣīr fi al-Dīn wa tamyiz al-firqa al-najiya an firaq al-halikin,* ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī, Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya, 1998, p.85).

[136] Al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Najjār (d. 230/844); his followers were also known as Ḥusayniyya (Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* p.117; al-Baghdādī, *farq,* p.207; Isfarāʾīnī, *Tabsir,* p.86). Considered an associate of al-Marīsī (footnote by Kawtharī In ʿIsfarāʾīnī, *tabsir,* p.86). Madelung's assertion that Najjāriyya was – 'like the Māturīdīyya – a

was well established. Ash'arī's book *al-'Ibāna,* already mentioned, gives another indication of the man's attitude towards Abū Ḥanīfa. In the course of his discussion on the gravity of upholding the doctrine of the created Qur'ān, he cites four reports accusing Abū Ḥanīfa of it. In two of them Abū Ḥanīfa is apparently disowned by his master (Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān) for holding the heretical view that the Qur'ān was created.[137] Interestingly, unlike Ash'arī, al-Ka'bī (a prominent Mu'tazilite contemporary of Ash'arī) – having considered two of Abū Ḥanīfa's immediate students as Mu'tazilah – does not attribute *'I'tizāl* to Abū Ḥanīfa.[138]

Ash'arī's earliest followers may well have shared his critical view on Abū Ḥanīfa. As already suggested, early Ash'arīs were almost entirely Shāfi'īs, Mālikīs or traditionalists (*Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*). Ibn 'Asākir reports of a Ḥanafī by the name of Abū Naṣr al-Wā'iẓ who was a contemporary of Abū Sahl al-Ṣu'lūkī (d. 369/979), a prominent student of al-'Ash'arī.[139] Al-Wā'iẓ changes from the school of *ra'y* (Ḥanafism) to the school of *ḥadīth* (presumably Shāfi'ism) after seeing a dream of the Prophet personally visiting al-Ṣu'lūkī and praising the school of *ḥadīth*.[140] Towards the end of the fourth/tenth century, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012) was particularly unimpressed by Abū Ḥanīfa and had reportedly said, 'I conclude of his (Abū Ḥanīfa) error in nine-tenths of his *madhhab...* and [of] the remaining tenth he is on equal footing with his opponents – perhaps they [even] surpass him in it.'[141] Bāqillānī – a

---

specifically Ḥanafī school of *kalām*' (Madelung, *Spread*, p.113) should be read with caution. In terms of prevalence of Ḥanafīs among their ranks, a similar claim could be made about the Mu'tazilah. Compared with Najariyya, Māturīdism was consciously – and almost entirely – founded on the trasmitted texts that are attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa. However, Najjāriyya agreed with the Mu'tazila that the Qur'ān was created and the negation of the Divine attributes; they defined faith as knowledge of God, His messengers, and religious duties and confession. It increases but does not decrease (al-Baghdādī, *farq*, p.208). Extant evidence does not refer to al-Najjār's Ḥanafism except his association with al-Marīsī. Al-Muqaddasī (cited by Madelung) mentions that the people of the Mountainous Region (inc. al-Rayy, Hamadān and Isfahān) were either excessive Ḥanbalites or 'extremist Najjāriyya who ascribe disbelief to the [rightly] guided sects' (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan*, v.1, p.384). (It is also odd that ardent Ḥanafī like Muqaddasī does not refer to their Ḥanafism). The Najjāriyya were split into different groups each of which accused the other of disbelief (al-Baghdādī, *farq*, p.207). While Ghassāniyya may be considered akin to Māturīdīyya, it seems the same could not apply to Najjāriyya, who Ash'arī heresiographers describe as Murji'a or Mujbbira, and Hanafi-Māturīdīs describe as Mu'tazilah.

[137] The other reports are: Abū Ḥanīfa's grandson Omar b. Ḥammād b. Abī Ḥanīfa heard his father telling him that Abū Ḥanīfa was trialled over the *Khalq al-Qur'ān*; and the last is on how it took Abū Yūsuf two month of continued debate with Abū Ḥanīfa until the latter disavowed the doctrine of *khalq* (Ash'arī, *'Ibāna*, p.29). Modern Ḥanafī scholar Wahba S. Ghawji (d. 2013) argued that the current *'Ibāna* has been altered from the original by Ash'arī, specially in the addition of these four reports on Abū Ḥanīfa which he also denounced as inauthentic (Ghawji, *Naẓra 'ilmiyya fi nisbat kitāb. al-'Ibāna*, pp.21-30).

[138] Al-Ka'bī relates that when Abū Ḥanīfa was told that Zufar is a Qadarite (archatype of Mu'tazila) he said: 'leave him, do not argue with him as [engagement in] law (*Fiqh*) will bring him back' (al-Ka'bī, "Maqālāt" In *Faḍl al-'I'tizāl*, pp.196-199).

[139] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn*, p.183.

[140] Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabyīn*, p.186.

[141] Reported in al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid *al-Mankhūl min ta'liqat al-Uṣūl* (edited by Muḥammad H. Hito), Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1980., p.439.

follower of Mālikī law and most influential Ashʻarite after Ashʻarī – seems to have continued his master's interest in Hanbalī theology[142] as well as his disparaging of Abū Ḥanīfa.

### 1.2.2 Fifth/Eleventh Century

Laxer attitudes towards Ḥanafism begin to be noticed in the writings of leading Ashʻarī masters in the fifth/twelfth century.[143] Abū Bakr Ibn Fūrak – who dies shortly after Bāqillānī in 406/1015 – shows a contrasting attitude to the latter. He even composed a commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-ʻĀlim wa al-mutaʻallim* (the Learned and the Learner) in which he praises Abū Ḥanīfa's 'advantageous knowledge in theology (*tawḥīd*) and his merits in it over other leaders of Religion.'[144]  More importantly, the expression denoting Sunnī orthodoxy, *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʻa,* begins to include both schools of *Ra'y* and *Ḥadīth.*[145] Another early example of that is given by renowned Ashʻarī theologian ʻAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 422/1031). After outlining the seventy-two wayward sects of Islam, ʻAbd al-Qāhir says:

> As for the thirty-seventh sect, it is *ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamāʻa*, of the two parties, *al-Ra'y* and *al-Ḥadīth*.' The saved sect (*al-firqa al-nājiya*) contains the greater lot of Muslims, and [is] made up of 'the associates of Mālik, al-Shāfiʻī, Abū Ḥanīfa, al-Awzaʻī, al-Thawrī and *Ahl al-Ẓāhir* (Literalists).[146]

Ashʻarīs commonly debated with the Ḥanafīs but mainly in their capacity as followers of a different school of law – namely Shāfiʻī or Mālikī – and over matters of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).[147] ʻAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī is said to have written a rebuttal of

---

[142] Khalid K. 'Allal argues that Bāqillānī did so to avoid persecution by Caliph al-Qādir who endorsed traditionalism. He also used the titles Mālikī and Shāfiʻī in addition to Ḥanbalī, but never Ḥanafī ('Allal, Khalid K., *al-'azma al-'aqidiyya bayna al-Asha'irah wa Ahal al-Hādīth khilal al-qarnayn 5-6 al-hijriyayn,* Algeria: Dar al-Imām Malik, 2005, p.15).

[143] Prior to the appointment of Niẓām al-Mulk as Grand Vizier the Seljuk Alp Arsalān and his successor Malik Shāh I (between 456/1064 and 485/1092), Ashʻarīs were politically persecuted. Toward the end of Būyid domination in Baghdād, al-Qādir (d. 422/1031) enforced a traditionalist view of theology, and tightened the grip over both Ashʻarīs and the Muʻtazilah (Maghzawi, M., *al-bu'd al-siyasi fi intishar al-madhhab al-'Ash'arī fi al-mashriq al-'islami wa maghribih,* Algeria: Kunuz al-Ḥikma, 2011, p.13). At Ghazna, Maḥmūd b. Sabaktakīn who enjoyed authonomy from central Abbāsid rule was similarly intolerant of theology, and even personally debated with Ibn Fūrak (Dhahabī, *Siyar,* v.17, p.487; Ibn ʻAsākir, *Tabyīn,* p.233). However, the most serious challenge to the existence of the Ashʻarīs was during the ministry of ʻAmīd al-Mulk al-Kindarī (d. 457/1065) who – beginning in the year 447/1055 – officially sanctioned cursing  the Ashʻarīs (along with the Shīʻa) from pulpits in Khorāsān and Nīsābūr (Ibn ʻAsākir, *Tabyīn,* p.108; Maghzawi, *al-bu'd al-siyasi,* p.15). This continued until the appointment Niẓām al-Mulk ( in 456/1064) as Grand Vizier who was a great partron of the Ashʻarīs.

[144] Ibn Fūrak, *Sharḥ al-'alim wa al-muta'allim* (ed. Aḥmad al-Sayih & Tawfiq Wahba), Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 2009, p.24.

[145] Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʻarī's extant works indicate orthodoxy to be exclusive to the traditionalist doctrine of Aḥmad. b. Ḥanbal (Ashʻarī, *Maqālāt*, pp.226-229).

[146] Al-Baghdādī, *farq*, pp.26-28. Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Isfaraʼīnī (d. 471/1078) gives the same definition ('Isfarāʼīnī, *Tabsir*, 15). On ʻIsfarāʼīnī see Ibn Asakri, *Tabyīn*, p.276.

[147] Al-Ghazālī's *al-Mankhūl* contains what could be seen as a rebuttal of Ḥanafī jurisprudence.

Abū ʿIsmāʿīl al-Jurjānī's book on "the merits of Abū Ḥanīfa's *madhhab*", presumably over that of Shāfiʿī.[148] A similar anti-Ḥanafī work was also composed by prominent Ashʿarī Abū al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085).[149] Their scholarly rivalry – nevertheless – was not free from mutual tolerance.[150] Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1369) further reports of two debates between Abū ʿIsḥāq al-Shīrāzī (famous Ashʿarī scholar) and prominent Ḥanafī *qāḍī* Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Damaghānī (d. 478/1058).[151] The latter is described by Ibn ʿAsākir as a rival of al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī, prominent Ashʿarī who was even favorably compared to his contemporary al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111).[152] When al-Harrāsī died in 504/1110, his funeral was attended by al-Damaghānī and al-Zaynabī – according to Ibn ʿAsākir: chief Ḥanafīs of the time – and recited eulogies.[153] Ibn ʿAsākir also reports of a question put to al-Damghānī (who probably subscribed to traditionalist Ḥanafism[154]) about 'a group of people which approves the cursing of the sect of the Ashʿarīs and considers them to be disbelievers.' Al-Damghānī's answer was:

> The Ashʿariyya are the notables (*aʿyān*) of the Sunna and champions of *Sharīʿa.* They stood up to respond to heretics – the Qadariyya, al-Rāfiḍa and others. Whoever defames them, defames *Ahl al-Sunna.* And if the matter reaches the ruler, it is incumbent upon him to discipline him (the defamer) in a suitably deterring manner.[155]

The heretical charges against Abū Ḥanīfa – especially concerning *ʿirjāʾ* and his views on faith were revisited. Ibn Fūrak – in his commentary on *al-ʿĀlim wa al-mutaʿallim*[156] – distinguishes between two senses of *ʿirjāʾ.* Commenting on Abū Ḥanīfa's contention that the self-named Murjiʾa are upholders of the right way, he says,

---

[148] Ibn al-Salah, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqaha' al-Shāfiʿiyya,* ed. Muhyi al-Dīn Ali Najib, Dar al-basha'ir al-'islamiyya: Beirut, 2 vs., 1992, v.2, 554.

[149] Entitled *Mugith al-Khalq fi Ittibaʾ al-ʿAhaq* (*Kashf al-ẓunūn,* v.2, p.1754). The anti-Ḥanafī sentiments of this book were taken to new extremes by Imām al-Haramayn's student – the famous al-Ghazālī – who would write during his early scholarly years a book (modelled on *Mugith al-Khalq* by Imām al-Haramayn) entitled *al-Mankhūl* – on which al-Dhahabī says: 'and in the concluding part of *al-Mankhūl* crude language on a particular *Imām* (i.e. Abū Ḥanīfa) I whish not be repeated here' (*Siyar,* v.19, p.344).

[150] An example of Transoxanian intolerance of Shāfiʿism is considering the Shāfiʿites who doubted their faith (*al-'istithnāʾ fi al-'iman*) to be heretics. Eastern Ḥanafīs who upheld this view were al-Sabthamuni al-Bukhārī (Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.163a); Abū Ḥafṣ al-SafKardarī, who also ruled that doubters of faith should not be allowed to marry into other Sunnites (Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.194a); and al-Zāhid al-Saffar (Kafawī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.1, fol.239a).

[151] Al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn Abd al-Wahhab *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah al-kubra* (edited by Mahmoud al-Tanahi and Abd al-Fattah al-Hilou), Cairo: Dar ʿihyaʾ al-kotob al-ʿArabiyyah, [undated], v.4, pp.234-252.

[152] Ibn 'Asaki, *Tabyīn,* 289.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Dhahabī, *Siyar,* v.18, p.485.

[155] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tabyīn,* p.332.

[156] W. Madelng seconds J. Schacht's assertion (Schacht, J, "An early Murji'a treatise: the *kitāb al-'alim wal-muta'allim*" in *Oriens,* XVII, 1964, p.100) that this work is an exposition of the doctrine of *ʿIrjāʾ* written by Abū Muqātil al-Samarqandī who attributes it to his teacher Abū Ḥanīfa (Madelung, W. "the Early Murjiʾa in Khorāsān and Transoxania and the spread of Ḥanafism," *Der Islam,* 59, 1982, p37).

Know that belief [in the manner] of *'irjā'* has been permitted by some of our predecessors (*al-salaf*) while disliked by others. Some of them divided *'irjā'* into two types and said it comprises good and bad [traits...] [Scholars] who proclaim it is permissible to be labelled a Murji', they refer to the suspension (*tawaqquf*) of judgement (*ḥukm*) on the grave sinners – [whether they are going] to heaven or hell in a definite sense – contrary to the Mu'tazilah and Kharijites. They also argued: "as deeds do no good with [the co-existence of] disbelief, sin does no harm with [the co-existence of] belief." This is the *maddhab* attributed to Muqātil b. Sulaymān (famous traditionalist) and those differing from the Khawārij and Mu'tazilah [...] As for *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-'istiqāma* (people of the Prophet's way and moderation) they said the same as the author of the book (i.e. Abū Ḥanīfa) – God's mercy be upon him.[157]

Prominent Ash'arī heresiographies from the fifth/eleventh century do not speak of Abū Ḥanīfa as a Murji' – a title now acquiring exclusively heretical connotations (although the existence of an early orthodox Murji'a is acknowledged). The Murji'a are said to have become four types: three affiliates of the Qadariyya, Jahmiyya, and Khawārij, and the fourth is the "pure Murji'a".[158] The latter are defined as being the new unorthodox *irjā'*, which still derives its meaning from "postponement" (or putting deeds after faith) but in the sense of "where there is belief sin does no harm", and seen as a distortion of the early doctrine.[159] These Murji'a are in turn divided into five sects: one of them is the Ghassāniyya, which is mentioned at the end of Ash'arī's entry on the Ḥanafīs in the Murji'a section of Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*.[160] Ghassāniyya, now, became a Murji'a sect of its own.[161] 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's account of the Ghassāniya is the following:

These are the followers of Ghassān the Murji' who claimed that faith is confession or love of God and glorifying Him, and abandoning arrogance with Him. He [also] said that it (faith) increases but does not decrease and departed [from orthodoxy] – along with the Yūnusiyya (another Murji'a sect) – by making every attribute (*khiṣla*) of faith a part of faith. And this Ghassān claimed in his book that the statements made in it are the same as those of Abū Ḥanīfa regarding them, and this is a mistake by him (Ghassān) on him (Abū Ḥanīfa) because Abū Ḥanīfa said that faith is knowledge and confession of God and His messengers and in what has come (revealed) from God and His messengers in its entirety, without specification, and that it does not increase or decrease and people are not better than others in it, and [finally] Ghassān said it increases but does not decrease. [162]

Leading Ash'arīs of the fifth/eleventh century deemed the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa as belonging to Sunnī orthodoxy (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*). The famous letter of defence against the traditionalist assault on the Ash'ariyya by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072)

---

[157] Ibn Fūrak, *Sharḥ al-'Alim*, pp.193-194.
[158] Shahrastānī, *Milal*, v.1, p.139.
[159] 'Isfarā'īnī, *Tabṣīr,* p.83.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Al-Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir *al-Tabṣira al-Baghdādiya* (published as *"kitāb Uṣūl al-din"*), Beirut: Manshurat dar al-'afaq al-jadida, , 1981, p.203 and *Farq*, p.140; 'Isfarā'īnī, *Tabsir,* p.83; Shahrastānī, *Milal,* v.1, p.141.
[162] Al-Baghdādī, *Farq,* p.203.

includes a refutation of the allegation that Ash'arī deemed the Muslim laymen to be disbelievers (*kufr al-'awām*). Clarifying Ash'arī's position, al-Qushayrī says: 'according to Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī faith is assent and this is the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfa.'[163] Ash'arīs in this period even considered Abū Ḥanīfa to be the first *mutakallim* of the jurists.[164] They saw the heretical image of Abū Ḥanīfa and the *true* Ḥanafīs to be the result of false attribution of heretical doctrines to him. As mentioned earlier, Ḥanafī leaning to *ra'y* meant they were more susceptible to Mu'tazilī theology, as well as other schools that fell out of the common Sunnī fold. This meant the theologically-divided Ḥanafīs attracted special attention in Ash'arī writing of this time who wanted to clear the eponymous Imām of distasteful accusations. Abū al-Muẓaffar al-'Isfarā'īnī puts the reason as follows:

> There appeared among the later *Ahl al-Ra'y* who assented (*talabbasa*) to something of the doctrines of Qadariyya and the Rawāfiḍ, by way of imitation (*muqallidan fīhā*), and if he feared the swords of *ahl al-Sunna*, attributed the malicious creeds he believed in to Abū Ḥanīfa as a disguise; and so: do not be deceived by their claims. Abū Ḥanīfa is not guilty of being one of them and of what they attribute to him.[165]

A similar heresiographical sentiment is observed towards Ash'arī in one of the leading Māturīdī tracts of second half of the fifth/eleventh century: the book of *'Uṣūl al-Dīn* by illustrious Bukhāran Ḥanafī Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099). In it, Abu al-Yusr divides Muslims based on their doctrinal affiliation into seven larger sects which are in turn sub-divided into minor groups – six of which are heretical.[166] The seventh category is described by Abū al-Ysur as follows:

---

[163] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqat al-kubrā*, v.3, p.419.

[164] Abd al-Qāhir Al-Baghdādī gives a chronological list of the earliest *mutakallimīn*. Of the earliest generation of Islam (al-Ṣaḥaba) he includes 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar; the second generation (*Tabi'īn*), Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq; of the early jurists, Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Shāfi'ī, followed by the latter's students al-Muḥāsibī, al-Karābīsī, al-Buwayṭī and Dawūd al-Iṣfahānī ; then Ibn Kullāb (Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd) and his students; al-Junayd al-Baghdādī; then the Imām Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī (Baghdādī, *Tabṣira,* 307-310 and *farq,* 363). 'Isfarā'īnī also lavishly praises Abū Ḥanīfa's theological works ('Isfarā'īnī, *Tabsir,* p.158).

[165] 'Isfarā'īnī, *Tabṣīr,* p.158. Al-Baghdādī gives the same reasoning: 'nowhere in the lands of the Muslims will a *fatwā* (religious ruling) be accepted from a Qadarite, Jahmite, Najjārite, Kharījite, Rāfiḍite or anthropomorphist unless this *muftī* (fatwa-giver) is disguised as a follower of the school (*madhhab*) of Shāfi'i or Abū Ḥanīfa, and conceales his heretication (*bid'a*) on Qadar (al-Baghdādī, *Farq,* p.158).

[166] These heretical sects are: i) the Shī'a, who reject the succession of the first three Caliphs in Islam; ii) the Khawārij, who wage war on doctrinal opponents; iii) the Qadariyya, who deny the *qadar* or God's agency in human deed; this group includes the Mu'tazilah, al-Zabrasha'iyya (a minor Mu'tazilī sect from Marw), Ḍirariyya, Bakriyya (followers of Abū Bakr al-Qalānisi), al-Ḥusayniyya (followers of al-Ḥusain b. al-Najjār, also known as al-Najjāriyya), al-Zuhayriyya, al-Tūmīniyya and the philosophers; iv) al-Jabriyya (Compultionists who contrary to the Qadariyya deny human agency); this group includes al-Jahmiyya (followers of al-Jahm b. Ṣafwān) and al-Marīsīyya (followers of Bishr al-Marīsī); v) the Murji'a (postponers, who put action after faith); vi) the Karrāmiyya-Mujassima (Coroporealists, ascribing spatial properties to God; they were followers of Muḥammad ibn Karrām – or Kirām) (Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl,* 249-250).

The *madhhab* of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa* is the seventh; it is the doctrine of the Jurists, Qurʾān specialists (*al-Qurrāʾ*),[167] Sūfīs, traditionalists (*Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*). It is [also] the doctrine of the [Prophet's] companions and their followers (*al-saḥāba wa al-tābiʿīn*) and it is the way of the Prophet. Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿAshʿarī and his followers say that they are of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*. The greater lot of Shāfiʿīs are followers of the Ashʿarī school (*ʿala madhhab al-Ashʿarī*) and there is no disagreement between us except over a few questions, on which they were wrong.[168]

### 1.2.3 Sixth/Twelfth Century

Distinguished Māturīdī theologian Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's (d. 508/1114) *Tabṣirat al-ʿadilla* refers to two Ashʿarīs who had responded to the definitive Māturīdī doctrine of *takwīn* (existentiation).[169] The first charge against it is that the terminology of *takwīn* is a later innovation. Al-Nasafī writes,

> [The adversaries say:] this doctrine which you innovated no one spoke of it from the [time of] predecessors (*al-salaf*). Even one person said that this doctrine did not come from Iraq, but it came from the Heights (*al-Aʿālī*) by which he means Samarqand. Some Ashʿarīs have claimed that this doctrine was innovated by a group of people (*ṭāʾifatun mina al-nās*) known as al-Zabirashāʾiyya, followers of a man known as Abū ʿĀṣim al-Zabirashāʾī; it flourished in Marw after the year 400 of the Hijrah.[170]

These words show the sense of uncertainty among early Ashʿarīs (possibly from Iraq or west Khorāsān) regarding the school of Samarqand, but, they also reflect a natural Ashʿarī reaction to one of the fundamental doctrinal differences with Ḥanafi-Māturīdī theology (and will continue through the centuries). It seems that – towards the late fifth/eleventh century – associates of Ashʿarism who did discuss this doctrine saw it as a heretical innovation of the Muʿtazilah or Najjāriyyah. The Zabirashāʾiyya mentioned above as the presumed innovator of the doctrine of *takwīn* was a less-known fifth/eleventh century group of Muʿtazilah from Marw.[171] Clearly, this point can be invalidated on a historical basis, which Nasafī himself

---

[167] Qurrāʾ may also mean students of religion.

[168] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* 250.

[169] Tanci, "Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī", pp.1-2; Madelung, *Spread,* p.111.

[170] Abū al-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira*, p.405. Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1100) mentions in his *ʿuṣūl al-dīn* a similar account of an Ashʿarī author who considered the doctrine of *takwīn* to be a late innovation. he says: 'and this (*takwīn*) is a major theological problem on which the Ashʿarites wrote many books; I saw that one of them composed a book nearing in size to a [thick] notebook and said in it that "there appeared in Khorāsān a group of *ʾahl al-ḥadīth* who believed that: creation (*takwīn*) is not the same as the created (*mukawwan*), existentiation (*ʾijād*) is not the same as existence (*mawjūd*) and that existentiation is eternal (*qāḍīm*). This problem was addressed by Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī when dealing with the Muʿtazilite doctrine and affirmed that it is the sound opinion of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*...and he is older than (came before) al-ʿAshʿarī, and it is the doctrine of Abū Ḥanīfa and his students' (Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.77).

[171] Bazdawī mentions the Zabirashāʾiyya as a group of Muʿtazilah who differed from mainstream Sunnism over the question of Divine Will. According to him, they argued: 'just as you would not say (allow) that He (God) does not do or is not able to do, you should not say He [does not have the prior Will].' (Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.55). Bazdawī attempts to refute this view, but admits that 'some later [associates] of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa* would incline to the opinion of the Zabirashāʾiyya' (Ibid*,* p.56).

undertakes in the same book by tracing the doctrine back to Abū Ḥanīfa.[172] The second Ash'arī mentioned by Nasafī has an even more serious assault on the concept of *takwīn*. After recounting the charge of innovation mentioned by the first Ash'arīs in his book, Abū al-Mu'īn continues,

> He was not satisfied with this discrediting (*tashnī'*) [of us] so he raised this problem in his book on elucidation of the doctrines of the believers in the eternity of the world, and mentioned the doctrine of Proclus whereby the world is eternal (*qādīm*) because the reason He (God) created the world is the Lord's bestowal (*jūd*) and [since] His bestowal is eternal, then the world is eternal. Next he said: "and close to Proclus's doctrine [is] the doctrine of *a group of people*", and related the doctrine which we are about (i.e. existentiation).[173]

These two accounts, possibly from the end of the fifth/eleventh century, show Ash'arīs as holding a negative image of the theological school of Samarqand.[174] While overly positive towards the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa, the Ash'arīs of this period were ironically opposed to its most ardent propagators in Transoxania. Nasafī answers to the claim by Muḥammad b. al-Hayṣam (Karrāmite anthropomorphist, died first half of the fifth century AH) that the doctrine of *takwīn* originated among the Kullābites of Samarqand and Marw by arguing that although *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* were at some stage followers of Ibn Kullāb,[175] they had originally drawn their theology from Abū Ḥanīfa.[176]

Towards the middle of the sixth/twelfth century, we have the prominent 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) who attempts to settle the issue of Abū Ḥanīfa's *'Irjā'* once and for all – elaborated in the section on Ghassāniyya from his celebrated *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*. The report whereby Abū Ḥanīfa is interrogated in Mecca over his definition of faith as 'unjustified knowledge' (cited by Ash'arī in *Maqālāt*) is attributed to Ghassān himself who used it as an argument to support of *his own* doctrine. Shahrastānī accuses him of falsely attributing his own *madhhab* to Abū Ḥanīfa. He also rejects giving the label of "Murji'" to Abū Ḥanīfa.

---

[172] Abū al-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* pp.467-475.
[173] Abū al-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* p.413.
[174] The earliest mention of Māturīdī by a theologian from the Ash'arī school is the *Kitāb al-Niẓāmi fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* by al-Fūraki (d. 478/1085). According W. Madelung (Madelung, *Spread,* p.111) this book contains the earliest mention of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in a non-Māturīdī text. Madelung bases his claim on a study by M. Gots in which this reference is quoted (Gots, M, "Māturīdī und sein Kitāb Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān", *Islam,* XLI, 1965). Al-Fūraki's book has also been used in R. M. Frank "Bodies and atoms: the Ash'arīte analysis", *Islamic Theology and Philosophy,* ed. M. Marmura, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1984. The author has not personally viewed the manuscript (Ayasofya MS. 2378).
[175] Ibn Kullāb ('Abd Allah b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, d. 242/855) was an early Sunnī *mutakallim* who is looked upon favourably by both Ash'arīs and Hanafi-Māturīdīs. Muqaddasī – writing in the second half of the fourth/tenth century – affirms that the theology of Ash'arī had already superseded that of Ibn Kullāb (Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan,* p.37). Abū al-Mu'īn at the end of his critique of b. al-Hayṣam says: 'and I think that they (the Kullābites) have [now] become extinct' (Abū al-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira*, p.405).
[176] Abū al-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* p.405.

Shahrastānī says that the fact Abū Ḥanīfa had been considered a Murji' in the extant books of *Maqālāt* (elaborations of Muslim doctrines) is because of their authors' misreading of his definition of faith as "assent by the heart and [that it] does not increase or decrease" – which they wrongly thought as necessitating "putting deeds after faith". The other argument presented by Shahrastānī is that

> Abū Ḥanīfa 'opposed the Qadariya and the Mu'tazilah of the early period (*al-Ṣadr al-'awwal*) and the Mu'tazilah, as well as the Wa'idī Khawārij, used to label anyone who opposed them over the [problem] of qadar a Murji'; therefore, it is not unlikely that the title was attached to him (Abū Ḥanīfa) by the [wayward sects of the] Mu'tazilah and Khawārij.'[177]

In the second half of the sixth/twelfth century, Ibn ʿAsākir's (d. 571/1175) *Tabyīn* provides a noteworthy (albeit problematic) Ashʿarī-Māturīdī encounter.[178] By way of giving testimony to Ashʿarī's greatness as an orthodox Sunnī theologian, Ibn ʿAsākir quotes a report by renowned Transoxanian Ḥanafī scholar and judge Ḥasan b. Manṣūr, better known as Fakhr al-Dīn Qāḍī-Khān (d. 592/1196) [179] - who hailed from Farghāna (modern Uzbekistan). Ibn ʿAsākir was a contemporary of Qāḍī-Khān (he named him: Abū al-ʿAbbās Qāḍī al-ʿAskar) and introduced him as "among the chief associates of Abū Ḥanīfa" (*min kubarā' Aṣḥāb Abī Ḥanīfa*). In it, Qāḍī-Khān says that having surveyed the existing books on the science of monotheism (ʿ*ilm al-tawḥīd*) by the philosophers and the Mu'tazilah, he found them to be wayward and erroneous. He then proposes the following:

> I have found by Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī (may God be pleased with him) many books in this art. They are nearly two hundred... Al-Ashʿarī [had] authored a grand work defending the doctrine of the Mu'tazilah, as he initially believed in their doctrine. Then God showed him their waywardness and he departed from... [their teachings]... Most followers of al-Shāfiʿī accept what the [eventual] doctrine of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī settled on. The followers of al-Shāfiʿī have written many books in accordance with the doctrines of Ashʿarī (*ma dhahaba 'ilayhi al-'Ashʿārī*). But some of our associates of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa* invalidated Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī in some problems (*masā'il*) such as his doctrine (*qawluhu*) that existentiation (*takwīn*) and creation (*mukawwan*) are one and [other] such [problems] as will be shown through [our following discussion] ... If one is able to identify the questions that Abū al-Hassan erred in and knew the error [thereof] then there is nothing wrong in looking into his books, as many of our associates have taken hold of his books and looked into them.[180]

Ibn ʿAsākir's commentary on it is the following:

---

[177] Shahrastānī, *Milal,* v.1, p.141; al-Āmidī, Sayf al-Dīn *'Abkār al-'Afkār* (ed. Aḥmad M. al-Mahdi)*,* Cairo: Dar al-Kotob wa al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya, 2004, v.5, 86*.*

[178] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tabyīn,* pp.139-140. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d.770H) copies this quote from *Tabyīn* into his *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra* (v.3, p.377) under the title "*Dhikr Kalām abi al-Abbas Qadhi al-'Askar al-Hanafi*" in the entry on Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī.

[179] *Al-Aʿlām,* v2, p.224.

[180] Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tabyīn,* pp.139-140.

> And these questions which he (the Ḥanafite Qāḍī-Khān) referred to do not discredit Abū al-Ḥasan or ascribe him to disbelief, waywardness or heresy. And if they investigated them further (*Ḥaqqaqū al-kalām fīha*) agreement will be reached, and it will be shown that difference over them was preconditioned upon agreement (*hasiluhu al-wifāq*).[181]

The inclusion of these statements in the canonical apology of Ash'arism by Ibn 'Asākir is in itself of great significance as it gives a wholly favourable attitude to the doctrine of the school of Samarqand by a strictly Ash'arī writer from the second half of the sixth/twelfth century. More importantly, the characteristic Māturīdī doctrine of *takwīn* is now a legitimate Ḥanafī theological position from a formal Ash'arī standpoint.

The quote is problematic, although not in an undermining way, in that it is found verbatim in Bazdawī's (d.493/1099) forward to his *'Uṣūl al-dīn*.[182] Ibn 'Asākir may well have attributed the quote to the wrong author (i.e. Qāḍī-Khān). However, it is more likely that Qāḍī-Khān had inserted the quote form Bazdawī's forward to *'Uṣūl al-dīn* without acknowledging his sources. All in all, the fact Ibn 'Asākir – the leading *ḥadīth* scholar and advocate of Ash'arism – was unaware of a significant Māturīdī Classic may point to the limited circulation of Māturīdī texts in central Islamic regions.[183]

However, it was not until the end of the sixth/twelfth century that we have the first major Ash'arī encounter with Māturīdī theology at the hands of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209). Rāzī, a well-travelled scholar with wide-ranging scholarly interests, gives us an invaluable narrative of his personal encounter with chief Māturīdī theologians of his time, which he recorded as a series of sixteen scholarly disputations (*Munaẓarāt*).[184] Six of them concerned theological problems.[185] His debates have an overtone of bitter sarcasm and are coloured by a sense of scholarly rivalry.[186] According to Rāzī, the defining doctrines of the

---

[181] Ibid, p.140.
[182] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* pp.13-14.
[183] The quote is most probably Bazdawī's as he promises to go into other differences between Ash'arītes and Māturīdīs, to which he delivers on later in his book.
[184] Kholeif, Fathollah, *Munaẓarāt Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fi bilād mā warā' al-nahr,* Dar al-Mashreq: Beirut, [date unknown].
[185] Rāzī, *Munaẓarāt, (mas'ala* 1) pp.14-17; (m. 3) pp.17-20; (m.4) pp.21-22; (m.5) pp.22-24; (m.13) pp.51-52; (m.14) p.53.
[186] His opinion was overtly negative of Transoxianian scholars. At Bukhārā, for example, he described its leading Ḥanafī jurist al-Raddiy al-Naysabur (Kholeif, *Munaẓarāt,* p.7f.) as a man with a straight sense of logic.., but slow in understanding and dull-witted who needs to think long before uttering a few words.' Celebrated Māturīdī theologian Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī of Bukhārā (d. 580/1184), with whom Rāzī debated the problem of *takwīn,* is

school of the people of Transoxania (*ahl mā warā' al-nahr*) are the belief in existentiation (*takwīn*) as different from creation (*mukawwan*), that God's true Speech (*Kalāmu Allah*) cannot be heard, and that God does not impose an impossible task on humans. He is strongly critical of all three doctrines, but more so of *takwīn* which appears to have become by Rāzī's time the chief doctrinal difference between the two schools.

The only reference to Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in Rāzī's seminal book *al-Muḥaṣṣal* is on *takwīn*.[187] Rāzī also knew Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as a *mufassir* (exegete of the Qur'ān),[188] and his grand *tafsīr* contains an early reference to Māturīdī's *Ta'wilāt*.[189] There, the only theological dispute with the Ḥanafi-Māturīdīs discussed was in the context of the Qur'ānic story of God's speech with the prophet Moses.[190] Whether Moses heard God's true speech or not, the Ash'arīs chose an affirmative stance, while the Māturīdīs objected to the Ash'arīs for not postulating a medium through which the speech could be heard. Instead they said that what Moses heard was only speech through a medium and not God's true speech. Rāzī's *tafsīr* is significantly one of the earliest Ash'arī works to treat Māturīdī as equal to Ash'arī in representing a theological split between *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*.[191]

---

portrayed as an inconsistent, self-contradicting theologian who unjustifiably presented himself as the foremost theologian of the land.( pp.14-20, 22-24). The only scholar who Rāzī described favourably was a student of al-Raddiy al-Naysaburi by the name of al-Rukn al-Qazwini. Of him says al-Rāzī 'the best and most dignified among his (al-Raddiy) students. Interestingly he was the only one of them to change to the Shāfi'i school (p.24f).

[187] Discussed under the title: "the proposition that some Ḥanafī jurists have claimed that *takwīn* is an eternal attribute of God and that the created [world] is temporal" (al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Muḥaṣṣal afkar al-mutaqaddimīn wal muta'akhirīn mina al-'ulama wal hukama' wal mutakallimīn,* Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Husayniyya, 1323/1905., p.186).
[188] Māturīd's *Ta'wīlāt* appears to have been in circulation through the seventh/thirteenth century Egypt. The prominent *mufassir* Shams al-Dīn al-Qurtubi (d. 671/1272) – born in Andalusia but settled in Egypt – mentions al-Māturīdī in the context of legal theory (al-Qurtubi, *al-jami' li 'Ahkam al-Qur'ān* (eds. Aḥmad al-Bardouni and Ibrahīm Atfish), Cairo: Dar al-Kotob al-Masriyya , [20 vols], 1964, v.6, p.38 and v.10, p.148).
[189] Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* Beirut: Dar 'Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, [3rd edition; 32 vols.] 1999, v.5, p.316.
[190] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb,* v.6, p.526; v.14, p.353; v.24, pp.492-93; v.27, p.612.
[191] Madelung notes in his entry "Māturīdiyya" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam (Second Edition)* that the nomenclature "Māturīdism" is not present in scholarship before around the middle of the eighth/fourteenth century (before the writings of al-Taftazānī). Evidently, this proposed absence does not mean the opinions of Māturīdī did not constitute a doctrine next to that of Ash'arī. Treatment of Māturīdī and Ash'arī as equal representative of Sunnī orthodoxy may well have began in the Classical period – and Rāzī's juxtaposition above of both schools strongly alludes to that.

### 1.3 The Later *Kalām* Tradition

*History of* ʿIlm al-Kalām *and the Question of Periodization*

Historians of Islamic religious sciences speak of a divide between early (*al-mutaqaddimūn*) and later (*al-mutaʾakhkhirūn*) theologians.[192] An influential account on this divide is offered by famous historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 806/1406). As delineated in Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddima*,[193] the (otherwise mainstream) Sunnī science of *kalām* has gone through the following four phases of development:

(1) The initial phase, whereby the science of *Kalām* begins to be used 'for the defence of creed', and the main figures of this period are Ibn Kullāb, al-Qalānisī, al-Muḥāsibī and culminates in the figure of al-Ashʿarī.

(2) The second phase is one of 'refinement' – or laying down the rational foundations of a theological system. The principal pioneer of this phase is al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012), whose methodology is described by reluctance to use Aristotelian logic.

(3) The third phase of development inaugurates with renowned theologian of Nīsābūr Abū al-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī (primary teacher of al-Ghazālī). He, too, did not accept the use of Aristotelian logic in theological arguments. The third phase – culminating in al-Juwaynī's books *al-Shāmil,* and its shortened version *al-ʿIrshād* – constitutes what Ibn Khaldūn calls *al-ṭarīqa al-qādīma lil-mutakallimīn* (the old way of theologians) as opposed to the *ṭarīqat al-Mutaʾakhkhirūn* (the way of the later theologians) which – as Ibn Khaldūn states – begins with al-Ghazālī. Ghazālī, then, marks the "historical" divide in methodology of *kalām* by his formulation of an anti-philosophical, practical concept of logic which is permitted to serve in the dialectics of theology. Ghazālian *kalām* – however – inaugurates a growing disputing fervour with the philosophers as adversaries in creed. Importantly, Ibn Khaldūn puts al-Rāzī – in some later accounts the *real* initiator of philosophical *kalām* – as being in the same category of 'later theology' as al-Ghazālī.[194]

---

[192] See: Wisnovsky, Robert "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunnī Theology" In *Arabic Sciencecs and Philosophy,* vol. 14 (2004), pp.65-100; Shihade, Ayman "'From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī: 6th/twelfth Century Developments in Muslim Philosophical Theology" In *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, vol. 15 (2005) pp. 141–179.

[193] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, v.2, pp.210-214.

[194] Shihade determines that Razi's *Nihayat al-ʿuqul* is the first work of theology to fully replace the method of inference used by previous theologians with Aristotelian logic; 'He (al-Rāzī), rather than al-Ghazālī, is responsible for the spread of logic in later *kalam*' (Shihade, Ayman, "From Ghazālī to Rāzī", p.168).

(4) Importantly, Ibn Khaldūn refers to an "even later" group of theologians 'who delved deeper into books of the philosophers and confused the subject-matter of the two disciplines [philosophy and theology].' He speaks of how the two approaches were mixed up by the later theologians – giving the example of the Persian al-Bayḍāwī in his *Ṭawāliʿ*, and by later (in his words) non-Arab scholars (ʿulama al-ʿAjam).[195] Ibn Khaldūn's history of *kalām* focuses on the tension between the parameters of logic, philosophy and theology proper. He is – nevertheless – exclusively critical of the "even later" theologians whose theology was indistinguishable from the works of the philosophers.

Another historically-significant account on the philosophical "turn" in Muslim theology is offered by a contemporary of Ibn Khaldūn: the renowned scholar and theologian Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390). His account on it is similar to that of Ibn Khaldūn – though it is more descriptive and does not criticize the philosophy-laden *kalām* of the later scholars. In his commentary on al-Nasafī's *Creed*, he writes:

> When philosophy was translated into Arabic and the Muslims plunged (*khaḍa*) into it, they attempted to refute the Philosophers on the points in which they differed from the canon law (*Sharīʿa*). So they mixed with *kalām* much of philosophy in order to understand thoroughly the goals of philosophy and so to be put into the position to show the unreality of it. This went on until they included in *kalām* most of physics and metaphysics and plunged into mathematics until theology was hardly to be distinguished from philosophy had it not been that it included "things to be believed on authority" (*al-samāʿiyāt*). This is the *kalām* of the Later Theologians (*al-muta'akhkhirūn*).[196]

Taftāzānī further spoke of a divide between early and later theologians over the definition, subject-matter and goal of the science of *kalām.* He wrote in his magnum opus *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, justifying the "philosophization" of theology by the later scholars,

> As some philosophical discussions (*mabāḥith ḥikmiyya*) do not break with religious creeds, and are not suited except for the science of *kalām* among the Islamic sciences, the later scholars (al-*muta'akhkhirūn*) mixed them with the discussions of *kalām* for better elaboration of facts, and to use them as an aide for investigating thorny problems. Nevertheless, there is no quarrel in that the quintessence of *kalām* is no other than the studies of the divine Essence and Attributes, Prophethood, Imāmate and the Hereafter, along with the relevant study of possibilities. Therefore, common theologians (*al-qawm*) confined [their discussion] to disproving that the subject-matter of *kalām* is Divine Essence alone or with the essences of possible beings from the standpoint that if it were so, proving it (the Divine Essence) could not have been one of its (*kalām*'s) problems, because the subject-matter of the science is not proven through the science itself (*mawḍūʿ al-ʿilm la*

[195] Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, v.2, p.214. In this statement, Ibn Khaldūn was most probably referring to al-ʿĪjī, al-Taftāzānī and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī – all of whom flourished in the eighth/fourteenth century and were from al-ʿAjam (Persia and Western Khorāsān).

[196] Edgar, *A commentary on the creed of islam*, pp.9-10.

*yūbayyan fīhi*) but is proven in a higher science until it arrives at a subject-matter whose existence is evident such as Being (*ḥata yantahī ilā mā mawḍuʿuhu bayna al-thubūt wa al-wujūd*).[197]

This distinction was also adopted by Ottoman scholars. Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah (d. 968/1516) echoes al-Taftāzānī in his discourse on the difference over the subject-matter of *kalām* between the *mutaʾakhkhirūn* and *mutaqāḍīmūn*. He writes that,

> Its (*ʿIlm al-Kalām*'s) subject-matter is God's Essence and His attributes, according to the *mutaqaddimūn*. It is also argued that its subject-matter is being qua being. And that it is differentiated from "metaphysics" (*al-ʿilm al-ʾIlāhī*) – which studies absolute existence – in terms of varying goals. This is so because *kalām* is founded upon the principles of revelation (*al-sharʿ*) and metaphysics (*al-ʿilm al-ʾIlāhī*) is on reason. According to the Later theologians (*al-mutaʾakhkhirūn*), the subject-matter of *kalām* is the knowable as far as it relates to proving religious creeds, of close or loose relevance. What is meant by 'religious', the one ascribed to the religion of our Prophet Muḥammad peace and blessings be upon him.[198]

The later Ottoman Sachalizādah (d. 1145/1733) in his *Tartīb al-ʿUlūm* also differentiates between *Kalām al-Qudamā'* (Theology of the Early Scholars) and *Kalām al-Mutaʾakhirīn* (Theology of the Later Scholars). According to him the theology of the early scholars 'mostly consists of the disputes with other Muslim sects, especially the Muʿtazilah. And the writings in it include the book by the master Abū ʿIsḥāq (al-ʾIsfarāʾīnī; d. 418) and the book of Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī...'[199] As for the theology of the later scholars, Sachalizādah defines it as what comprises the 'mixing of philosophy and its refutations.'[200]

### 1.3.1.1 Doctrinal Affiliation and the Later *Kalām* Tradition

That there appeared a 'later' tradition (or discourse) of Islamic theology conjures up two sense of the term. The first is that what came to be known as the later *kalām* tradition – in its developed form – was quite different the theology of the first five centuries of Islam. This 'difference' was manifested in the influence and subsequent inclusion of philosophy – i.e. in contrast with Classical *kalām* where it is said to be minimal, or even absent. Clearly, the second sense of the term is chronological – i.e. the tradition of Muslim theology which came later in time, and unavoidably includes writings that did not necessarily fit in with the "philosophical" paradigm.

---

[197] Al-Taftāzānī, Saʿd al-Dīn *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (edited by Abd al-Raḥmān Umayrah), Beirut: ʾAlam al-Kotob, 1998, v.1, p.184.
[198] Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda wa misbah al-riyada fi mawduʾat al-ʿUlūm* (editor unknown), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1985, v.2, p.132.
[199] Sachalizādah, Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr al-Marʾashi *Tartīb al-ʿUlūm* (edited by Mumammad b. Ismail al-Sayyid Aḥmad), Beirut: Dar al-Bashaʾir al-Islamiyya, 1988, p.146.
[200] Ibid.

The controversy over strict doctrinal affiliation with a "theological" *madhhab* – as opposed to a variant of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) – has been noted in the Introduction. This uneasiness among Muslim theologians to associate with a particular school of (particularly) Sunnī creed reaches a new climax in the literature of post-Classical Ash'arism, which – in light of the above distinction between historical and philosophical senses of later *kalām* – appears to be a feature of the latter (philosophical) sense. Although the full exposition of this distinction lays beyond the scope of this study, but initial comparative observations reveal that while – on the one hand – stringent doctrinal affiliation with a school of theology was not among the guiding objectives of later "philosophical" *kalām,* it was – on the other hand – the focal-point of the literature on the disputes between Ash'arism and Māturīdism.

Determining with precision the time-period of a philosophical "turn" and whether it was universally pursued by Muslim theologians is a topic yet to be fully explored in modern scholarship. But, whether the later *kalām* tradition beings with al-Juwaynī (for his early systemization of theology), or his student al-Ghazālī (for the inclusion of logic), or al-Rāzī (for his thorough engagement with philosophy), or – indeed – with Ibn Khaldūn's "even later" theologians of Persian and West Khorāsān, is a case in point and a full consideration of the dating of later *kalām* deserves a separate investigation. But, as far as doctrinal affiliation is concerned, no doubt the philosophy-laden later *kalām* tradition was largely dictated by an Ashʿarī continuum of development.[201]

From the seventh/thirteenth century, Ashʿarīs produced numerous contributions to the later Islamic theological tradition, which were systematic, voluminous and included a wealth of opinions and ideas. This tradition eventually culminated in the eighth/fourteenth century *kalām* manuals of ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-ʾĪjī, Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī and Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī – all of which would become standard scholastic references throughout the Muslim world. Leading focus of these works was the mastery of rational arguments. Furthermore,

---

[201] Wisnovsky's 2004 article "One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunnī Theology" provides a useful insight into the influence of ontological formulations from *Falsafa* on Classical *kalām,* by tracing the adoption of the Avicennian distinction between essence and existence in core arguments for the existence of God put forward by prominent Sunnī theologians. Although the study avails of a number of Māturīdī texts (alongside Ash'arism), presuming a *universal* historical and philosophical "turn" in Sunnī *kalām* remains problematic (Wisnovsky's study scrutinizes one doctrine and, more importantly, terminates with the towering figuer of al-Taftāzānī). What remains is the question of whether later theologians of the next five centuries (post-Taftāzānī) in fact followed suit and adopted – in a similar fashion – the concerned Avicennian distinction. Furthermore, to what extent did later (post-Taftāzānī, or even post-Rāzī) Ash'arīs, Māturīdīs, and anti- (or semi) philosophical theologians share a common understanding of the purpose and function of *kalām* – e.g. did the proof of God's existence as purused in Classical *kalām* maintain the same central position in the dialects of post-Classical Islamic theology?

the tendency of "verification" (*taḥqīq*) – the thorough investigation to reach the most true opinion on a given problem – was part and parcel of the internal dynamics of later (post-Rāzī) Muslim theology.[202]

Preoccupation with philosophical inquiries, in tandem with the tendency of *taḥqīq*, led to a shift of focus in Sunnī theological writings from "defence" of a particular *madhhab* to the investigation of theoretical problems. Mastery of rational skills became the raison d'être of theological writing which – given its hegemony over common Sunnī *kalām* discussions – in turn influenced the intensity and relevance of the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism as will be discussed in the course of this study. As such, a vital feature of later philosophical Ashʿarism is the general indifference to the school of Māturīdī (and indeed to the inherent disputes between common Ḥanafī theology and Ashʿarism), which merely continued an age-old common Ashʿarī indifference to its Sunnī rival.[203]

Importantly, while the earliest treatises dedicated to the debates between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism (outlined below) exclusively appeared in post-Classical time, they do not easily fit in with the later *kalām* tradition in the philosophical sense (that is: part of a line of development otherwise dominated by philosophical Ashʿarism). This, to a certain degree, applies to a large portion of the Ottoman literature on the Disputes.

### 1.3.2 Ashʿarī-Māturīdī Disputations: Early Prototypes

The focal-point of Sunnī *kalām* is the refutation of heretical Muslim sects. In this sense, as far as opposition to groups such as the Muʿtazilah, the Shīʿa and the anthropomorphists – all of whom were deemed to fall out of the fold of Sunnī orthodoxy (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa*) – the Māturīdīs, Ashʿarīs and Traditionalists were in broad agreement.[204] But, the crucial point shown in the course of this survey of encounters between Ashʿarism and Ḥanafi-Māturīdism during the Classical period is that – although the *ultimate*

---

[202] See: Rouayheb, Khaled "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the seventeenth Century" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May, 2006), pp. 263-281.

[203] Analysis of Classical and post-Classical Ashʿarī indifference to Ḥanafī-Māturīdism is offered in Chapters I and III respectively. The Ashʿarī response to Ottoman Māturīdism which led to the cononization of an Ashʿarī "minimalist and conciliatory" attitude to the debates is discussed in Chapter IV.

[204] Abū Bakr al-ʿIyāḍī (d. 361/971), prominent Ḥanafī from the School of Samarqand, issued an anti-Muʿtazilite declaration which contained ten principles over which they differed with Sunnī orthodoxy. They are known as *al-Masāʾil al-ʿashr al-ʿIyāḍiyya*. He wrote them before he died and made sure to disseminate them through the markets of Samarqand (Abū l-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira*, p.470; Bahgivan, "Introduction" to Mastjizādah, Abd Allāh b. ʿUthmān *al-Masālik fī al-khilāfiyyat bayna al-mutakallimīn wa al-hukamaʾ* (edited by Seyit Bahgivan), Beirut: Dar Sader, 2007, p.21).

principles of Abū Ḥanīfa's theology agreed with those of Ashʻarī – there were some doctrinal differences that could not be passed over in silence. These disputes, which varied in number and philosophical significance, were touched upon by Classical Muslim theologians, and reflected a friction between two schools; and revealed that each school in fact belonged to different course of intellectual development. Yet they never formed – during the Classical period – a self-contained unit of theological inquiry. An early attempt to encapsulate the disputes in one place came from the first half of the fifth/eleventh century. ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī framed the doctrinal difference between Ashʻarism and Ḥanafism in the following words:

> The fundamental principles of Abū Ḥanīfa's theology (*kalām*) are the same as the fundamental principles of the traditionalists (*Aṣhāb al-Ḥadīth*) except in two problems, the first is that he said belief is confession and knowledge, and the second is his doctrine (*qawluhu*) that God has an unknowable Essence (*māʼiyya*).[205]

Later in the century, Māturīdī theologian Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī outlined at the end of his *ʿUṣūl al-dīn* five overarching doctrines over which Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʼAshʻarī differed from common Sunnism; they are:

(1)         Ashʻarī's agreement with Qadariyya and Jahmiyya in assuming God's acts as identical with His creations;
(2)         That man's sins and disbelief are acts desired by God and with which He is pleased;
(3)         Making verbal confession of belief a criterion of belief;
(4)         That the *mujtahid* (one who gives individual judgment on a given problem) is always right;
(5)         That the deeds of man do not affect his ultimate destiny – i.e. man is born felicitous (*saʻīd*) or wretched (*shaqy*).[206]

In Classical Ashʻarī and Māturīdī *kalām* tracts, these disputes and related arguments and counter-arguments were articulated in the course of a general theological narrative. Prior to the early eighth/fourteenth century, the disputes did not constitute a self-contained "theological theme" or become a subject-matter of a specific body of texts in Islamic theological literature. Extant historical and bibliographical sources show that the earliest pre-Ottoman juxtaposition of Ashʻarī and Māturīdī disputes were the following:

---

[205] Al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl,* p.312.
[206] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl al-dīn,* pp.252-253.

### 1.3.2.1 Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328)

Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328)[207] was an influential Damascene Hanbalī scholar. Although boasted immense theological interests, Ibn Taymiyya was a powerful voice of opposition to the science of *kalām* in general, and later philosophical Ashʿarism in particular. Among the nearly three hundred works to his name is a work entitled: *Risāla fī ʿaqīdat al-'Ashʿariyya wa ʿaqīdat al-Māturīdī wa ghayruhu mina al-Ḥanafiyya* (Epistle on the Doctrine of the Ashʿarīs and the Doctrine of Māturīdīs and other Ḥanafis). This work (now lost) is mentioned by two of Ibn Taymiyya's students: Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī (d. 744/1343) in his biography of Ibn Taymiyya – *al-ʿUqūd al-durriyya*;[208] and, by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) in the compilation *List of Works*[209] that are authored by his teacher. This work is the earliest to be found (in light of extant historical sources) of the genre of the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism.[210]

### 1.3.2.2 Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭarasūsī (d. 758/1357)

Najm al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Ṭarasūsī (d. 758/1357)[211] was a prolific scholar and esteemed judge from Damascus – particularly famed for his collection of religious rulings (*al-Fatawa al-Ṭarasūsiyya*). Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) in *al-Durar al-kāmina* (collection of biographies of scholars from the eighth/fourteenth century) refers to an *urjūza* (didactic poem) with its subject-matter described as: *fī maʿrifat mā bayna al-ʿAshāʾira wa al-Ḥanafiyya mina al-khilāf fī 'uṣūl al-dīn* (on learning the differences between Ashʿarīs and Ḥanafīs in theology).[212] We know Ṭarasūsī took a steadfastly anti-Shāfiʿī line in his *Tuḥfat al-Turk* (Gift of the Turks) – a treatise on governance and political administration. In the latter, Ṭarasūsī endorses what he

---

[207] *Al-Aʿlām,* v.1, p.144.

[208] Ibn Abd al-Hādī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad *al-ʿUqūd al-durriyya min Manāqib shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya* (edited by Muḥammad H. al-Faqi), Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-Arabi, p.71.

[209] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Muḥammad b. Abi Bakr *'Asma' mu'allafat Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya* (edited by Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjid), Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-Jadid, 1983, p.23.

[210] Ibn Taymiyya was certainly aware of Māturīdī theology and we have the following explicit reference to Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and Māturīdism as a sect in the following works: [1] Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. Abd al-Halīm *Majmu' al-fatawa* (edited by Anwar al-Baz and 'Amir al-Jazzar), al-Manṣūra: Dar al-Wafa', 3rd ed., 2005, v.6, p.290; v.7, pp.431, 433; v.8, p.438; v.16, p.269. [2] And, in his *Dar' taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa al-naql* (edited by Muḥammad R. Salim), Riyad: Dar al-Konuz al-Adabiyya, 1391/1971, v.1, p.354. Finally, [3] in his *Minhāj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya* (edited by Muḥammad R. Salim), Cairo: Mu'assasat Qurtuba, [undated; 8 vols.], v.2, p.214.

[211] *Al-Aʿlām,* v.1, p.51. Also see: Tezcan, Baki "Ḥanafism and the Turks in al-Tarasusi's Gift for the Turks (1352)" in *Mamluk Studies Review* 15 (2011), pp.67-86.

[212] Al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn Ḥajar Aḥmad b. Ali *al-Durar al-kāmina fi Aʿyān al-mi'a al-thamina,* Hyderabad: Dar al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1349/1930 [4 vols], v.1, pp.13-44.

believed to be the Ḥanafī legal sanctioning for Mamlūk rulers to assume Caliphal authority: an opinion opposed by Shāfiʿī who otherwise confined it to those of Qurashī descent.[213]

### 1.3.2.3 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1370)

Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī (d. 771/1370);[214] Shāfiʿī scholar and jurist born in Cairo, then moved to Damascus where he would become chief judge of Syria (*qāḍī quḍāt al-Shām)*. Al-Subkī hailed from a scholarly family; his father, Taqī al-Dīn ʿAli al-Subkī (d. 756/1355), was a Shāfiʿī jurist and *ḥadīth* scholar of great renown. Subkī was an ardent advocate of Ashʿarism as the leading school of Sunnism. In his magnum opus *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya al-kubra* (a compilation of the biographies of leading Shāfiʿīs) he includes a didactic poem in which he sought to delineate thirteen disputed doctrines between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism – seven verbal (*lafẓī*) and six real (*ma'nawī*) disputes. This poem is known as *al-Nūniyya* (i.e. rhyming ends with the Arabic letter-sound "Nūn") and would leave an enduring legacy on the perception, and development of the critical relation between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism in following centuries. The *Nūniyya* will be discussed in various places in the course of this study.

But, some background on the composition of Subkī's *Nūniyya* is worthwhile. Like his father Taqī al-Dīn, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī was strongly opposed to Hanbalī traditionists, in particular the students of Ibn Taymiyya (commonly referring to them as Hashawiyya – i.e. ascribing spatial qualities to God). His father wrote a treatise entitled *al-Sayf al-ṣaqīl* (the Sharp Sword) which was a valiant rebuttal of Ibn al-Qayyim's six-thousand-verse didactic poem on creed and the anti-*Kalām,* anti-'Ashʿarī arguments it pursued. Incidentally, Ibn al-Qayyim's poem was also known as the *Nūniyya* – and Taqī al-Subkī's poem may well have been an (albeit significantly shorter) response to it. As for the motivation for composing it: we know that a copy of Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī's commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-'absaṭ* was in circulation in Damascus at the time, and that Subkī had composed a further commentary on it prior to composing the *Nūniyya.* However, Abū al-Layth's vigorously anti-'Ashʿarī commentary was erroneously believed to be a work by Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī himself – hence Subkī's *Commentary* on it was named: *al-Sayf al-mashhūr fī Sharḥ ʿaqīdat Abī*

---

[213] Ṭarasūsī wrote in the prelude to the book: 'ultimately, the Sultan should not appoint a Shāfiʿi as governor or judge because – they suppose – the Sultanate is limited to Quraysh and the Turks have no claim for it (al-Ṭarasūsī, Ibrahīm b. Ali *Tuhfat al-Turk fī ma yajibu an yu'mala fī al-mulk* (edited by Abd al-Karim al-Hamdawi), Damascus: Dar al-Shihab, 2000, p.32.

[214] *Al-A'lām*, v.4, pp.184-185.

*Manṣūr* (the Brazen Sword in Commenting on the Creed of Abū Manṣūr – i.e. al-Māturīdī[215]).

Therefore, the fact Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī flourished in Damascus (then, a stronghold of Ḥanbalī traditionalism particularly following the influence of Ibn Taymiyya) – and given his (and his father's) antipathy to the growing anti-theological sentiment of the time – it seems that Subkī's encounter with Abū al-Layth's treatise was intellectually challenging. Al-Subkī was now confronted with a strongly-worded criticism of Ashʿarism but by a pro-*kalām* Sunnī theologian. Thus, al-Subkī's *al-Sayf al-mashhūr* was an attempt to maintain a unified Sunnī front against contemporary adversaries of the science of *kalām.*

### 1.3.2.4 Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442)

Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ali al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442);[216] Cairene scholar and foremost historian of Egypt during the ninth/fifteenth century. In his comprehensive history of Egypt – popularly known as *al-khiṭaṭ al-Maqrīziyya* – al-Maqrīzī refers to the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism (presumably in reference to the Egyptian context). He says:

> Now, there is between the Ashʿarīs and the Māturīdīs – followers of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī: they are a group of Ḥanafī jurists, emulators of the Imām Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʾmān b. Thābit, and his two associates Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrahīm al-Haḍramī and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (may God be pleased with them) – controversy over creedal matters (*khilāf fī al-ʿaqāʾid*) which is well-known in relevant contexts (books). If one traces this (controversy), it would not be over a dozen (*biḍʿ ʿashara*) problems which caused in the early times rifts and opposition, and each of them invalidated the other's doctrine. But, eventually they resorted to turning a blind eye (on the Controversies).[217]

Maqrīzī's note on the Disputes in the quote above resounds the attitude of al-Subkī (and Ashʿarīs in general) whereby they are not seen as deserving of much scholarly attention. This rather indifferent attitude to the Disputes – as is the case towards mid. ninth/fifteenth century Egypt – indicates a hegemony of Ashʿarism which is to be observed at the same time through to the end of the tenth/sixteenth century in classical Ottoman theological literature.

### 1.4 Conclusion: An Unequal Rivalry

This chapter attempted to discuss the key problems and concepts related to the early history of Ashʿarī-Māturīdī theological debates. By way of sketching out the background which led to the emergence of the school of Māturīdī in Samarqand, I gave a panoramic view

---

[215] This work will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.
[216] *Al-Aʿlām,* v.1, pp.177-178.
[217] Al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad b. Ali *al-Mawaʾidh wa l-ʾIʿtibār fi dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa al-ʿāthar,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 1997, v.4, p.193.

of the attitude of early Ḥanafī masters towards the science of *kalām*. This initial survey has shown an uneasy relation between practitioners of Ḥanafī law and the use of *kalām*. Since Ḥanafism was associated with official ʿAbbāsid authorities, and became the chosen legal doctrine among a variety of sects – such as the Muʿtazilah, the Murji'a and the Karrāmiyya – Ḥanafīs were (in a general sense) theologically divided. Leading traditionalist (non-Muʿtazilī) Ḥanafīs would not engage in the science of *kalām* because it had an overly Muʿtazilī ("heretical") association. This division over the religious legality of the science of *kalām* (which was more severe in central Ḥanafī learning centres, especially in Iraq) would eventually be bridged in the Transoxanian city of Samarqand whereby an influential Ḥanafī school stood out by its defense of the traditionalist Sunnī doctrine (as articulated by the books attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa) through the medium of the science of *kalām*. The triumph of (non-Muʿtazilī) traditionalist Ḥanafism during the early fourth/tenth century took place at the hands of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī – who would become the epitome of the theological school of Samarqand –, and Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī – who would instigated a major intellectual movement in defense of Sunnī traditionalism; again, with the scrupulous use of the science *kalām*.

Survey of key encounters between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism between fourth/tenth and sixth/twelfth centuries has shown Ashʿarism as having greater presence in early Māturīdī writings, whereas Māturīdī texts and theologians are nearly missing from Classical Ashʿarī texts. Points of dispute with Ashʿarī theology were frequently brought up in early Māturīdī writings. In contrast, prominent Ashʿarīs of the same period seem little aware of the theological school of the Ḥanafīs of Samarqand, even less so of al-Māturīdī who eventually became its chief exponent. Also, the scant information we have of the early Ashʿarī's view of Māturīdī and Transoxanian Ḥanafism makes it difficult to construct a coherent picture of it; a picture which may not have been there in the first place. The early Ashʿarīs, however, held critical convictions concerning the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa – a trend which begins to change in later centuries. In general, although the relation between pioneering Ashʿarīs and Ḥanafī-Māturīdīs was marked by scholarly rivalry, it was not free from instances of mutual tolerance and acceptance.

What would be called the later *kalām* tradition, which implied a "turn" in Sunnī theological interests towards paying greater attention to intellectual problems from philosophy and natural science, was a gradual process that began in the seventh/thirteenth

century. This shift – which would be the common scholarly paradigm in the post-Classical period – was in fact largely dictated by dominant Ashʿarī theological discourses. The hegemony of later ("philosophical") Ashʿarism on Islamic theological discourses, along with the "indifference" of these works towards doctrinal affiliation, were two detrimental aspects that led to the growing attachment to Māturīdī theology among later Ḥanafī scholars. Finally, this chapter documents the earliest prototypes of works with Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputations as their primary subject-matter – which would become an established genre of later Islamic theological writing during the Ottoman period as will be discussed in the course of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

OUTLINE OF KEY THEOLOGICAL DISPUTES AS
PRESENTEDIN CLASSICAL MĀTURĪDĪ TEXTS

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is an outline of the chief theological concepts over which the Māturīdī
and Ashʿarī schools differed. The various doctrinal differences discussed here are grouped
under four main headings: Knowledge of God and the Role of Reason; Wisdom and the Acts
of God; Predestination and the Acts of Man; and God's Active Attributes.

As discussed in the foregoing chapter, just as writing on the differences between
Ashʿarism and Māturīdism became a mostly Māturīdī commitment during the Ottoman
period, early Māturīdī theologians were evidently more aware of their Ashʿarī counterparts
than vice versa. This persistent Māturīdī engagement with Ashʿarī theology is a marked
feature of early Māturīdī thought which continued through the centuries of the school's
development. On the other hand, early Ashʿarī texts show little knowledge of Imām Māturīdī,
his school or ideas. It was only in later Ashʿarism (particularly from the eighth/fourteenth
century) that one finds difference with theology of the Māturīdīs (and Ḥanafis) more
pronounced. This chapter, then, focusses primarily on authoritative Ḥanafī and Māturīdī
texts predating the Ottoman period insofar as they provide a theoretical background on the
development of the debate in early Islamic theology. Contributions to the debate made in
later theological writings (particularly during the eighth/fourteenth and early
ninth/fifteenth century) will be included where relevant.[218]

---

[218] The theological texts frequently cited in this chapter are (in chronological order): Al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr
Muḥammad *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (edited by Fathalla Kholeif) Bayreuth: Dar el-Machreq, 1970; al-Samarqandī, Abū l-
Layth *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-ʿakbar* (edited by Abdallah al-ʿAnsari) Doha: Al-shuʾun al-diniyyah, [undated]; Al-Sālimī,
Abū Shakūr *Tamhīd abi Shakūr,* Delhi: al-Matbaʾ al-farouqi, 1309 [1891]; al-Bazdawī, Abū al-Yusr *Uṣūl al-Dīn*
(edited by Hans Peter Lans), Cairo: al-Maktaba al-ʿAzhāriyya lil-turath, 2003; Al-Nasafī, Abū l-Muʿīn Maymoun
b. Muḥammad, *Tabṣirat al-ʿAdilla fi ʾUṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Husayn Atay), Ankara, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet
İşleri Başkanlığı, 1993; Al-Lāmishī, Abu al-Thanāʾ Maḥmūd bin Zayd *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li qawāʿid al-tawḥīd,* edited
by Abd al-Majīd Turki, Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-ʿIslami, 1995; al-Ṣābūnī, Nūr al-Dīn *al-Bidāya fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited
by Bakr Topaloglu), Istanbul: al-Maktaba al-Hanifiyyah, 1979; al-Khabbāzī, Jalāl al-Dīn *Kitāb al-Hādī fi Uṣūl al-Dīn*
(edited by Adel Beybek), Istanbul, 2006; al-Samarqandī, Shams al-Dīn *al-Ṣaḥāʾif al-ʿilāhiyyah* (edited by Aḥmad al-
Sharīf), Kuwait, 1405 [1985].

## 2.2 Knowledge of God and the Role of Reason

Moḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (1879 – 1951), one of the last influential advocates of Māturīdism from within Ottoman scholarly circles, summarized the difference between the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī schools in the following way: that if one were to place the theology of Ashʿarism halfway between the Muʿtazilah, who emphasize the use of reason (ʿaql), and their counterparts - the traditionalists -, who primarily rely on revelation (naql), then Māturīdism is best placed between Ashʿarism and the Muʿtazilah.[219] This view echoes a contention, held by a majority of scholars of Māturīdism, that over every chief difference with Ashʿarism, Māturīdism is closer to Muʿtazilī theology. While this is true, it is important to remember that al-Māturīdī, like Ashʿarī, maintains the view that religious knowledge is drawn from rational and scriptural sources alike, and attempted to maintain reasonable distance from Muʿtazilī teachings.[220]

Māturīdī's book *kitāb al-tawḥīd* is considered one of the earliest works of Sunnī theology that begin with a clearly defined theory of knowledge, with reason as one of its constituents.[221] In it, al-Māturīdī identifies three means 'by which true knowledge of things is attained: sensory perception (ʿiyān), testimonies (akhbār), and reasoning (naẓar).'[222] However, there is a crucial point over which he differed with the majority of traditionalists and Ashʿarites. In the Māturīdī view, knowledge of God by reasoning (naẓar) is obligatory on every rational person. It is through reason, independent of prophetic revelation, that man *should* contemplate on the divine wisdom inherent in creation to conclude the existence of an eternal God Who is ultimately unique and different from His creation.

Reason plays a fundamental role in Māturīdī epistemology in that, without it, neither the senses nor testimonies are able produce reliable knowledge. It is through the faculty of reasoning that one is able to compensate for the shortcomings of the senses in fathoming distant objects or subtle bodies; likewise, reason is the unescapable resort to distinguish a false report from a sound tradition.[223] Therefore, criticizing the view held by the adversaries,

---

[219] Abū Zahra, *Tarīkh al-madhāhib al-ʿIslāmiyya*, p.169.
[220] In his *Kitāb al-tawḥīd,* al-Māturīdī confirms that religious knowledge is acquired through two sources, reason (ʿaql) and revelation (samʿ). See al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, p.4.
[221] Kholeif *K. al-Tawḥīd*, p.xx; Ceric, Muṣṭafa *Roots of synthetic theology in Islam : a study of the theology of Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944)* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995; Yaman, Hikmet "Small theological differences, profound philosophical implications: notes on some of the chief differences between the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs", in *Ankara universitesi ilahiyat fakultesi dergisi,* 51:1 (2010), p.179.
[222] Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, p.7.
[223] Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, p.10.

Māturīdī writes: 'the deniers of reasoning have no proof for their denying except [by the use of] reasoning; this obliges them to confess the necessity of reasoning.'[224] And since Māturīdī admits that the ultimate sources for religious knowledge are twofold, reason and prophetic revelation, the importance of reasoning in religion also rests on solid scriptural foundations, which is borne out by his Qur'ānic-based justification of reason.

### 2.2.1 Rational Necessity of Knowledge of God

Māturīdī theologians then agree with the Mu'tazilah that reason, not revelation, necessitates knowledge of God (*wujūb ma'rifati-llah 'aqlan*).[225] This idea has its origins in some statements attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa who is reported to have said: 'no excuse is acceptable from the person who is ignorant of God for [all] the signs of creation that he witnesses in the world.'[226] It meant in the Māturīdī (and Mu'tazilī) view that belief in, and praise of, God are incumbent upon every rationally sound human even if a divine command is absent. But, although they seem similar, Māturīdī theologians point to a subtle distinction from the Mu'tazilah concerning their doctrine on rational necessity of knowledge of God. Abū al Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 493/1099) clarifies that nothing is made an obligation except by God, and that reason is merely a cause (*sabab*) of this necessity.[227] Similarly, Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (d. after mid. Fifth/Eleventh century) distinguishes between the necessity of belief in the religious obligations and of knowledge of God, basing necessity of the former on revelation and the latter on reason.[228]

This central Māturīdī doctrine is also one of the chief theological differences between Ash'arism and Māturīdism. Early Māturīdī texts commonly debated it but by looking at it from different angles. Ash'arīs argued to the contrary of the Māturīdīs; that no belief is obligatory or disbelief is forbidden prior to the descent of divine decree (*shar'*). To the Ash'arīs, making any act incumbent upon God presupposes the existence of a parallel eternal power and undermines the omnipotence of God. Māturīdīs, on the other hand, see deactivating the rational faculty of man an act of frivolity (*'abath*) inappropriate to God who created the world out of His wisdom and endowed man with reason as an aspect of that

---

[224] Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd,,* p.10; Abū Zahra, p.168.
[225] Early Ḥanafī theologians were divided over this matter. Abū al-Yusr writes that this view was held by the Mu'tazila, the majority of the scholars of Samarqand, and some Ḥanafīs from Iraq. The contrary view, however, was held by the majority of *Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama'a* and Ash'arī (Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.214).
[226] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.214.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī, pp.10-11. Also see discussion of the disputes in: Nasafī, *Bahr al-Kalām,* pp.82-83 and Samarqandī, *al-Sahaif,* p.463.

wisdom. Another aspect of this epistemological dispute is that the rational person who has not received the news of revelation is pardoned for disbelief or ignorance of God according to the Ashʿarīs.[229] The Māturīdī view is again different from both the Muʿtazilah and the Ashʿarīs. They argued (contrary to the Muʿtazilah) that the rational person who does not use his mental faculties to know God cannot be considered a "true" believer because as he is in a neutral state, there is no prior belief in the existence of God which can be negated to the opposite state of disbelief. Also, (contrary to the Ashʿarīs) the person who willingly disbelieves by denying the existence of God is not pardoned because his state of disbelief is pre-conditioned on the negation of God's existence.[230]

Early Māturīdīs were bitterly critical of the relation between faith and knowledge in Ashʿarī theology. This debate was manifested in different ways, one of them was over the possibility of perfect knowledge of God. Ashʿarīs did not accept the possibility of the perfect knowledge of God because ultimately humans have no role in producing it.[231] Hence, early Māturīdī theologians considered the Ashʿarī conception of knowledge a kind intellectual paralysis. Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983) wrote in his commentary on *al-Fiqh al-ʿakbar*: 'the Ashʿarīs said: God is known by God and not by [anything] other than Him, even if one was an ordained messenger or a high angel; yet He knows Himself truly and the angles and believers are bereft of this [knowledge]. This coming from them (the Ashʿarīs) is not surprising because they doubt their faith.'[232] Nearly a century later, Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (d. after mid of fifth/eleventh century) declares that 'according to Ashʿarī the ultimate meaning (*ḥaqīqa*) of knowledge is perplexity (*ḥīra*) and inability (*ʿajz*) in knowing because [in Ashʿarī

---

[229] Al-Sālimī, *Tamhīd*, p.11 ; Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl*, p.214; Abū al-Muʾīn, *Bahr al-Kalām*, pp.82-83.

[230] Sālimī, *Tamhīd*, p.11; al-Samarqandī, *Sahaif*, p.463.

[231] This will be discussed in more detail in the section on human acts and predestination. However, this detail was an early doctrinal dispute between the Ḥanafī theologians of Samarqand and Bukhārā. Early Māturīdī theologians (the school of Samarqand) argued that faith is not created (*al-ʿiman ghayr makhlouq*), whereas the Bukhārans maintained that faith is created. This is described by Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī in the following words: 'people differed over faith; is it created or not? This difference is [confined] between *ahl al-sunna wal jamaʿa* albeit agreeing that all acts of humans are creations of God (*makhluqa lillah*). Prominent scholars (*ʿaʾmma*) of Bukhārā unanimously said: it is absolutely impermissible to say faith is a creation of God – they went to the point of commonly affirming that the communal prayer led by a person who confesses the createdness of faith is not valid... The scholars of Samarqand unanimously said that faith is created; that it is a creation of God and ascribed to ignorance those who upheld that it is uncreated' (Abū al-Yusr, p.158). Ashʿarī is not mentioned in the context of this dispute, and it does not seem to figure in later theological writings on the disagreements between Ashʿarīsm and Māturīdism.

[232] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar*, p.47.

view] knowledge is neither reached nor realized; [to Ashʿarīs,] true and perfect knowledge is impossible.'[233]

Furthermore, the Ashʿarī concept of faith (the same held by al-Shāfiʿī and the traditionalists) whereby it is not fixed and subject to quantitative increase and decrease (*al-ziyāda wal nuqsān*) was in direct opposition to the understanding held by Māturīdīs (and Ḥanafīs in general) to whom faith is unchanging and not subject to increase or decrease. This leads to another important doctrinal difference between the two schools, famously known as "exception in faith" (*al-ʾistithnāʾ fi al-ʾimān*). The Ashʿarīs held that one cannot make the statement "I am a believer" with complete certainty since it is ultimately God who decides whether one is a believer or not. Therefore, it should be followed by an expression like "God willing" (*inn shāʾa Allah*), declaring uncertainty concerning the validity of their faith in this life and its fruition in the hereafter. Early Māturīdīs, who rebuked this doctrine, negatively described Ashʿarism as a "sect of doubters" (*al-Shakkākiyya*) for putting doubt at the heart of their understanding of faith.[234]

The same line of argument continues in later Māturīdī theology. We find Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī (d. 786/1384), one of the most influential Ḥanafī theologians of the eighth/fourteenth century, declaring that the similarity between the Muʿtazilah and the Māturīdīs on this doctrine is undeniable. But, he ensures to highlight a subtle distinction between them in that the source of necessity of belief in God is the very presence of reason according to the Muʿtazilah, whereas the Māturīdīs determine that 'reason is [merely] a means for acquiring knowledge (*ʿalatun lil-maʿrifa*), and the provider of necessity (*al-mūjib*) is God but by the medium of reason (*ʿaql*).'[235] (A more detailed analysis of the distinction with the Muʿtazilah is also made by contemporary Ḥanafī scholar Qāsim Ibn Qūtlūbghā – d. 879/1474). Al-Bābartī confirms that the rational necessity of faith is a verified opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa and that his teachers[236] were all of this opinion. But interestingly, although he typically takes an anti-ʾAshʿarī position in his works, al-Bābartī tries to minimize the gravity of this dispute with them; he says:

---

[233] Al-Sālimī, *al-Tamhīd,* p.98.

[234] Samarqandī, *Tamhīd,* p.16 and p.22. The ramifications of this doctrine are more closely related to the debate over the acts of man and predestination and will be dealt with in more detail in section three of this chapter.

[235] Al-Bābartī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ waṣiyyat al-ʾImām ʾabi Ḥanīfa* (edited by Muḥammad al-ʿAydi and Ḥamza al-Bakri), Amman: Dar al-Fath, 2009, p.55.

[236] That is: scholars who flourished in the first half of the eighth/fourteenth century.

Know that our fellow associates have argued that we do not mean by the rational necessity of faith that it is the sort of deed which is meritorious if performed and punishable if ignored, because this deed (belief in God) is known through revelation. Instead, we mean: a kind of inclination (*rujḥān*) towards belief occurs in the mind whereby reason does not see belief and disbelief as one and the same. Rather, reason should consider belief to be praiseworthy and disbelief to be reproachful. In view of this, there is no difference between us and the Ashʿarīs on this matter.[237]

The significance of this dispute is highlighted by doctrinaire Ashʿarī Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771/1369), author of the *Nūniyya* - one of the earliest works on the disputes between Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs (introduced in Chapter One). In the *Nūniyya*, the rational necessity of knowledge of God is considered a real dispute with Māturīdīs rather than a verbal one.[238] Interestingly, while al-Bābartī does not give the dispute on the rational necessity of knowledge of God much theological weight, we find al-Subkī (whose goal in the *Nūniyya* was to minimize difference) accepting the opposite view and lists the problem among the non-verbal, real dispute with Māturīdīs.

### 2.2.2 Validity of the Emulator's Belief

The philosophical repercussions of the two school's divergent conceptions of knowledge transpired during the course of their debate on the validity of the emulator's belief (*ʿimān al-muqallid*) which became one of the key theological disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. But, a more influential source of difference in this dispute related to the fact the two schools also held different definitions of faith. Ironically, one would expect the Māturīdīs – who (like the Muʿtazilah) emphasize the use of reason in the acquisition of knowledge of God – to disapprove of blind faith. Nevertheless, the established doctrinal dispute was that the Ashʿarīs invalidated belief of the emulator, and the Māturīdīs saw it as valid.

The Muʿtazilah argued that the nature of faith obligatory upon humans is not abstract – whereby the mere assent to the existence of one unique eternal Creator is sufficient. Rather, the substance of valid faith in the Muʿtazilī view should include the detailed rational proofs of faith. In other words, faith should be assented to in a substantiated or detailed (*mufaṣṣal*) sense not unsubstantiated or abstract (*bil-jumla*).[239] Māturīdī theologians in line with Abū Ḥanīfa's conception of faith, considered abstract faith sufficient for a person to be

---

[237] Al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-waṣiyya,* p.59.

[238] Al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn Abd al-Wahhab *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah al-kubra* (edited by Mahmoud al-Tanahi and Abd al-Fattah al-Hilou), Cairo: Dar 'ihya' al-kotob al-ʿArabiyyah, [undated], v.9, p.387.

[239] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl*, p.154.

a believer, which was strongly contested by Ashʿarīs. The book of *Maqālāt* by Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī contains a direct criticism of Abū Ḥanīfa's formulation of faith; he says: Abū Ḥanīfa did not make any [practical component] of religion a part of faith; he claims that faith is not divisible, does not increase or decrease, and people are equal in it.'[240] Māturīdīs saw that the Ashʿarī and Muʿtazilī prescription of detailed faith upon every individual inevitably amounts to ascribing the common laymen to disbelief (*takfīr al-ʿawām*), for only a learned minority can effectively fulfill the task of knowing the detailed rational proofs of the articles of faith.[241] Indeed this was a common accusation of Ashʿarī's doctrine from early Ḥanafī and non-Ḥanafī Sunnī theologians.[242] Possibly to ward off the association of Ashʿarīs with the Muʿtazilah, Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī provides a verified interpretation (*taḥqīq*) of the actual difference between Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs over the prescription of substantiated rational faith. He says in *Tabṣirat al-ʿAdilla,*

> This dispute [with Ashʿarī] concerns the person who had grown up in a distant land (*qutr mina l-aqtar*) or atop a high mountain (*shāhiqi jabal*) and has not receive the religious call and lacked the verified knowledge of the existence of this religion (*milla*). He then encounters a Muslim that invites him to religion and delineates to him the obligatory articles of belief; telling him that a messenger had passed on [the message] of this religion from God and has invited humanity to follow it. [This messenger,] furthermore [was divinely aided] with supernatural miracles. This person [having heard this] attests to all of the above and believes in the religion without prior contemplation and thought. This is what they (Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs) disputed. As for the people of Islam (*ahl dar al-Islam*) [including] their laymen, scholars, women, mentally mature teenagers (*ṣibyānuhum al-ʿaqilūn*), urban or country dwellers, villagers, desert or steppe inhabitants; [we confirm] that they are all true Muslims who know God and His monotheism and so on. None of them lacks a kind of reasoning (*ḍarbu istidlāl*), though they may lack the means of expressing it [.] Over them there is no dispute between us and al-ʾAshʿarī, but the dispute is between us and the Muʿtazilah.[243]

Nonetheless, the crucial consequence of the Ashʿarī and Muʿtazilī rejection of unsubstantiated belief is the parallel rejection of the emulator's faith. Māturīdīs opposed Ashʿarī who interestingly sides with the Muʿtazilah on this doctrine against the majority of Sunnī jurists and traditionalists. [244] Abū al-Layth wrote in defense of the Māturīdī position: 'faith by emulation is sound though he (the emulator) does not seek the proof of reasoning (*istidlāl*) contrary to the Muʿtazilah and Ashʿarīs [as] they invalidate faith by emulation and

---

[240] Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt,* p.119.
[241] Al-Sālimī, *Tamhīd,* p.100; Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.154;
[242] As gleaned from Qushayrī's letter discussed in Chapter One.
[243] Abū l-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira,* p.60-61. Al-Sālimī (al-Sālimī, *Tamhīd,* p.9), predating Abū l-Muʿīn, mentions the same allegorical example but only in the Muʿtazilī context with no reference to Ashʿarīs. Al-Lāmishī (al-Lāmishī, *Tamhīd,* p.143) and al-Khabbāzī (al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī,* p.280) quote Abū al-Muʿīn's *Tabṣira,* and expresses the same view. (Al-Khabbāzī does not mention Abū l-Muʿīn's name).
[244] al-Sālimī, *Tamhīd,* p.100; Abū al-Yusr, p.155; al-Samarqandī, *al-Sahaif,* p.462;

confess the doctrine of the waywardness of the righteous majority.'[245] Māturīdīs contented that if a person believed in (*i'taqada*) and assented to (*ṣaddaqa*) the articles of faith without seeking or being able to demonstrate rational evidence for them, he is to be considered a believer. Ultimately, in the Māturīdī view, in order to reach a particular destination, it does not matter whether one follows an instructor or a map on the one hand – or navigates the correct pathway by his own efforts, on the other – because both will eventually lead to the same destination. Likewise, if one believes by emulation or by proof of reasoning, both will lead to the same goal – i.e. belief in God – and must both be described as believers.[246] However, the soundness of faith in the Māturīdī view is only technical in that those whose faith is wholly dependent on emulation are sinners for not using reasoning (*naẓar*) to garland their faith with certainty. Abū l-Layth writes: 'the status of faith by proof (*istidlāl*) is a thousand times higher than the status of faith by emulation. The more reasoning and inference used by a person, the more enlightened their faith will be.'[247] Some Māturīdī theologians, disagreeing still with the common Ash'arī position, point out that there are two possible opinions attributed to Imām Ash'arī on this point, one of which (the authentic one according to them) agrees with the Māturīdī view and validates the faith of the emulator.[248] Indeed, some influential Māturīdī theologians, like Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, do not even attribute the invalidity of faith by emulation to the Ash'arīs and confine it to the Mu'tazilah.[249]

Therefore, it is not surprising that the difference over the validity of the emulator's faith is considered merely a verbal difference in al-Subkī's *Nūniyya*. Al-Subkī, who ultimately subscribes to the Māturīdī opinion on this dispute, reports of disagreement among the Ash'arīs concerning whether the contrary view of the invalidity of the emulator's faith was falsely attributed to al-'Ash'arī. Al-Subkī maintains that even if in fact there was a difference, it would be minimal and insignificant.[250] In his other work *al-Sayf al-mash'hūr,* which is a super-commentary on Abū l-Layth's *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-'akbar,* he cites *al-Hādī* by Māturīdī theologian al-Khabbāzī (d. 691/1292) to corroborate his claim that it is a verbal difference and explains it in the following words:

> Ash'arī did not intend to say that he who does not know God on the basis of a rational proof
> made up of logical suppositions (*muqaddimāt*) and conclusions (*natā'ij*) in line with the

---

[245] Abū al-Layth, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh*, p.15. the word *Istidlal* is this critical edition is wrongly written as "Islam".

[246] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.155.

[247] Abū al-Layth, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* pp.15-16.

[248] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.155; al-Ṣābūnī, *Bidāya,* p.153; al-Lāmishī, *Tamhīd*, pp.135-136; l-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī,* p.261.

[249] Abū al-Mu'īn, *Baḥr al-Kalām,* pp.84-85p; *Tabṣira,* pp.35-36.

[250] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.9, p.385.

terminology of theologians is a disbeliever. Rather he ('Ash'arī) confirmed that [the believer] must know them in an abstract, simple sense (*bil-jumla*), and this is the case in every lay person.[251]

### 2.2.3 Rational Recognition of Good and Evil

The divergence over the role of reason in knowing God between Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs led to another dispute which would be thoroughly discussed in later theological writings on the doctrinal differences between the two schools. The Māturīdīs, who (similar to the Mu'tazilah) held that the existence of the rational faculty in humans makes it incumbent upon them to know God even if they did not "hear" (*samā'*) the religious call, also drew closer to the Mu'tazilah in approving that by reason alone one is able to recognize good and evil in this world. Ash'arīs, on the other hand, did not accept either of the above dictums. To them, the revealed law (*al-shar'*) exclusively determines the necessity to know God, the prescribed religious duties, as well as all indications on the good (*ḥusn*) and evil (*qubḥ*) of things in this world.

Like the Mu'tazilah, Māturīdīs divided the things of this world in terms of good and evil into three categories: first, the things whose quality of being good is known by independent reason; second, the things whose quality of being evil is known by independent reason; and the third category refers to the things whose quality of being good or evil is ambiguous.[252] On the last category both Māturīdīs and Mu'tazilah agreed that the ultimate point of reference to unlocking the ambiguity of good and evil is religious law, not reason. But, Māturīdīs differed with the Mu'tazilah over the entailments of the good and evil recognizable by reason. Contrary to the Mu'tazilah who argued that rational recognition of good and evil alone necessitates action and divine law plays no role in this necessity, the Māturīdīs (in line with statements attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa) ruled that although reason is able to fathom good and evil, nothing is made an obligation except by God because reason cannot be fully independent of revelation. As for the Ash'arīs, they distanced themselves from both schools and saw no inherent quality of good or evil in things of this world, rather a thing in this world is only good or evil because religious law prescribes it as such.

---

[251] Al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn "al-Sayf al-mash'hur fi Sharḥ 'aqīdat Abī Manṣūr" in Yeprem, M. Saim *Māturīdī'nin Akide risalesi ve serhi,* Istanbul: Marmara Universitesi Ilahiyat Fakultesi, 2000, p.41.
[252] A similar classification of good and evil is found in Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī's Mu'tazilī teacher (Abū Zahra, p.170).

The book of *Tamhīd* by Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī (d. around mid. fifth/eleventh c.) contains one of the earliest Māturīdī accounts on this debate, but only in the context of the opposition between the Muʿtazilah and the majority of scholars (ʿammat al-ʿulama'); the name of Ashʿarī is omitted. He classifies the things of this world in terms of good and evil in the following way: that there are things which are good in themselves (*ḥasanun bi-ʿaynih*), such as the values of faith in God and justice; or evil in themselves (*qabīḥun bi-ʿaynih*), like thievery, injustice and disbelief; and finally that there are things which are good (or evil) not in themselves, but for other (external) factors (*ḥasan li-ghayrih*), such as the construction of places of worship or the removal of harmful objects from the way of pedestrians. Al-Sālimī then concludes in what seems like a response to both Muʿtazilah and Ashʿarīs by saying:

> We say: the good is good in itself and revelation testifies to it as being good; [likewise] the evil is evil in itself and revelation testifies to it as being evil. It is reported of Abū Ḥanīfa as saying in his book entitled *al-ʿĀlim wal mutaʿallim* that injustice is evil in itself and we do not say it is known to us as good or evil by reason [alone] but we say that we [are able to] know whether a thing is good or evil by rational proof (*bi-dilālat al-ʿaql*) as much as [we are able] to know it by proof of scripture (*bi-dilālat al-sharʿ*).[253]

The question of whether good and evil are known through reason or revelation became one of the key theological disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism in later theological writings, especially from the eighth/fourteenth century onwards.[254] A highly influential Māturīdī argument in opposition to the Ashʿarī doctrine of good and evil was made by Bukhāran scholar Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī (d. 747/1346).[255] He argued against the Ashʿarīs that it is rationally impossible not to give reason a role in the recognition of good

---

[253] Al-Sālimī, *Tamhīd*, pp.17–18.

[254] The Māturīdī doctrine of good and evil as articulated by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa in his two books *al-Tawḍīḥ* and *Taʿdīl al-ʿUlūm* proved influential and was frequently quoted beyond the eighth/fourteenth century as will be seen in the course of this study. However, the doctrine of good and evil is absent from al-Subkī's (d. 771/1369) Ashʿarī poem on differences (known as *al-Nūniyya*). His contemporary, Māturīdī scholar Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī (d. 786/1384), mentions it in his commentary on the *Waṣiyya* by Abū Ḥanīfa in the course of discussing the role of reason in Ashʿarī theology, but with no reference to Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa (al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ waṣiyyat Abī Ḥanīfa,* p.53).

[255] Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī delineates three meanings of good and evil. The first refers to whether something is described by an attribute of perfection (*kamāl*) or imperfection (*naqs*), such as knowledge and ignorance. The Second is whether something is done according to one's intention or in contradiction to it. The third meaning refers to when something is described as good or evil if it commands praise or reprimand in this world, and punishment or reward in the hereafter. Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs are in agreement that good and evil in the first two meanings are known through reason alone. The third meaning, however, is what they differed over. But, since both Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs agree that reason cannot determine God's decision to punish or reward someone, Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa narrowed down the difference over good and evil in terms of praise (*madh*) and reprimand (*dhamm*) only (Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī *Taʿdīl al-ʿUlūm* , State Library of Berlin MS Landberg 394, fols.120b –121a and Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa, *al-Tawḍīḥ* In al-Taftāzānī, Saʿd al-Dīn *Sharḥ al-Talwih ʿala al-Tawḍīḥ*, Cairo, 1377 [1957], pp.172 - 175). A similar understanding of good and evil is found in the book of *Ṣaḥāʾif* by Shms al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. after 690/1291) (al-Samarqandī, *Ṣaḥāʾif*, pp.464 – 467) and Abū al-Barakat al-Nasafī's (d. 710/1310) manual of the principles of jurisprudence (Abū al-Barakat al-Nasafī, *al-Manār* In *Majmūʿat al-Mutūn*, Fazilet: Istanbul, undated, p.4).

and evil. If the obligation to believe in the message of the prophet (*wujūb taṣdīq al-nabī*) , as well as the fact he does not lie (*ḥurmat al-kadhib ‘alayh*) were both exclusively known by revelation, it would lead to a circular logical fallacy (*dawr*) because the obligation to believe in the message of the prophet was based on the very truthfulness of that message. Likewise, the scriptural basis of the fact the prophet does not lie is another false circular argument because the message can only be believed in having established that lying is a forbidden act unsuited for an infallible (*ma‘ṣūm*) prophet. Therefore, the "good" (*ḥasan*) that is believing in the message of the infallible prophet and the "evil" (*qabīḥ*) of lying must both be known through rational, not scriptural, proof. In conclusion, Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a writes in response to the Ash‘arīs that in order to avoid logical inconsistencies 'one must admit that the good and evil in some acts of God are known through reason, for if lying and non-deliverance of promises were acceptable in God, [all] religious laws (*sharā’i‘*) would be rendered meaningless and His promises would not be trustworthy.'[256]

## 2.3 Wisdom and the Acts of God

Another doctrine over which the Māturīdīs differed with the Ash‘arīs was related to the acts of God. The Ash‘arīs argued that the acts of God are not explicable in terms of good or evil, wisdom or frivolity, and commonly cited the Qur’ānic verse which reads: 'He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)' in support of their view.[257] The Mu‘tazilah, on the other hand, believed that the acts of God are invariably explicable in terms of intents and purposes, because an all-wise God does not act in a way which contradicts His wisdom. Therefore, it is impossible for God not to arrange creation in the most appropriate manner; that is, goodness and doing the most beneficial for His creatures (*fi‘l al-‘aṣlaḥ*) are necessary upon God. The Māturīdī interpretation of this problem was different from both schools. They argued that just as God is described in the Qur’ān as all-wise and all-knowing, then His acts are pre-conditioned upon His eternal wisdom; He both intended and aimed at creating the world in line with His divine wisdom. But, they also emphasize that God creates with wisdom by His intent and freewill and not by compulsion.

---

[256] Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a, *Ta‘dīl,* fol.121a. Al-Bābartī seems to make the three-fold distinction of good and evil a feature of Ash‘arīsm: 'the Ash‘arīs said: good and evil are apply to various things: attributes of perfection or imperfection that invite praise and reproach; what is in line with nature or opposed to it; and what relates to the consequence of reward or punishment' (al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-waṣiyya,* pp.57–58). Nevertheless, dispute on the rational recognition of good and evil does not draw strong criticism from al-Bābartī partly because he connects it with the problem of the rational necessity to know God, which he already trivialized as mentioned earlier.
[257] Surat al-Anbiya', Verse 23 (Holy Qur’ān, translated by Yūsuf Ali).

Therefore, Māturīdī theologians desisted from accepting the Muʿtazilī creed that it is necessary unto God to do the most beneficial for His creatures (*wujūb fiʿl al-ʿaṣlaḥ*). To them, ascribing any sort of compulsion upon God belies His omnipotence and presupposes that He is compelled to act by another power, which contradicts His monotheism.[258]

The fact Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs held different definitions of wisdom was central to their theological disputes on the acts of God. Ashʿarīs argued that an act is described by wisdom if it corresponds to the intention of the doer, which meant that an act of God is not justifiable in terms of wisdom (*ḥikma*) or impertinence (*safh*) because God does whatsoever He wishes. The Muʿtazilah, on the other hand, ruled that an act is described by wisdom if it is beneficial for the doer or other than the doer (i.e. choosing the best for creation), which inclined them to ascribing compulsion unto God who out of His divine wisdom should act in accordance with that which is most beneficial for His creation. The Māturīdīs, however, argued that an act is described by wisdom if it ultimately leads to praiseworthy consequences (*ma lahu ʿaqiba Hamīda*). Indeed, wisdom is a crucial notion in Māturīdī theology because it directly relates to the theological problems of divine justice.[259] In Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's *kitāb al-tawḥīd,* wisdom (*ḥikma*) and justice (*ʿadl*) are closely related, if not even identical; he says, 'wisdom is exactitude (*al-ʿiṣāba*), which is putting everything in its [right] place; and that is [also] the meaning of justice.'[260] Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī after outlining the above definitions of wisdom, wrote that 'elucidation of which of these definitions is valid and which is invalid will be very extensive as it will have numerous divisions and sub-divisions; [all] theological discussions over the determination of justice and injustice (*al-taʿdīl wa al-tājwīr*) revolve around it.'[261] Then, given the significance of the question of wisdom, al-Nasafī apologizes for not probing further into it in this book of his – *al-Tabṣira* – and promises to deliver on an entire volume dedicated on the problem of divine wisdom.[262]

---

[258] Abū Zahra, pp.170–171. Framing this doctrinal difference between Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs as a dispute over whether the acts of God are explicable in terms of good and evil (*taʿlīl afʿal Allah*) seems to be a product of later *kalām*. We find reference to it in al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal,* p.65; al-Samarqandī, *al-Ṣaḥāʾif,* pp.467 – 470; Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa, *Taʿdīl,* fols.120a–122a; al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid,* v.4, p.304.

[259] More on the definition of wisdom in Māturīdism see: Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl al-din,* p.130; al-Nasafī, *Tabṣira* (edited by Muḥammad Isa), v.2, p.922; al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Bidāya,* p.62; al-Lāmishī, *al-Tamhīd,* p.111; al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī,* p.169.

[260] Māturīdī, *k. al-Tawḥīd,* p.97; *ḥikma* is defined in *k. al-Tawḥīd,* p.306. Also see Yaman, "Small theological differences...", p183.

[261] Abū al-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira,* p.505.

[262] Al-Nasafī wrote 'as for [those who seek] satisfaction and elaboration, they are found in a book of mine solely dedicated on this (the question of wisdom) which I have yet to complete' (ibid). As of today, the book is lost.

*2.3.1 Does God Pardon Disbelief?*

In light of their definition of wisdom, the Ashʿarīs argued that certain acts of God like forgiveness of disbelief and polytheism (*al-ʿafw ʿan al-kufr wa al-shirk*) or committing the righteous to eternal punishment in hell-fire and the disbelievers to eternal blessing in heaven are rationally possible (*jāʾiz ʿaqlan*). That is, although evidence contained in religious texts ascertain that God would not do such acts – i.e. they are legally impermissible (*ghayr jāʾiz sharʿan*) – nonetheless, they are equitable with reason and imply no contradiction because God chooses to act in the way He had intended. Hence, according to the Ashʿarīs, there is no humanly-determined criterion of wisdom on the basis of which one justifies the acts of God. Māturīdī theologians, to the contrary, proposed that the ability to differentiate between good and evil, a good-doer and an evil-doer, is an inherent aspect of wisdom. Furthermore, they argued that the Ashʿarī approval of the abovementioned acts of God as rationally possible clearly deviates from the divine wisdom out of which the world was created. Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣabūnī (d. 580/1184) wrote against the Ashʿarīs who ruled that it is both rationally and legally impossible for God to pardon disbelief because:

> According to our fellow (Māturīdī) associates, the difference between disbelief and other sins is that disbelief is the ultimate transgression, and one which cannot be permitted or tolerated; therefore, it cannot be forgiven or absolved. And since the disbeliever upholds that his opinion is true and proper, and he does not seek divine amnesty or forgiveness, then why would his forgiveness by God be considered an act of wisdom.[263]

This dispute which also relates to the role of reason in the recognition of good and evil is the first among al-Subkī's real differences (*al-khilāfāt al-maʿnawiyyah*) between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. He says:

> The first [of them] is that in our doctrine it is permissible for God to punish the righteous and reward the transgressors [since] every blessing (*niʿma*) bestowed by Him is a favor (*faḍl*), and every indignation (*nuqma*) is justice. [There are] no restrictions upon Him in His dominion and no justifications for His actions. As for them (Māturīdīs), the transgressor must be punished and the righteous must be rewarded, and the opposite is impossible.[264]

Similarly, Ḥanafī scholar Ibn al-Humām – on whom the influence of Ashʿarī theology (especially that of al-Ghazālī) is clear – sides with the Ashʿarīs on the problem whether it is rationally possible to submit the righteous to eternal punishment in hellfire. He quotes a later Māturīdī text as saying: 'submitting the righteous to eternal punishment in hellfire and the transgressors to eternal bliss in heaven is possible according to them (Ashʿarīs), yet

---

[263] Al-Ṣabūnī, *al-Bidāya,* pp.83–84.
[264] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt k.,* v.9, p.386.

revealed evidence (*al-sam'*) rules out such possibility. As for us (Māturīdīs), it is not possible.'[265] Commenting on this, Ibn al-Humām says that he favors the first opinion.[266]

### 2.3.2 Is the Will of God indicative of His Love and Pleasure?

Another problem relevant to the debate on the acts of God which Māturīdī theologians discussed in opposition to the Ash'arīs was on whether God's will (*irāda*) includes pleasure (*riḍa*) and love (*maḥabba*). Ash'arīs held that God does not will something unless it is also desired and loved by Him. In other words, because God does not desire evil (such as disbelief) then this evil is not part of His will. Māturīdīs believed that God's will is separate from His desire and pleasure. They affirmed that everything in the world happens in accordance with God's desire (*mashī'a*), will (*irāda*) and wisdom (*ḥikma*), notwithstanding their being good or evil. However, only the things which are good happen with the pleasure and love of God, and – although evil is willed by God – it is neither desired nor loved by Him. According to early Māturīdīs, Ash'arīs side with the Mu'tazilah in this doctrine. Abū al-Yusr says:

> Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī said: all human acts (good, evil and neutral) are by the pleasure, love, desire and will of God; furthermore, he does not differentiate between [Divine] Will and Desire, and between [Divine] Love and Pleasure. Al-'Ash'arī dissented from the doctrine of *'ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* over this great problem which is among the five doctrinal disputes between *'ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* and the Mu'tazilah who [even] called themselves the People of Justice (*'ahlu al-'adl*) because of it.[267]

Abū al-Yusr then states the view held by the Mu'tazilah and the Ash'arīs which is: because God would be unjust if He desired evil acts and then punished for them, we must say that God neither wills nor desires evil acts. Abū l-Yusr comments on this by saying: 'they erred in what they claimed because by negating God's will they attributed inability (*'ajz*) to Him.'[268]

In later theological writings, we find the problem of whether God's will is indicative of His love and pleasure in al-Bābartī's commentary on the *waṣiyya* of Abū Ḥanīfa explained in the following way:

---

[265] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara* In Abū l-Lutf al-Muqaddasī's commentary *al-Musamara*, p.176. The quoted text is *al-'Umda* by Abū al-Barakat Abd-Allah b. Aḥmad al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310).
[266] Ibid.
[267] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.53.
[268] Ibid. Al-Ṣābūnī (*al-Bidāya*, pp.71–73) and al-Lāmishī (*al-Tamhīd,* pp.78–79) discuss this problem only in relation to the Mu'tazilah without reference to Ash'arīs. Al-Khabbāzī, however, did mention it; he says: 'Ash'arī claims that love and pleasure are in one meaning with God's will, i.e. they are inclusive of every created being just like God's will. This is a branch of the dispute over the acts of man' (al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī*, p.176).

> In general, our doctrine determines that every created being was by God's will no matter what it was. But, righteous submission (*ṭāʿa*) to God occurs by His wish, will, love, pleasure, command, divine decree and predestination. As for transgression (*maʿṣiyya*), it occurs by His divine decree, predestination, will and wish; but not His command, pleasure or love because His pleasure and love are only befitting to what is good, such as righteous deeds – not sins.[269]

Bābartī then states that according to Ashʿarī, 'love and pleasure are of the same meaning as divine will, therefore they [must] be inclusive of every created being, just like God's will.'[270] In Subkī's *Nūniyya*, this dispute is one of the verbal differences with the Māturīdīs. Al-Subkī suggests that the contrary opinion to the Māturīdīs which saw God's will identical with His love is falsely attributed to al-Ashʿarī. He further reports of the majority of Ashʿarīs, early and late, as having the same opinion as Abū Ḥanīfa. But, although he mentioned it in the course of his list of differences, this dispute seems insignificant to al-Subkī as he himself also takes the Māturīdī opinion as the correct one on this problem.[271]

## 2.4 Predestination and the Acts of Man

### 2.4.1 The theory of Acquisition (kasb)

The debate over the createdness of human acts (*khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād*) is a central theme in Islamic theology. It is also the overall heading under which Ashʿarism and Māturīdism disputed on a number of crucial doctrines.[272] The Muʿtazilah, in consistence with their concept of justice, which is one of the five defining principles of Muʿtazilī theology, argued that God instills, or creates (*yakhluq*), in man the power (*qudra*) to act, and that the acts generated thereafter are genuinely man's own creation. Therefore, only this way can man be held truly responsible for his own acts and be rewarded or punished in concord with divine justice. According to Ashʿarism, making man's actions his own creation amounts to the heretic doctrine of the deniers of predestination (*al-Qadariyya*), and compromises the sovereignty of God's omnipotence. The Ashʿarīs argued that God is the creator of everything in the world, including the acts of man in their entirety. Yet, in order to avoid the obvious problem of nullifying the obligation to perform religious duties (*al-taklīf*) – because how can man be rewarded or punished for actions that lay beyond his powers – they propose the

---

[269] Al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-waṣiyyah,* p.86.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.9, pp.384 – 385.
[272] See William M. Watt "The Origin of the Islamic Doctrine of Acquisition" In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 75 (1943), pp 234-247.

theory of acquisition (*kasb*) which proposes that while man's actions are created by God, he simultaneously acquires (*yaksab*) the merits of his acts.

Nevertheless, Māturīdīs – like the Ashʿarīs – emphasized that everything in existence is a creation of God because assuming a creative principle in any being other than God implies partnership in creation and violates the monotheistic basis of Muslim belief. But, divine wisdom and justice also necessitate that unless man has free choice in acting no reward is earned or punishment is deserved for his acts. Then, in order to achieve a coherent position that sustains the createdness of everything by God as well as human free choice, Māturīdīs say, (also similar to the Ashʿarīs), that humans do not create their acts, rather they acquire them in a way which invites reward or punishment. However, a fundamental difference occurs between the doctrine of *kasb* in Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. Ashʿarīs argued that both man's action, which is created by God, and his free choice occur concurrently and together bring about the acquisition. In other words, for acquisition to be created by God, Ashʿarīs upheld that man has absolutely no power or influence over its occurrence.[273]

On this particular detail, the Māturīdīs departed from the position of the Ashʿarīs. According to the Māturīdī doctrine of *kasb,* God creates in man a certain power by which he is free to choose whether to acquire his acts or not to acquire them. Again, Māturīdism seems to place itself partway between the Muʿtazilah and Ashʿarism. While the Muʿtazilah affirmed the existence of a power by which man creates his own acts, and the Ashʿarīs denied the existence of that power and made man's acquisition of his acts occur only if it is coupled with the act of God, the Māturīdīs gave man the power to acquire his acts by giving him freedom to choose (*ikhtiyār*) between the two opposite effects of the capacity to act (*ʿistitāʿa*).

Here, it is noteworthy to mention that this power to choose between two effects (which constitutes the main element in Māturīdī theory of *kasb*) is none other than the human capacity (*ʿistitāʿa*) with two opposite effects which is an idea that goes back to Abū Ḥanīfa who is reported to have said:

> The capacity with which a person commits a sinful act is the very same capacity by which he performs a righteous act; [therefore] he is punishable for expending the capacity which God created in him and commanded him to use in performing righteous acts not in committing sin, he directed it towards committing sinful acts.[274]

---

[273] Abū Zahra, p.171 – 172.
[274] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ,* pp.16-17. Beginning with Abū Manṣūr himself, Māturīdī theologians adopt Abū Ḥanīfa's idea of *ʿistitāʿa* as usable in two opposite effects.

Justifying this position, Abū l-Layth wrote,

> Abū Ḥanīfa and his associates took an intermediary position by asserting that creation (*al-khalq*), [which] is an act of God, means creating the capacity to act in man. [However,] utilizing this divinely created capacity to act is man's own act in a real, not metaphorical, sense. This way they (the Māturīdīs) came through unscathed by the doctrines of denying predestination (*qadar*) and compulsionism (*jabr*).'[275]

Māturīdī theologians strongly criticized the Ashʿarī theory of *kasb* and viewed it as a kind of "disguised compulsionism" (*jabr muqannaʿ*).[276] Abū al-Layth wrote,

> 'another difference between us and the Ashʿarīs is that they say: "the capacity which is usable for doing an evil act is not usable in doing a good act", and this is also close to compulsionism (*jabr*), if not compulsionism itself, because if the capacity for evil cannot be directed towards doing a good act, [the person] becomes compelled to do evil.'[277]

In a similar vein, Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī exclaims at the theological disorder in Ashʿarī's conception of the acts of man, saying: 'Ashʿarī claims that God *ex nihilo* initiates (*mujid*) the acts of man, and that He is also their creator. [Despite that, Ashʿarī] still maintains that the acts of God are none other than the acts of man; in fact, [to him,] the act of God is identical with the act of man.'[278] Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī provides in his *Tabṣira* an extensive rebuttal of the Ashʿarī formulation that the acts of man are only figurative and not actions proper. To him, it is even at odds with the common rules of linguistics, arguing that if Ashʿarīs are willing to accept the authority of the renowned pioneer of Arabic grammar Sibawayh, then 'Sibawayh affirmed that humans have their own acts for he says regarding the statements "Zayd hit [someone]" or "Zayd went up" that he did so by his own act. Then why did your Ashʿarī master claim there are no acts in reality except the acts performed by God!'[279]

Māturīdī theologians also expounded an important differentiation between the acts of man and the acts of God, indicating that Ashʿarī does not observe in his theory of *kasb*. Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, probably influenced by Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī,[280] argued that human actions

---

[275] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ,* p.19.
[276] Al-Jabriyyah (Compulstionists) refers to the upholders of the doctrine which sees humans compelled to act, viewed by mainstream theology as nullifying *taklīf* because it leaves man with no free choice. It is the exact opposite of al-Qadariyya (deniers of predestination).
[277] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ,* p.19.
[278] Al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-din*, p.104.
[279] Abū l-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira,* p.423.
[280] The influence of Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī on Ṣābūnī is evident in the latter's theological works, but it can also be gleaned from the *Munaẓarāt* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in which he reports of al-Ṣābūnī to have 'had studied the book of *Tabṣirat al-ʿAdilla* by Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī and concluded that it is unsurpassable in [providing] verified and thorough examinations [of theological problems]' (al-Rāzī, *Munaẓarāt,* pp.23-24). Other early Māturīdī

are two types: involuntary (*ghayr ikhtiyāriyya*) which God creates in man irrespective of his power and choice; and voluntary acts (*ikhtiyāriyya*), which God creates in man with his ability to choose. In the Māturīdī view, whether an act is by man or by God, it must always be considered an act in a real sense. However, the acts of man should be described as acquisition and never creation, because creation is by God alone. Conversely, the acts of God should invariably be termed creation and never acquisition because the latter is reserved for man who is rewarded or punished for his deeds. As for the Ashʿarīs, acting is another word for creating in the real sense (*haqiqi*) and must be confined to God. This leads Ashʿarīs to define man's acquisition of his deeds as a figurative (*majazi*) act, because if it were in a real sense, it would lead to man creating his own acts – something both Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs disallowed in opposition to the Muʿtazilah. Al-Ṣabūnī provides a response to this by arguing that figuration is only valid if it is conditioned on the existence of a common denominator between the real and the figurative, allowing for an expression to be borrowed from the place were it is used in a real sense and transferred to the figurative in order to convey a shared meaning between the two. But, since it is self-evident that God's creative act is worlds apart in terms of meaning and efficacy from man's acquisitive act, al-Ṣabūnī determines this this sort of proof by figuration for Ashʿarī's theory of *kasb* is a void argument.[281]

Māturīdīs also repudiate the Ashʿarī view of action whereby it is inconceivable for an act (*fiʿl*) to have two effects (*mafʿūlayn*) or to be predestined (*maqdūr*) for two acting agents (*qādirayn*). Abū l-Yusr al-Bazdawī says in his refutation that while the above statement holds true concerning the acts of man – because he cannot make his acts effective in others – the same does not apply to God. This is because all the acts of God are voluntary as nothing is incumbent upon Him. But man has involuntary acts (like the pulsating of his heart) and they are created by God. Therefore, 'just as it is possible for the same item of knowledge to be known by two people, and the visible object to be seen by two seeing individuals, then why cannot the efficacy of the act be shared by two acting agents or be estimated for them.'[282] Abū al-Yusr further criticizes in stronger terms the "sophistry" in the Ashʿarī supposition that an act is invariably divine and voluntary by saying:

> Some ignorant Ashʿarīs and other sheepish fools argued that no act exists except of the voluntary type (*ikhtiyāri*); this is an obscene denial [of commonsense] like that of the

accounts on the difference between the acts of man and the acts of God are found in: al-Māturīdī, *k. al-Tawḥīd*, p.228; Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl al-din*, p.104; Abū l-Muʿīn, *Bahr al-Kalām*, pp.147-148.
[281] Al-Ṣabūnī, *al-Bidāya*, pp.66 – 67.
[282] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl*, p.110. See also al-Ṣabūnī, *al-Bidāya*, p.67.

Sophists because water flows from one place to another in the same way a donkey can travel from one place to another – further still, it contradicts the book of God.[283]

The significance of the debate over the acts of man is evident in later theological writings. Al-Bābartī has no reservations in putting the Ash'arī's in view of their doctrine of *kasb* in one camp with the doctrine of the heretical sect of al-Jahmiyyah. He says:

> The compulsionists (*al-Jabriyya*) and their Master al-Jahm b. Ṣafwān al-Tirmidhī, which is also the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, said that man does not have an act [of his own] in the first place, nor do people have free choice or power over their actions. Rather, they are all involuntary and necessary acts like the movements of a person seized by a fit of epilepsy (*harakat al-murta'ish*) or the pulsating veins, and deeming them man's own acts is [merely] figurative.[284]

Even Ibn al-Humām's sympathy with Ash'arīs does not transpire in the context of this doctrinal dispute, and he criticizes its defenders giving no value to the extensively rational justifications put forward by later Ash'arī theologians.[285] To Ibn al-Humām, the Ash'arī theory of *kasb* leads to making obsolete all of God's commands and prohibitions because man's acts are not in fact his own. Ibn al-Humām then says: 'therefore, a group of later Ash'arīs have had to confess that the necessary consequence of their theory [of *kasb*] is the acceptance of the doctrine of compulsions (*al-jabr*) and that man is compelled in the guise of a free-chooser.'[286]

Al-Subkī, however, is unyielding in his defense of his Ash'arī master's doctrine of *kasb*. Interestingly, it is among the verbal disputes with Māturīdīs, which seems to contrast with the perceived irreconcilability between the two views in the abovementioned Māturīdī refutations. According to al-Subkī, anyone who seeks to take an intermediary position between Mu'tazilism (which sees man as the creator of his acts), and the compulsionists (who sanction no active power for man), must presuppose a medium through which the acts of man materialize. Then he says: 'this medium is difficult to express and is likened by scholars to the difference between man's voluntary and involuntary acts. [Our] scholars have [indeed] been inconsistent in their exposition of this medium, yet the Ḥanafīs [simply] called it free choice (*ikhtiyār*).'[287] Although, al-Subkī confesses that Ash'arī's *kasb* is subtle and difficult to

---

[283] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.115.

[284] Al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-Waṣiyya,* p.105. Also see discussion on the precedence of the capacity (*al-'istitā'a*) to the act in al-Bābartī's commentary on the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī (al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah,* pp.121 – 122).

[285] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara,* p.106. By "later theologians" he refers to the highly influential theological works of the later *kalām* tradition, especially of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. They will be discussed in the next chapter.

[286] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara,* pp.106–107.

[287] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt k.,* v.9, p.385.

understand, nevertheless it is the theory which best expresses the reality of the acts of man in relation to God. Al-Subkī adds in his *al-Sayf al-mashhūr* that Abū Ḥanīfa's true theology is not in conflict with al-Ash'arī:

> Abū Ḥanīfa... said "creation is the act of God and it is creating the capacity to act [in man]; the use of this capacity is man's act proper". Some Ḥanafīs have named it free choice and this is the middle way between the Mu'tazilah and the Compulsionists according to Abū Ḥanīfa. It is also the opinion of the majority of scholars and our master Ash'arī called it acquisition (*kasb*).[288]

In conclusion, al-Subkī determines that both Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs are correct on this dispute because what is between them is only a difference in expression.

### 2.4.2 Does God Prescribe the Unbearable?

The extensive debate between Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs over the createdness of the acts of man provokes another dispute known as "prescription of the humanely unbearable religious duty" (*taklīf ma la yuṭāq*); i.e. does God burden a person with a religious duty the fulfilment of which lays beyond his ability? The Ash'arīs answered in the affirmative because God does whatsoever He wishes and His acts are not explicable in terms of good and evil. The Māturīdīs, however, objected to the view that God obliges humans with a compulsory religious duty which they cannot fulfil because it is at variance with divine wisdom. Indeed, this debate does not only relate to the dispute over the acts of man, but also to the problem of good and evil. These two dimensions are evident in Al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd.* In it, the doctrine which rejects the validity of the prescription of the unbearable is attributed to the Mu'tazilī theologian al-Ka'bī. Al-Māturīdī, although ultimately agreeing with it, does not accept al-Ka'bi's presupposition that it is known to reason by mere intuition (*badīha*); to him, this intuitive reasoning only recognizes the apparent reality of the act, but not the fact there is a difference between the capacity (*qudra*) and the sound means (*siḥḥat al-'ālāt*) to actualize the capacity to act. This means intuition could not apprehend instances such as the fact God ordered Pharaoh to believe knowing that he could not do so, which in fact means – in Māturīdī logic – that Pharaoh was fully capable in terms having a rational faculty to assent to faith, but God had chosen to make it impossible.[289] Nevertheless, al-Māturīdī affirms that

---

[288] Al-Subkī, *al-Sayf al-mash'hur,* p.31.
[289] Al-Māturīdī, *k. al-Tawḥīd* [Irshad Kitābevi edition], p.352, fn.3.

'the fundamental point [in this problem] is that prescribing duties upon a person who lacks the capacity (*ṭāqa*) [to do them] is a rationally invalid principle.'[290]

Although early Māturīdī theologian consistently criticized Ash'arī's doctrine of *taklīf ma la yuṭāq,* their interpretations of the problem were somewhat diverse. Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī proposed that it is the inherent compulsionism of the Ash'arīs which amounted to their acceptance of prescribing the impossible as rationally sound.[291] A strong criticism is found in Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī, who says:

> Ash'arī mentioned in his book called *al-Nawādir* that prescribing the unbearable is permissible, and that if God had ordered a person to validate the coincidence of opposites (*al-jam' bayna al-ḍiddayn*) it would neither be impertinent (*safh*) nor impossible. This is consistent with his (Ash'arī's) fundamental doctrines as in one of his principles it is wise and within reason for God to submit his creatures to eternal punishment in hellfire though they committed no felony, because God acts on his own terms in his dominion.[292]

However, Abu al-Yusr al-Bazdawī – having stated the Māturīdī position - does not rule out the possibility of the Ash'arī doctrine: 'and if the adversaries ask: would it be impossible for God to prescribe the unbearable upon man? We respond by saying: what good is it for us to answer this question? Then, [if asked again,] we respond by saying: it would not be impossible as it is reported in prophetic traditions.[293] Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣabūnī in his book *al-Bidāya* also provides a compromise solution by differentiating between the prescription of unbearable religious duties (taklīf *mā lā yuṭāq*) and burdening with an unbearable task (taḥmīl *mā lā yuṭāq*). He says:

> According to us (Māturīdīs) it is permissible for God to burden man with [the lifting] of a mountain or a wall in that it overburdens him to the point that he may die from it. But it is not permissible [to say] that God would prescribe the lifting of a mountain or a wall as a religious duty in that he would be rewarded if he did, or punished if abstained.[294]

Interestingly, Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī nearly a century after al-Ṣabūnī even doubts that Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī had explicitly stated the Ash'arī position which allows *taklīf ma la yuṭāq.* Nevertheless, al-Samarqandī maintains that it may be 'a logical consequence (*yalzam*) of his doctrine that power is with the act, which necessitates prescribing what is beyond one's power, in addition to his doctrine that the acts of man occur by the power of

---

[290] Al-Māturīdī, *k. al-Tawḥīd,* p.266. See also the same argument quoted in Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī's *Tabṣira* (*Tabṣira*, ed. M. Anwar, p.839).
[291] Abū al-Layth, *Shrh al-Fiqh,* pp.19–20.
[292] Abū al-Mu'īn, *Tabṣira,* p.834.
[293] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.128.
[294] Al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Bidāya*, p.69.

God and the power of man has no influence over them.'[295] Al-Subkī, however, considers the difference with Māturīdīs on prescribing the unbearable a real dispute, nevertheless he admits that a number of prominent Ashʿarīs were of the opposite opinion.[296] In contrast, prominent ninth/fifteenth century Ḥanafī theologian Ibn al-Humām speaks of the Ḥanafīs as being united on this problem, he says: 'I know of no Ḥanafī scholar who considered possible the prescription of the unbearable.'[297]

### 2.4.3 Does man's Happiness or Wretchedness change by his deeds?

The Māturīdī objection to the perceived non-efficacy of the acts of man as implied in Ashʿarī's theory of *kasb* was articulated in their discussions on the problem of whether it is possible for a man's worldly state of happiness (*saʿāda*) to change to wretchedness (*shaqā'*) and vice versa. The Ashʿarīs argued that man's belief and fulfillment of righteous duties do not have a real value in this world because their merits are entwined with their ultimate fruition in the hereafter; that is, in reaping the reward of heaven or suffering the punishment of hellfire. In other words: in view of God's knowledge, a person is considered happy (*saʿīd*) at any particular moment because God had predestined him to eternal bliss in heaven – although he may be a sinner and a disbeliever; and conversely, a person is considered wretched (*shaqy*) because God had predestined him to eternal punishment in hellfire – nevertheless he exhibits the appearance of a righteous believer. As for our human judgment on the happiness and wretchedness of people, Ashʿarīs contend that since only God knows the ultimate fate of his creatures, and because the acts of a person do not affect or modify that ultimate fate which God had decreed in His knowledge, we do not pass such judgment.

Māturīdīs went to the opposite side and completely negated the Ashʿarī position. Abū l-Layth categorically affirms that the wretchedness which God had predestined indeed changes into happiness by the good deeds of the righteous; likewise, divinely decreed happiness is turned into wretchedness by sin and disbelief.[298] Illustrating the extremity of the Ashʿarī view, he further adds:

> Ashʿarīs claim they (happiness and wretchedness) do not change [and] that is why they
> upheld that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar (the prophet's closest companions) were [true] believers

---

[295] Al-Samarqandī, *al-Ṣaḥā'if,* p.470.
[296] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt k.,* v.9, p.387. The Ashʿarīs who did not allow prescribing the unbearable in al-Subkī's work are Abū Ḥāmid al-'Isfarā'īnī, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Taqī al-Dīn ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd.
[297] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara,* p.156.
[298] Abū l-Layth, *Sharḥ,* p.20.

at the (per-Islamic) time when they prostrated to an idol; also that Pharoh's magicians were [true] believers when they swore by Pharoh's majesty and confessed his divinity.[299]

Therefore, according to Ash'arīs, a person is described as happy or wretched as long as there is divinely-revealed evidence that God had declared him as possessing either of the states. Furthermore, happiness and wretchedness in the Ash'arī view are retrospective and they hold true in the person from the moment of a person's conception in his mother's womb. Abū l-Layth responds to a possible Ash'arī counter-argument which says that in accepting that God's predestination is modified according to the acts of man, Māturīdīs imply that God modifies His decisions (*al-badā'*). He replies by stating that the Ash'arīs mistakenly saw the decree of divine predestination as an attribute of God – which made them protest its changeability – where in fact it is an attribute of man. And, since it is possible for humans to change from one state to another, it is also possible for their attribute indicating happiness or wretchedness to change too.[300] This total opposition to the Ash'arī view is further illustrated by al-Bazdawī who says, '*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* argue that the wretched becomes happy and the happy become wretched; they even said that when Iblis (the devil) was chief of the angels, he was happy in the true sense. But when he transferred into a wicked demon (*'ablasa*) he became wretched.'[301]

Despite the apparent severity of this dispute in light of Māturīdī texts, Ash'arī scholar al-Subkī makes the difference over the changeability of happiness and wretchedness a verbal disputes with no major philosophical ramifications.[302] He says:

> The dispute over the problem of happiness and wretchedness is also verbal (*lafẓī*) because the happy person according to Abū al-Ḥasan (al-'Ash'arī) is he whose life ends in goodness, and the wretched is the opposite. [In other words,] it would not benefit a man, whom God had decreed a bad ending for, to have vast amounts of faith, yet it would benefit the person whom God had decreed a good ending for to have faith [as little as] the size of a mustard seed. [In essence,] there is no difference in meaning between all of the above.[303]

Al-Subkī tries here to minimize the dispute with Māturīdīs by presenting an argument which focusses on divine decree and predestination and not on the acts of man. As we saw, early Māturīdī theologians placed greater attention on the acts of man in their deliberations on the problem of happiness and wretchedness. To them, al-Subkī may well have seemed to be presenting a forcible conciliation between two opposite views. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy

---

[299] Ibid.
[300] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ,* pp.20 – 21.
[301] Al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-din*, p.177. The same example is mentioned by al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Bidāya,* p.91.
[302] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt,* v.9, pp.383 – 384.
[303] Al-Subkī, *al-Sayf al-mash'hur,* p.45 – 46.

to mention that contemporary Ḥanafī theologian al-Bābartī steers clear from delving into this problem in his two influential commentaries on the *Waṣiyya* of Abū Ḥanīfa and the creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī.

### 2.4.4 Can faith be Doubted?

Closely related to the problem of happiness and wretchedness is the debate on exception in faith (*al-'istithnā' fi al-'imān*). Since the righteous acts of man provide no guarantee of happiness except at the unknown moment of death, the Ashʿarīs invalidate the certain and confident pronouncement of faith, and argued that expressions like "I am a believer" are incomplete without adding statements like "if God wills" (*inn shā'a Allah*). Māturīdīs affirmed that no doubt is acceptable on the things that have a verifiable existence, which includes faith because in the Māturīdī view it is a real thing with a recognizable minimum definition of assent (*taṣdīq*) to the revealed message of the prophet. Therefore, if this definition is met, it is as much wrong to say "I am a believer, if God wills" as it is to say "I am alive" or "I am standing, if God wills". [304] It is noteworthy to mention that debate on the doctrine of exception in faith precedes the Māturīdī and Ashʿarī schools and goes back to a difference between Abū Ḥanīfa, who did not accept it, and Shāfiʿī who espoused it. Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī reports a number of opinions that attempt to find a compromise solution for the problem; he says 'some have claimed that there is no [real] disagreement over this problem because al-Shāfiʿī said "I am a believer, if God wills" out of fear of God, and Abū Ḥanīfa said "I truly believe" out of positive doubt in God (*ḥusn al-ẓan billah*).'[305] Al-Sālimī also reports of Abū Ḥanīfa as saying 'In view of myself now, I am a true believer; but, in view of God, I am a believer *inn shā'a Allah*.' He also quotes renowned Ashʿarī theologian Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī as making a similar statement.[306] Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, however, invalidates these statements. He argues:

> It is meaningless when someone says: my faith is real without exception, but when describing the state of his belief says "I am a believer, if God wills", because if his faith was real, then he would be a believer in the real sense; like sitting if the person is seated. Equally there is no meaning in saying: I am a believer in God with no exception, but – in view of God – I am a believer if God wills! Because if someone's faith was verifiably real, then he would be a true believer.[307]

---

[304] Abū l-Layth, *Sharḥ,* p.23; Abū l-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira* [Anwar]*,* v.2, p.1092; al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Bidāya,* pp.90 – 91.
[305] Abū al-Shakūr al-Sālimī, *al-Tamhīd,* p.113.
[306] Ibid.
[307] Abū l-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira,* ed. M. Anwar, v.2, pp.1093–1094.

The dispute over exception in faith is another verbal difference according to later Ash'arī scholar al-Subkī.[308] Importantly, al-Subkī does not attribute the opinion which invalidates exception in faith to Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī but in his view it is only the common position of the Ḥanafis.[309] Contemporary Ḥanafī al-Bābartī also considers this dispute to be verbal. He says: 'truth of the matter is that this dispute is one of syntax (*bina'i*), because since all deeds are part of one's faith according to al-Shāfi'ī, any doubt of the reality of deeds entails doubt of the reality of faith. As for Abū Ḥanīfa and his followers, since faith is assent (*taṣdīq*) [alone], doubting one's deeds does not necessitate doubt of faith.'[310]Ibn al-Humām also minimizes the difference between the two schools over exception in faith and says :'there is no [real] difference between them.'[311]

## 2.5 God's Active Attributes

Sunnī theologians in general, including Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs, affirmed the existence of seven attributes (*ṣifāt*) – extrapolated from religious texts - by which God is eternally described; they are: power (*qudra*), will (*irāda*), knowledge (*'ilm*), life (*ḥayāt*), hearing (*sam'*), seeing (*baṣar*) and speech (*kalām*). These eternal, uncreated and timeless attributes of perfection are unique and not to be likened to the attributes of created beings. The Mu'tazilah, on the other hand, advocated that it is false to think of God as having eternal attributes because it implies the multiple existence of eternal entities and undermines God's monotheism.  Furthermore, while God may be described by certain attributes (because they are reported in religious traditions), the Mu'tazilah determine that they do not really exist as attributes rather they should be treated as nothing other than names of God with no real theological weight. Ash'arī theology, in addition, distinguished between  two types of divine attributes: essential attributes (*ṣifāt al-dhāt*) and active attributes (*ṣifāt al- fi'l*). The first refers to the seven attributes mentioned above, which are considered to be eternal (*qadīma*) and derive their existence from the existence of the divine essence (*qā'ima bi-dhati-llah*); and the second are God's active attributes, which are defined as originating in time (*muḥdatha*) and do not derive their existence from God.

---

[308] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt k.,* v.9, p.383.
[309] Al-Subkī, *al-Sayf al-Mash'hur,* pp.44–45.
[310] Al-Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-waṣiyyah,* pp.69–70.
[311] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara,* p.338. Interestingly, Ibn al-Humām's contemporary Ibn Qūṭlūbghā provides a thorough and detailed exposition of the debate in which he cites Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on different occasions to prove that the two views are reconcilable (Ibn Qūṭlūbghā, *Sharḥ al-Musāyara,* pp.338 – 325).

In summary, Ashʿarīs argued that the active attributes of God by which the world and its beings are brought into existence – such as existentiating (*takwīn*), initiation (*ʾījad*), creation (*takhlīq*) and originating in time (*iḥdāth*) – are not in fact eternal attributes of God, but they are created in time at the instance of their occurrence. That is, God is only described as an existentiator (*mukawwin*) or creator (*khāliq*) – or by any synonymous active attribute – when He existentiates or creates. Here, another problem arises which draws heavy Māturīdī criticism alongside the already perceived-as-invalid Ashʿarī twofold division of attributes and the createdness of God's active attributes. If God creates the world in time with an attribute of His which is brought into being at the instance of creation, then Ashʿarīs in fact postulate that there should be no differentiation between the act of existentiation (*takwīn*) and the existentiated (*mukawwan*). In the Ashʿarī view, there should be no theological controversy in presupposing that *takwīn* and *mukawwan*, or the act (*fiʿl*) and the acted (*mafʿūl*), are identical as they are all in the realm of action and do not undermine the eternity of the seven essential attributes of God. Ashʿarīs provide the following rationale for their theology of attributes. They argue that inductive reasoning entails that the acts of man are the same as their consequent affects, because we witness in the manifest world (*fī al-shāhid*) that the written is not written and the built house is not built unless they materialize to these new states by an acting agent, in this case a writer or a builder; hence, the person acquires the active attribute at the instance of performing the relevant act. The same then should also apply to the realm of the unknown (*fī al-ghāʾib*) whereby God's active attributes are brought into existence at the instance of the occurrence of His acts. In addition, Ashʿarīs defend the position that *takwīn* is identical with the *mukawwan* by advising that it is impossible for the act of existentiation to take place without a simultaneously existent substance, in much the same way that it is impossible for the act of breaking to take effect without a broken thing, or writing without the written. Ashʿarīs therefore admonish making *takwīn* an eternal attribute of God. They suggest that such a view must necessarily imply that existent beings other than God (*mawjūdāt*) are eternal, something which violates the concept of monotheism according to them. For this reason, Ashʿarīs rejected the differentiation between *takwīn* and *mukawwan,* and espoused that they must be seen as one.

The grave consequence of the Ashʿarī view that God's active attributes (*ṣifāt al-ʿafʿāl*) are created in time led to some of the most prominent controversies that ensued between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. Māturīdī theologians fiercely contested the createdness of active attributes because all divine attributes by which a unique and eternal God is described must

also be timeless, eternal and uncreated. Early Māturīdīs argued that the divine attributes are neither identical with God, nor other than Him (*la huwa wa lā ghayruhu*). This seems to indicate that they took an intermediary position between the Ashʿarīs who assert the external existence of divine attributes, and the Muʿtazilah, who deem divine attributes as nothing other than God himself. Yet, since both schools advocate the createdness of active attributes, early Māturīdīs put Ashʿarīs and the Muʿtazilah in the same adversary camp.[312] Abū al-Layth writes:

> Separating (*al-mughāyara*) between Essence and its attributes is the doctrine of the Muʿtazilah and the Ashʿarīs because they deem as created the active attributes of God. This, together with separating between Essence and its attributes, is invalid. According to *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamāʿa* the attributes of God are neither identical with, nor other than, God; they are [all] uncreated, whether they were active or essential.[313]

Abū al-Layth also challenged its underlying logical reasoning. He rejects the way in which Ashʿarīs and the Muʿtazilah describe God by active attributes such as creation based only on the merits of the act of creating (*khāliqun bi khalqihi*). Abū al-Layth continues,

> We (the Māturīdīs) say [of God] that He is a creator (*khāliq*) and has always been a creator; a sustainer (*rāziq*) and has always been a sustainer... in the same way that we say: all-knowing (*ʿalim*) and has always been all-knowing and all-powerful (*qādir*) and has always been all-powerful... Then responding to the nonsense (*turrahāt*) of the Qadariyya and the Ashʿarīs we say: the builder is a builder although he did not build and the writer is a writer although he did not write as it is not necessary for a writer to become a writer by performing the act of writing. Likewise it is permissible for God to be [described as] a creator although He did not create.[314]

Abū al-Layth further adds that the proof of the soundness of the Māturīdī argument is that if God is described as a creator only at the time of creation, He would lose that attribute when the act of creation terminates, and would mean paradoxically describing an all-powerful God by the inability to create (*al-ʿajz*). Also, asserting that God may be described by a new active

---

[312] It seems that the Muʿtazilī position on the doctrine of the separation between God's essence and divine attributes (*al-mughāyara bayna al-dhāt wal ṣifāt*) may be interpreted in two ways. As far as the active attributes are concerned, both Ashʿarīs and the Muʿtazilah advocate that they are created in time. Therefore, it is valid to assume that the Ashʿarī position (which affirms the existence of attributes in the first place) lends to the assertion that some divine attributes have an external existence of their own. But, it is more problematic to consider the Muʿtazilah as advocates of the external existence of attributes because they fundamentally deny the concept of attributes and deem them synonymous with divine names with no real theological significance. Therefore, the suggestion that the Ashʿarīs and Muʿtazilah hold completely opposite views, which is the view found in M. Abū Zahra's history of Muslim sects (Abū Zahra, *Tarīkh,* p.173), is sound from the point of view that the Muʿtazilah do not define the created active attributes as attributes per se, rather all real attributes are nothing other than the divine Essence. In view of this, it is correct to define the Māturīdī position which says that the divine attributes are neither identical nor other than God (*la huwa wala ghayruhu*) as taking an intermediary position between the Ashʿarīs and the Muʿtazilah.
[313] Abū al-Layth, *Sharḥ,* p.32.
[314] Abū al-Layth, *Sharḥ,* pp.32–33.

attribute in accordance with His new acts assumes unacceptable likeness between Creator and creation because the former is defined as eternal and unchanging, and the latter originates in time and subject to degeneration.[315]

More problematic, however, is when Ashʿarīs side with the opinion of the majority of the Muʿtazilah and the anthropomorphists – with whom they also agree on the createdness of active attributes – in supposing that the existentiated (*mukawwan*) is identical with the act of existentiation (*takwīn*).[316] Undoubtedly, this differentiation between *takwīn* and *mukawwan* was *par excellence* a defining doctrine of Māturīdī creed and provoked the most controversial dispute between the two schools. Māturīdīs generally argued against the Ashʿarī adversaries in two directions: first, that this theological blunder of Ashʿarīs inclines them to the teachings of the anthropomorphist sect known as the Karramiyyah; second, that the Māturīdī doctrine of *takwīn* in fact originates in the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa and is not an invention of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī.

Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī dedicates a sub-section in his *Tamhīd* to the problem of *takwīn.* He says:

> Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī and the Karramiyyah argued that existentiation and the existentiated are one; *ahl al-sunna wal jamāʿa*, however, argued that existentiation is the act of the existentiator, and the existentiated is the result of existentiation; [therefore,] existentiation is something other than the existentiated.'[317]

Abū Shakūr then delineates that all aspects of the Ashʿarī view that God's active attributes are created in time (*muḥdatha*), and that God is no longer described by the attributes of creation (*takhlīq*) and existentiation (*takwīn*) the moment He ceases to create and existentiate because His creative acts are transferred to the temporal creation, invariably lead to infidelity (*kufr*). Abū Shakūr justifies his view by stating that an act is either created in time (*muḥdath*) or eternal and uncreated (*ghayr muḥdath*). He suggests that if Ashʿarīs approve that God's acts are created, then they also 'approve that God's eternal essence contains

---

[315] Ibid.

[316] Muʿtazilī theologians differed among themselves over the sameness between *takwīn* and *mukawwan*. Prominent Muʿtazilah such as Abū l-Huthail, Ibn al-Rawandi, Muʾammar bin ʿAmr and Bishr bin al-Muʿtamir argued that they are not identical. Nevertheless, early Māturīdī texts ascribe the doctrine that *takwīn* and *mukawwan* are identical to the majority of the Muʿtazilah (*ʿammat al-Muʿtazila*). See: Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, *Bidāya,* p.36; al-Lāmishī, *Tamhīd,* p.76 and al-Khabbāzī, *al-Hādī,* pp.111-113.

[317] Abū Shakūr, *Tamhīd,* p.59. The copyist of this old print of Abū Shakūr's *Tamhīd* wrote the last word in this quote as *"al-mukawwin"*, putting the sign of the short vowel "e" under the letter Arabic letter "و", which should be translated as "the existentiator". However, the intended word in the original text is more likely *"al-mukawwan"* (the existentiated), with the short vowel sign "a" above the latter "و".

temporalities (*maḥal lil ḥawādith*) and that He is susceptible to change […] and transformation which necessitates infidelity.'[318] Likewise, it is no less a declaration of infidelity if the Ashʿarīs determined that the acts of God are not created in time because in their logic it necessitates that God's active attributes are eternal. Therefore, as long as Ashʿarīs hold existentiation to be identical with the existentiated, then their position implies that a timeless eternal attribute of God is one and the same with the time-bound temporal creation. According to Abū Shakūr, making an eternal attribute bounded in time necessitates the heretical doctrine of the eternity of time (*qidam al-dahr*) and hence ascribes Ashʿarīs to infidelity (*kufr*).[319]

Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī's *ʿUṣūl al-dīn* contains a more detailed analysis of Ashʿarī's *takwīn,* but a comprehensive exposition of it goes beyond the scope of this outline. However, it contains important indications on the gravity of this dispute between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism in the Classical period. Abū al-Yusr, concerning the origins of the differentiation between *takwīn* and *mukawwan*, wrote:

> This is a disputed problem of great significance about which the Ashʿarīs composed numerous works. I have seen one of them [even] writing a stacked-up volume in which he suggested that a group of traditionalists who flourished in Khorāsān argued that existentiation (*takwīn*) is something other than the existentiated (*mukawwan*), and creation (*ʿījād*) is something other than created existence (*mawjūd*), and that creation is [an] eternal [attribute].[320]

Then Abū al-Yusr responds to what seems like an Ashʿarī contention that Māturīdīs concept of *takwīn* does not originate in the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa:

> This problem is mentioned by Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī [in the context of his dispute with] the Muʿtazilah and he corroborated the doctrine of *ahl al-sunna wal jamāʿa* which says: existentiation is something other than the existentiated, and existentiation is not temporal but created. He (Abū Manṣūr) precedes Ashʿarī in time and this doctrine is exactly that of Abū Ḥanīfa and his associates.[321]

As for Ashʿarī's doctrine of *takwīn,* Abū l-Yusr considers it the "most vulgar" (*afḥash*) doctrine in his theology and equates it with the anthropomorphist school of the Karramiyyah.[322]

In tune with Abū al-Yusr's sentiment, Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī dedicates the longest chapter of his magnum opus *Tabṣirat al-ʿAdilla* to the problem of *takwīn* and provides one of the most detailed and extensive rebuttals of the Ashʿarī position by a Māturīdī theologian. In

---

[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* p.77.
[321] Ibid.
[322] Ibid.

it, Abū al-Muʿīn delivers a strong critique of Ashʿarīs based on their interpretation of the word "Be" ("*Kun*") which is the word by which God created the world according to revealed sources.[323] Māturīdīs proposed that "Be" is not speech per se but a synonym of the divine act of existentiation and creation – i.e. something other than the existentiated and created. Abū al-Muʿīn also reports that earlier Māturīdīs took a more cautionary approach by saying that the word "Be" is an expression used to imply the speedy and totally unconstrained creation of the world by God whereby He said: "Be", and it became. He then deliberates that the Ashʿarī view that the word "Be" is in fact divine speech and the world is created by it, inheres an unavoidable contradiction. This is because if they accept that the world was created by it, then in practical terms it is nothing other than the existentiation and creation of the Māturīdīs. In Abū al-Muʿīn's words:

> He who approves the truth of something and then refuses to approve of its name is self-contradictory. Theologians considered this one of Ashʿarī's [major] contradictions and it is indeed a most obscene contradiction because he negates *takwīn* and then affirms it; if this is not a contradiction then nothing is a contradiction in this world.[324]

Moreover, Abū al-Muʿīn points out that this Qurʾānic verse is used in nearly every Ashʿarī book to prove the un-createdness and eternity of God's speech against the Muʿtazilah. Ashʿarīs have to accept that the expression "Be" is not created because if it was, it would need to be created by second expression, which in turn would need a third expression and so on, leading to infinite regression of causes (*tasalsul).* And, if the word "Be" cannot be anything but eternal, 'then Ashʿarīs [in effect] affirm the existence of an eternal attribute by which the world is brought into being; and that is exactly existentiation (*takwīn*), origination (*ījād*) and creation (*khalq*) in view of those who adhere to this doctrine.'[325] Abū l-Muʿīn adds that every doubt raised by the Ashʿarīs about the Māturīdī doctrine is proven invalid by this inherent inconsistency. Evidently, *takwīn* is the defining doctrine of Māturīdism in Abū al-Muʿīn's book. Denying the authenticity of *takwīn* provokes Abū al-Muʿīn to probe into the doctrine's history to prove that it predates Ashʿarī and originates in the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa, and in turn providing us with a highly valuable account on the early history of the Māturīdī school.[326]

---

[323] Also discussed in Abū al-Yusr, *Uṣūl,* pp.78–80.

[324] Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Tabṣira,* p.414.

[325] Abū al-Muʿīn, *Tabṣira,* pp.414–415.

[326] Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (*Bidāya,* pp.35–38), al-Lāmishī (*Tamhīd,* pp.76 – 78), and al-Khabbāzī (*al-Hādī,* pp.111 – 121) present similar rebuttals – varying in detail – of Ashʿarī's concept of *takwīn.* All of them however equate the Ashʿarī view with the opinions of the majority of the Muʿtazilah and the Karramiyyah. Al-Khabbāzī (d.

Part of the Ash'arī argument to invalidate the eternity of the attribute of *takwīn* is that God's ability to create does not need a separate attribute, rather it emanates from power (*qudra*), one of the seven eternal attribute of God; in other words, God brings the world into existence not because He is eternally described as an existentiator but because He is eternally all-powerful. The common Māturīdī view however saw existentiation as an eternal attribute additional to the seven eternal attributes of God. Interestingly, the more philosophically-inclined *al-Ṣaḥā'if al-'Ilahiyyah* of Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī does not delve into the problem of *takwīn* in the same way the majority of past and contemporary Māturīdī theologians did.[327] He attributes the opinion that existentiation is something other than the attribute of power to "a group of Transoxanian jurists" (*qawm min fuqaha' mawara' annahr*). Of their rationale he says: 'we know that God has the power (*qadīr*) to create manifold suns and planets in the world but He did not create them, therefore, eternal power is actual without the necessity to create, and we must affirm that they (power and creation) are separate.'[328] Furthermore, in what seems like an alternative look at the debate by focusing on the problem of whether the attribute of power (*qudra*) is something other than creation (*takhlīq*), he says: '[because] creation is pre-conditioned upon power and power is not preconditioned upon creation, then [they must be] different.'[329] More significant is al-Samarqandī's conclusion in which he quotes Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī –whom he refers to as the Master (*al-Imām*) – to conciliate both opinions.  He writes:

> The master said: the attribute of power is effective by way of possibility (*'ala sabil al-jawaz*). As for the attribute of creation, if it were also effective by way of possibility, then it would be identical (*'ayn*) with power. But, if it were effective by way of necessity, it would mean God is compelled and does not have free will (*mujbaran la mukhtaran*).[330]

In other words, if the Ash'arīs held that God creates by His free choice, then their assumption that eternal attributes of power and creation are one is sound.

In later theological writings, we find al-Subkī understandably considers the problem over the createdness of God's active attributes an actual and real (*ma'nawī*) dispute with

---

691/1291) includes a more detailed analysis clearly influenced by the extensive rebuttal in *al-Tabṣira* by Abū al-Mu'īn al-Nasafī which he also quotes in his argument.

[327] The Māturīdism of Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī is not entirely evident although he defends a number of crucial Māturīdī doctrines in his book. This is partly explained by his philosophical inclinations and being a follower of the theological school of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Nevertheless, al-Samarqandī is invariably used by later Ottoman theologians to defend Māturīdī doctrines in opposition to Ash'arīsm.

[328] Shams al-Din, *Ṣaḥā'if,* p.350.

[329] Shams al-Din, *Ṣaḥā'if,* p.351.

[330] Ibid.

Māturīdīs.[331] In al-Subkī's *al-Sayf al-mash'hūr,* which is a super-commentary on Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī's mostly anti-'Ash'arī *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-'akbar,* we find an attempt to reach a common ground between Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs. It also shows al-Subkī's impassionate quest towards minimizing the differences; he says:

> Know that our difference with the Ḥanafīs in this problem is easy, even though the two camps have extensively over-debated it because negating the divine active attributes does not entail imperfections in God, and the same applies to affirming them. There is also no quarrel in saying: "the creator" and "the sustainer" are among God's eternal attributes. But, I say: God may be termed a Creator in the true sense of the word, and I disagree with the Ḥanafīs who make God's creative attributes eternal!'[332]

Al-Subkī, then, reiterates in a forceful conciliatory manner:

> Difference between us and them diminishes very much as we agree that God is eternally a creator in the real sense (*ḥaqīqatan*), then [it seems] the difference is over whether the attribute (of creation) is an eternal attribute of God? After all, it is an attribute whose affirmation or negation does not undermine God's absolute perfection, then [again] there is no great difference concerning it![333]

Al-Subkī's obsession with attempting to trivialize or reconcile the differences between the two schools is clearly evident in these words. But, the dispute over *takwīn* is proven more challenging, and al-Subkī responds to the Māturīdī accusation that in Ash'arī theology the divine act of creation is only figurative because according to them existentiation (*takwīn*) and the existentiated (*al-mukawwan*) are one. He says:

> It is not well-established that Abū al-Ḥasan (al-'Ash'arī) ever claimed God's name "the creator" to be a figure of speech. He may not have intended to say anything another other than what I have said here. [Further,] it is not [normally] the theologians' task to study expressions and their metaphors, rather they study the truth of things and their reality.[334]

Al-Subkī then argues that if Ash'arīs are quizzed on whether God creates in a true or figurative sense, they should respond by saying that it is an invalid question because it is no business of the theologian to study expressions and figures of speech. In summary, although clearly aware that this dispute with Māturīdīs is to some extent irreconcilable, yet al-Subkī maximizes his efforts to find compromise solutions.

An important development to the debate in later theological writings is found in the book of *al-Musāyara* by Egyptian Ḥanafī scholar Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1388) in

---

[331] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt k.,* v.9, p.387.
[332] Al-Subkī, *al-Sayf al-Mash'hur,* p.24.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid.

which he controversially argued that the original theology of Abū Ḥanīfa held *takwīn* to be an eternal attribute inclusive of all other active attributes. He then criticized the Māturīdī view which approves the eternity of every active attribute, such as creating (*takhlīq*), sustaining (*tarzīq*), giving life (*'iḥyā'*) as contrary to the teachings of Abū Ḥanīfa and that it is in fact the later invention of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and his followers. He says:

> Later Ḥanafīs from the time of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī claimed that these [active] attributes are eternal and additional to the established [seven] attributes. Nothing in the sayings of Abū Ḥanīfa and his early associates expressly states that, except for his statement: "God was a creator before He created, and a sustainer before he sustained" and (Māturīdīs) innovated their [own] ways of interpreting it.[335]

He argues that the true understanding of Abū Ḥanīfa's doctrine of *takwīn* makes him more in line with the Ash'arīs rather than Māturīdīs, and a closer reading of the statements of pre-Māturīdī Ḥanafīs reveals that they do not imply active attributes to be something other than the attribute of power. 'In fact,' he states, 'the teachings of Abū Ḥanīfa indicate that they are closer to the Ash'arī understanding of these attributes.'[336] While this may indicate a turn in Māturīdī thought given the influence of the writings of Ibn al-Humām on later Māturīdī theology, nonetheless it seems more of an isolated opinion. The influential commentary on Ibn al-Humām's *Musāyara* composed by contemporary Egyptian Ḥanafī Qāsim Ibn Qūtlūbghā (d. 879/1474) categorically discredits the above statements as uninformed doubts and provides a thorough defense of Māturīdism as the true representative of the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa.[337]

## 2.6 Conclusion: A Māturīdī Phenomenon

Three conclusions can be drawn from this chapter. First, on the points that were disputed with Ash'arīs, Māturīdism seems to draw closer to the Mu'tazilah. But, Māturīdīs also maintained reasonable distance from the Mu'tazilah which goes on to show that al-Kawtharī's opinion that Māturīdī theology takes a middle way between the Mu'tazilah and the Ash'arīs is largely correct. Second, it seems that on nearly all of the crucial theological disputes, the Māturīdīs originate their contrary-to-'Ash'arī positions in the teachings and explicit statements of Abū Ḥanīfa. This is certainly true in the disputes on the rational

---

[335] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara* In *al-Musamara*, pp.84–85.
[336] Ibn al-Humām, *al-Musāyara*, p.87.
[337] Ibn Qūtlūbghā, *Ḥāshiya 'ala al-Musāyara* [printed in *al-Musamara*], pp.84 – 88.

necessity to know God, the efficacy of man's power to act, and the eternity of God's creative attributes as has been shown in the course of this chapter. Third, the tendency to minimize the differences or to conciliate opposing points of view was more strongly felt in later Ash'arī writings, as was shown in the arguments put forward in Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's *Nūniyya* (whereby nearly half of the disputes are considered merely verbal), and, to a limited extent, Ibn al-Humām's *Musāyara.* In contrast, we find in Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī and Ibn Qūtlūbghā a more doctrinaire Māturīdism that generally emphasizes difference, much in line with early Māturīdī thought. The next chapter, however, will look at the origins and sources of Ottoman *Kalām* literature and attempts to measure the extent to which later philosophical theology influenced the debates between Ash'arism and Māturīdism as they are presented in prominent early Ottoman theological writings to the end of the tenth/sixteenth century.

PART II

CHAPTER THREE


CLASSICAL OTTOMAN THEOLOGY AND THE
LEGACY OF LATER ASHʿARISM


## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to approximate an understanding of the presence and contextual significance of the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism in classical Ottoman theological literature (from the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century towards the middle of the tenth/sixteenth century). This chapter is divided into two sections. Section One contains discussions on the origins and sources of theological thought in Ottoman scholarship by analyzing the role of pioneering scholars, their academic background and later influence, as well as surveying the widely-spread theological texts . Section Two deals closely with the disputes by providing an overview of key encounters between the two schools during the specified period, followed by intertextual analysis of the treatment of chief points of dispute as presented in selected prominent Ottoman theological texts.

It will be shown in the course of this chapter that works of *kalām* composed by Ottoman scholars who flourished between mid. ninth/fifteenth and mid. tenth /sixteenth centuries were largely influenced by later Ashʿarī thought. Meanwhile, textual references to Māturīdī texts and opinions appear minimal. During this period, Ottoman Ḥanafī *mutakallimīn* studied exclusively Ashʿarī tracts and espoused fundamental Ashʿarī doctrines. Importantly, resurgence of the disputing spirit with Ashʿarism among post-Classical Ottoman Ḥanafīs from al-Rūm (Anatolia and the Balkans) – which begins to take shape in the eleventh/seventeenth century (discussed in Chapter IV) – was to an extent provoked by the general indifference to critical points of disputes by Ḥanafī theologians who belonged to the preceding Classical period covered here. In general terms, as far as Classical Ottoman *kalām* is concerned, Māturīdism was not invariably acknowledged as a school of theology head-to-head with Ashʿarism; rather, we see that it is at times ignored and even made subservient to Ashʿarism in prominent *kalām* texts.

In modern academia, it is commonly agreed that Ottoman scholarship has received relatively little academic attention in view of the thousands of volumes that abound today and were produced during the centuries of the empire's reign over large parts of the Muslim

world.[338] Ottoman scholars' contribution to the Islamic scholarly tradition is yet to be systematically studied and appraised, and *'Ilm al-kalām* is one of the sciences that Ottoman rulers and scholars alike considered to be of pivotal importance to Islamic scholarship. Indeed, a comprehensive inquiry into the Ottoman contribution to Islamic theology is beyond the purpose of this chapter which is to investigate the extent to which the later Ash'arī tradition influenced Ottoman Ḥanafī *mutakallimīn,* and in turn influenced their attitude towards the debates between Ash'arism and Māturīdism, which a century later start to draw special attention in Ottoman theological literature.[339]

The foremost source of Ottoman scholarly history during the classical period is *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniyya fi 'ulamā' al-dawla al-'uthmāniyya* (the Anemone Flowers: on the Scholars of the Ottoman Empire); an extensive and highly detailed collection of biographies of Ottoman scholars written by Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafa Ṭāshkubrī'zādah (d. 968/1516). Ṭāshkubrī'zādah was an outstanding Ottoman scholar; born in Bursa (then a major center of religious scholarship), he studied in Ankara and Istanbul before embarking on a diverse scholarly career where he taught at the most esteemed centers of learning in the Ottoman realm and wrote nearly thirty books. Towards the end of his life, he became a teacher at one

---

[338] Historian Halil Inalcik wrote: 'there has so far been no serious attempt to establish the position of Ottoman learning within the whole field of Muslim scholarship, and so it is difficult to assess its contribution to the Islamic sciences'; see: Inalcik, Halil (2013-11-21). The Ottoman Empire: 1300-1600 (Kindle Locations 3761-3762). Orion. Kindle Edition). A similar sentiment is found in *History of the Ottoman State and Civilization*: 'so far we lack sound and serious studies about the origins and development of traditional Islamic sciences throughout Ottoman history, such as *tafsīr, Ḥadīth, Fiqh* and *Kalām* – about [Ottoman] scholarly activities and contributions and biographies of scholars who emerged in that period' (İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin [editor and co-author] *History of the Ottoman State and Civilization* [translated into Arabic by Salih Sa'dawi], Istanbul: IRCICA, 1999, v.2, p.244). Some attempts have been made to study Ottoman scholarly life in recent western scholarship, see for example: El-Rouayheb, Khaled *Islamic Intellectual history in Seventeenth Century: scholarly currents in the Ottoman empire and the Maghreb*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Bruckmayr, Philipp, "The Particular Will (al-irādat al-juz'iyya): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in Kalām Terminology on human Agency and its Position in Naqshabandi Discourse" in *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol 13, 2011; and Radtke, Bernd (2002) "Birgiwīs Ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya. Einige Bemerkungen und Überlegungen" in *Journal of Turkish Studies* 26 (2), pp. 159-174.
[339] The recently published Schmidtke, Sabine (editor) *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016 contains an entry by M. Sait Ozervarli entitled "Theology in the Ottoman Lands" (pp.568-586) which attempts to present a panoramic historical overview of theological developments during the Ottoman empire's lifetime. Concerning the current state of scholarship on Ottoman theology, Ozervarli writes 'existing literature falls short of providing a critical analysis of Ottoman Islamic theology in its historical context' (p.568). The study contains few references to the attitude of Hanafi-Māturīdi Ottoman theologians towards Ash'arism and observes – in line with the conclusion of this chapter – the influence of later philosophical Ash'arism on Classical Ottoman theological discourses. This observation by Ozervarli, which is qualified with rather cursory evidence, is further supported by the more detailed arguments below. Also, the extensive influence of post-Classical Ash'arism – particularly in the figuers of Taftāzānī and Jurjānī and prosopographical analysis of late ninth-fifteenth/early tenth-sixteenth century pioneers of Ottoman theological scholarship – as pursued in this chapter, may question the extent to which Ottoman theology was, according to the author, the 'continuation of an existing religious culture established by the Anatolian Saljūqs (*Salājiqa-i Rūm*) since the sixth/twelfth century' (ibid).

of the prestigious *Sahn-i Saman* (Eight Courtyard schools) in Istanbul, in addition to assuming the office of judge in the city.[340] His celebrated *al-Shaqā'iq* is arranged according to succeeding *ṭabaqāt* (generations – sin. *ṭabaqa*), each of which corresponds to the reign of an Ottoman Sultan and lists prominent scholars who flourished therein. The book spans the period of over two hundred and fifty years; between 699/1299-1300 - the year in which the founding father of the dynasty, 'Uthmān I (d. 726/1324), became a sultan - and terminates a few years before the author's death in 968/1561. Ṭāshkubrī'zādah is also author of *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda,* the second primary source on classical Ottoman scholarship.[341] This book is a substantial encyclopedia of arts and sciences, and has been critically acclaimed in the wider Muslim world until today.

But, for the purposes of this chapter, and certainly for the remainder of this study, the category "Ottoman scholar" deserves some qualification. Here, Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's *al-Shaqā'iq* comes for the aid. In fact the book was composed with the express purpose of writing on the scholars belonging to "al-Rūm" (which traditionally mostly refers to the geographical region of Anatolia) whom historians – according to the author – have passed over in silence. In the preamble to *al-Shaqā'iq,* Ṭāshkubrī'zādah writes:

> Historians have recorded the virtues (*manāqib*) of religious scholars and notables. [These histories] were either asserted by tradition (*naql*) or confirmed by eyewitness (ʿ*iyān*). Yet, no one turned to collecting the histories of the scholars of these lands -- that their names and descriptions almost disappeared from the speeches of civilized and nomadic people alike. And when this situation was observed by some men of virtue and integrity, I was beseeched [by them] to collect the virtues of the scholars of al-Rūm; and I answered to their request.[342]

In light of *al-Shaqā'iq,* an Ottoman ʿ*ālim* may – in general terms - refer to a scholar who: (i) studied and taught within the bounds of the geographical region of al-Rūm (Anatolia and the Balkans); (ii) moved to al-Rūm from other polities but spent the greater part of their academic career in it; (iii) was in close liaison with the Ottoman governing elite; or, (iv) served in an official capacity at an Ottoman religious institution, such as being appointed a

---

[340] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah concludes his book with a detailed autobiographical account, see Tshkubrizade, Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafa *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'maniyya fi ulama' al-dawla al-'uthmaniyya* [followed by *al-'iqd al-manthum fi thikr afadil al-Rūm* by al-Aydini, Ali b. Bali] (Edited by Muḥammad Tabatabai), Tehran: Library, museum and documentation centre of Islamic Conslutative Assembly (Majlies-e Shura-ye Eslami), 2010, pp. 471–476.
[341] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafa *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda wa misbah al-riyada fi mawdu'at al-'Ulūm* (editor unknown), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, 1985.
[342] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.3.

professor in one of the Sultans' endowed madrasas, or serve in the capacity of a judge or muftī.[343]

## 3.2 Notes on the Origins and Sources of Classical Ottoman *Kalām*

Scholarly pioneers of the up-and-coming Ottoman empire were marked for their diverse cultural and intellectual backgrounds.[344] The new polity attracted men of learning from different parts of the Muslim world – especially from neighboring Seljuk princedoms, and Persia and Khorāsān (*al-ʿAjam*).[345] More importantly, the scholars' training and education was wide-ranging; earliest Ottoman scholars would normally spend their education years studying at the then thriving centers of learning in Mamluk Egypt and Syria, or in Persia, Khorāsān and Transoxania.[346] As such, there was naturally a high level of scholarly exchange between the Ottoman dominion and other parts of the Muslim world. Ottoman rulers' special relation with men of religion and learning, in addition to their patronage of scholars,

---

[343] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's criteria of what defines an "Ottoman scholar" includes scholars who sojourned (or *dakhala* – lit. entered) in al-Rūm for purposes of scholarship. This is implied in his mention of famous Ṣūfī of Khorāsān Zayn al-Dīn al-Khafi (Khawāfī) – died in 834/1435 (*al-Aʿlām*, v.7, p.46; *Kahhala*, v.11, 214). Ṭāshkubrī'zādah said: 'it does not cause us rebuke to mention some of his (Khāfi's) noble virtues even though he never entered the lands of al-Rūm, to draw blessings and good-fortune by his mention, because God's mercy descends upon the mention of the pious' (*al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.65).

[344] Use of the word "empire" in the Ottoman context is criticized in Mehmed Maksudoglu *Osmanli history (1289-1922) based on Osmanli sources,* Kualalumpur: Research Centre IIUM, 1999, which argues that Ottomans never used its derivatives to refer to their polity, and used instead the Arabic word *dawlah* (see M. Hussain , Amjad *A Social History of Education in the Muslim World: From the Prophetic Era to Ottoman Times*, London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 2013, fn.562).

[345] The Arabic word *ʿAjam* (lit. non-Arabic) has acquired various meanings in Muslim geographical literature. In later Ottoman historical contexts, *ʿAjam* came to designate more exclusively Safavid Iran(ians). But, it is crucial to point out that in general Ottoman contexts, *bilād al-ʿAjam* (lands of the Ajam) referred to a larger geographical region which included – among other regions – Persia and Khorāsān (roughly modern-day Iran and Afghanistan). This is certainly one of the meanings employed by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah in his *Shaqāʾiq*. For example, on Mūsa Qāḍīzādah (died after 815/1412) Ṭāshkubrī'zādah said: 'he departed to *bilād al-ʿAjam* and studied under chief scholars of Khorāsān; then, moved to *mā warāʾ al-nahr* (Transoxania)' (*Shaqāʾiq*, p.18). Also, regarding a scholar named al-Malīḥī al-Āydīnī (lived during the reign of Mehmed II), Ṭāshkubrī'zādah wrote: 'he entered *bilād al-ʿAjam*, and *mawla* (common Ottoman synonym of shaykh) Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī studied together with him' (*Shaqāʾiq*, p.197). Jami (d. 898/1492) was a famous Ṣūfī and mystic who lived and studied in the Khorāsānian city of Herat (*al-Shaqāʾiq*, pp.232-233; *al-Aʿlām*, v.3, p.296). The lands of *al-ʿAjam* in *Shaqāʾiq* even included centres of learning in Transoxania. On a teacher at *Sahn-i Saman* named Pir Muḥammad al-Fanārī (d. 956/1549), Ṭāshkubrī'zādah said: 'then he travelled to *bilād al-ʿAjam* and studied there under the ulama of Samarqand and Bukhārā' (*Shaqāʾiq*, p.420).

[346] Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu quotes a study by M Lekesiz (M. H. Lekesiz, "Osmanli ilmi zihniyetinde degisme [Tesekkul-gelisme-cozulme XV-XVII. Yuzyillar]", Masters Thesis, Hacettepe University, Dept. of History, Ankara, 1989, pp.27-28-65) which gives the following statistics on the sources of Ottoman education between the eighth/fourteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries: scholars studied in Iran constituted 39.3 percent; Egypt, 30.3 percent; as for Transoxania, Iraq, Khorezm and Fergana each had 6.06; finally, Anatolia and Khorāsān had 3.03 percent (Ihsanoglu, Ekmeleddin "the Madrasas of the Ottoman Empire" published by Foundation for Science and Technology and Civilisation [UK], no. 4055, April 2004, p.4). These statistics would have to be largely modified if the study by Lekisiz treated *ʿAjam* as an absolute synonym for moder-day Iran, and did not take into consideration the variations of this designation outlined above.

certainly impacted the scholarly environment of those times.[347] For example, the first entry in *al-Shaqā'iq* is a scholar by the name of Sheikh Edebali al-Karamānī (d. 726/1325-6) who hailed from the powerful *beylik* (princedom) of Karaman – prior to its annexation into Ottoman dominion - where he acquired his initial religious learning before taking higher studies at the *ulama* of al-Shām (Syrian). Al-Karamānī then had a close affinity with 'Uthmān I (founder of the dynasty) and became his chief advisor on matters of religion and governance. The Sultan even married one of al-Karamānī's daughters who – according to Ṭāshkubrī'zādah[348] - became mother of Orhan, son of 'Uthmān I and his successor.[349] Another notable from the time of 'Uthmān I's reign is Mukhlis-Baba, a Ṣūfī native of Khorāsān who settled in Kirshehir in Karaman and then became part of the sultan's inner circle and accompanied him on his conquests[350]; Mukhlis-Baba's son and grandson continued their father's legacy and became prominent Ottoman scholars in their own right.[351]

Proficiency in the rational sciences (*al-'Ulūm al-'aqliyyah* or *al-ma'qūlāt*) is a recurring theme in *al-Shaqā'iq*. According to Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *al-ma'qulat* are made up of the following disciplines (in this order): 'theology (*kalām*), principles of jurisprudence (*'uṣūl al-fiqh*), Arabic grammar (*al-naḥw*), morphology (*al-taṣrīf*), the science of inflection (*al-i'rāb*), the science of meanings (*al-ma'ānī*), the science of clarification (*al-bayān*), the science of dialectics (*al-jadal*), logic (*manṭiq*), philosophy (*falsafa*) and astronomy (*al-hay'a*).'[352] The sequence in which the rational sciences are outlined by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah echoes a common understanding that *'ilm al-Kalām* is the chief science and the validity of other religious sciences is contingent upon it.[353] Foremost scholar in the reign of Orhan (lasting from 726/1326 until his death in

---

[347] For more on this point, see the recently published: Atçıl, AbdurRaḥmān *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

[348] This assertion has been challenged in recent scholarship. For example see: Leslie P. Peirce *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Oxford University Press, 1993. pp. 106–107.

[349] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, pp.5-6.

[350] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.7.

[351] They are Ashiq-Pasha al-Ḥanafī al-Ṣūfī (*al-Shaqā'iq*, p.7) and Alwan Chelebī (*al-Shaqā'iq*, p.8.).

[352] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.60.

[353] This trend is found in al-Ghazālī and is a dominant theme in authoritative canons from the later *Kalām* tradition. Al-Ghazālī wrote in his manual of Shāfi'i jurisprudence, *al-Mustaṣfa*: '*Kalām* is [the science] responsible for proving the principles of all of the religious sciences, because they are [merely] particular in respect of [the science] of *Kalām*. *Kalām* is the science which reserves the higher status since from its [station] that one descends to these particularities.' (al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid *al-Mustaṣfa* [edited by Muḥammad Abd al-Salām al-Shafi], Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993, p.6-7). Al-Taftāzānī wrote in his *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah*: '[*Kalām*] is the most noble of sciences because it is the basis of religious rulings and chief of the religious sciences' (al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ*, p.56). However, al-Ghazālī's division of sciences slightly differed from that of Ṭāshkubrī'zādah; al-Ghazālī divided all sciences into two parts: rational - including medicine, mathematics, geometry etc. - and religious - including *Kalām*, the principles of jurisprudence, the science of tradition, tafsīr, and the inner science - *'ilm al-batin* - or science of the heart (al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfa*, p.6). It would seem that since *'ilm al-Kalām* was becoming increasingly "rational" in the later theological tradition, and became – in al-Taftāzānī's words –

760/1359) is Dawūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350) who became a prominent teacher at the madrasa in Iznik - the first college to be established under Ottoman auspices. Qayṣarī was a native of Karaman, studying there first, then moved to Egypt to study *tafsīr, ḥadīth* and *ʿuṣūl*. Ṭāshkubrī'zādah makes special mention of Qayṣarī's exceptional abilities in the rational sciences; he wrote that Qayṣarī

> Excelled in the rational sciences and acquired the science of Sufism; he composed a commentary on [the book] of *Fuṣūṣ* by Ibn ʿArabī, and forwarded it with an introduction in which he outlined the principles of the science of Sufism; his aptitude for the rational sciences can also be gleaned from his words in that introduction.[354]

*3.2.1 Pioneering Scholars and Popular Texts*

### 3.2.1.1 Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's List of Theological Classics

A noteworthy feature of Ottoman theological scholarship during the Classical period is the predominance of Ashʿarī texts. Writing in the year 948/1541-42, Ṭāshkubrī'zādah finishes the relatively elongated entry on the science of *kalām* in his encyclopedia of sciences with a list of works that may be deemed the classic text-books in the field.[355] First among them are the tracts of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1273) – namely, *Qawāʿid al-ʿAqāʾid* and *al-Tajrīd.* Al-Ṭūsī was a follower of Twelver Shi'ism and his works are considered the pinnacle of philosophical *kalām.*[356] Nevertheless, al-Ṭūsī's works – in particular *al-Tajrīd* - was one of the foundational texts of Ottoman scholasticism throughout the Classical period. The second treatise in the list is the book of *al-Ṭawāliʿ* by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286). Al-Bayḍāwī was a renowned Ashʿarī scholar from Shīrāz and this work by him has been until recent times one of the most widely-studied Ashʿarī canons.

Importantly, these works were not studied in their abstract form, but were typically read through the gaze of commentaries – a dominant trend in Islamic religious scholarship in those times. Ṭāshkubrī'zādah lists three commentaries on *al-Tajrīd* by an Ashʿarī, a Māturīdī and a philosopher; they are: first, the commentary by Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 744/1349) – an influential Ashʿarī commentator who was born in Iṣfahān and – in

---

'almost indistinguishable from philosophy' (al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ,* p.55), it was viewed as a rational science by Ottoman scholars in this period. See discussion on the later *kalām* tradition in Chapter One.
[354] *Al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.9. Note Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's use of available evidence to substantiate his view of the prevalence of rationalism in early Ottoman intellectual history.
[355] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda,* v.2, pp.159-162.
[356] Tūsī's works were controversial even among some prominent Ashʿarīs, and the same reaction to it – and to the enterprise of philosophical *Kalām* – would be observed in following centuries of Ottoman history. See for example Sacaklizādah in Chapter V.

Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's words – "excelled in the rational sciences"; al-Iṣfahānī taught in Damascus and later in Egypt where he died; second, the commentary by Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī (d. 786/1348), an Egyptian Ḥanafi-Māturīdī scholar already referred to in the previous chapter; and, third, the commentary on *al-Tajrīd* by Transoxanian philosopher-mathematician ʿAli al-Qūshjī (d. 879/1474) who established rapport with Mehmed II and became an esteemed member of Ottoman scholarly circles. As for al-Bayḍāwī's *al-Ṭawāliʿ*, Ṭāshkubrī′zādah mentions one commentary – also by the Ashʿarī Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī .

Next in Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's list of theological works are the following Ashʿarī classics: *al-Muḥaṣṣal, al-ʿArbaʿīn [fi ʿuṣūl al-Dīn]* and *Nihayat al-ʿuqūl* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209); *Lubāb al-ʿArbaʿīn* by Sirāj al-Dīn al-ʿUrmawī (d. 682/1283), which is commentary on Rāzī's *al-ʿArbaʿīn*; *Abkār al-ʿAfkār* by Sayf al-Dīn al-ʿĀmidī (d. 631/1233); *al-Mawāqif, Jawāhir al-Kalām* and *al-ʿaqāʾid al-ʿAḍudiyyah* by ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-ʿĪjī (d. 756/1355); and Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*.[357] Interestingly, in addition to al-Bābartī's Commentary on *al-Tajrīd*, only two Ḥanafī theological tracts are listed by Ṭāshkubrī′zādah, and both were from Transoxania. The first is *al-Ṣaḥāʾif al-ʿIlāhiyya* by Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (died around 690/1291), a Ḥanafī scholar from Samarqand who was strongly influenced by later Ashʿarī scholars – especially al-Rāzī; Ṭāshkubrī′zādah exclaimed that he did not know anything about the author besides his name.[358] The second is *Taʿdīl al-ʿUlūm* by famous Bukhāran scholar Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī (d. 747/1346).[359]

### 3.2.1.2 Commentaries and Super-commentaries

Ottoman theological literature during the Classical period took overwhelmingly the form of commentaries (*shurūḥ*, sin. *Sharḥ*) and super-commentaries (*ḥawāshī*, sin. *ḥāshiya*) on earlier *kalām* works – especially from the later Ashʿarī tradition. These commentaries formed the basis of scholarly writing among the learned class; and, since they typically defined themselves in view of earlier commentaries, they proved to be a vehicle for intellectual debate. It is crucial to point out, however, that this academic practice prevailed in other centers of learning in the Muslim world and was in no way a unique feature of Classical Ottoman scholarship. In fact, Ṭāshkubrī′zādah himself mentions an example of a non-Ottoman intellectual exchange in the discipline of *kalām* that took place within the bounds

---

[357] Ṭāshkubrī′zādah, *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda,* p.160-161.
[358] Biography of Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī remains mostly unknown.
[359] Both works have already been discussed in the last two chapters.

of the "paradigm" of super-commentaries. Concerning the abovementioned commentary on *al-Tajrīd* by Qūshjī, he wrote: 'there are super-commentaries on it by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī (d. 918/1512), as well as by Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 930/1523); the debate between them kept going back and forth; accordingly, they composed super-commentaries in phases, well-known by the experts.'[360] Al-Dawwānī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī were contemporaneous philosophers and theologians who lived in the city of Shīrāz. Both evenly authored six super-commentaries on Qūshjī's commentary on *al-Tajrīd*, and as a whole constituted a protracted and continuous intellectual exchange. The debate even continued posthumously by Ṣadr al-Dīn's son Mir Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 949/1542) who retorted to the last super-commentary written by al-Dawwānī which had been intended to be a rejoinder against his father's last super-commentary on the subject.[361]

### 3.2.2 Legacy of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī

Reading the works of Ṭāshkubrī′zādah, or Kātib Chelebī's (d. 1067/1657) bibliographical encyclopedia *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, in addition to catalogues of extant manuscripts in modern-day Turkey, one is struck by the vast number of commentaries and super-commentaries that were composed during the Classical Ottoman period which covered nearly all aspects of Islamic learning. However, specially in the fields of *'Uṣūl* and *Kalām,* no works attracted more commentary, glosses and annotation than the writings of two scholars: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī.

Al-Taftāzānī was a highly prolific scholar from Nisā in Khorāsān. Born into a family well-versed in the Islamic scholarly tradition (his father was a scholar and judge, and his grandfather and great grandfather were both well-regarded *ulama*). He studied under philosopher-logician Quṭb al-Dīn al-Taḥtānī (d. 766/1365) and prominent Ashʿarī ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-ʿĪjī. Al-Taftāzānī was a Shāfiʿī with wide-ranging intellectual interests which were mostly in the rational sciences of Islam. According to Ṭāshkubrī′zādah, Taftāzānī's specialist fields include: Arabic sciences such as grammar, morphology; the sciences of meanings and clarification; in addition to the two fundamental disciplines (*al-ʿaṣlayn*) - principles of jurisprudence and theology.[362] Taftāzānī lived in Samarqand during the reign of Tīmūr, and the latter reportedly had a high opinion of him. He died in Samarqand in 792/1390 leaving a

---

[360] *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, p.159.
[361] Details on these super-commentaries is also found in Kātib Chelebī's *Kashf al-ẓunūn* (v.1, pp.346-351).
[362] *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda,* p.190-192.

long-lasting legacy. In the words of Ṭāshkubrī'zādah: 'mastery of the sciences in the east ended in him.'[363]

The other scholar whose works were highly celebrated by the Ottomans is al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413); a contemporary of al-Taftāzānī who also lived in Tīmūrid Persia and Transoxania, and was born in Istrābād in northern Iran. A follower of the Ḥanafī school of law with greater inclines to Ashʿarī theology, al-Jurjānī studied under Quṭb al-Dīn al-Taḥtānī among others before moving to Egypt to study under prestigious *ualma,* primarily chief of Ḥanafīs Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī. Al-Jurjānī authored fifty books on a wide-range of topics; Ṭāshkubrī'zādah described him as 'leading scholar of the east and foremost intellectual of his age.'[364]

Majority of Classical Ottoman scholars who wrote on theological matters studied and produced commentaries on texts by these two scholars, in particular al-Taftāzānī's commentary on the Māturīdī *Creed* of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (known as *Sharḥ al-ʿaqā'id al-Nasafīyyah*), and al-Jurjānī's all-inclusive *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* – a commentary on al-ʿĪjī's manual of Ashʿarī *kalām.* However, al-Taftāzānī's theological *magnum opus* was the book of *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*, which parallels in size al-Jurjānī's voluminous *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif.* (The last two treatises complete the abovementioned Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's list of *kalām* classics.[365])

The systematic and encyclopedic nature of the scholarly works produced by al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī resulted in their wide-dissemination in parts of the Muslim world, especially in the eastern lands of Persia and Khorāsān. An interesting report from *al-Shaqā'iq* quotes Turco-Mongol conqueror Tīmūr (d. 807/1405) as saying (during Taftāzānī's lifetime): 'I have not conquered a town which his (al-Taftāzānī's) books have not reached before my sword.'[366] This quote gives a strong indication on the far-reaching popularity of al-Taftāzānī's

---

[363] *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda,* p.191.

[364] *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda,* p.192-193.

[365] *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda,* p.161; he also lists in the passing *Tahdhīb al-manṭiq wal-kalām* by al-Taftāzānī and other works by al-Iṣfahānī and al-Āmidī which he mentions for bibliographical purposes. Interestingly, Ṭāshkubrī'zādah does not cite al-Taftāzānī's most widely-disseminated work - *Sharḥ al-ʿaqaid al-Nasafīyyah* - among his list of *kalām* classics – a work which exhibits the greatest Māturīdī influence among Taftazānī's books.

[366] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* p.82. Egyptian historian Aḥmad b. ʾAlī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) – who wrote in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century – provides an early insight on the popularity of al-Jurjānī among his (presumably Persian) countrymen. In his biographical work *Durar al-ʿuqūd al-farida,* and after acknowledging Jurjānī's exceptional erudition, he wrote 'and he had followers who excessively venerated him and overly praised him in keeping with the habit of Persians - al-ʿAjam' (Al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad b. Ali *Durar al-ʿuqud al-farida fī tarajim al-ʿAyān al-mufīda* [edited by Maḥmūd al-Jalili], Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-ʿIslami, 2002, v.2, 524). This quote indicates the early popularity of al-Jurjānī, but it also shows a kind of dismissiveness on the part of the Egyptian historian regarding the overly celebratory attitude towards these scholars. He also seems to favor al-Taftāzānī over al-Jurjānī (also noted by Kātib Chelebī who claimed that "learned elite" favored Taftāzānī over al-Jurjānī; see

scholarship towards the end of the eighth/fourteenth century. But there is also evidence that his works had reached beyond the Tīmūrid realm in and around the same period. Muḥammad Ḥamza al-Fanārī (d. 834/1430) was a highly influential Ottoman scholar who flourished during the reign of Bāyazīd I (lasted from 791/1389 until his death in 804/1402). He was the first to acquire the title of *Shekhul-'Islam* in the empire and is arguably considered the founding father of Ottoman scholasticism.[367] Ṭāshkubrī′zādah reports that while al-Fanārī was a teacher at a school in Anatolia,[368] he would give his students an extra day off in addition to their normal weekly holiday which was on Tuesday and Friday; 'the reason is,' Ṭāshkubrī′zādah says,

> That during his (al-Fanārī's) times the scholarly works of al-Taftāzānī had reached a high level of fame, and he [had] encouraged students to study them. But, those books were not available for purchase as their copies had not yet become widely-disseminated (in al-Rūm). Therefore, they had to reproduce them; and as they struggled to have sufficient time to copy them, the *mawla* (al-Fanārī) added Monday to their [weekly] holiday.[369]

Indeed, a closer reading of the scholarly career of al-Fanārī – and others from this period – offers hints on the origins of the Ottoman interest in the rational sciences, which coupled an unwavering interest in the undoubtedly rationalist character of the writings of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī.[370] It is said that when renowned Ḥanafī jurist Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Kardarī (d. 827/1423) sojourned in al-Rūm, he proved to be more knowledgeable than al-Fanārī in jurisprudential knowledge (*al-furūʿ*), although the latter overmastered him in *ʿuṣūl*

---

Chelebī, Kātib *Sullam al-wUṣūl ila Ṭabaqāt al-fuhul* [edited by Maḥmūd Abd al-Qādir al-Arnaʾut], Istanbul: Ircica, 2010, v.2, p.388); he said in Taftāzānī's biography: 'a lot of his [works] were critically pursued by al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī and others, and most of what they criticize in him is not free from wantonness - *taʾassuf*' (v.3, p.471).

[367] This assertion is not explicit in Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's *al-Shaqāʾiq* or in Kātib Chelebī's Arabic edition of *Fezleke,* although the former refers to the extensive authorities bestowed upon al-Fanārī by Murād I. Later studies affirm that al-Fanārī was indeed *Shekhu-l Islam* of the Ottoman empire, see Aydın, İ.H. (2005). Molla Fenari. in İslam Ansiklopedisi (Vol. 30, pp. 245-247). Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı.

[368] Ṭāshkubrī′zādah does not specify the whereabouts of the school in question, but it was most likely a school in the princedom of Karaman or in Bursa where he is said to have taught (*al-Shaqāʾiq,* pp.25-31).

[369] *Al-Shaqāʾiq,* p.30.

[370] Beyond the Classical period, later Ottoman scholars appear to make a fine distinction between philosophical *kalām* of later Ashʿarīsm – which invited a degree of criticism – and the writings of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī in that works of the two contained philosophical content for the purpose of argument and does not necessarily mean they intended to propagate them. This assertion is made – for example – by twelfth/eighteenth century Ottoman scholar Sachaklizādah in his discussion of the history of *kalām* in his book *Tartīb al-ʿulūm.* Similar to Birkawī, Ḥasan Kāfī Āḳhisârî, and a great many post-Classical Ottoman theologians, Sachalizādah attempts to clear al-Taftāzānī's *Maqāṣid* and al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* of the charge that they are texts of "philosophical theology" by saying: 'although they quote the doctrines of the philosophers, but they do not disguise or interpolate them [deceptively] into the doctrines of Islam. Rather, they clearly state whence they quote, and follow up with critical responses.' (Sachaklizādah, *Tartīb al-ʿUlūm* , p.149; see also pp.146, 210, 214.).

and other sciences.[371] Al-Fanārī also used his authority to encourage interest in the rational sciences in other scholars; he reportedly sent a fellow *ʿālim* by the name of Ṣafar-Shāh al-Ḥanafī (d. 834/1430) 'some problems from the rational sciences (*al-ʿUlūm  al-ʿaqliyya*) and *ordered* him to answer them.'[372]

However, it seems that the earliest surge in Ottoman theological writing – which was mostly in the form of commentaries and super-commentaries – took place during the reign of Murād II (who ruled from 825/1421 until his death in 855/1451). Ṭāshkubrī′zādah mentions a scholar by the name of Muḥammad b. Bashīr who studied at the school built by Bāyazīd I in Bursa before ascending to the rank of tutor, then teacher in it. Ibn Bashīr, while only a tutor, taught the entire *Sharḥ al-Matali′* of al-Jurjānī (a super-commentary on a logic classic by al-Urmawī) thirty-seven times. This meant, in Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's words, 'he taught all days [of the year] except Fridays and the two religious holidays.'[373] This incessant scholarly activity is further evidenced in *al-Shaqāʾiq* in the fact that thirteen out of the thirty-nine scholars chronicled in Murād II's *ṭabaqa* (which includes a plethora Ṣūfīs and others whose expertise were unrelated to rational disciplines) composed super-commentaries on the works of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī – a significant proportion of them was indeed in *ʿilm al-kalām.*[374]

### 3.2.2.1 Rational Sciences and the "Two Masters" under the Reign of Mehmed II (the Conqueror)

Classical Ottoman scholasticism entered a new era under the reign of Mehmed II (the Conqueror) – who ruled between 855/1451 until his death in 886/1481. [375] His nearly thirty-year rule inaugurated with the conquest of Constantinople which was a turning-point in Ottoman history. Shortly after the conquest, he temporarily converted eight churches into schools, commissioning scholars from various parts of the empire to teach in them. When he constructed the Conqueror's Mosque, he built around it eight colleges that would be known

---

[371] *Al-Shaqā′q*, p.31. Ṭāshkubrī′zādah provides a short entry on al-Kardarī although he was from Khorezm and died in Yemen. The fact he stopped in al-Rūm for an unknown duration qualified him to be among the biographees of *al-Shaqā′iq*. His death is dated in *Kaḥḥale* (v.3, p.177) as 816/1413.

[372] *Al-Shaqā′q*, p.34.

[373] *Al-Shaqā′iq*, p.75.

[374] *Al-Shaqā′iq*, pp.73-109. The chapter on Ottoman religious thought in *History of the Ottoman State and Civilization* (İhsanoğlu, v.2, p.245) cites a study of Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's *al-Shaqā′iq al-nu′maniyya* (Lekesiz, H. "Osmanlı İlmi Zihniyeti Üzerine Bir Tahlil Denemesi[15.-17.y.y]", Milletlerarası Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumunda Sunulan Tebliğ 1991, p.170) which suggests that of all commentaries, super-commentaries, and annotations composed between the eighth/fourteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries, 26.3 were in jurisprudence and 25.3 in *Kalām*.

[375] His reign was interrupted between 848/1444 and 850/1446 as his son Mehmed II reigned for two years.

as *Sahn-i saman* – lit. the eight Courtyard Schools – to which he moved lectureship from the old schools.[376] Mehmed II's reign would witness important steps in the direction of canonizing Ottoman scholarship and his *Sahn-i saman* would become the pinnacle of Ottoman learning throughout the empire's lifetime.

Importantly, Mehmed II took a personal interest in Islamic scholarship and was in contact with a large number of scholars who he invited to the new capital Istanbul, some of whom became his private tutors. *Al-Shaqā'iq* contains reports that reveal the Conqueror's interest in the rational sciences as epitomized in the works of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī. Mehmed II's encounter with Khiḍr-Beg bin Jalāl (d. 860/1455-56) proves that the sultan's involvement in scholarly life predates the conquest of Constantinople. Ṭāshkubrī'zādah reports that around the year 848/1444 and in the presence of the sultan, an assembly of scholars was held at Bursa to debate with a an unnamed visiting Arab scholar 'who was widely-read in the strange sciences (*al-ʿUlūm al-gharība*).'[377] The latter supposedly refuted all attending local scholars and made the sultan "extremely agitated and greatly ashamed". Then the sultan is urged to invite Khiḍr-Beg (a local judge in his thirties from a humble background), who – presumably – not only countered all of the visiting scholar's arguments, but also refuted him in "sixteen further sciences" which the Arab scholar had not even heard of. As a result, Mehmed II gave Khiḍr-Beg two schools in Bursa including Mehmed I madrasa whose list of graduates from this date onwards would include some of the biggest names in classical Ottoman theological scholarship.[378]

Shortly after Mehmed II built the *Sahn-i Saman* schools, he gave one of them to ʿAlā' al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī (d. 887/1482); a scholar from al-ʿAjam who moved to al-Rūm and initially taught at the school of Mehmed I in Bursa. Before assuming professorship at one of the *Sahn-i Saman,* al-Ṭūsī was said to have been at once a master of traditional and rational sciences. On a seemingly surprise visit to the latter school, Mehmed II summoned ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī and asked him to conduct a lesson to his students as per normal; content of the lesson was a theological super-commentary by al-Jurjānī.[379] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah reports that during this lesson al-Ṭūsī's

---

[376] Inalcik, Halil (2013-11-21). *The Ottoman Empire: 1300-1600* (Kindle Location 3643). Orion. Kindle Edition.
[377] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.84.
[378] Ibid.
[379] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah states that it is a super-commentary on one of the works by the Ashʿarī Adud al-Dīn al-ʿĪjī.

erudition was so that Mehmed II was moved with ecstasy and granted him ten-thousand dirhams, in addition to five-hundred dirhams to each one of his students.[380]

The sultan's role in encouraging learning of scholastic theology is further delineated in his encounter with the celebrated Ottoman scholar Aḥmad b. Musa al-Khayālī (died around 886/1481). Al-Khayālī – a graduate of Khiḍr-Beg's school at Bursa – was renowned for his excellence in the rational sciences and produced a number of *ḥawāshī* on theological classics, most influential among them being his *ḥāshiya* on al-Taftāzānī's commentary on the *Creed* of al-Nasafī. This *ḥāshiya* became one of the most widely-disseminated and studied works of its type, inviting over sixteen further commentaries by Ottoman scholars as well as scholars from the wider Muslim world.[381] Having learned that Khayālī was author of the famous *ḥāshiya,* Mehmed II immediately appointed him teacher at the *Murādiyya* school in Bursa, and then offered him a position at one of the prestigious *Sahn-i Saman* schools where al-Khayālī briefly taught until his early death at the age of thirty three.[382]

The scholarly culture of the time can be further gleaned from the impressive career of Muṣṭafa b. Yūsuf Khojazādah (d. 893/1488) who became teacher and close associate of Mehmed II. Khojazādah's status in the Ottoman learning class reached peak levels following a series of encounters with the Mehmed II in which Khojazādah proved his worth. Most famous of them was when Mehmed II commissioned Khojazādah and the abovementioned ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī to write the best new reappraisal of al-Ghazālī's rebuttal of philosophy (*Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*) vis-à-vis the counter-arguments of the philosophers. Khojazādah finished his *al-Tahāfut* in four months, and two months later ʿAli al-Ṭūsī completed his version and called it *al-Dhukhr.* In the end, although Mehmed II gave both scholars the same financial reward of ten-thousand dirhams, he clearly favored Khojazādah's *al-Tahāfut* (which became a popular Ottoman classic) over al-Ṭūsī's by complementing the former's reward with a robe of honor (*khilʿa nafīsa*).[383]

Khojazādah – in keeping with the spirit of the time – had a special affinity with al-Jurjānī and his *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif.* Purportedly, while teaching a super-commentary in *ʿuṣūl al-*

---

[380] *Al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.90.
[381] Al-Habashi, Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad *Jami' al-Shurūḥ wal-ḥawāshī,* Abū Dhabi: al-Majmaʿ al-Thaqafi, 2004, pp.1184-1186.
[382] *Al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.130.
[383] *Al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.91.

*fiqh* by al-Jurjānī,[384] Khojazādah raised strong objections to some of its arguments. Nonetheless, Ṭāshkubrī′zādah's father – who recounts this story as he was one of his students – quotes Khojazādah as saying: 'these objections are such that if the honorable al-Sharīf [al-Jurjānī] was alive and I presented them to him, he would have accepted them without hesitation.' He then said, 'but do not think from these words of mine that I am claiming privilege over the honorable al-Sharīf [al-Jurjānī] or to be of equal status to him! God forbid, God forbid! He is my master in scholarly disciplines; indeed, I have benefited from his books.'[385] Khojazādah also used to say that 'beyond the works of al-Jurjānī, he never glanced over someone else's book with the purpose of acquiring new knowledge.'[386] Towards the end of his life, Khojazādah suffered ill-health and was semi-paralyzed; nevertheless, he finally consented to composing a super-commentary on al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* (which he had memorized verbatim earlier in his life) after being repeatedly pressed to do so by Mehmed II. Khojazādah died before completing the demanded super-commentary, but it is clear that Mehmed II thought his favorite scholar's erudition must be utilized (perhaps before the scholar's imminent death) to produce a super-commentary on the crucial *kalām* classic.[387]

The reverence attached to Taftāzānī and Jurjānī during Mehmed II's reign is further indicated in the following three encounters from *al-Shaqā'iq*:

(1) The first is when Muḥammad Zeyrek – a Ṣūfī and one of the first to teach in Istanbul after the conquest – reportedly once claimed that he was superior to al-Jurjānī in the presence of Mehmed II; a statement which the latter found unpalatable. As a result, the sultan summoned Khojazādah to hold a debate with Zeyrek and asked Muḥammad b. Farāmarz (d. 885/1480), popularly known as the Mawla (*sheikh*) Khosrow, to arbitrate between them. Khosrow was a highly-regarded scholar and close associate of the sultan who appointed him the first grand judge of Istanbul.[388] (Interestingly, Ṭāshkubrī′zādah reports that Khosrow – known for his beautiful calligraphy – left behind after his death two copies of al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* which were purchased at auction by a scholar from al-Rūm

---

[384] The book is a super-commentary on the commentary by al-'Ījī on renowned Ash'arī scholar Ibn al-Ḥājib's *Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā* – or *mukhtaṣar Ibn al-Ḥājib* in principles of jurisprudence (*Kashf al-ẓunūn*, v.2, 1853; *al-Shaqā'iq*, p.124).

[385] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.124.

[386] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.124.

[387] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.128.

[388] The present edited version of Kātib Chelebī's *Fezleke* inserts the name of "Khiḍr-Beg" above the name of Mawla Khosrow in the chronological list of Judges of Constantinople. However, he merely mentions the name without biograpical information (*Fezleke*, p.461).

for six-thousand dirhams! [389]) In the outset of the debate, Khojazādah quizzed Zeyrek on the rational proof of God's monotheism and the debate lasted seven days until Khosrow ruled that Khojazādah prevailed over Zeyrek. To the latter's humiliation, he left Istanbul to Bursa and refused to return to the capital until his death.[390]

(2) A similar encounter also occurred involving a scholar by the name of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥamīdī; a native of Isparta and student of 'Alī al-Ṭūsī who became one of Mehmed II's personal teachers. He reportedly claimed superiority over al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī in the presence of Mehmed II and said: 'if they had been alive, they would have been [my servants] and carry the covers of my horse's saddle.'[391] The sultan loathed hearing this form Ḥamīdī and requested Khojazādah to refute him, which he did.

(3) A vizier at the court of Mehmed II named Muḥammad Pasha of Karaman[392] reportedly held an assembly of esteemed scholars who debated with Khojazādah the necessity of logic in theological inquiry; interestingly the debate was provoked by the assembly's consensus that "absolutely no objection can be raised" against the opinions of al-Jurjānī.[393]

### 3.2.3 The Established Paradigm

### 3.2.3.1 The Official Scholastic Institution

The developed educational hierarchy in the classical Ottoman period took much of its final shape under the reign of Mehmed II. Ottoman schools generally fell into two categories: *haric* (peripheral) and *dahil* (central); somewhat akin to the conventional distinction between undergraduate and postgraduate. Each category was further sub-divided into three categories according to the level of instruction. The *haric* madrasas started

---

[389] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.112.

[390] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, pp.117-118; Ṭāshkubrī′zādah reports that Mehmed II regretted what he did to Zeyrek and offered him official titles which the latter invariably declined to accept.

[391] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.164. A similar story is found in *Tarajim al-A'yān* by al-Ḥasan al-Būrīnī involving Ibn Kamāl Pasha and Suleyman the Magnificent: 'trustworthy persons have related that the late honourable Sultan Suleyman asked the late *mawla* Ibn Kamāl Pasha: "suppose you lived in the times of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī, what would your status be in respect to them? [Ibn Kamāl] answered: "if they were in my times they would have carried the 'cover'"; the sultan discretely disliked this overblown statement from him and did not respond to him. Later he posed the very same question to Abū al-Su'ūd Efendi (prominent *Shekhul Islam*) who replied: "I would be [but] an agreeing student"' (al-Burini, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad *Tarajim al-A'yān min abna' al-zaman* [edited by Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjid], Damascus: Matbu'at al-Majma' al-'Ilmi bi Dimashq, 1963, v.1, p.240)

[392] Chelebī, Kātib *Fezleke,* pp.398-399.

[393] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, pp.122-125. Khojazādah did not accept this assertion and argued that al-Jurjānī, like all scholars, is prone to error.

with the *ibtida-yi dahil*, a school for novices which offered introductory instruction in basic Islamic sciences - with a definite focus on rational sciences as it covered in addition to the sciences of the Arabic language and theology, the disciplines of logic, astronomy and geometry. Interestingly, these schools were supposedly also known as "Tajrīd madrasas", as one of the schools' main texts was the already-mentioned Jurjānī's super-commentary on al-Qūshjī's commentary on Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd*. Ottoman historian Janābī Muṣṭafa Efendi (d. 999/ 1590-91) wrote that syllabus of the peripheral schools was made-up of theology (*Kalāmiyyat*), *Tajrīd*-based studies (*Tajrīdiyyāt*), and mathematics (*Riyādiyyāt*), and in more advanced levels students read al-Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* and al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*.[394] First level in the second category (the *dahil* schools) includes advanced training in Ḥanafī jurisprudence, in addition to emphasis on *ʿuṣūl* and Qurʾānic exegesis. Quite significantly, curriculum of *dahil* schools reveal the influence of the rationalist spirit of later Ashʿarism on classical Ottoman scholarship. In *ʿuṣūl*, students studied al-Taftāzānī's *Talwih*, a commentary on later Māturīdī Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī's *Tanqīḥ al-ʾuṣūl*; a manual in principles of jurisprudence which contains a host of important theological inquiries and anti-ʾAshʿarī doctrines. However, studying Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa's work through the gaze of al-Taftāzānī, who was an Ashʿarī, meant the students were presented with Ashʿarī and Māturīdī points of view on matters of dispute between the two schools.[395] Equally interesting was the

---

[394] Janābī, Muṣṭafa Efendi *Cenabi tarihi,* manuscript, quoted in Chelebī, Kātib *Fezlektu akwali'l-akhyar fi ʿilm't-tarih ve'l-ahbar* (edited by Seyyid Mumammad es-Seyyid), Ankara, Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 2009, p.236, fn.698.

[395] Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī's *al-Tanqīḥ* presents another example of *ḥāshiya* writing in Ottoman theological scholarship. This book contained a controversial chapter which dealt with critical theological doctrines that intersected with the discussions of the principles of jurisprudence. He arranged it into four introductions (*muqaddimāt*) and took a generally anti-ʾAshʿarī view on the questions of rationality, good and evil and human free will. It seems that given the theological nature of this chapter, Ottoman scholars excerpted it along with al-Taftāzānī's commentary and composed further super-commentaries making it look like a separate work. Introducing the *muqaddimāt*, Kātib Chelebī wrote in *Kashf al-ẓunūn*: 'the famous yet vague introductions in the middle of the book; he adduced them from his own thought to delineate the weakness of al-ʾAshʿarī's doctrine that good and evil are not substantiated except by [divine] command and prohibition: what God commands is good and what he forbids is evil. He then outlined his (al-ʾAshʿarī's) evidence and exclaimed that "its weakness is evident"; he then said: "and know that a great many scholars have taken this proof [of al-ʾAshʿarī] a certain; as for those who refused to accept his proof as definite, have not raised objections to his *Introductions* that may be deemed something [of value]. Both camps have overlooked the [real] places of error [in Ashʿarī's argument]. You will read hereby some thought that have crossed my mind and it is divided into four introductions' (*Kashf al-ẓunūn* v.1, 489). According to Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah the first to write a super-commentary on *al-Muqaddimat al-ʿarbaʿa* (the four introductions) was ʿAlī al-ʿArabī (d. 901/1495-6); an Arab scholar originally from Aleppo where he acquired his initial learning before moving to al-Rūm, studying under prominent teacher of Mehmed the Conqueror Aḥmad al-Goranī at Bāyazīd I school in Bursa, and eventually took up professorship at one of the *Sahn-i Saman* in Istanbul. His *ḥāshiya* possibly pursued controversial arguments relating to Ashʿarism as it invited four further super-commentaries during al-ʿArabī's life time (see discussion on it in *al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.141 and *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, v.1, 498). Importantly, while the above commentaries on *al-Muqaddimāt al-ʿarbaʿa* may imply Classical Ottoman engagement with Māturīdī doctrines (which this chapter attempts to show as incomparable with Ashʿarism), these engagements were done through the gaze of Taftazānī's commentary on the original

selection of the Qur'ānic exegesis *al-Kashshāf* by renowned Mu'tazilī Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1143). Reading these exegeses was almost certainly accompanied with commentaries by al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī.[396] Before reaching the *Sahn-i Saman* schools, the highest ranking learning institution in the empire, students attended a preparatory school known as *musile-ye sahn.* Finally, at the highest ranking *Sahn-i Saman* students received specialized education on a variety of disciplines including jurisprudence, Qur'ānic exegesis, theology and Arabic sciences.[397] According to the historian Janābī, scholars who spent time teaching at *Sahn-i Saman* would 'brace to be made judges in the dignified lands of al-Ḥaramayn (Mecca and Madīna), Aleppo, Damascus, Egypt or Baghdād; or in the three cities of Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul.'[398]

### 3.2.3.2 Communion between Pioneers of Ottoman Theological Scholarship and Later Ash'arī Masters

On the whole, pervasiveness of Ash'arism in Classical Ottoman *kalām* is not all surprising. Closer prosopographical analysis reveals the sheer communion between pioneering Ottoman scholars and prominent later Ash'arīs, especially al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī.

(1) One of the earliest recorded direct Ottoman encounters with prominent Ash'arī masters was in the figure of Tāj al-Dīn al-Kurdī (d. 760/1358), who succeeded Dawūd al-Qayṣarī at the influential madrasa of Iznik – the first school built by the Ottomans. Interestingly, al-Kurdī who became part of sultan Orhan's inner circle and bequeathed

---

text by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa. As such, they do not represent a shift beyond the influence of later Ash'arism on Classical Ottoman *kalām.*

[396] Although Halil Incalik does not specify the presence of the commentaries on *al-Kashshāf* as set texts in first level of the *dahil* schools, there is evidence that these commentaries were popular in the earliest period of Ottoman scholasticism. *Al-Shaqāʾiq* records at least three super-commentaries that were composed during the reign of Murād II (825/1421 - 855/1451); two of them were *ḥāshiyas* on al-Jurjānī's commentary on *al-Kashshāf* by Yūsuf-Bali al-Āydīnī (895/1489-90) who was a teacher at a madrasa in Bursa (*al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.75), the other by ʿAlī a-Ṭūsī (d. 887/1482) who taught at the Mehmed I's school in Bursa and later taught at one of the *Sahn-i Saman* in Istanbul (*al-Shaqāʾiq, p.92*). Additionally, Khiḍr-Beg Ibn Jalāl (d. 860/1456), a highly influential Classical Ottoman religious teacher (discussed below) who also taught at Mehmed I's school in Bursa composed a *ḥāshiya* on al-Taftazānī's commentary on *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī (*al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.86). Indeed, numerous other super-commentaries were composed in later centuries. Another reason to believe that study of *al-Kashshāf* was accompanied by commentaries is the fact that post-Classical scholars in the Ottoman realm, and beyond, took a hardline against the Mu'tazilah and it would be quite inconceivable that Ottoman scholars allowed students to read a classic Mu'tazilī *tafsīr* without reliable and "sound" Sunnī commentary – and al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī perfectly fitted the bill.
[397] This paragraph was based on Inalcik, Halil (2013-11-21). The Ottoman Empire: 1300-1600 (Kindle Location 3668). Orion. Kindle Edition.
[398] Chelebī, Kātib *Fezleke,* p.236, fn.698.

money for the establishment of the first madrasa in Bursa,[399] was supposedly a direct student of illustrious Shāfiʿī-'Ashʿarī Sirāj al-Dīn al-ʿUrmawī.[400]

(2) Of perhaps more pivotal influence is Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Āqṣarā'ī of Tabrīz (died around 770/1368), who was also a Shāfiʿī[401] and direct descendant of the renowned Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.[402] Āqṣarā'ī was based in the *beylik* of Karaman and taught at a famous school known as *al-Musalsala,* which was markedly structured in line with ancient Greek philosophical schools; students were divided into three groups according to level of instruction: the lowest-level was named *al-Mashshā'ūn* (Peripatetics), followed by *al-Ruwaqiyūn* (Stoics), then by a third advanced group. Āqṣarā'ī claimed wide-reaching fame and drew a large student following, most notable among them was Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī, a founding father of Ottoman scholasticism.[403] Quite significantly, it was through the conduit of al-Āqṣarā'ī that al-Fanārī became a personal acquaintance of al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, who during his student days had travelled to Karaman to study under al-ʿĀqṣarā'ī (but, upon al-Jurjānī's arrival to al-Rūm Āqṣarā'ī had already died). Then, Aqsara'i met al-Fanārī who he accompanied on a trip to Egypt to study – together with him – under prominent Ḥanafī *mutakallim* Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī.

(3) Indeed, it was not only al-Fanārī who had a common scholarly training with al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. Maḥmūd b. Isrā'īl Ibn Qāḍī Simāwna (died around 818/1415)[404] and physician-theologian Ḥāj-Pasha al-Āydīnī (died after 784/1382)[405] were two well-regarded Ottoman scholars who, while in Egypt, studied together with al-Jurjānī under al-Bābartī among others. Exceptional erudition of the two scholars was highly commended by al-Jurjānī, who in his celebrated *ḥāshiya* on the logical tract *al-Matali'* even cites al- Āydīnī who had predated him in composing a super-commentary on the same logic classic.[406]

---

[399] The statement in *al-Shaqa'iq* may be read in another way: that the scholar 'left behind an amount of money which was used to establish the school at Izniq' – i.e. he may not have intended it for this purpose.

[400] Although this report is affirmed in *al-Shaqā'iq,* it contains some obvious dating inconsistencies. It is possible that he studied under a direct descendant of al-Urmawī or one of his prominent students.

[401] Later histories suspect that he converted to Ḥanafism; see for example the biographical work of Ḥanafīs by Indian scholar Muḥammad al-Laknawī who died in 1304/ 1886-7 (Al-Laknawī, Muḥammad *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya fi tarajim al-hanafiyya* (edited by Aḥmad al-Zu'bi), Beirut: Dar al-'Arqam, 1998, pp.315-316).

[402] Another scholar who traced his lineage to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was Ala' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Shāhrūdī, popularly known as Mussannefik (d. 875/1470). Originally from Bistam in Khorāsān, he sojourned at al-Rūm around the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century and was a highly-regarded man of learning (*al-Shaqā'iq,* p.149).

[403] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* pp.20-21.

[404] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* p.48-50.

[405] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* p.50-51.

[406] Ibid.

Prior to the reign of Mehmed II, several active prominent Ottoman theologians were direct students of al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī. These are the names of the scholars as extrapolated from *al-Shaqā'iq*:

(1) One of the earliest to study – albeit briefly[407] – under al-Jurjānī was philosopher-mathematician Musa Qāḍīzādah (died after 815/1412) who originally came from al-Rūm and lived during the reign of Murād I, but moved to Transoxania and came in contact with Tīmūrid ruler Ulug-Beg (d. 853/1449) who put him in charge of the construction of the observatory at Samarqand.[408]

(2) During the reign of Bāyazīd I, we have a scholar by the name of 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Rūmī, described by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah as a man of powerful intelligence who had entered Egypt and reportedly refuted its scholars (presumably in rational sciences). He studied under both al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī and attended their debates and memorized many of their discussions and arguments.[409]

(3) Belonging to the reign of Mehmed I (from 810/1413 until his death in 825/1421) we have Ḥaydar b. Muḥammad al-Harawī (died around 830/1426) who was a direct student of al-Taftāzānī. While in al-Rūm, al-Harawī composed a *ḥāshiya* on al-Taftāzānī's commentary on Mu'tazilī exegesis of the Qur'ān *al-Kashshāf* in which he defended the ideas of his teacher against the counter-claims made in al-Jurjānī's *ḥāshiya* on the same work.[410]

(4) Another student of al-Jurjānī from the same period is Fakhr al-Dīn al-'Ajamī, who became teacher assistant of *Shaykh al-Islām* al-Fanārī in Bursa, and had prominent students most notable of them is Mehmed II's close associate Khojazādah.[411]

(5) Direct scholarly affiliation with al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī continued during the reign of Murād I, which as mentioned above witnessed an upsurge in *kalām* commentaries. Sayyidi 'Alī al-'Ajamī (860/1456) studied under al-Jurjānī (presumably in Iran) before moving

---

[407] Qāḍīzādah considered Jurjānī to be an unsuitable match for him given his modest interest in mathematical, which was clearly Qāḍīzādah's most specialized discipline. Al-Jurjānī in turn affirms this by dismissing Qāḍīzādah's preoccupation with mathematical sciences (*al-Shaqā'iq*, p.19).

[408] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.18. Qāḍīzādah died before completing the construction of the observatory in Samarqand. The observatory was entrusted to 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qūshjī (879/1474) who oversaw its completion (*al-A'lām*, v.5, p.9). The latter moved to Istanbul and became prominent member of Ottoman learning circles during the reign of Mehmed II.

[409] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, pp.46-47.

[410] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.55.

[411] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.56.

to al-Rūm where Murād I gave him lectureship of Bāyazīd I madrasa in Bursa. Al-'Ajmī composed a number of *ḥawāshī* on al-Taftāzānī and his teacher's popular works, including *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif.*[412]

(6) A prominent student of al-Jurjānī, who even lived into the first years of Mehmed the Conqueror's reign, is Fatḥ Allah al-Shīrwānī (d. 857/1453). Al-Shīrwānī had been in Samarqand and studied rational and traditional sciences under al-Jurjānī and mathematical sciences under Qāḍīzādah al-Rūmī. After moving to al-Rūm, al-Shīrwānī initially resided in Kastamunu (then part of the Jandarid Seljuk *beylik*) where he taught al-Taftāzānī's *Talwīḥ* and al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif.*[413]

At least in official learning circles, theological interests among the next generation of Ottoman, mostly Ḥanafi, scholars continued the intellectual interests of pioneering *ulama,* and certainly remained within the radius of later Ash'arism. Of the earliest twenty teachers at *Sahn-i Saman* outlined in *al-Shaqā'iq*'s Mehmed II's *ṭabaqa,* two had been students of Mawla Yekan al-Āydīnī, who was a student of al-Fanārī before becoming his successor as *Shaykh al-Islām* of the empire.[414] Yekan's list of disciples is long, but most prominent among them is the influential teacher at Bursa Khiḍr-Beg bin Jalāl; five of Khiḍr-Beg's students became teachers at one of the *Sahn-i Saman* schools during the reign of Mehmed II.[415] Interestingly, Khiḍr-Beg was the main master of Khojazādah, and four of the latter's students also made it to the highest-ranking *Sahn-i Saman.*[416]

---

[412] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* p.93.

[413] *Al-Shaqā'iq,* pp.100-101. A later example of the continued legacy of the two masters is found in Ottoman scholar Abd al-Wāsi' b. Khiḍr of Demotika (Didymoteicho, in modern-day eastern Greece). He initially studied under scholars from al-Rūm before moving to Herat in Khorāsān to study under Aḥmad b. Yaḥya b. Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-Taftāzānī, a great grandson of Sa'd al-Taftāzānī (who was chief *alem* of Herat and known as "the martyr" after being killed in his hometown by Safavid 'Ismā'īl b. Ḥaydar in 916/1510; see *Hadiyya,* v.1, 74 and *al-A'lām,* v.1, p.270). Abd al-Wāsi' studied under him works by al-Jurjānī, and after his return to al-Rūm, sultan Salīm I appointed him teacher at one of the *Sahn-i Saman.* He also taught in Edirne and became judge in Istanbul during the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent (*al-Shaqā'iq,* p.342-343).

[414] The teachers are: Muḥammad Baliksiri Ḥājī-Ḥasanzādah (d. 911/1505) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.144] and Ḥāmid al-Dīn b. Afḍal al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī (d. 908/1502) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.156]. In addition to being teacher of prestigious scholars, Mawla Yekan (*Shaqā'iq,* p.73-74) played an important role in the formation of Ottoman scholarship. When in Egypt, Yekan brought back with him to al-Rūm Aḥmad b. 'Ismā'īl of Goran (d. 893/1487) who would become then prince Mehmed II's (the Conqueror) earliest and most influential teachers (*al-Shaqā'iq,* pp.78-83).

[415] The teachers are: Muslih al-Dīn Muṣṭafa al-Qaṣṭallanī (d. 901/1495) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.131]; Muḥammad Khatībzādah (d. 901/1495) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.135]; Ya'qūb Pasha b. Khiḍr-Beg (d. 891/1486) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.161]; Aḥmad Pasha b. Khiḍr-Beg (d. 927/1521) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.162]; Qāsim Qāḍīzādah (d. 899/1493-4) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.172].

[416] The teachers were: Bahā' al-Dīn al-Anḳrawī (d. 895/1489-90) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.177]; Mawla Sirāj al-Dīn [*Shaqā'iq,* p.178]; Muṣliḥ al-Dīn al-Yārḥisārī (d. 911/1505) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.186]; Yūsuf b. Ḥusain al-Kirmastī (d. 906/1500) [*Shaqā'iq,* p.187].

These teachers, and others from schools in the wider empire, helped in establishing a paradigm of theological writing marked by the influence of post-Classical Ash'arism and its peaking rationalism. This strong influence was the result of various factors, especially the interrelatedness between the scholarly careers of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī and pioneers of Ottoman learning, in addition to the rigorously systematic and encyclopedic nature of their works which proved ideal for the establishment of early Ottoman scholasticism. These factors partly explain the great – and, in the Ottoman case, seemingly excessive – attraction to the works of Jurjānī and Taftāzānī in the wider Muslim east.

## 3.3 Māturīdism under Ash'arī Hegemony

### 3.3.1 Status of Ash'arism in Early Ottoman Theology

Ottoman scholars were predominantly followers of the Ḥanafī school of law.[417] But, unlike classical Transoxanian Ḥanafism (discussed in Chapter Two), and later Ottoman theology (discussed in the next two chapters) who both espoused Māturīdī *kalām*, Classical Ottoman theology may not be correctly defined in exclusively Māturīdī terms.

Evidently, and in light of our discussion so far, a major source of influence on Ottoman Ḥanafī theology during this period – in the context of vindicating the original theology of Abū Ḥanīfa – came from the later Ash'arī tradition. Naturally, canons of later Ash'arism – which, as discussed above, pervaded Classical Ottoman scholasticism – had an impact on the theological imagination of scholars who flourished in that time and place, including their attitude towards the nature and significance of the doctrinal dispute between Ash'arism and Māturīdism. Indeed, references to the disputes made in leading volumes of *kalām* by al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī played a crucial role. Al-Taftāzānī wrote in his magnum opus *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid*:

> The dominant [doctrine] among the people of Sunna in Khorāsān, Iraq, al-Shām, and most other countries is that of the Ash'arīs, followers of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī... the first to go

---

[417] References to the Ḥanafism of Ottoman scholars abound in Ṭāshkubrī'zādahs' *al-Shaqā'iq.* For example, when illustrious Ṣūfī Muṣṭafa b. Aḥmad al-Ṣadrī of Konya (d. 896/1490-91), who was a follower of the Ḥanafī school of law, observed Shāfi'i practices in the ritual prayer (by vocalizing the *basmalah* and resting in-between prayer segments), he was met with objection by local Ḥanafī *ulama* who disapproved of eclectically mixing between schools of law. Nevertheless, he was defended by a fellow *ālim* who proclaimed that al-Ṣadrī did so out of personal *'jitihād* and his erudition was that of a *mujtahid*; thereafter, no objection was raised against al-Ṣadrī (*al-Shaqā'iq,* pp.215-216). Furthermore, the very title of Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's history of Ottoman *ulama* is indicative of their predominant Ḥanafism; the Arabic word for Anemone flowers is "*al-Shaqā'iq al-Nu'maniyya*", which is a play on the word "*al-Nu'mān*" - Abū Ḥanīfa's surname. The word "*Nu'mān*" and its derivatives (*Nu'mānī* and *Nu'māniyya*) are popular synonyms of Ḥanafī and Ḥanafism. However, despite the received wisdom, the scholarship and influence of non-Ḥanafī Rūmī Ottoman *ulama* deserves further scrutiny.

against [his Muʿtazilī teacher] Abū Ali al-Jubbaʾi and relinquished his old ideas and [embraced] the Sunna, i.e. the way of the Prophet... In the lands of Transoxania, the follower of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī [dominate], and Māturīd is a village in Samarqand. But, now some differences have emerged between the two sects over a few principles, like the question of *takwīn,* exception in faith, the problem of faith of the emulator and so on. Erudite scholars (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) from both parties do not ascribe each other to innovation or waywardness, unlike outmoded fanatics who would perhaps also make difference over [minor] matter of jurisprudence (*furū*) [an act of] innovation and waywardness.[418]

Post-Classical Ashʿarī writings, including works by al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī, contain scant references to the controversies between the two schools, and the quote above by al-Taftāzānī is among the few explicit references ever made to them. Evidence suggests, nevertheless, that a number of prominent early Ottoman scholars were generally apathetic towards Māturīdism's integral objections to key Ashʿarī doctrines. Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Muṣtafa al-Qasṭallānī (d. 901/1495-96) was an Ottoman scholar renowned for his exceptional mastery of rational sciences (was also a peer of al-Khayālī with whom he co-shared teacher assistance of influential master Khiḍr-Beg at Bursa). Al-Qasṭallānī became prominent judge and teacher at *Sahn-i Saman* in Istanbul.[419] On the section defining *ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamāʿa* in their two celebrated *ḥawāshī* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, both Qasṭallānī and Khayālī confine to copying the above statement by al-Taftāzānī, word for word without further annotation.[420]

---

[418] Al-Taftāzānī, Saʿd al-Dīn *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (edited by Abd al-Raḥmān Umayrah)*,* Beirut: ʾAlam al-Kotob, 1998, v.5, pp.231-232. By '*now* some differences have emerged...' he is probably referring to his contemporary Egyptian Ashʿarī Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī and his circle. Al-Subkī – chief Shāfiʿi of the times – was highly interested in the disputes and composed a didactic poem on them, then had a Ḥanafī student of his write a commentary on it; all of which imply a growing interest in the debate between Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs in those times (discussed in Chapter One). Similarly, al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī said the following concerning the differences: 'those who are Māturīdīs in creed are Ḥanafīs in law, whereas Ashʿarīs in creed are Shāfiʿī in law, because the two masters – Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī appeared a long time after the two Imāms, Abū Ḥanīfa and Shāfiʿī (al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Bayan al-firaq al-ḍālla*, Ms. quoted in Bahgivan, Seyit *Khams rasāʾil,* pp.67-68, fn.5.

[419] Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah, *al-Shaqāʾiq,* pp.131-135.

[420] El-Qasṭallānī, Muṣtafa *Serh-il Akaidi Qasṭallānī,* Istanbul: Salah Bilici Kitābevi, [undated], p.17; Kātib Chelebī, *Kashf al-ẓunūn,* v.2, 1145 and al-Khayālī, Aḥmad *Ḥāshiya ʿala Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* in al-Kurdī, Faraj-Allah Zaki (compiler) *Majmūʿat al-ḥawāshī al-bahiyya ʿala Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-Nasafiyya,* Cairo: Matbaʾat Kurdīstan al-ʿIlmiyya, 1329/1911, v.1, p.21. An possible example of early Ottoman shaky awareness of Imām Māturīdī is found in another famous *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* by a tenth/sixteenth century Ottoman named Ramaḍān b. Muḥammad (Kātib Chelebī – *Kashf al-ẓunūn,* v.2, 1145 – does not give more information on him). Bin Ramaḍān upon the mention of Ashʿarī writes the following commentary: '[Ashʿarī] also worked (on refuting Muʿtazilism) and the Shaykh Abū al-Manṣūr al-Matoorīdī (sic.) who was a student of Abū Ḥanīfa.' (Ramaḍān Efendi, Ramaḍān b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-shaykh Ramaḍān b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī ʿala Sharḥ al-saʾd...,* Manuscript Collection at King Saʾud University, 214/sh. r. [3899], written by Mūsa b. Aḥmad in 1017/1608, fls.17v-18r). Assuming this is a reliable copy of the *ḥāshiya,* the spelling of the title 'Māturīdī' is inconsistent with the pre-, and co-existing narratives, and Māturīdī is made a student of Abū Ḥanīfa. (Though unlikely, he may have intended: "associate" of Abū Ḥanīfa, not "student".)

Contrary to traditional Transoxanian Ḥanafism and its followers whose categorical rejection of the Ash'arī attitude of subordinating Imām Māturīdī to al-'Ash'arī (as discussed in Chapter Two) is unmissable, pioneers of Ottoman theological scholarship generally showed no hesitation in affirming Ash'arī as the foremost *mutakallim* of Islam and – even – of superior status to his counterpart, al- Māturīdī. The earliest Ottoman juxtaposition of Ash'arī and Māturīdī in a single work which deals with the doctrinal disputes between their two theologies is an epistle by prominent Ottoman scholar Aḥmad b. Sulaymān Ibn Kamāl Pasha (known in later Turkish sources as Kemalpaşazâde).[421] Ibn Kamāl Pasha flourished during the reign of Salīm I (918/1512 – 926/1520) and the first half of the reign of Sulaymān I, the Magnificent (926/1520 – 974/1566). He was an influential Ottoman *Shaykh al-Islām* whose scholarly output was well-received throughout the wider empire.[422] Ibn Kamāl's tract is a short summary of twelve disputed doctrines between Ash'arism and Māturīdism in witch neither school is overtly endorsed. But, at the outset of his epistle Ibn Kamāl prioritizes Ash'arī:

> Know that Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī is the leader (Imām) of the people of Sunna and their foremost master (*muqaddamuhum*), *then* [comes] Shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī. Students and followers of al-Shāfi'ī imitate him in theology (*'uṣūl*), but follow Shāfi'ī in matters of jurisprudence (*furū'*). As for followers of Abū Ḥanīfa, they imitate Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in *'uṣūl* and Abū Ḥanīfa in *furū'*.[423]

Similar preference of Ash'arī over Māturīdī found in Ibn Kamāl Pasha's work on differences (which surprisingly enjoys nearly no reference in later Ottoman revival of

---

[421] This work has been critically edited by Seyit Bahgivan (Ibn Kamāl Pasha *Khams rasā'il fi al-firaq wal madhāhib* [edited by Seyit Bahgivan], Cairo: Dar al-Salām publishers, 2005, pp.65-78) and Edward Badeen (Badeen, Edward *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit* Orient-Institut: Istanbul, 2008, pp.20-23). This work has been generally considered the earliest Ottoman piece of literature in the genre of the disputes between Ash'arīsm and Māturīdism. However, a similar work has been attributed to Aḥmad b. Mūsa al-Khayālī (886/1481) entitled *al-ilktilāf bayna al-Māturīdī wa al-Ash'arī* [the dispute between Māturīdī and Ash'arī] in Antalya Tekeli manuscript collection in Turkey (Nu:58,ist.tar:843/1458.v.92b-95a). Nevertheless, attribution of this work to al-Khayālī demands further investigation as: i) it is not listed among al-Khayālī's bibliography; ii) only one single copy of it exists; and, iii) it was written in Turkish (all surviving writings of al-Khayālī were composed in Arabic). Al-Khayālī's supposed work on disputes is also mentioned in Sonmez, Kutlu *Imām Māturīdī ve Māturīdīlik*, Ankara: Otto Yayınevi, 2003, p.400; and – based on the latter - Seyit Bahgivan's introduction to *Al-Masālik fi al-Khilāfiyāt*, Beirut: Dar Sader, 2007, pp.21-24.

[422] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, pp.331-333; *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.76.

[423] Ibn Kamāl Pasha in Seyit Bahgivan, *Khams rasā'il,* p.67. The twelfth disputed points in his epistle are: i) existentiation (*takwīn*); ii) hearing essential eternal divine Speech; iii) divine Wisdom; iv) is God's Will inclusive of his Love and Pleasure; v) prescribing the unbearable; vi) rational recognition of good and evil; vii) happiness and wretchedness; viii) forgiveness of disbelief; ix) is it rationally permissible for believers to eternally dwell in hell; x) the noun and the nominatum; xi) masculinity is a condition of prophethood; xii) the problem of acquisition (*kasb*).

Māturīdism) is Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's detailed entry on *'Ilm al-Kalām* in his encyclopedia of sciences (*Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*). Ṭāshkubrī'zādah had the following to say about Māturīdī:

> Know that chief [masters] of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a* in the science of *kalām* are two men, one Ḥanafi, and the other Shāfi'ī. As for the Ḥanafi, he is Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Māturīdī... attributed to him [are the following books]: the book of monotheism, the book of *Maqālāt,* the book of interpretations of the Qur'ān (*Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*); in addition to books in rebuttal of the Mu'tazilah, the Qarāmiṭa, and the Rawāfiḍ...He died in Samarqand in the year 333/944, and learned under Abū Naṣr al-'Iyāḍī.[424]

On Ash'arī, he wrote:

> As for the Shāfi'ī other: he is master of the Sunna, chief of the Community, *Imām* of all theologians, champion of the way of the best of Prophets, defender of religion, striver in preserving the creeds of Muslims; Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī: a pontiff of a scholar, of outclassing righteousness. Purifier of the chests [of the pious] from doubts as a white garment is cleansed from filth, climber by the lights of certitude above the predicaments of ambiguity, guardian of the revered Law from words of slander, who defended the religion of Islam and granted it a most supreme victory.[425]

Although Ṭāshkubrī'zādah began by juxtaposing Māturīdī and Ash'arī as grand masters of theology, he was clearly far more impressed by the latter. He spends the rest of this chapter in *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda* in defense of Ash'arī against his adversaries, and on the vindication of the practice of *kalām* in religious arguments after alluding to opposition to it by "many scholars" in his time.[426] Indeed, Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's history of *kalām* is mostly related in view of Ash'arī texts and authors.

Giving Ash'arī the status of foremost pioneer of Sunnī theology, whereas Māturīdī is merely a secondary complement to him, is a common Ash'arī persuasion which was strongly resisted by early Māturīdīs, especially Abū l-Mu'īn al-Nasafī. This unequal commendation of the two masters took different forms, but it was importantly a key provocation in the face of which later Ottomans would seek to restore the status of Māturīdī as the prime source of Ḥanafī theology. A historically-significant example of this in the context of Ottoman Māturīdī texts is given by a tenth/sixteenth century scholar from Khorāsān named 'Iṣām al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad of 'Isfarā'īn (d. 945/1538) who, although belonged to the period in question, was not an Ottoman scholar. Nevertheless, being a highly-acclaimed author and commentator, in addition to belonging to an illustrious line of renowned scholars in his native Khorāsān where he worked, 'Iṣām al-Dīn's works were certainly in circulation in the

---

[424] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda,* v.2, pp.133-134.

[425] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda,* v.2, p.134.

[426] This discussion takes up nearly twenty-five pages of the present critically edited version (Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda,* v.2, pp.133-158).

Ottoman dominion.[427] In his *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id* (described by Kātib Chelebī as "all-encompassing and precise") and on the same place where Qasṭallānī and Khayālī inserted a quote from Taftāzānī by way of explanation, 'Iṣām al-Dīn – after a lengthy tribute to Ash'arī – objected to (presumably Taftāzānī's) making of "Māturīdism" a title of a school of theology on a par with Ash'arism. He had the following to say regarding Imām Māturīdī:

> The designation of "Māturīdism" (*al-Māturīdīyya*) is invalid because [the Commentator] has already identified [Ash'arīs as *ahl al-Sunna wa al-jamā'a*]... You can consider Māturīdīs among his (Ash'arī's) followers because he was the first who sought to invalidate the doctrines of the Mu'tazilah and revive the authentic proofs of the Sunna; although they (Māturīdīs) differ from him (Ash'arī) over some problems, nevertheless that does not make them part away from imitating him – in the same way Ash'arī's student Abū 'Isḥāq of Isfarā'īn was nothing but an imitator of him.[428]

'Iṣām al-Dīn's strongly-worded diminishing of Māturīdism to the rank of a sub-set of Ash'arism makes him individually named in later Ottoman Māturīdī literature as will be discussed in the next chapter.[429] Nevertheless, reminiscences of his opinion resonated in classical Ottoman *kalām.* This was manifested in the apparent indifference to the point of dispute between the two schools of theology, and no doubt motivated by the strong culture of *taḥqīq,* or deep deliberation of intellectual problems that presided in later *kalām,* and which meant in practical terms suspension of doctrinal affiliation in favor of the best-verified argument on a given dispute. At least at face-value, the presence of this culture of *taḥqīq* in early Ottoman scholarship appears to be a by-product of the influence of later philosophical Ash'arism.

A glaring example of *taḥqīq* as a factor undermining the status of Māturīdī doctrines is found in Ottoman Ṣūfī and theologian Muḥammad Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's (d. 952/1554) *al-Qawl al-faṣl,* (lit. the Last Word; a commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-'Akbar*). Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah studied under the abovementioned Qasṭallānī (among others) and his commentary was praised by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah as successfully 'employing an admixture of the methods of Sufism and theology in which [theological] problems were investigated with utmost perfection.'[430] In this commentary, Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah defends his subscribing to the Ash'arī

---

[427] *Al-A'lām*, v.1, 66 and, *Kaḥḥale,* v.6, 181.

[428] Al-'Isfarā'īnī, 'Iṣām al-Dīn *Ḥāshiyat al-muḥaqqiq mawlana 'Iṣām al-din...* in al-Kurdī, *Majmū'at al-ḥawāshī,* v.4, p.31.

[429] Bayāḍīzādah makes a special reference to it in the preamble to his seminal anti-Ash'ari treatise *Isharat al-maram.*

[430] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.376; his biography is in pp.375-377 of the same book; also see Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, Muḥammad *al-Qawl al-faṣl: Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar lil'Imām Abi Ḥanīfa* (edited by Rafiq al-Ajam), Beirut: Darl al-Muntakhab al-Arabi, 1998, pp.7-9. Kātib Chelebī is presumably referring to the same commentary on *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* but he gives a different death-date for the author; he said in *Mizān al-Ḥaqq*: 'Sheykh Muḥammad ibn Bahā' al-Dīn, who died in 956/1549, proposed, after thirty years of retirement and worship, to write a commentary on the *Fiqh*

doctrine of *kasb* by saying: 'it is not our purpose [in the present volume] to be prejudiced towards a particular sect (*firqa*) – to propagate their doctrines by giving lukewarm and imposed justifications; rather, our purpose is verification (*taḥqīq*).'[431] On the other hand, in arguing against the common Ash'arī opinion on the Divine attribute of Speech, he said: 'certainly [my opinion] contravenes the principles of Ash'arism, but our purpose [here] is *taḥqīq*, not the imitation of anyone.'[432]

Doctrinal controversy between Ash'arism and Ḥanafī-Māturīdī theology appears to be a minor concern in among leading scholars of Classical Ottoman *kalām*. In fact, the focal-point of discussion in the leading works consulted for this study, was the opposition between Ash'arism vis-à-vis the Mu'tazilah, Determinists, the philosophers among others. A commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-'akbar* belonging to the second half of the ninth/fifteenth century by teacher at the Sultaniyya school in Bursa named Ilyās b. Ibrahīm of Sinop, or Sinap (d. 891/1486), affords a good example.[433] In this commentary – highly praised by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah who personally studied it[434] – al-Sīnopī commences with a stern vindication of the authenticity of the present book by Abū Ḥanīfa against Mu'tazilī adversaries (who although generally followers of Ḥanafism conventionally deny the attribution of *al-Fiqh al-'Akbar* to Abū Ḥanīfa), he says:

> As for the reported opinion of some contemptible Mu'tazilah... that Abū Ḥanīfa never authored a book on theology (*ma'rifatu al-Bari*, lit. knowledge of the Creator), and that this book was written by Muḥammad b. Yūsuf who was known as Abū Ḥanīfa of Bukhārā, is outright falsehood [...] which they fabricated since this book contains invalidation of their principles and creeds, and since they allege that Abū Ḥanīfa was in fact one of them.[435]

*akbar* in order to revive interest in Muslim dogmatics (Kātib Chelebi, *The balance of Truth* [translated by G. L. Lewis], London: Geogre Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957, p.68).

[431] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *al-Qawl al-faṣl,* p.280.

[432] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *al-Qawl al-faṣl,* p.213.

[433] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.95-96; *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.225.

[434] *Al-Shaqā'iq*, p.96.

[435] Al-Sīnopī, Ilyās b. Ibrahīm *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-'Akbar,* Manuscript Collection at King Sa'ud University, 214/sh.sh. (1438), written by Aḥmad al-Dilnjawī in 1100/1688, fols.1v-2r. The cataloguer wrote the surname wrongly as al-Shaybānī. The authenticity of Abū Ḥanīfa's *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* is discussed by Kātib Chelebī in his *Mizān al-Ḥaqq fī 'ikhtiyār al-Ahaq.* He said the following: 'It is agreed to be so in the reports of those who sat at the feet of the Imām. The *Ṭabaqāt Hanafiyya* expressly states that Abū Muṭī' of Balkh, who died in 199/814-5, transmitted the text of the *Fiqh akbar* which he had heard from his master, the Greatest Imām. In my own *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh*, I at first erroneously wrote that Abū Muṭī' of Balkh was the author of the *Fiqh akbar.* Subsequently I corrected "author" to "transmitter". My original copy had gained wide circulation, and one of the preachers of our city pointed out that it was a powerful weapon in the hands of those bigots who wished to discredit the *Fiqh akbar* because of its stand on this question, and he begged me to correct it. So I wrote in the original copy that Abū Muti' was the transmitter, and gave it to that preacher' (Kātib Chelebi, *The balance of Truth*, p.68). Kātib Chelebī then concludes: 'the allegation that the *Fiqh akbar* is not the work of Abū Ḥanīfa is false, a product of fanaticism, a simple denial with no foundation. They offer certain vague and fantastic notions in support of it, but these are indubitably to be rejected, as testimony conflicting with the words of an unimpeachable witness' (*Balance of Truth,* p.69).

But, how did Ḥanafī-Māturīdī doctrines fit in with the established Ash'arī paradigm and to what extent did Ottoman Ḥanafī *kalām* draw on Māturīdī arguments as opposed to the original theology of Abū Ḥanīfa? And to what extent were Ottoman Ḥanafīs followers of Ash'arism? Below is an intertextual analysis of selected prominent Ottoman commentaries and super-commentaries spanning the period from late ninth/ fifteenth to mid. tenth/sixteenth century.

*3.3.2 Intertextual Analysis of Selected Early Ottoman Theological Tracts*

### 3.3.2.1 Existentiation (*takwīn*)

So far we have argued that the problem of *takwīn* (which originates in some form in the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa) was to a certain extent Māturīdism's raison d'être. Ash'arīs commonly disapproved of the eternity of God's active attribute of *takwīn*, and espoused (contrary to Māturīdism) that the act of existentiation (*takwīn*) – i.e. bringing beings into existence – is identical with the existentiated (*mukawwan*), as explained in Section 2.5 in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, early Ottoman Ḥanafī theologians were still influenced by the Ash'arī doctrine as articulated in post-Classical texts. The position of master Ottoman commentator al-Khayālī on this problem is not entirely clear. In his famous *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id* (known for its abstract and succinct prose[436]) both sides of the dispute are given their due.[437] Commenting on an argument for the validity of *takwīn* outlined in the primary text by al-Taftāzānī which says that if the attribute of *takwīn* was created in time (*ḥādith*) – as argued by Ash'arīs – it would necessitate a circular logical fallacy (*yalzam al-tasalsul*) because it renders impossible the creation of the otherwise sensible and visible world, he says: 'this is contradicted by a famous counter-argument in that it is possible for the creation of the created to be the essence of creation (*takwīn al-takwīn 'ayn al-takwīn*).'[438] Nevertheless, he confines to affirming that this argument has certain "strengths and

---

[436] Ṭāshkubrī'zādah wrote the following on Khayālī's *ḥāshiya*: 'he employed a method of succinctness (*'ijaz*) that tests the intelligence of clever students; it is sanctioned by scholars and laymen and its wide repute needs not my praise of it' (*al-Shaqā'iq,* p.131).

[437] This is certainly in line with al-Taftāzānī who says in his *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id* regarding the critical dispute over *takwīn*: 'it is nevertheless incumbent upon the rational scholar to [unhastily] meditate upon these discussions and should not read into the arguments of pioneering scholars who are deep-seated in the disciplines of *Uṣūl* what clearly defies the intuition of those with the least amount of sense in them. Rather, [scholars] should seek a balanced and fair interpretation of their arguments. Those arguing that *takwīn* is the essence of the *mukawwan* meant that upon the occurrence of an act, both the acting agent (*fā'il*) and the acted-upon (*maf'ūl*) share one existence. As for [the other argument] concerning the meaning of *takwīn* [...] it is merely a mental category concerning the relation between the acting agent and the acted-upon – it does not have [verifiable] external existence' (al-Taftāzānī in *Majmū'at al-ḥawāshī,* v.1, p.134).

[438] Al-Khayālī in al-Kurdī, *Majmū'at al-ḥawāshī,* v.1, p.129.

weaknesses". Interestingly he also cites an unorthodox interpretation of the statement: "[*takwīn*] is other than the *mukawwan* according to our doctrine" from the primary Māturīdī text of al-Nasafī by suggesting that the word "*other*" should not be read as a testimony of belief; rather it is merely terminological and means: "it is possible for *takwīn* to be other than the *mukawwan*", which supports the Ashʿarī position.[439]

Khayālī, however, is more conclusive in his – lesser-known – commentary on his teacher's Khiḍr-Beg's *al-Nūniyya*; a didactic poem on creed and perhaps the foremost Māturīdī text from the Classical Ottoman period.[440] The commentary contains a rare reference by Khayālī to Māturīdī and Māturīdism; he says:

> Shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and his followers held the opinion that *takwīn* is an eternal attribute in a real sense [and] additional to the famous seven [eternal attributes of God]; as for Ashʿarī's doctrine (*madhhab*) they are suppositions (*idafat*) with no external (non-mental) existence. It seems that the author has opted for the former opinion.[441]

Khayālī – aware that his teacher's *Nūniyya* is highlighting opposition to Ashʿarī – reluctantly proposes a compromise solution: 'some have argued that what is in fact meant by *takwīn* there (in the Māturīdī view) is [nothing other than] the *mukawwan* (the existentiated), in the same way "creation" is used to imply "created beings". Based on this, the depute is [only] *verbal*.'[442] Remarkably, al-Khayālī in fact goes beyond Ashʿarī discourse of conciliation between the two schools as found for example in al-Subkī who although attempts to minimize difference over the problem of *takwīn*, did not consider it to be verbal (*lafdhi*), but a real (*maʾnawī*) dispute with unavoidable philosophical implications. At the end of his discussion, Khayālī – following Taftāzānī – dismisses the claim of Classical Māturīdism which rules that every particular active attribute, in addition to *takwīn*, is an eternal attribute in its own right: 'not every [active attributes] is eternal in a real sense as alleged by a group of Transoxanian scholars, but they all go back to it (*takwīn*) and are grouped under it.'[443]

---

[439] Al-Khayālī in *Majmūʿat al-ḥawāshī*, v.1, p.133. Nevertheless, al-Khayālī later dispels this interpretation. Also see the commentary on Khayālī's *ḥāshiya* by Ottoman scholar Shujāʿ al-Dīn Ilyās al-Rūmī (taught at the school known as the ʿIsḥāqiyyah for forty years and died in 929/1522; *al-Shaqāʾiq*, p.102), in which he repudiates al-Khayālī for citing this unorthodox interpretation (al-Rūmī, Shujāʿ al-Dīn b. Ilyās, *Ḥāshiyat al-fadil al-muhaqqiq mawlana Shujāʿ al-Dīn al-Rūmī ala al-Khayālī ala al-ʿAqaid al-Nasafiyya* in al-Kurdī, v.4, p.286).

[440] Al-Khayālī, Aḥmad *ḥāshiyat Shams al-Din...* in Khalīl Efendi-zādah, Muḥammad Talib b. Husayn *Sharḥ al-ʿallama Dawūd b. Muḥammad al-Qarsi al-Ḥanafī lil qasida al-nuniyya al-Tawḥīdīyya*, Istanbul: Matbaʾat Sharikat Sahafiyya, 1318/1900.

[441] Al-Khayālī in *Sharḥ al-ʿallama Dawūd*, pp.38-39.

[442] Al-Khayālī in *Sharḥ al-ʿallama Dawūd*, p.39.

[443] Al-Khayālī in *Sharḥ al-ʿallama Dawūd*, p.39. Al-Taftāzānī said in his commentary on the creed of Nasafī: '[as for] the particular acts of giving (*tarzīq*), forming (*taṣwīr*), giving life (*iḥyāʾ*), giving death (*imāta*) and as many as what reaches an infinite number [of acts], the view that each one of them is truly an eternal attribute [of God] is the

More evident than the Ash'arism of Khayālī is that of his peer al-Qasṭallānī, who in his own *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sh. al-'Aqaid* routinely refers to Ash'arī as "the Master" (*shaykh*) and to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī as "the Leader" (*Imām*). Qasṭallānī acknowledges that Ash'arī's doctrine of *takwīn* is at odds with the opinion of the majority (*qawl al-jumhūr*), but he attempts to justify it. He proposes a distinction between the all-embracing acts of creation and existentiation, and other acts such as cutting, breaking, writing etc.; the latter acts effectuate a change of state on something, as opposed to existentiation (*takwīn*) whereby the effect ('*athar*) is the same as the effectuated (*al-mafʿūl*). Qasṭallānī wrote: 'and since the existence of something is [also] its essence according to the shaykh (Ash'arī), and as he wanted [the reader] to be mindful of this subtle point (*daqīqa*), he asserted *takwīn* to be the essence of *mukawwan*.'[444] He then – to justify the Ash'arī opinion – suggests an ontological reframing of the dispute:

> Since existence of beings is additional to essence – according to scholars other than Ash'arī – they did not make the effect of existentiation the essence of the existentiated, but only that it "exists" [...] Therefore, ultimately this dispute goes back to existence: is it the essence of beings or [something] additional to them?'[445]

In Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's extended commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, the only time the name of Māturīdī appears in it is in the context of *takwīn*; he wrote: 'it is avowed by Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and his followers and reported its attribution to early masters who lived before Ash'arī.'[446] But, Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah (contrary to Māturīdism) does not accept *takwīn* as an eternal attribute of God, preferring instead the Ash'arī view that – in virtue of available

---

peculiar [opinion] some scholars from Transoxania, and [,at odds with monotheism,] necessitates excessive multiplicity of eternal entities [...] The closest [to truth] is the view held by their verifying scholars (*al-muḥaqqiqun)* that they all go back to the attribute of *takwīn*' (Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id,* p.124). Interestingly this anti-Māturīdī argument (certainly popularized by Taftāzānī) seems to be a later Māturīdī development which even caused a split among Ḥanafī theologians (its full extent calls for a seperate investigation) whereby scholars such as Egyptian Ḥanafī Ibn Qūtlūbghā objected to his teacher Ibn al-Humām's propagation of this idea (see Chapter Two) by saying: 'and as for his statement: "the sayings of Abū Ḥanīfa and the early masters bear no evidence for it," I say: it is indeed in the *Fiqh al-Akbar* as narrated from Abū Ḥanīfa. Its meaning is also [implied] in [the creed of] al-Ṭaḥāwī as narrated from Abū Ḥanīfa and [his students] Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad [b. al-Ḥasan].' He then cites works bearing the same opinion by per-Māturīdī Transoxanian Ḥanafīs (Ibn Qūtlūbghā, *Sharḥ al-Musāyara,* p.86). This argument is also found in Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar,* but he attempts to rationalize the statements of Abū Ḥanīfa which at face-value support the Māturīdī view by saying: 'Imām Abū Ḥanīfa may well have affirmed these [multiple eternal] attributes out of his strict following of literal meanings of religious texts' (p.192).

[444] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id,* pp.101-102.
[445] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala al-'aqā'id,* pp.102.
[446] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, Sharḥ al-Fiqh, p.191.

religious evidence – only God's eternal attribute of power (*qudra*) is the valid principle of creation *ex nihilo*.[447]

### 3.3.2.2 Hearing and Seeing God

Perhaps the most widely-debated Māturīdī doctrine in later Ashʿarism concerns the dispute over the divine attribute of Speech (*kalām*). In opposition to Ḥanbalī literalists, Ashʿarī and Māturīdī theologians were in broad agreement that the present – read and heard – word of God as preserved in the Qur'ān is not His eternal divine Speech in the *real* sense, but it offers *symbolic* indications to it (*dilala ʿalayhi*). In theological discussion, Ashʿarism and Māturīdism postulated the concept of *al-kalām al-nafsī* which they defined as "an essential eternal attribute" ontologically precedent to its formation into compound sounds and words. However, the concept of *kalām nafsī* runs into theoretical strife in view of revealed Qur'ānic evidence – in particular the numerous references to the story of Prophet Moses at Sinai whereby God speaks directly to him. At face-value, the story presents the theologian with a contradiction: for how can divine Speech (defined as eternal and formless) be physically heard in time and space. On this detail, Classical Ashʿarism and Māturīdism differed over the possibility of hearing eternal Speech, which was affirmed by the Ashʿarīs and ruled as impossible by Māturīdīs. More remarkable, however, is the influence of later Ashʿarism on Ottoman theological writing as borne out by tracing the intertextual itinerary of this particular debate.

Later popularization of this dispute originates in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. It appears to be the only dispute where the name of Imām Māturīdī is invoked by Rāzī in the context of its opposition to a common Ashʿarī opinion. In Rāzī's grand *tafsīr,* the Māturīdī argument (extrapolated by Rāzī from Imām Māturīdī's exegesis of the Qur'ān, *al-Ta'wīlāt*), is repeated in a number of places, corresponding to the occurrence of the story of Moses in the Book.[448] The following is one detailed example:

> Those asserting the eternity of the attribute of Speech said: we have [on this matter] two [different] opinions (*madhhabān*): first is the doctrine of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and the Imāms of Transoxania which rules that eternal-essential divine Speech is not heard, rather

[447] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh*, p.192. Ilyās al-Sīnopī, on the other hand, is unyielding towards Ashʿarism in his *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*. He criticizes the concept of the createdness of God's active attributes and attributes it to the Ashʿarīs and Muʿtazila, and defends the common position of the majority and his Ḥanafī associates (Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh*, fols.8r-8v); it is also the first dispute in Ibn Kamāl Pasha's epistle on Differences (Bahgivan, *Khams rasā'il,* pp.69-70).

[448] Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* Beirut: Dar 'Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, [3rd edition; 32 vols.] 1999, v.6, p.526; v.14, p.353; v.24, p.492; v.24, p.593; v.27, p.612.

what is heard is the sound (ṣawt) and letter (ḥarf) which were [concurrently divinely] created and [heard] through [the medium] of the tree; in virtue of this [argument] no objection can be raised. The second, is the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī which argues that the sort of Speech bereft of sound and letter formations may be heard in the same way an essence (dhāt) possessing neither substance (jism) nor accident ('araḍ) may be [physically] seen.[449]

Rāzī speculates in his *tafsīr* that this opinion of Māturīdī draws near to the Mu'tazilah.[450] However, at least in his early writings, Rāzī clearly defended the Ash'arī view. This is found in the second crucial Rāzian reference to Māturīdī from his *Controversies with the scholars of Transoxania* (the book of *Munaẓarāt*). It is the subject of the (shortest) fourteenth controversy in which he defends the Ash'arī position by pointing to an inherent contradiction in Transoxanian scholars' counter-'Ash'arī argument. He said at the outset of the Controversy:

> The doctrine of the people of Transoxania is that God Almighty speaks and His Speech is essentially eternal (qāḍīm qā'im bi'dhātih) above [the formations] of sound and letter as is the Ash'arī doctrine. But, the difference is that Ash'arī says: such Speech *may* be heard. As for Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and his Transoxanian associates, they said: it is *impossible* for such Speech to be heard.'[451]

Rāzī does not present in detail the Māturīdī counter-Mu'tazilī argument – but suggests: since Transoxanian scholars object to the Mu'tazilī rejection of the possibility to see God (based on the view that God is not a substantiated entity with spatial attributes), and say: "you provide no [sound] proof", they must also accept the Ash'arī position in permitting the possibility to hear eternal Speech of God. Rāzī's rationale for this conclusion is: just as it is impossible to hear essential-eternal Speech, then it must also be impossible for non-spatially existent beings to be seen. And, since Māturīdīs would not accept the latter, then both statements must equally be held as true.

Indeed, the problem of the possibility of hearing God's eternal Speech (samā' Kalām Allah) is philosophically entwined with the problem of possibility to visually see God (ru'yat Allah); and the latter is also interestingly debated in the context of the same Qur'ānic story of Moses who asks God to reveal Himself to him. Remarkably, al-Rāzī ultimately adopts the position of Imām Māturīdī on the problem of seeing. In his *al-'Arba'īn fī 'uṣūl al-Dīn,* Rāzī says: 'our doctrine on this problem is the favored opinion of shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī of

---

[449] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* v.24, p.593.
[450] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* v.27, p.612.
[451] Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Munaẓarāt fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī bilād mawara'annahr* (edited by Fathullah Kholeif), Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1984, p.53.

Samarqand, which is: we do not affirm the possibility of seeing God by the use of rational proof, but we uphold to the literal proofs of the Qur'ān and the narrated traditions of the Prophet.'[452] More importantly, it seems that Rāzī's own interest in Imām Māturīdī's solution to the problems of seeing and hearing God (which made him explicitly refer to Māturīdism) was adopted and pursued by prominent later Ashʿarīs – including Taftāzānī and Jurjānī – and in turn left its mark on the works of Classical Ottoman theologians. In Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* one of the two instances Māturīdī is directly referred to is in the context of this debate; he said: 'as for God's essential-eternal attribute of Speech, Ashʿarī argued that it can be heard. But it was rejected by [Ashʿarī master] Abū ʿIsḥāq of ʿIsfarāʾīn; it is also the favored opinion of shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī.'[453] A similarly-worded statement is also found in Taftāzānī's magnum opus *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid.*[454] Al-Jurjānī, exclaiming at the feebleness of rational arguments in support of the Ashʿarī position on the problem of seeing God, says in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*:

> Such propagated arguments contain further affectations recognizable by minimal thought; therefore, it is more appropriate to accept the opinion which rules out the possibility of rationally proving this problem, and hence we take the opinion of shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and uphold to the literal meanings of [scriptural] traditions.[455]

Having outlined the interest in Māturīdī's take on hearing and seeing God, Classical Ottoman theologians attached relative importance to the problem.[456] Quite likely, therefore, that the appearance of Māturīdism in the context of the problem of hearing and seeing God in early Ottoman theological tracts was a by-product of the references already made to Māturīdī's opinion in the *kalām* works of past Ashʿarī masters (particularly the abovementioned by Rāzī and Jurjānī).

---

[452] Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *al-ʿArbaʿīn fi Uṣūl al-din,* Cairo: Maktabat al-Kuliyyat al-ʿAzhāriyya, 1986 [2 vols.], v.1, p.277. Also see detailed argument in the same book (*al-ʿArbaʿīn,* v.1, pp.277-283); Rāzī argues that he does not accept rational proof for the validity of seeing God (al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Muḥaṣṣal afkar al-mutaqaddimīn wal muta'akhirīn mina al-ʿulama wal ḥukamā' wal mutakallimīn,* Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Husayniyya, 1323/1905, pp.136-139).

[453] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* p.116.

[454] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid,* v.4, p.157.

[455] Al-Jurjānī, Ali b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 1998, v.8, pp.144-145. Evidently, the problem of hearing God's Speech was a widely-spread opinion of Māturīdī among Ashʿarīs during the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries. It is also mentioned by foremost Egyptian *ḥadīth* expert Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1449; *al-Aʿlām,* v.1, p.178) in his canonical commentary on Bukhārī's book of sound traditions. Ibn Ḥajar (who was a follower of Ashʿarism) said: 'it is narrated that Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī who is a Ḥanafī jurist said [...]: God [simultaneously] created a [humanly-heard] sound when he called upon [Prophet Moses] and some have attributed this opinion to the pious forefathers who refused to accept the createdness of the Qur'ān (al-ʿAsqalānī, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar *Fatḥ al-bārī fī Sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī,* Beirut: Dar al-Maʿrifa, 1379/1959 [13 vols.], v.13, p.455).

[456] It is the second dispute in Ibn Kamāl Pasha's epistle on differences (Bahgivan, *Khams rasāʾil,* pp.70-71).

Khayālī in his commentary on the *Nūniyya* said the following on the problem of seeing: 'Ash'arī and his followers have adopted unsatisfactory arguments, thus shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī said "we do not prove the validity of seeing God by traditional proofs, but we uphold to the literal meaning of the Qur'ān".'[457] Also in the context of seeing God, his peer Qasṭallānī wrote in his commentary on *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id*: 'verifying scholars (*al-muḥaqqiqūn*) unanimously establish that proving seeing (*ru'ya*) by traditional proofs is not free from faults, and the trusted doctrine on this problem is the favored opinion of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī.'[458] In the same *ḥāshiya*, Qasṭallānī cites the Māturīdī view that what prophet Moses heard was a parallel sound only indicative of eternal divine Speech, and said: 'he (Taftāzānī) stated: this was the doctrine of shaykh Abū Manṣūr and master ('*ustādh*) Abū 'Isḥāq [al-'Isfarā'īnī] and claimed that the sound was heard from all spatial dimensions.'[459]

Concerning the disputed problem on eternal Speech, Ilyās al-Sīnopī delivers a valiant critique of Māturīdism in his *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-'akbar*. Commenting on Abū Ḥanīfa's statement: "and Moses heard the Speech of God", he says:

> Know that it agrees with the principle of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī, and we can deduce from it the invalidity of the doctrine of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, for he (Māturīdī) argued that God's Speech is not heard because what is not realized into letter and sound cannot be discerned by the sense of hearing; hearing is concomitant with the existence of sound.[460]

Also, contrary to the Māturīdī contention that what in fact was heard by Moses is a sound with physical properties created through the medium of a tree at Sinai, Sīnopī asserts that it is unbecoming of an all-Wise God to speak without making Himself instantly heard.[461] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's commentary on the same text of Abū Ḥanīfa makes no mention of Māturīdism and focusses instead on the vindication of the Ash'arī concept of *Kalām nafsī* against Mu'tazilī invalidations. Furthermore, according to him, it is the same concept held by Abū Ḥanīfa. Then, he pays this tribute: 'Ash'arīs by upholding this doctrine have taken the *best* intermediary position, and placated otherwise admonished opinions, and stayed on the

---

[457] Khayālī, *Sharḥ al-Nuniyya*, p.44.
[458] Qasṭallānī, *ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id*, p.106.
[459] Qasṭallānī continues by citing the opinion of al-Ghazālī: 'as for al-Ghazālī, he favored the opinion that [Moses] heard eternal Speech without the forms of letter and sound, just as divine Essence is seen in the hereafter free of qualitative (*kayfiyya*) and quantative (*kammiyya*) attributions' (Qasṭallānī, *ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id*, p.94).
[460] Al-Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-'akbar*, Ms., fols.15v-16r.
[461] Al-Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-'akbar*, Ms., fol.16r.

even way. [In their doctrine,] they have appeased all of reason, tradition, commonsense and language.[462]

### 3.3.2.3 Belief

Among the disputed points between Ash'arism and Māturīdism in the context of faith (*imān*) is whether it is susceptible to increase or decrease (contra Māturīdīs, Ash'arīs espoused the affirmative position). Qasṭallānī went along with the conciliatory Ash'arī view of al-Rāzī which saw this discussion as centering on a verbal difference (*khilāf lafẓī*). Qasṭallānī also argues against Taftāzānī, and reproves his understanding of the problem (as stated in *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*) in which he made faith's increase and decrease of relation to its qualitative attributes; he said:

> The [real] dispute is over the qualitative disparity (*tafawut al-kamiyya*), i.e. increase and decrease, because the expressions "increase and decrease" are mostly used in numbers (i.e. quantative terms). As for (Taftāzānī's) qualitative disparity (*tafawut al-kayfiyya*), i.e. that it is [more/ less] powerful or weak, it falls out of the present discussion. For this reason Rāzī and many theologians have argued that this dispute is verbal, springing from [different] interpretation[s] of *imān*.[463]

Ilyās Sīnopī – who already admonished Māturīdī over the problem of hearing eternal Speech – weighs a similar critique against the Ḥanafī position on belief. In his commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, he acknowledges that the concerned book contains anti-'Ash'arī allusions. He then strongly rebukes an anti-'Ash'arī argument from the book of *Waṣiyya* by Abū Ḥanīfa, and says:

> He (Abū Ḥanīfa) rationalized his position [...] and said: "[belief's] decrease is not conceivable without [comparable] increase of disbelief, and its increase is not conceivable without [comparable] decrease of disbelief; how can a person be at once in a state of belief and disbelief?"[464]

Sīnopī's rebuttal was:

> Increase of one of two co-existing opposites does not necessitate decrease of the other; cannot you see that if the whiteness of a dress increased beyond its present condition – that is, its quality [of whiteness] intensified – it does not entail the existence of decreased blackness.'[465]

---

[462] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* p.179-180.
[463] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* p.158.
[464] Al-Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* Ms., fol.40v.
[465] Ibid.

Sīnopī admits that the above statement may be valid if it was made in the figurative sense, but in that case Sīnopī believes it would be unfit for intelligent conversation. He also deems any attempt to come back on this problem 'to be [the result of] arrogance and abstinence.'[466] Nevertheless, Sīnopī later presents a justification for the wording of Abū Ḥanīfa's position on increase and decrease of faith by suggesting that in view of the Ḥanafī definition of belief as "assent and confession", it is conceivable for the belief of a person to increase if he discerns that some of his presently-held concepts are of disbelief; when he abandons them, he moves from affiliation with disbelief to belief.[467]

Like Sīnopī, Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah also favors the Ashʿarī position on this problem (which he also attributes to the Muʿtazilah), and rules that it as better-supported by the literal meanings of revealed sources. Among his proofs of the validity of Ashʿarī's doctrine of belief's increase and decrease is that if one does not permit such qualitative disparity, the faith of the most dignified of Prophets would in theory be equal to the faith of the most lowly believer.[468] However, he also attempts to reach a middle ground with the other (Ḥanafī) position and cites this quote by Rāzī: 'the rationale for the harmony is that [statements] disproving disparity relate to the fundamental principle (ʿaṣl) of belief, as for the [statements] affirming disparity they relate to the perfect actualization (kamāl) of belief.'[469]

On the famous dispute concerning the validity of the emulator's belief (accepted by Māturīdīs and contested by Ashʿarīs), Māturīdism is entirely absent from our selected Ottoman texts. (Interestingly, when Taftāzānī outlines in *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* the arguments against the common Ashʿarī position, he is openly referring to Māturīdīs as upholders of the opposite opinion.[470]) Khayālī in the commentary on the *Nūniyya* attributes the anti-'Ashʿarī view to 'various scholars and jurists.'[471] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah shows no compromise on the Ḥanafī position regarding belief's increase and decrease. Nonetheless, Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah attempts to apologize for Ashʿarī: he quotes prominent early Ashʿarī pioneer 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī who had reported that Imām Ashʿarī did not ascribe emulators to disbelief, and in fact argued that the emulator is a sinner for disabling his mental faculty to reach knowledge of God, and that the emulator may be pardoned if God so wishes.[472] Ultimately, in

---

[466] Ibid.
[467] Al-Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* Ms., fols.40r-41v.
[468] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* p.387.
[469] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* p.388.
[470] Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid,* v.5, 99.218-219.
[471] Khayālī, *Sharḥ nuniyya,* p.121.
[472] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *al-Qawl al-faṣl,* p.31-32.

Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's view, the Ash'arī denial of validity is only in terms of perfection of faith, and therefore 'there is *no real dispute* over this problem.'[473]

Khayālī also highlights Baghdādī's softened version of Ash'arī's doctrine on emulator's faith, which is also the chosen opinion in his teacher's Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya*.[474] Ilyās al-Sīnopī's *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar* even deliberates that Ḥanafīs and Ash'arīs are upholders of the same doctrine on this problem. On the following statement from the primary text by Abū Ḥanīfa: "the believers are equal in their deep-seated knowledge and certainty", Sīnopī comments: 'this statement hints that belief of the emulator is invalid insofar as the emulator has no certainty.'[475] Finally, no controversy relating to belief is addressed in Ibn Kamāl Pasha's twelve disputed points between Māturīdīs and Ash'arīs.

### 3.3.2.4 Prescribing the Unbearable

The fifth disputed point in Ibn Kamāl Pasha's epistle on the Differences briefly delineates the classical Ash'arī-Māturīdī controversy concerning this problem: 'prescribing the unbearable (*taklīf ma la yuṭāq*) is not permissible according to Māturīdī, but burdening [someone] with an unbearable task (*taḥmīl ma la yuṭāq*) is permissible by him. They are both permissible according to Ash'arī.'[476]

Khayālī ignores the Māturīdī take on this debate in his *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* and focusses on justifying the Ash'arī position. He outlines three possible meanings of *taklīf ma la yuṭāq*: i) that it is impossible in itself; ii) that it is impossible in itself, but impossible due to natural human limitation (*ʿāda*); iii) that it is humanly possible, but had been decreed impossible in God's Knowledge and by His Will. Khayālī adduces that all schools are unanimous in ruling out the first contingency. As for the second meaning, he argues that it is possible for God to prescribe the humanly unbearable contrary to the Muʿtazilah. In terms of the third category, Khayālī also implies scholarly consensus that it is possible for God to decree as impossible what is otherwise humanly doable. Then, Khayālī comments: 'this is the rationale for the supposed Ash'arī allowance of prescribing the unbearable.'[477] Ultimately in

---

[473] Ibid.
[474] Khayālī, *Sharḥ nuniyya,* p.121.
[475] Ibid.
[476] Bahgivan, *Khams rasāʾil,* p.73.
[477] Khayālī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* in al-Kurdī, v.1, p.154.

Khayālī's opinion, the contra-Ash'arī view may only be rationally sound to those who do not take into account the abovementioned three-fold distinction.

Qasṭallānī in his own *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id* points to a lack of consensus among Ash'arīs regarding the permissibility of *taklīf mā lā yuṭāq*. However, he endorses the Ash'arī position in permitting the prescription of belief upon the person who God had decreed to be a disbeliever. Qasṭallānī considers the dispute to be one of linguistic expression (*nizā' lafẓī*),[478] and again going beyond the classic conciliatory approach as founded in al-Subkī who deemed the dispute to be real (*ma'nawī*) as it draws on key differences between Ash'arism and Māturīdism over the role of reason.

Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah is less conclusive in his commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, although he does not endorse the Māturīdī view. Instead, he proposes a compromise solution on prescribing the unbearable; he says: 'Truth of the matter in my view: it is possible in virtue of God's absolute sufficiency, perfect power and all-encompassing Will; but, in virtue of His [supremely evident] divine Wisdom and mercy for his creatures, then the most sound [opinion] is its impossibility.'[479]

### 3.3.2.5 Rational Recognition of Good and Evil

In Ibn Kamāl Pasha's epistle on Differences, the fifth disputed point between Ash'arism and Māturīdism is the following:

> Māturīdī said: some divinely-prescribed rulings are known by reason, because reason is a [valid] means by which the goodness and evil of some things are recognized. And [it is by reason] that belief and giving thankfulness to God are made obligatory. But, the ultimate source of this obligation is God, though through the medium of reason; in the same way the Messenger is the conduit of the obligatory knowledge of God, though God is the true source of this obligation. Thus, it is said: "no excuse is acceptable from a created being for ignorance of the Creator for [the divine sings] he witnesses in the creation of the heavens and earth"; also "had God not sent a Messenger, created beings would still be obliged to know God by reasoning". As for Ash'arī, he said: nothing is made obligatory or forbidden except on the authority of revealed law, not by reason – although [we admit] that reason may recognize good and evil in some things. According to Ash'arī, all rulings relating to divine command succumb to tradition (*sam'*).[480]

Ibn Kamāl interestingly tries to bridge the gap between the two schools by claiming that Ash'arīs agree with Māturīdīs in allowing some room for reason in the recognition of

---

478 Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya 'ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id,* pp.123-124.
479 Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar,* pp.251-252.
480 Bahgivan, *Khams rasā'il,* pp.73-74.

good and evil. Certainly, this is unlike Khayālī's treatment of the problem in his commentary on Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya* where Māturīdism is not brought into the discussion. Instead Khayālī quotes Taftāzānī and says:

> It is stated in *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* that some people of *Ahlu al-Suuna* – by which we mean Ḥanafīs – argued that recognizing the good and evil in some things is attainable by reason, as is the opinion of the Mu'tazilah [...] As for Ash'arīs, they argued that they (good and evil) are proven by revealed law in an absolute sense.[481]

On the related problem of forgiveness of disbelief (which the Ash'arīs allowed and Māturīdīs disallowed on the basis of their doctrine of the rational recognition of good and evil), Khayālī attributes the non-'Ash'arī position to the Mu'tazilah: 'some Muslims have argued that forgiveness is rationally impermissible...and they are the Mu'tazilah.'[482] Interestingly, an early Ottoman scholar by the name of Shujā' al-Dīn Ilyās al-Rūmī (d. 929/1522), who produced a super-commentary on Khayālī's *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id,* furnishes Khayālī's statement with the following annotation: 'also the Māturīdīs – among the people of *Ahl al-Sunna* – are like the Mu'tazilah[483] and uphold the doctrine of the rational recognition of good and evil.'[484]

Qasṭallānī declares outright his Ash'arism in his own *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī. According to him, Ash'arism sees acts of God as unjustifiable in terms of causes and purposes, because He acts in whatsoever way He wants. In addition, he highlights that this view is at odds with Mu'tazilī teachings which command sending the revealed message as incumbent upon God's Wisdom. He also points to its opposition to the Māturīdī view: 'nor is [sending messengers] justifiable in terms of [God's] beneficence and generosity as is the opinion of the scholars of Transoxania.'[485] Significantly, Qasṭallānī even warns fellow *ulama* against Taftāzānī's book *Sharḥ al-aqa'id* for its incline to the doctrine of Transoxanian Ḥanafīs in some of its discussions:

> [Taftāzānī] alludes that reason may attain knowledge of good and evil in some act, following the opinion of the scholars of Transoxania ('*ulama Mawara'annahr*) and not the doctrine of Ash'arī which categorically dissociate reason from it. Indeed, the Commentator (Taftāzānī) had composed this book on the basis of their doctrine

---

[481] Khayālī, *Sharḥ al-Nuniyya,* p.53.
[482] Khayālī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id* in al-Kurdī, v.1, p.171.
[483] Undoubtedly, attributing a Māturīdī doctrine to the Mu'tazilah differs from the attitude observed by later Ottoman theologians who sought to vindicate Māturīdism as the truly sound doctrine of the Sunna.
[484] Al-Rūmi, Shujā' al-Dīn b. Ilyās, *Ḥāshiyat al-fadil Shujā' al-Dīn* in al-Kurdī, v.4, p.313.
[485] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ,* p.165.

(*madhhab*) in many places [in it] out of his imitation of the author (Māturīdī theologian Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī); so let it be noted.[486]

Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah deliberates in his *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar* that Ḥanafī theologians are truly divided over this problem, and ascribes the Māturīdī view to 'the Ḥanafīs who accept the Muʻtazilī doctrine on rational recognition of good and evil.'[487] Eventually, he acknowledges that the Ḥanafī doctrine subtly differs from the Muʻtazilah and he subscribes to it 'so as not to disable the divine attribute of Wisdom.'[488]

### 3.3.2.6 Acquisition (*kasb*)

Next to *takwīn,* the debate over the createdness of human acts – which centered on Ashʻarī's controversial concept of *kasb* – was a characteristic feature of the Ashʻarī-Māturīdī debate from the early years. To shed some light on the nature of the debate in Ottoman literature, it is useful to backtrack to Taftāzānī, who in *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* cites Rāzī's exclamation on the age-old difficulty of this problem. He then determines that invariably opinions on this matter are confined between the Jabriyya who – in asserting God's creation of everything – consider man's actions entirely God's creation, and the Qadariyya who – in order to validate man's earning of reward and punishment – make man the sole creator of his acts. He continues: 'there is no nation which does not have these two sects, and so the statements and anecdotes jostle between the two; it is even related that: [roll of] the dice reminisces *jabr* (determinism) and [playing] chess alludes to *qadar* (fee will).'[489] Taftāzānī decidedly takes the Ashʻarī opinion which he describes as follows:

> We (Ashʻarīs) say: truth of the matter is …neither determinism nor free will, but something between the two, because the opinions leaning to man's creation of his acts emphasize his power and choice; and the opinions farther apart [from *qadar*] emphasize [man's] incapacity and neediness. Man is compelled in the guise of a free chooser, like the pen in the hand of a writer.[490]

In this spirit of later Ashʻarism, Qasṭallānī distinguished between two types of determinists. He wrote in his *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-ʻaqā'id*:

> Determinists are two sects: absolute determinists (*jabriyya khālisa*) who affirm neither effective nor acquisitive power in man, but put him in the category of inanimate beings –

---

[486] Ibid.
[487] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar,* pp.285-286.
[488] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar,* pp.286.
[489] Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid,* v.4, p.263.
[490] Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid,* v.4, p.263-264.

such as the Jahmiyya; and non-absolute determinists (*jabriyya ghayr khālisa*) who affirm that man has ineffective yet acquisitive power – like the Ash'arīs, Najjāriyyah and Ḍirāriyya.[491]

Qasṭallānī also acknowledges the labyrinthine nature of this debate and even sees it as a possible annulment of the entire enterprise of *'ilm al-kalām*; he also quotes al-Rāzī's exclamation at the apparent weakness of Ash'arī's theory of *kasb*. But, importantly, while Qasṭallānī's discussion involves the opinions of the Ash'arī masters al-Bāqillānī, al-'Isfarā'īnī, al-Juwaynī, and al-Rāzī, there is no mention of arguments from Māturīdism or Ḥanafism. Furthermore, concerning two relevant characteristic doctrines of Abū Ḥanīfa (that power is effective in two directions and that power is with the act), Qasṭallānī shows uncertainty over whether they are in fact Abū Ḥanīfa's *own* opinions.[492] Ilyās al-Sīnopī, on the other hand, does not yield into Ash'arism or Mu'tazilism on this dispute, and favors instead a third unaffiliated opinion:

> True acquisition is what has been argued by the verifying scholars of *ahl al-Sunna wal-jamā'a* that the effective cause of man's acts is the combination of God's creation and man's free choice; neither only the first (divine createdness of acts) so it becomes compulsionsm as claimed by Ash'arī, nor only the second (human createdness of acts) so it becomes complete free will as claimed by the Mu'tazilah.[493]

Strict endorsement of Ash'arism on this problem is found in Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *Fiqh al-'akbar*. He outlines six possible doctrinal divisions: i) pure compusionists; ii) intermediary compulsionists; iii) the Mu'tazilah; iv) the view of Abū 'Isḥāq of Isfarā'īn; v) the view of al-Bāqillānī; and, finally, vi) the view of Juwaynī and the philosophers. Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah extensively scrutinizes each of these opinions, and a full exposition of his analysis goes beyond the present chapter. Of more relevance to our discussion is his concluding remark at the end of Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah's protracted analysis in which he declares that the root of all confusion on the problem of the createdness of man's acts (*khalq af'āl al-'ibād*) is the reluctance to accept the Ash'arī view; he says: 'origin of self-praise and deviance over these matters is nothing but refusal to accede to the meaning of pure compulsionism,'[494] which is the title he gives to the Ash'arī notion of *kasb*.

---

[491] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ,* p.121.
[492] Qasṭallānī, *Ḥāshiya ala Sharḥ,* p.121-122.
[493] Al-Sīnopī, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* Ms., fols.25v-26r.
[494] Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, *Sharḥ al-Fiqh,* pp.257-260.

### 3.4 Conclusion: The Ashʿarī influence on Early Ottoman *Kalām*

While Māturīdism was certainly not absent in a complete sense from early Ottoman theology, this chapter attempted to prove that the later Ash'arī tradition was highly influential, particularly in terms of diminishing the status Māturīdī and contextual relevance of some key doctrines of his school. The involvement of later Ash'arī texts and scholars in the early ferment of an Ottoman *kalām* discourse is studied in light of the theological works composed by early Ottoman scholars, the theological curricula in state-sanctioned madrasas, and the prosopographical connections between prominent early Ottoman theologians and masters of the later Ash'arī tradition (in particular Taftāzānī and Jurjānī). Mehmed II's personal interest in, and patronage of, the later Ash'arī tradition is an example of the role of the ruling elite in further empowering a sense of Ash'arī hegemony on early Ottoman *kalām*. The last section of this chapter discusses explicit statements in which early Ottomans favored Ash'arī to Māturīdī as the foremost leader of Sunnism, followed by intertextual analysis of selected early Ottoman *kalām* tracts and how they either inclined to the Ash'arī opinion or were indifferent to Māturīdism over – the otherwise hotly-debated – problems of: existentiation, hearing and seeing God, belief, prescribing the unbearable, rational recognition of good and evil, and acquisition.

Three conclusions, however, can be drawn from this chapter. First, later Ashʿarism was part and parcel of the formative period of Ottoman theological thought. This was manifested in the sheer communion between Ashʿarī pioneers and founders of Ottoman scholasticism, the persistence of canonical Ashʿarī texts in Ottoman scholarly activity (which was translated in studying and composing commentaries on them), and the evident political patronage that went along with it. Second, that this prevalence of later Ashʿarism directly impacted the nature and scope of classical Ottoman theological literature. Third, this Ashʿarī influence in turn influenced the perception and scholarly treatment of points of dispute between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. Then, it seems that the unmistakable Ottoman obsession with Māturīdism and its opposition to Ashʿarism which reaches its zenith during the twelfth/eighteenth century, was an outcome of a period of transition from classical times through to the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century. Pointing to the key highlights of this transition will be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS STEADFAST MĀTURĪDISM IN POST-CLASSICAL OTTOMAN THEOLOGY
(LATE TENTH/SIXTEENTH – LATE ELEVENTH/SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)


## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter pursues the traces of Māturīdī ideas in the works of Ottoman scholars from the late tenth/sixteenth towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century. It surveys and contextualizes the growing interest in Māturīdism in prominent *kalām* works by Ottoman scholars who flourished in al-Rūm and the learning centres of the wider Arab east. It will be shown in the course of this chapter that the eleventh/seventeenth century was a period of transition between Classical Ottoman *kalām* (marked by the manifest influence of Ash'arism) and the great upsurge in works on Ash'arī-Māturīdī controversies in the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries. This transition is studied in the present chapter in three sections. Section One investigates a shift in Ottoman theological focus beyond the prominent Classical Ottoman paradigm by scrutinizing the legacy of Ottoman revivalist al-Birkawī whose contributions to Ottoman *kalām* discourses signals a move towards emphasis on sound creed (*'aqīda*) in strict affiliation with the theological principles of Abū Ḥanīfa, as well as stern opposition to the science of *kalām* in general. Next in this context is Ḥasan Kāfī Ākḥiṣārī who – although more yielding on the merits of *kalām* – continues Birkawī's emphasis on sound creed. But, importantly, unlike Birkawī's complete silence towards the school of Māturīdī, Ākḥiṣārī proposes – in two highly influential and widely disseminated *kalām* tracts of the early eleventh/seventeenth century – that the final source on correct Ḥanafī creed is in fact Imām Māturīdī, giving new force to the doctrines of Māturīdism. The post-Classical Ottoman intellectual landscape, into which these two prominent figures emerged, is further illuminated in the seminal work *Mīzan al-Ḥaqq* (Criterion of Truth) by renowned Ottoman historian Kātib Chelebī. Section One finishes with a study of references made by Kātib Chelebī on a "turn" in Ottoman intellectual interests marked by increasing doctrinal dogmatism. Section Two studies a parallel scholarly attention to the school of Māturīdī in Ash'arī and Rūmī-Ḥanafī *kalām.* However, it appears that towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century Ash'arism had an edge over its rival and the Controversies were dealt by the latter in a more developed "minimalist and

conciliatory" approach; this approach meant that, from an Ashʿarī perspective, controversies with Māturīdism are needless and frivolous. Against this background, Section Three looks at the major turn in Ottoman Rūmī Māturīdism at the hand of Bayāḍīzādah whose landmark study *ʿIshārāt al-marām* formed the groundwork of a renewed and extensive Māturīdī response to Ashʿarism. This section contains detailed analyses of this work and its enduring legacy as an inspiration for the great Ottoman defense of Māturīdism in the following two centuries.

The historical and cross-textual analysis delineated in the last chapter showed that as far as doctrinal affiliation is concerned, Classical Ottoman Ḥanafī theologians' attitude towards the debates between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism was marked by: (i) seldom subscription to the school of Māturīdī as the primary theology of Abū Ḥanīfa; (ii) hegemony of Ashʿarism manifested in the common incline to the Ashʿarī position on conventional points of disputes with Māturīdism; (iii) or, general indifference to the philosophical ramifications of the differences between the two schools. These features seem to have been accommodated in mainstream Ottoman scholarship and are uniformly present in prominent *kalām* commentaries and super-commentaries well through the tenth/sixteenth century. But, in a predominantly Ḥanafī intellectual milieu, the character of Ottoman theological writing would soon grow more conscious of Ḥanafism – the popularly (and institutionally) favored school of practical law – as also the main point of reference in theoretical matters of creed.

Going by evidence presented in the previous chapter, if disinterest in the Māturīdī-Ashʿarī debate was a consequence of the prevalence of the later Ashʿarī thought and its concomitant "verifying" spirit on points of theological dispute, then the "waning" of Ashʿarī influences would logically result in greater interest in dogma, or affirming the Ḥanafī doctrinal position on common points of dispute with Ashʿarī. Undeniably, the opposite may also be true; that growing Ḥanafī dogmatism in fact made Ḥanafī theologians gradually "turn away" from Ashʿarī influences. It is futile, nonetheless, to presuppose a specific "turning-point" at which Ottoman theology transitioned from one state to another. The presently described change to the "overall landscape" of Ottoman theological interests was evidently gradual and marked by persistence of diverse – even opposed – discourses.

## 4.2 Demarcating a Doctrinal Shift beyond Classical Ottoman Theology

### *4.2.1 Muḥammad b. Pīr ʿAlī al-Birkawī (d. 981/1573) and the Emphasis on Sound (Ḥanafi) Creed*

Birkawī (also spelled Birgili and Birgevi), was an influential shaykh who flourished in the second half of the tenth/sixteenth century and grand pioneer of later Ottoman religious scholarship. He combined scholarly erudition with piety and austere living, in addition to a reformist spirit shown in his uncompromising legal and theological dispositions. A glaring example of this is when he famously implicated renowned *Shaykh al-Islām* Abū al-Suʿūd Efendi in his epistle *al-Sayf al-ṣārim* (the Unyielding Sword) in which he repudiated the established practice of accepting financial return for acts of worship.[495] Birkawī had a large student following, and his works – which covered a wide range of topics including jurisprudence, ḥadīth, Arabic language, ethics and mysticism – enjoyed wide scholarly reception.[496] By the eleventh/seventeenth century, he had already become a saintly figure and point of reference for many scholars within Ottoman learning circles; Kātib Chelebī dedicated a whole chapter in *Mīzān al-ḥaqq* to his controversy with Abū-al-Suʿūd Efendi,[497] and manifold commentaries were composed on his major works. Indeed, aiding this popularization may have been the inspiration Birkawī contributed to popular preachers such as Qāḍīzādah (discussed below).

But, what concerns us here is the theology of Birkawī – more precisely his creedal positions (*ʿaqīda*). From the point of view of Ottoman ulama's attitude towards Māturīdism and its concomitant variance with Ashʿarism – and aside from Birkawī's legacy in the increasingly troubled relation with Sufism and the nature of religious innovation (*bidʿa*) in Ottoman religious life which has been discussed in recent scholarship[498] – Birkawī represents a definite change. This change or "shift" is epitomized in connoting significance to the vindication of "sound" creed in steadfast concord with the principles of traditional Ḥanafism. Birkawī's staunch Ḥanafism is a manifest feature of his thought in general and partly justifies his espousal of both legal and theological doctrines in line with the school of

---

[495] See *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.252 and Al-Qassar, Aḥmad Hādī (editor) *Rasāʾil al-Birkawī,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005, pp.229-283. Interestingly, Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah mentions in *al-Shaqāʾiq* at least one more Ottoman scholar who held the same opinion as Birkawī.

[496] For biographical information on Birkawī see: al-Aydini, Ali b. Bali (d. 992/1584) *al-ʿiqd al-Mandum fi dhikr afadil al-Rūm* (edited by Muḥammad Tabatabaʾi), pp.114-116 published in Ṭāshkubrīʾzādah *al-Shaqāʾiq,* Tehran: 2010); Kātib Chelebī, *Balance*, pp.128-132; *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.252.

[497] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* pp.128-132.

[498] See Ivanyi, Katharina Anna *Virtue, piety and law: a study of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi's al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* (PhD Thesis), Princeton University, 2012.

Abū Ḥanīfa.[499] But, the critique of what he saw as heretical Ṣūfī innovations of the time – a glaring motif of his ethical works – is particularly noteworthy. Therefore, it seems that Birkawī's intellectual endeavors carried a concoction of strict Ḥanafism in *ʿuṣūl* and *furūʿ* as well as stern annulment of innovation. Thus we arrive at a theology in contrast with common Classical Ottoman *kalām* discussed in the previous chapter which to a reasonable extent revolved in the radius of later Ashʿarī thought.

Birkawī's vindication of Ḥanafī creed is delineated in two texts where his *ʿaqīda* is explicitly stated: the first is Section I from Chapter Two (entitled *taṣḥīḥ al-iʿtiqād*, lit. Rectifying Creed) of his magnum opus *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiya* (the Muḥammadan Path) – an extensive work combining ethics, mysticism and jurisprudence and one of the most popular post-Classical Ottoman religious tracts. The second is the introduction to his Testament (*al-Waṣiyya*); a shorter work written in Turkish and akin to *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* in scope.[500] Both contain summations of articles of creed scrupulously in line with Ḥanafi-Māturīdī *kalām* over key notions of disputes with Ashʿarism.[501] Curiously, despite his mindful espousal of Ḥanafī-Māturīdī doctrines, Birkawī is entirely indifferent to explicit doctrinal affiliation; the name of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and the nomenclature "Māturīdism" and its derivatives are entirely absent from his extant works (likewise, with Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī and "Ashʿarism").[502]

---

[499] Interestingly, even the mode of classification in his delineation of sects in the heresiongraphical work *Tuḥfat al-mustarshidin* is attributed directly to Abū Ḥanīfa (which is unheard of as an original opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa). See al-Birkawī, *Tuḥfat al-mustarshidīn fī bayān madhāhib firaq al-muslimin*, Tokyo Collection, 1136.

[500] See Birkawī, Muḥammad b. Pir Ali *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya fi bayan al-sīra al-nabawiyya al-ʿAḥmadiyya*, Istanbul: Matbaʾat al-Haj Mahram Efendi, 1280/1863, pp.16-23 and Birkevī, Meḥmet bin Pīr ʿAlī, *Vaṣiyet-nāme*, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, B. or. 045, fols.3a-25a. For an English translation of *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* see: Imām Birgivi, *The path of Muḥammad: a book on Islamic morals and ethics* (trans. By Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jarrahi al-Halveti), Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2005.

[501] For Birkawī's espousal of Ḥanafī-Māturīdī doctrines see his position on *Takwīn* (*Ṭarīqa*, p.17; *Waṣiyya*, fols.8a-9b), seeing God (*Ṭarīqa*, p.17), eternal divine Speech (*Waṣiyya*, fols.7a-8a), *Qadaʾ* and *Qadar* (*Waṣiyya*, fol.21a), *Ikhtiyār* (*Ṭarīqa*, p.17), prescribing the unbearable (*Ṭarīqa*, p.17), rational recognition of good and evil (*Ṭarīqa*, p.17), oneness of Imān and Islām (*Ṭarīqa*, p.18). Faith: of the emulator; does not increase or decrease; created (*Ṭarīqa*, p.18).

[502] The presence of certain Ashʿarī doctrines in Birkawī's heresiography is particularly interesting. In his stern *Dāmighat al-mubtadiʿīn* (lit. the Conclusive Word against Innovators in Religion), he proposes three (new) heretical sects within the Murjiʾa based on three aspects of the Ashʿarī conception of belief – namely: i) al-Shākkiyya (Doubters) for the inclusion of deeds in the definition of faith; ii) al-Manqūṣiyya (Limiters) for upholders of the view that faith is subject to increase and decrease; and iii) al-Mustathniyya (Exceptionists) for necessitating doubt in the pronouncement of faith. Birkawī, *Damigat al-Mubtadiʿin*, p.413, 418 and 420 respectively. Also in his heresiographical work *Tuḥfat al-mustarshidīn,* Birkawī condemns the Ashʿarī doctrine of felicity and wretchedness but attributes it to a sub-section of the Qadariyya (fol.32b); good and evil, attributed to Karrāmiyya (fol.33a); createdness of divine attributes, to al-Wāqifiyya, a sub-section of Muʿtazilah (fol.33b).

Notwithstanding Birkawī's silence towards the schools of Ashʿarī and Māturīdī, his position on the whole enterprise of *kalām* is particularly revealing. Also in *Dāmighat al-mubtadiʿīn,* he is explicitly critical of later (philosophical) *kalām;* he wrote:

> It is incumbent upon the believer to be wary of intermixing doctrines (*madhāhib*). For this, probing deep into *ʿilm al-kalām* is blameworthy because [later] theologians have fused much philosophy with *ʿilm al-kalām,* and included in it most of natural science and metaphysics, and delved into mathematics; to the extent it became no longer discernible from philosophical disciplines had it not included [a component] on matters to be believed on scriptural authority (*al-samʿiyyāt*).[503]

This quote resounds a famous statement made by al-Taftāzānī in his *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* regarding the split between early and later *kalām* traditions, and Birkawī acknowledges his sources.[504] But, clearly the quote is not only meant as a description of the method of later *kalām*, but to justify Birkawī's reproach of *kalām* altogether; he continues:

> The custom of religious scholars is to veer away from the scrupulousness of philosophers, because the habit of philosophers is to waste time in what is no good to them since they follow the [judgments] of pure intellect. Much of true religious knowledge is drawn from true testimonies (*al-khabar al-ṣādiq*) not pure rational proofs that comprise reasoning of the philosophers. For this reason the jurists have condemned practicing *ʿilm al-kalām;* even Abū al-Layth al-Ḥāfiẓ said: he who engages in *kalām* has his name removed from the community of scholars.[505]

Birkawī advocated a return to traditionalist theology predating *kalām* of later Ashʿarism as befits his definition of "philosophical theology". In stark contrast with scholars of the classical Ottoman period, theological problems in Birkawī's works are studied with seldom reference to conventional *kalām* classics. Instead, he draws on his erudition in *ḥadīth* and makes use of a wide-range of sources, especially from Ḥanafī jurisprudence. Indeed, Birkawī's strong criticism of theology has led some contemporary scholars to presuming external influences, namely Ibn Taymiyya and his line of thought which – in like fashion – prohibits the use of *kalām* and overstresses the perils of heretical innovation in religion.[506]

Nevertheless, it appears that Birkawī represented a conservative-cum-reformist strand within Ḥanafism, and the charge that his thought echoed Hanbalī fundamentalism is

---

[503] Birkawī, Muḥammad *Damigat al-mubtadiʾin wa kashifat butlan al-mulhidin* (edited with introduction by Sultan b. Ubayd al-Araabi), MA Thesis, Mecca: Umm al-Qura University, 2009, pp.199-200.
[504] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid,* p.55. Also see Chapter One of this study.
[505] Birkawī, *Damigat al-mubtadiʾin,* pp.200-202.
[506] This assertion is made by Halil Inalcik in : Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, Chapter XVIII, and the idea and its trail in Western scholarship is discussed in Khaled El-Rouayheb's "Myth of fanatasiscim". Also in Mustapha Sheikh's "Taymiyyan influences".

far from conclusive. Although Birkawī showed great aversion to *kalām,* but he did not call for a complete abolition of it. In *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* he concedes the use of *kalām* but 'not beyond one's need of it.'[507] He also makes use of *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* and *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* - albeit disproportionately less than Classical Ottoman theologians.[508] Birkawī, himself member of the Bayrami Ṣūfī order, finds no paradox in praising Ṣūfī figures such as Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, 'Umar al-Sahrawardī[509] and even Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī[510] on the one hand, and citing Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (student of Ibn Taymiyya; strong antagonist of philosophy and Ṣūfism) on the other.[511] More remarkable is the fact Kātib Chelebī does not state Birkawī to be the cause for the decline of rational sciences in later Ottoman scholarship which he bitterly laments. On the contrary, Kātib Chelebī expresses admiration of Birkawī and states how the latter, in fact, devoted half of his scholarly life to the study of Logic.

In short, Birkawī played a major role in the growing attachment to "sound" Ḥanafī creed among post-Classical Ottoman ulama, and set the standard for a new approach to doctrinal criticism which does not employ the conventional method of *kalām,* but instead utilized *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence. His affirmation of Ḥanafī creed and emphasis on correct and sound dogma is a particularly significant contribution to the overall attitude towards *kalām* in post-Classical Ottoman Ḥanafism. In this sense at least, Birkawī signifies a "shift" in Ottoman theology.

### 4.2.2 Ḥasan Kāfī al-Ākhiṣārī (d. 1025/1616) and Imām Māturīdī as the ultimate Source of Sound (Ḥanafī) Creed

A notable scholar whose contributions to *kalām* left an imprint on post-Classical Ottoman theological literature is Ḥasan b. Ṭurkhān b. Dawūd – popularly known as Ḥasan Kāfī al-Ākhiṣārī (d. 1025/1616).[512] A native of Akḥisâr (Prusac) in Bosnia, he rose to

---

[507] Birkawī, *Ṭarīqa,* p.25.
[508] It seems that these two works were not viewed as strictly philosophical by other Ottoman critics of Kalām such as Sachalizādah; it will be discussed in the next chapter.
[509] Birkawī, *Damgat al-mubtadi'in,* pp.312-313.
[510] Al-Qassar, *Rasā'il al-Birkawī,* p.141.
[511] See al-Qassar, *Rasā'il al-Birkawī,* p.59; p.141 and p.155.
[512] For biographical information on Ḥasan Ākḥiṣārī see his personal account of his life and education in Ākḥiṣārī al-Bosnawi, Ḥasan Kāfī *Niẓām al-'ulama ila khatam al-anbiya',* Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, written in Prusac in 1026/1617 by Halil an-Nawabadi, Kat. Br. 896. Also see: Kātib Chelebī, *Sullam al-wUṣūl* v.2, pp.19-20; *Hadiyya* v.1, pp.291-292; al-Khānjī al-Bosnawi, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad *al-Jawhar al-'Asna fi tarajim ulama wa shu'ara' Bosna* (edited Abd al-Fattah Muḥammad al-Hilw), Cairo: Hajr Publishers, 1992, pp.61-71; *al-A'lām* v.2, p.194 and the introduction to Al-Ākḥiṣārī, Ḥasan Kāfī *Nūr al-yaqīn fi Uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Zuhdi A. al-Bosnawi), Riyadh:

prominence in the Ottoman scholarly community, assuming the position of Qāḍī in various cities and serving as advisor to Ottoman Sultan Mehmed III during military campaigns.[513] Ākḥiṣārī wrote two major theological works – both of which he completed in the year 1014/1606; they are: *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fi 'uṣūl al-'I'tiqādāt* (Meadows of Heavens: on the Principles of Belief) and a commentary on Ṭaḥāwī's *Creed* entitled *Nūr al-yaqīn fi 'uṣūl al-Dīn* (Light of Certitude: on the Roots of Religion).[514] Ākḥiṣārī's '*Rawḍāt al-jannāt* was instantly popular, and nearly a year later (1015 AH) he composed an extensive commentary on it named *Azhār al-Rawḍāt* (Roses of Gardens).

Ākḥiṣārī shared with Birkawī his staunch Ḥanafism and the fervor for correct creed in line with the principles of Abū Ḥanīfa. Likewise, his intolerance of heretical innovations of some contemporary Ṣūfī orders eschews doubt. In *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt,* Ākḥiṣārī states that he wrote this book because of 'wayward and heretical doctrines of the Ṣūfīs' that were common in his time.[515] But, unlike Birkawī, Ākḥiṣārī's scholarship is laden with considerable theological content and his method is more fittingly *kalām*-oriented. Importantly, Ākḥiṣārī espoused the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as the proper theology of Abū Ḥanīfa, and the best means to it. In this survey of the history of Ottoman Māturīdism, Ākḥiṣārī stands out as one of the earliest Ottoman Rūmī scholars to compose a robust and detailed defense of Māturīdism. In a remarkable statement attributed to him, and attached to a manuscript copy of his *Rawḍāt al-jannāt,* Ākḥiṣārī speaks of his "discovery" of Māturīdī's *Book of Monotheism* when he was in Mecca in the year 1000/1592.[516] The statement reads as follows:

> While in Mecca, I came across *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (the Book of Monotheism), which was authored by the shaykh Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, written in antique script in the year 500 (1107 CE) in the method of *Ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a;* from there, I decided to write in this science a book that is short and deliberated in the way of Sunna to benefit laymen, especially people of the Abode of Victory (*Dār al-Naṣr*).[517]

Ākḥiṣārī voiced strong criticism of "philosophical *kalām*". But, he did not call for the drastic approach of Birkawī who hardly employed theological arguments in his writings. Ākḥiṣārī acknowledges the use of *kalām* and defines it as 'the science which investigates the Essence of God and His attributes, and the states of beings from creation to the hereafter in concord with the Islamic canon.'[518] But, his conception of valid *kalām* is nothing other than the 'theology of the jurist of the chosen Ḥanafī sect ...and their followers who conduct *ijtihād* in the principles of religion; this is the acceptable *kalām*.'[519] Therefore, although Ākḥiṣārī approves of the use of theology, but only based on Ḥanafī sources; other forms of theology are described by him as being 'the *kalām* of wayward philosophers and excessive Sūfīs which amounts to infidelity (*zandaqa*).'[520]

Ākḥiṣārī's theology reveals an attempt to transcend the discourse of later Ash'arism which pervaded Classical Ottoman theology and presents his arguments by drawing chiefly on Ḥanafī sources. Apart from the praise we find in Ākḥiṣārī's autobiography *Niẓām al-ulama'* of Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya* and its commentary by Khayālī – which is one of few Māturīdī tracts from the Classical Ottoman period[521] - no other Ottoman theological work is cited in the *kalām* books he studied. Nonetheless, Ākḥiṣārī was not strictly a 'revivalist' of classical Māturīdism. In fact, aside the works attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa, his primary sources are the works of later Māturīdīs, especially Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī, who was similarly critical of "philosophical" Ash'arism.[522]

According to Ākḥiṣārī, Imām Māturīdī is the perfect reflection of the original theology of Abū Ḥanīfa. A short biography of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī appears in *Azhār al-Rawḍāt* in the context of the definition of faith – in which he suggests the true opinion of Ash'arī to be the same as that of al-Māturīdī.[523] A particularly revealing insight showing Ākḥiṣārī's unyielding Māturīdism is his invalidation of Ṭaḥāwī's creed on the definition of faith in support of the doctrine of Māturīdī. He said:

---

referring to new territories conquered by the Ottomans, or the Bosnian region where he spent the remainder of his life, living and teaching at his native city of Akhisar.
[518] Ākḥiṣārī, *Azhār al-rawḍāt,* fol.5b.
[519] Ibid.
[520] Ibid.
[521] Ākḥiṣārī, Ḥasan Kāfī *Niẓām al-'ulama*, fol.13a. Khiḍr-Beg is scholar numbe twenty five in Ākḥiṣārī's lineage of Ḥanafī scholars see Ākḥiṣārī, *Niẓām,* fols.12b-13a.
[522] Bābartī is number twenty two in Ākḥiṣārī lineage of Ḥanafī scholars, see: Ākḥiṣārī, *Niẓām al-'ulama*, fols.11b-12a.
[523] *Azhār al-rawḍāt,* fol.10b. it appears to draw on Bābartī's commentary on Abū Hanfia's *Wassiyya*.

Many Ḥanafīs followed the shaykh (Ṭaḥāwī) who said: "[faith is] profession by tongue and consent by heart". But what it more accurate is the doctrine of the Great Imām (Abū Ḥanīfa), which is followed by Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, that the true essence of faith is the heart's belief in God's existence and what the Prophet passed on from Him. As for profession (*iqrār*), it is an additional constituent and not essential...'[524]

Although Ākhiṣārī was a strong advocate of the school of Māturīdī and his theology entirely affirmed Māturīdī doctrines, opposition to Ash'arism was not a major theme in his books on *kalām*, and the school of Ash'arī was not a target of criticism. Reference to the school of Ash'arī appears in a few places. On whether the *mujtahid* is prone to error – the position of Māturīdism – the opposite (that the *mujtahid* does not err) is attributed to "some" Ash'arīs and the Mu'tazilah.[525] Over faith of the emulator (seen as valid by Māturīdīs), he referred to the famous opinion of Ash'arī which ruled that 'no person is to be deemed a believer having not assented to each principle of religion based on rational proof.'[526] Ākhiṣārī affirmed, in line with Māturīdism, the necessity of reason in knowing God, and states that the Ash'arīs held a different opinion and states that according to them, 'those who die in the state of disbelief in God are pardoned because they did not receive the [divine] call.'[527] Interestingly, Ash'arīs are not invoked in the context of the chief Māturīdī doctrine of *takwīn,* but he makes brief reference to the fact Ash'arīs contradicted Māturīdīs by arguing that existentiation (*takwīn*) is identical with the existentiated (*mukawwan*).[528]

In summary, Ākhiṣārī's role in the further popularization of Māturīdism in post-Classical Ottoman *kalām* cannot be underestimated. He presented a theology firmly in line with the school of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, cited primary Ḥanafi-Māturīdī texts and helped to disseminate Māturīdism through his widely popular theological works, most notably *Rawḍāt al-jannāt.* As far as the disputes with Ash'arī are concerned, Ākhiṣārī was lukewarm and passed over in silence key controversies – including *takwīn,* free will and predestination. But, his acknowledgement of Ash'arism as a school of theology on a par with Māturīdism was a noteworthy development from Birkawī in terms of doctrinal affiliation in post-Classical Ottoman theology.

---

[524] Ākhiṣārī, *Nūr al-yaqīn,* pp.193-194.
[525] Ākhiṣārī, *Azhār al-rawḍāt,* fols.57a-57b.
[526] Ākhiṣārī, *Azhār al-rawḍāt*, fols. 15a-15b.
[527] Ākhiṣārī, *Azhār al-rawḍāt*, fols.18a. Ākhiṣārī copies – without acknowledgement – from Bābartī's commentary on the *Waṣiyya* of Abū Ḥanīfa regarding Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's view on the faith of rational children (fol.18b). See Bābartī, *Sharḥ al-waṣiyya,* pp.55-56.
[528] Ākhiṣārī, *Azhār al-rawḍāt,* fols.29b-30a.

*4.2.3 References to a Later Ottoman Theological "Turn" in Kātib Chelebī's* Mīzān al-Ḥaqq

An influential sketch of intellectual life in eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman religious circles – in the period following the influence of Birkawī and Ākḥiṣārī – is given in *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq fī ikhtiyār al-aḥaqq* (the Balance of Truth in Choosing the Most True) by historian and bibliographer Kātib Chelebī (d. 1068/1657). The book, which is the last to be written by the eminent Ottoman scholar,[529] is a critical examination of religious affairs in eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman dominion; its twenty-one chapters document the author's perception of mainstream controversies over legal, social and ethical issues. Although the book contains little that may be deemed strictly theological – or *kalām*-related – on closer reading, Kātib Chelebī's *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq* furnishes important hints regarding eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman theological thought vis-à-vis the Classical Ottoman period discussed in the previous chapter.

In *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq,* Kātib Chelebī famously laments the degenerate state of scholarship in his times which is demonstrated in the growing apathy to the rational sciences among fellow scholars in al-Rūm; he wrote:

> In every age, the works of scholars who have devoted themselves to both philosophy and sacred law have been widely known and esteemed and sought after. The great divines and scholars, the Imām Ghazālī, the Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, the learned ''Aḍud al-Dīn and his followers, the Qāḍī Bayḍāwī, the learned Shīrāzī, and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāzī and Sa'd al-Dīn Taftāzānī, and the Sayyid the Sharīf Jurjānī and their learned follower Jalāl Dawwānī, and their disciples, reached the heights of study and investigation and did not confine themselves to one branch of knowledge only. But many unintelligent people, seeing that the transmission of these sciences had once been banned, remained as inert as rocks, frozen in blind imitation of the ancients. Without deliberation or consideration of the truth of the matter, they rejected and repudiated the new sciences. They passed for learned men, while all the time they were ignoramuses, fond of disparaging what they called 'the philosophical sciences', and knowing nothing of earth or sky.[530]

Kātib Chelebī's high praise of past masters – in particular those belonging to the later Ash'arī tradition – and the contrast thereafter with Ottoman scholars of his time (who he describes as ignorant and reactionary), speaks of a change of scholarly attitude towards texts that were once the pinnacle of Ottoman learning. Indeed, Kātib Chelebī recounts in plain words that "change" in intellectual and scholarly interest occurred after the classical

---

[529] Kātib Chelebī wrote that he was completing his book 'on the eve of Sunady 24 Muharram 1067/November 1656' (Kātib Chelebi, *The balance of Truth* [translated by G. L. Lewis], London: Geogre Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957., p.145). For more on Kātib Chelebī see: Ugur, Ali *The Ottoman Ulama in the mid-seventeenth century: an analysis of* Waka'i'ul-fuzala *of Mehmed Seyhi Ef.,* Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1986, pp.212-214; *Hadiyya,* v.2, pp.440-441; Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* pp.7-14 and 135-147.

[530] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* p.25.

Ottoman period which he dates at the end of the reign of Suleyman I (r. 926/1520 – 974/1566); he continues:

> From the beginning of the Ottoman Empire till the time of the late Sultan Suleyman, whose abode is Paradise, scholars who combined the study of the sacred sciences with that of philosophy were held in high renown. The Conqueror, Sultan Mehmed, had built the Eight Colleges, and had written in his *waqfiya* 'Let work be carried on in accordance with the *qanun*', and had appointed lessons in the 'Notes on the *Tajrīd*' and the 'Commentary on the *Mawāqif*', Those who came after put a stop to these lessons, as being 'philosophy', and thought it reasonable to give lessons on the *Hidāya* and *Akmal* (manuals of Ḥanafī jurisprudence). But as restriction to these was not reasonable, neither philosophy nor *Hidāya* and *Akmal* was left. Thereupon the market for learning in Rūm (Turkey and the Balkans) slumped, and the men of learning were nigh to disappearing.[531]

Thus, the book sets out with a valiant vindication of rational sciences, especially Logic – which Kātib Chelebī defines as 'the balance and the touchstone of all sciences'[532] – and the need to restore equilibrium between legal and rational thought.[533] The greater part of the book is devoted to controversies arising from popular Ṣūfī practices and doctrines associated especially with the school of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī.[534] Kātib Chelebī also discusses the complex relation between rulers, influential and outspoken scholars, and the role of laymen in the articulation of religious controversies in the public sphere.[535]

---

[531] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* p.25-26.

[532] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* p.22.

[533] For example Kātib Chelebī discusses a mufti's inescapable need for the sciences of geometry (pp.26-27), geography (pp.27-28) and mathematics (pp.28-29). He is also evidently critical of the scholarly scope given to *Hādīth* scholarship; on the controvesy regarding the eternal bodily life of the Qur'ānic figure Khiḍr, Kātib Chelebī is critical of solely relying on *ḥadīth* in discussing this problem without command over rational disciplines; he argued against renowned *ḥadīth* authority Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni who refered to bodily life of Khiḍr because 'insight is a matter of abstract thought; it is quite a different thing, quite unconnected with traditions' (*Balance*, p.36). Likewise, concerning the infidelity of the parents of the Prophet, he attributes the origin of the conflict over this problem to 'some traditionists, whose interest did not run in the direction of ascertaining the facts, like Suyūṭī (famous Egyptian encyclopaedist and *muḥaddith*, died in 911/1505; see also *Balance*, p.74), simply took these truths at their face-value and recorded them. Their writings showed a lack of critical perception and were based on mere hearsay and blind following of their predecessors' (*Balance*, p.71). Nevertheless, Kātib Chelebī also downplays 'the method of reasoning' in understanding intrinsically mystical concepts; he says in defense of Ibn Arabi against his adversaries over the problem of the faith of Pharaoh (which originates in the thought of Ibn 'Arabī): 'the rules of the speculative method cannot be used to confute claims and arguments put forward in accordance with the principles of purification; any confutation must use the rules and terms of that same method. Now all attempts to confute Ibn 'Arabi in this matter are by means of speculation and deduction. Therefore they are invalid and unacceptable (*Balance*, p.78).'

[534] Chapters directly relating to Sufism are: I (p.33); II (p.38); III (p.42); IX (p.75); X (p.80); XIII (p.92); XIV (p.97).

[535] On the controversy over Ṣūfī dancing and whirling he said: 'the real purpose of the ulama's prohibition (of dancing) is to protect the State, for in the past States have suffered much from the Sufis: witness in particular the rise of the Safavids in Persia' (*Balance,* p.42). Of those partaking in dancing ceremonies he says: 'the brutish common people flock to them, and votive offerings and pious gifts pour into their lodges' (*Balance,* p.44). The relation between the state and religious class is also discussed concerning prohibitions of tobacco (p.57), coffee (p.60), and drugs and narcotics (p.63).

No doubt, the fact Kātib Chelebī steers clear of addressing theological controversies in his *summa* of the religious life of his age is in itself telling of a seemingly social and intellectual frivolity of doctrinal affiliation with Ash'arism or Māturīdism in his day. More importantly, his theological orientation – in view of his indifference to strict adherence to sound and orthodox schools of *kalām* - seems more in line with later "philosophical" Ash'arism which operated within the "paradigm of verification". But, as the survey of prominent Ottoman theologians from the eleventh/seventeenth century presented in this chapter will show, Ottoman scholars paid relatively more attention to the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and in turn we encounter more allusion in *kalām* texts to the disputes with Ash'arī in comparison with the Classical Ottoman period covered in the previous chapter which Kātib Chelebī speaks about with an air of nostalgia.

But, what can we learn regarding theology from *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq*? Kātib Chelebī concludes that the intellectual environment of his time was marked by opposition between two camps: the "traditionalists", consisting of leaders of popular Ṣūfī groups – and he specifically refers to followers of Shaykh to ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Sīwāsī (d. 1049/1639), leader of the Halveti Ṣūfī order –, and the "reformers" – manifested in the followers of Muḥammad Efendi Qāḍīzādah (d. 1045/1635).[536] He wrote:

> These two sheykhs were diametrically opposed to one another; because of their differing temperaments, warfare arose between them. In most of the controversies I have mentioned in this book, Qāḍīzādah took one side and Sivasi took the other, both going to extremes, and the followers of both used to quarrel and dispute, one against the other. For many years this situation continued, with disputation raging between the two parties, and out of the futile quarrelling a mighty hatred and hostility arose between them. The majority of sheykhs took one side or the other, though the intelligent ones kept out of it, saying, 'This is a profitless quarrel, born of fanaticism...'[537]

---

[536] On Qāḍīzādah and his followers see: Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1973, Chapter XVIII; Madeline. Zilfi, *Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulama in the Post-Classical Age (1600–1800,)* Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988; M. C. Zilfi "The Qāḍīzādahlis: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul" In *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (Oct., 1986), pp. 251-269 and Khaled El-Rouayheb "The Myth of "The Triumph of Fanaticism" in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire" In *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 48, Issue 2 (2008), pp. 196-221. On the history of the Halveti order in Ottoman Empire see: Curry, John J. *The transformation of Muslim mystical thought in the Ottoman Empire: the rise of the Halveti order*, 1350-1650, Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, c2010. On a possible link with the works of Ibn Taymiyya by a presumed associate of the Qāḍīzādeli movement, see Mustapha Sheikh "Taymiyyan Infuences in an Ottoman-Hanafī Milieu: The Case of Amad al-Rūmī al-Āqhisārī" In *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume 25, Issue 01 (January 2015), pp 1 – 20.

[537] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance*, p.133. For the biography of Qāḍīzādah, see: *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.177; *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.402. Curiously, in Kātib Chelebī's grand biographical work *Sullam al-Wuṣūl,* although he inserts the name of Qāḍīzādah in alphabetical order of entries (*Sullam al-Wuṣūl*, v.3, p.270), it is left blank without further information in the printed critical edition. The same is done for the entry concerning Muḥammad al-Birkawī (v.3, p.209).

Opposition of popular Ṣūfī doctrines and practices by a rising scholarly elite who increasingly viewed them as excessive and heretical seems to be a feature of Ottoman religious life towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century. A protruding name in this context is Muḥammad b. Pīr ʿAlī al-Birkawī (introduced above) who would leave an enduring intellectual legacy extending to the wider Muslim world seldom paralleled by an Ottoman ʿālim. Birkawī, who figures prominently in *Mīzān al-Ḥaqq* and is highly praised by the author, was a powerful spokesman against heretical Sufism – in particular the Halveti order – and whose teachings are considered by Kātib Chelebī the inspiration behind Qāḍīzādah and his followers.  On a theological level, a debate was afoot between the two camps in virtue of affirming "sound" creedal positions. Kātib Chelebī makes noteworthy mention of what might be an early antecedent of a growing body of Ottoman summations of creeds (ʿaqāʾid). He said:

> Sheykh Muḥammad ibn Bahāʾ al-Dīn,[538] who died in 956/1549, proposed, after thirty years of retirement and worship, to write a commentary on the *Fiqh akbar* in order to revive interest in Muslim dogmatics. He sought the advice of my cousin Pīr ʿAlī Efendi, who was the father of Birgili Mehmed Efendi (Birkawī), discussed it with him, and with his approval and encouragement wrote a useful and popular commentary which is still in use and in favour among the learned.[539]

That a change of attitude towards *kalām* took place beyond the Classical period is clearly indicated by Kātib Chelebī. As will be shown below, popular theological texts were more interested in sound and orthodox creed, and the school of Māturīdī is no longer passed over in silence. Full maturation of Ottoman Māturīdism, however, is reached towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century at the hands of Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah whose work *Ishārāt al-marām* came as a reaction to Ashʿarī hegemony over the prevalent *kalām* discourse and general Ottoman apathy towards the Disputes.

## 4.3 The Renewed Interest in Māturīdism during the eleventh/seventeenth Century

### 4.3.1 The Birkawī Connection (Early eleventh/seventeenth century)

Beyond Turkish-Ottoman *kalām*, Māturīdism was also gradually recognized in Ashʿarī circles as the school that – together with Ashʿarism – makes up the sound doctrine of Sunnism. The Meccan-based Molla ʿAlī al-Qārī of Herat (d. 1014/1606) was a renowned Ḥanafī

---

[538] Bahāʾ al-Dīn-zādah.
[539] Kātib Chelebī, *Balance,* p.68. This book is discussed in the previous chapter. The association of Birkawī's father with the revival of interest in dogmatics is extraordianry.

scholars of the early eleventh/seventeenth century who wrote relentlessly on various topics of religion, including a number of critically-acclaimed volumes on theology.[540] Ali al-Qārī was a devoted Ḥanafī, and we know he was an early champion of the Ottoman Birkawī from a poem he composed praising the latter's *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya.*[541] But, unlike common Ottoman Ḥanafism, Ali al-Qārī was critical of key Māturīdī doctrines and his attitude towards the disputes was more in keeping with Ash'arism.[542] In his *Marqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, a commentary on *Mishkāt al-maṣābīḥ* – an eighth/fourteenth century *ḥadīth* manual – the controversies between the two schools are seen as trivial and unimportant; ʿAlī al-Qārī says:

> As for the disagreement which has transpired between the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs [some] problems; they ultimately concern the branches (*furūʿ*) as they are uncertainties (*ẓanniyyāt*), and not based on definite proofs (*yaqīniyyāt*). Even some verifying scholars have argued that all disputation between them is merely verbal.[543]

ʿAlī al-Qārī's uneasy attitude to doctrinal affiliation in theology is also shown in his strong objection to contemporary ulama who insisted on calling the debate over God's deliverance on His promise and threat (*waʿd wa al-waʿīd*) a real dispute (*khilāf maʿnawī*). Al-Qārī even wrote a book to refute their claims and prove that it should been treated as verbal (*lafẓī*).[544] He also insisted in the same volume that every time the designation "verifying scholars" occurs, it does not only refer to theologians from Ash'arī background, but to the Māturīdīs as well.[545]

Interestingly, other Ash'arī texts from the first half of the eleventh/seventeenth century which referred to the disputes with Māturīdī also have a connection with the Ottoman Birkawī; the following are two examples. The first is the commentary on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* – named *al-Mawāhib al-fatḥiyya* – by the Meccan-based Shāfiʿī-'Ash'arī scholar

---

[540] One bibliographical study estimates his works at 263 odd title. See Muḥammad Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shamma', "al-Mulla Ali al-Qārī: *fihrist* mu'alifatihi wa ma kutiba 'anh" in *Afaq al-thaqafa wal-turath,* vol.1, June 1993, pp.4-37. For his biography see: al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.3, 185-186 and *al-Aʿlām,* v.5, pp.12-13.

[541] Quoted in Ibn ʿAllan, Muḥammad Ali *al-Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya ala al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* uncatalogued manuscript, 320 folios, last owned in Damascus by Hussein b. ʿIsmāʿīl al-ʿĀmirī, known as Ibn al-Ghazzī in 1263/1847, fol.318b. Also see: *Verses written about al-Birkawī,* MS.1658, Tokoy Daiber Collection. The poem is missing from MS.214/m,'ayn/504 King Sa'ud University Manuscript Collection.

[542] The following are a few examples: ʿAlī al-Qārī agrees with the Ash'arīs on recognising good and evil by revelation alone (Al-Qārī, Mulla Ali *Sharḥ al-amālī,* Istanbul: Salah Bilci Kitābevi, [undated], p.5), and attributes the Māturīdī doctrine to the Muʿtazilah. He also accepts that the dispute over *takwīn* could be only verbal (*Sharḥ al-amālī,* p.6), an opinion seemingly influenced by Ibn al-Humām (*Minaḥ al-rawḍ al-Azhar fi Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar* [edited by Wahby Sulaymān Ghawji], Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-'Islamiyya, 1998, p.90-91). He negates Māturīdism over the problem of hearing God's eternal Speech and adopts the Ash'arī doctrine which sees that God's Speech is directly hearable without the postulation of a created medium (*Minaḥ al-rawḍ al-Azhar,* pp.94 and 101).

[543] Al-Qārī, Mulla Ali, *Marqat al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ mishkat al-masabih,* Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2002, v.1, p.261.

[544] Al-Qārī, Mulla Ali *al-Qawl al-sadīd fi khulf al-waʿīd,* Tanta: Dar al-Sahaba lil-Turath, 1992.

[545] Al-Qārī, *al-Qawl al-sadid,* p.43.

Muḥammad Ibn 'Allān (d. 1057/1648).[546] In it, he juxtaposes Ash'arī and Māturīdī as the legitimate agents of Sunnī orthodoxy, and intimates that he had discussed thirty different disputes between them elsewhere in his corpus of writings.[547] Nevertheless, in his *Commentary* on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa,* he only touches on a few disputes without detailed discussion.[548]

The second text is by the renowned Egyptian[549] Ṣūfī and *ḥadīth* scholar 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī (d.1031/1622). Al-Munāwī wrote a commentary on *Ibn Sina's poem of the Self and Soul* (*qaṣidat al-nafs wa al-rūḥ*), and presents a reading of the controversy over the definition of wisdom between Ash'arism and Māturīdism through the gaze of mystical philosophy. He suggests that as long as the Māturīdī vision of wisdom contains the meanings of perfection and creation in terms "being *qua* being", they are on the foothold of Jesus, the Spirit of God; as for the Ash'arīs, whose definition of wisdom focusses on the outcome of action and good consequences, they are on the foothold of Moses, 'to whom God spoke.'[550] Interestingly, al-Munāwī was – like 'Ali al-Qārī – an early advocate of Birkawī and also composed a poem in praise of *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*.[551]

That early eleventh/seventeenth century references to the school of Māturīdī were made by scholars who we know were advocates of Birkawī and his intellectual orientation affords hints on the renewed interest in Māturīdism beyond the Classical Ottoman paradigm. It may well have been the case that Brikawī's works – in particular *al-Ṭarīqa* and its commentaries – in which he valiantly defended Ḥanafī-Māturīdī doctrines posed a new challenge to the established Ash'arī "minimalist and conciliatory" approach to the Disputes.

---

[546] For a detailed biography seen al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.4, pp.184-189. See also *al-A'lām*, v.6, p.293.

[547] The book is said to be a commentary on the Ash'arī creed of al-Shaybāni, entitled *Badi' al-ma'ani* (*Kashf al-ẓunūn*, v.2, p.1142). The extent of the book's circulation – or even completion – is not clear as Kātib Chelebī's reference to it is quoted from the author's statement in the *Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya* mentioned above.

[548] See Ibn 'Allan, *al-Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya,* MS. Damascus, fols.13a, 17a, 31b, 32b. He cites from Subkī's *Nūniyya* (fol.33a); considers exception in faith as a verbal dispute (fol.35b) and does not mention Māturīdism in is relatively longer treatment of *jabr* and *Ikhtiyār* (fols.95a-100a).

[549] In early eleventh/seventeenth century Egypt, criticism of Ḥanafi theology seems to have been commonplace among a class of doctrinaire Ash'arīs. This is gleaned from a short epistle written by a prominent Azhar-affiliate Shāfi'ī named 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Danusharī (d. 1025/1616) in which he defends the Ḥanafī understanding of exception in faith ('*istithnā*') against contemporary adversaries (Al-Danusharī, Abd Allah *Risāla fi kalimat lā ilāha illa Allah,* MS. 370782 Jum'a al-Majīd Centre for Culture and Heritage Dubai. Also in Suleymaniye 611 Fatih) On Danushari see: al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.3, p.53-56 and *al-A'lām,* v.4, p.97.

[550] Al-Munawi, Abd al-Ra'uf *Kitāb Sharḥ al-'Allāma al-Munāwī 'ala Sharḥ al-qaṣīda al-'ayniyya fi al-nafs wal-rūū lil ra'īs Ibn Sina,* Cairo: Matba'at al-Mawsu'at, 1900, pp.48-49. Influences of Ibn 'Arabī – in particular his *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*– are evident in this quote.

[551] See: *Verses written about al-Birkawī,* MS.1658, Tokoy Daiber Collection.

*4.3.2  An  Ash'arī "Minimalist and Conciliatory" approach to the Disputes (Late eleventh/seventeenth Century)*

### 4.3.2.1  'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī (d. 1078/1668)

A manifest feature of the attitude of later eleventh/seventeenth century Ash'arīs to the disputes is their passion towards rendering the controversies trivial and immaterial by suggesting compromise solutions and alternative interpretations. This is starkly manifested in the Egyptian 'Abd al-Salām b. Ibrahīm al-Laqānī's *Hidayat al-murīd,* a commentary on his father's (d. 1041/1632) *Jawharat al-Tawḥīd* – one of the most authoritative Ash'arī canon from this period.[552] Al-Laqānī maintains Ash'arī and Māturīdī as the two *Imāms* of Sunnī orthodoxy.[553] But, over chief disputes between them (including faith of the emulator; pronouncement of faith; that *imān* and *islam* are identical; felicity and wretchedness and predestination), he is adamant in defining them as differences of expression with no real philosophical ramifications.[554]

### 4.3.2.2  Yaḥya al-Shāwī (d. 1096/1685) and Translation of his *Qurrat al-'Ayn fī Jam' al-Bayn*

Ash'arism's conciliatory approach to the Disputes is no more evident than in the theology of renowned Ash'arī scholar Yaḥya b. Muḥammad al-Shāwī (d. 1096/1685) as gleaned from his work *Qurrat al-'ayn fī jam' al-bayn* (Delight of the Eye: on Reconciling Opposites) – possibly the greatest eleventh/seventeenth century Ash'arī treatment of the controversies between Ash'arism and Māturīdism, and which presents a climax of conciliatory Ash'arism.[555] Al-Shāwī had a fascinating scholarly career; born in 1030/1621 in the Algerian city of Miliana where he acquired his initial learning. Al-Shāwī travelled widely, entering Cairo in the year 1074/1664 where he rose to prominence among local Egyptian scholars, and – according to one report – had claimed the prestigious title of chief shaykh of al-Azhar seminary.[556] Al-Shāwī's scholarship – particularly in *kalām* and other rational sciences – was critically-acclaimed and he received matchless praise by contemporary

---

[552] Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.2, pp.416-417; *al-A'lām,* v.3, p.355.

[553] Al-Laqānī, Abd al-Salām in Ibn al-Amir, Muhmmad b. Muḥammad *Ḥāshiya ala Ithaf al-murid* (edited by Muḥammad F. al-Mazidi), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 2001, pp. 238 and 251.

[554] Al-Laqānī in Ibn al-Amir, *Ḥāshiya ala Ithaf al-murid*, pp. 71, 92, 97, 103, 106, 193, and 199 respectively.

[555] For Yahya al-Shāwī's biography, see the account of al-Muḥibbī (who was a student of his) in *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.4, pp.486-488; al-Kittānī, 'Abd al-Ḥayy *Fahras al-faharis wa al-athbat wa mu'jam al-ma'ajim wal mashyakhat wa al-musalsalat* (edited by Ihsan Abbas), Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1982 [2ⁿᵈ ed.], v.1, pp.1132-1135 and *al-A'lām,* v.8, p.169.

[556] Al-Kittānī, *Fahrast al-faharis,* v.1, p.1134.

scholars, including the abovementioned 'Abd al-Salām al-Laqānī;[557] he was even posthumously described as "Ash'arī of the time".[558] Al-Shāwī also sojourned in Damascus and al-Ḥaramyn, but of greater relevance to our discussion are his travels to Istanbul (which he visited twice and taught in the presence of the Ottoman Sultan and was hosted by the grand *vizier*), as well as his thorough contact with Turkish ulama, most notably *Shaykh al-Islām* Yaḥya Minqārīzādah (d. 1088/1677) who highly praised al-Shāwī's scholarly erudition.[559] Interestingly, while at Istanbul, Shāwī taught various books, including Ash'arī texts such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī's *ḥāshiya* on Jurjānī's commentary on the *Creeds* of 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-'Ījī.[560]

As understood from the opening words, al-Shāwī's *Qurrat al-ayn* was written following a request from a senior scholar (most likely written in Istanbul at the behest of *Sheikhul-islam* Minqārīzādah) who asks al-Shāwī 'about the problems over which the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs differed; is their conciliation possible or not?'[561] Al-Shāwī outlines twenty one dispute and attempts to solve each one of them; he says: 'difference over them is harmless and does not entail corruption in creed, and this is based on the disputes as they are, let alone the fact conciliation is possible; sometimes an opinion of Ash'arīs is identical with the Māturīdī doctrine, sometimes they differ.'[562] Given the historical significance of Shāwī's *Qurrat al-'ayn,* the following is an abridged translation of it, which delineates how far he was willing to go in order to reach a compromise position on the Controversies:

I.   **Faith (*imān*) and Islam:** Those who say they are "different", have the understanding that Islam and faith (*imān*) respectively refer to the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and esoteric (*bātin*) aspects of religion. As for those who say: "identical", they define Islam or faith in the absolute sense which contains all defining elements of the other.

II.  **Faith's increase and decrease:** those who claim that faith is subject to increase and decrease refer exclusively to the deeds of the faithful. As for the opposite doctrine, faith does not increase or decrease because faith is defined as certainty (*yaqīn*), whose decrease necessitates disbelief. Shāwī affirms that increase of faith is only in terms of qualitative intensity – like the light in a lantern, it may grow stronger or dimmer but the flame source is fixed and unchanging.[563]

---

[557] Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.2, p.417.
[558] Al-Kittānī, *Fahrast al-faharis,* v.1, p.1133.
[559] Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.4, p.487. On Minkārîzâde see: *al-A'lām,* v.8, p.161 and Mehmed İpşirli, "Minkārîzâde Yahya Efendi" in *TDV,* year: 2005, vol: 30, pages: 114-115.
[560] Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar,* v.4, p.487. Al-Muḥibbī reports that he travelled to Istanbul with a group of scholars from Damascus to study this text among others under al-Shāwī.
[561] Al-Shāwī, Yahya b. Muḥammad *Qurrat al-Ayn fi jam' al-bayn,* Riyad: King Abd al-Aziz Manuscript Library, MS.3 (1205), written in 1233/1818, fol.1b and al-Haram al-Makkī Library Mecca, MS.1426, fol.1b.
[562] Al-Shāwī, *Qurrat al-Ayn,* Mecca MS.1426, fol.1b.
[563] Al-Shāwī, fols.2a-2b.

III. **Deeds as part of the definition of faith:** Ash'arīs argued the affirmative, contrary to the Māturīdīs. The Ash'arī position is justified because their definition of faith presumes perfect realization (*imān kamil*) which necessarily becomes incomplete without the inclusion of deeds.[564]

IV. **Exception in faith:** This is a futile, age-old dispute. But, because Māturīdīs accept it under certain conditions, and the Ash'arīs themselves are not united on one opinion, there should be no categorical disagreement over this problem.[565]

V. **Faith of the emulator:** Māturīdīs see it as valid, contrary to the Ash'arīs. Conciliation may be attained in assuming that he who rules the emulator to be a disbeliever, it is because he did not use reasoning though he was able to. As for accepting faith of the emulator, it is because he did not use reasoning due to time constraints. In light of this, both positions are founded on reasonable grounds.[566]

VI. **Perfect knowledge of God:** Māturīdīs see that we can acquire true knowledge of God. It is also an opinion among some Ash'arīs. Conciliation may be achieved in that true knowledge based on proof [by reason] is possible to the Ash'arīs as well, but not in the utmost essence (*kunh*) of Truth.[567]

VII. **Predestination (*jabr*):** Māturīdīs say: [truth of the matter] is neither free will (*tafwid*) nor predestination (*jabr*) but a state between two states. Ash'arīs went to the contrary because they say: we take a middle way and it is a form of compulsionism. No dispute is imaginable over this in the first place because the Ash'arī doctrine of "intermediary compulsionism" (*jabr mutawassit*) is identical with the Māturīdī doctrine of "a state between two states" (*amr bayna amrayn*).'[568]

VIII. **Capacity for two opposites:** Māturīdīs argue that capacity (*istitā'a*) is effective for two opposites (good and evil), contrary to the Ash'arīs. Conciliation may be reached if the above capacity is seen as prior to the act, i.e. possessing the sound means, which is also known as power (*qudra*) and is prior to the act. As for the power in the Ash'arī view, it changes in time (*la yabqa zamanayn*), therefore, it is accidental and ineffective in two opposites.[569]

IX. **The name and nominatum (*al-'ism wa al-musamma*):** Identical for the Māturīdīs, contrary to the Ash'arīs. This debate is long-winded, but there are different ways to appease conflict. If they were seen as one thing, it is in the sense of [the statement] "Zayd came" whereby it provides real meaning. As for the view they are not one, it is in the sense of "I wrote Zayd's name" – i.e. it is only verbal because it refers to the name of Zayd and not Zayd the person.[570]

X. **Divine attributes:** Māturīdīs say: they are neither God nor other than God, contrary to the Ash'arīs who see divine Attributes as 'other' than divine Self. There is no inherent conflict over this problem because both schools ultimately want to affirm that the attributes are not identical with God.[571]

---

[564] Al-Shāwī, fol.2b.
[565] Ibid.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Al-Shāwī, fols.2b-3a.
[568] Al-Shāwī, fol.3a.
[569] Ibid.
[570] Al-Shāwī, fols.3a-3b.
[571] Al-Shāwī, fol.3b.

XI. **God's Speech:** Māturīdīs say "what is written in the Book is truly God's Word"; the Ashʿarīs say: "it gives indications to God's Word". Deniers of the written Word of God being one with God are right as it is clearly not the eternal meaning subsisting in the divine Essence. As for affirming it as the word of God, it refers to the nominal – or the sense of a verbal truth.[572]

XII. **Stillness (*sukun*):** Māturīdīs rule that a thing is in one stillness. Ashʿarīs went to the opposite; i.e. they postulate a state (*ḥāl*) whereby if something is "still" it is in a "state of stillness" and if it moves, it is in a state of moving and so on. Conciliation is evident because these "states" are only mental categories and do not exist on their own.[573]

XIII. **Wretchedness (*shaqawa*):** contrary to Ashʿarīs, wretchedness decreed by God in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*) changes by man's own deeds according to Māturīdīs. It may be conciliated by saying that if what is in question is eternal divine Knowledge, then it surely does not change. Other than that, God does whatsoever He wishes.[574]

XIV. **Existentiation (*takwīn*):** Māturīdīs argued it is an eternal attribute (*qāḍīma*), but Ashʿarīs say it is created in time (*ḥādith*). Existentiation (*takwīn*) is [also] affirmed as being the same as the existentiated (*mukawwan*) by the Ashʿarīs, contrary to the Māturīdīs. But, *takwīn* does not exist apart from the *mukawwan*; hence, it does not really exist, and no real dispute should ensue over this problem.[575]

XV. **Profession (*iqrār*) of faith:** to the Ashʿarīs it is a criterion (*sharṭ*) for belief, as for the Māturīdīs is a part of it (*shaṭr*). The problem is resolved by affirming the Ashʿarī position, because true believers should also be of the same opinion because belief is incomplete without its pronouncement by the tongue.[576]

XVI. **Role of reason:** Ashʿarīs say: nothing is made obligatory by reason, contrary to the Ḥanafis. There is no dispute between the two schools because as I understand it Māturīdīs see that God is known by reason – i.e. rational proof – only after an *a priori* acceptance of necessity to know God by revelation.[577]

XVII. **Acts of God:** God's acts and decrees are not rationalized according to the Ashʿarīs, contrary to the Māturīdīs. Harmonization between the two opinions is reached by not defining God's acts and decrees in the sense of purpose (*gharaḍ*), but only as denoting a "sort of judgment". At this level, there is no disagreement between the two sects.[578]

XVIII. **Acts of man:** Ashʿarīs give no power to man over his actions, neither in the sense of creation (*khalq*) nor in acquisition (*kasb*); Māturīdīs, on the other hand, affirm that man has particular choices (*ikhtiyārāt juz'iyya*) whereby though they are ultimately God's creation, they are acquired by man.[579]

---

[572] Ibid.
[573] Al-Shāwī, fols.3b-4a. The section is strangely titled "Stillness", which is not the common title for the dispute over the Ashʿarī concept of states (*ahwal*) which relates to the problem of Divine Attributes.
[574] Al-Shāwī, fol.4a.
[575] Ibid.
[576] Al-Shāwī, fols.4a-4b.
[577] Al-Shāwī, fol.4b.
[578] Ibid.
[579] Al-Shāwī, fols.4b.-5a. Shāwī's attempt to conciliate the two opinions runs into contradiction and he finally invalidates the Māturīdīs in favour of Ashʿarīsm.

XIX. **Prescribing the unbearable:** Māturīdīs say impossible, contrary to the Ash'arīs. Prescribing the unbearable is possible only in certain hypothetical scenarios.[580]

XX. **Obligating disbelievers with religious duties:** it is a null statement to the Ash'arīs, contrary to the Māturīdīs. Ash'arīs are right from the view that such obligation is mentally inconceivable. As for the Māturīdīs, they are right insofar as divine retribution for not fulfilling religious duties is possible.[581]

XXI. **Is air (*hawa'*) stationary wind (*rih sakin*)?** Ash'arīs argued the affirmative position, and the Māturīdīs said: [wind] is a subtle body (*jism laṭīf*). There is no disagreement because at the moment air is in a motionless state, it is not "wind"; if it moves, it is "wind". Then, air in the prior state is not "wind" in truth (*halan*) but in a figurative sense (*mithalan*).[582]

*4.3.3 Rūmī Ottoman Scholars on Ash'arī-Māturīdī Disputes towards late eleventh/seventeenth century*

Although doctrinal affiliation with Māturīdism was progressively observed in post-Classical Ottoman theology, opposition with Ash'arism was not so pronounced. We find, for instance, a clear statement to this effect in one of the earliest Ottoman commentaries on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa,* by Abū al-Naṣr 'Abd al-Naṣīr al-Ākshahrī (d. 990/1582), popularly known as Khojazādah, who advocates accepting the opinion of Ash'arī in the context of the Disputes. Commenting on the section of 'Rectifying Creed' in Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa,* Khojazādah writes:

> Matters of belief (*i'tiqāḍiyyāt*) are three types: [matters] the opposite of which amount to disbelief; or [matters] the opposite of which amount to heresy; finally, [matters] the opposite of which are better neglected (*tarku 'awla*). [The latter] refers to the disagreements between the two *Imāms* of the Sunna, namely Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī. [However,] leaving the opinion of Abū Manṣūr and reckoning on the opinion of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī is adequate (*la ba'sa bihi*).[583]

In the absence of a comprehensive examination of the disputes from a purely Māturīdī point of view – in comparison with dominant later Ash'arī texts, such as al-Subkī (esp. in his *Nūniyya*) and the works of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī – Ottoman scholars' treatment of the Disputes was informed by the common Ash'arī attitude towards them. This attitude could be seen as tending to i) minimize philosophical ramifications of disputes by

---

[580] Ibid.
[581] Ibid.
[582] Al-Shāwī, fols.5a-5b.
[583] Note inserted in Muḥammad Ibn 'Allān's *al-Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya* (Damascene copy). Khojazādah's *Commentary* on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* is preserved in manuscript form at Fatih (MS.2067) in Turkey, Petersburg (MS.935) in Russia, and Berlin (MS.8838) in Germany. See al-Habashi, *Jāmi' al-Shurūḥ,* v.2, p.1157. On Abū al-Nasr Khojazādah see *Hadiyya* v.1, p.632.

making them merely verbal; ii) assume they are few in number; iii) provide justifications and compromise solutions; and iv) imply Māturīdism as a sub-set of Ashʿarism.[584]

One of few eleventh/seventeenth century Ottoman works so far known as being solely dedicated to the disputes with Ashʿarism is attributed to Yahya b. Pir Ali, better known as Nawʿī Efendi (d. 1007/1599).[585] Nawʿī Efendi (father of ʿAṭāʾī, author of a well-known addendum – *dhayl* – to Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's *al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʿmāniyya*[586]) was a celebrated Turkish poet and scholar with strong passion for *kalām*.[587] He served as judge in Baghdād and became private teacher of Sultan Murād III's sons.[588] His approach to the Māturīdī-'Ashʿarī debate in his untitled brief epistle is remarkably in line with Ashʿarism. It begins with the following words:

> Know that the sect of salvation is [made up of] Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs, and our doctrine – i.e. of Abū Ḥanīfa – is Māturīdism. Among their books are: the *Creeds* of Nasafī, *al-Bidāya* [of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣabūnī], *al-Tabṣira* [of Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī], and the *Creed* of Ṭaḥāwī. The books of Ashʿarīs include: *al-Ṭawāliʿ* [of Nasir al-Dīn a-Bayḍāwī], [al-Jurjānī's] *Commentary* on *al-Mawāqif,* the original text [by ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-ʿĪjī], and *al-Maqāṣid* [of al-Taftāzānī]. The Commentator on the *Creeds* [of Nasafī] is an Ashʿarite, because he is a follower of the Shāfiʿī school of law and [all] Shāfiʿīs are Ashʿarites. If in the books of Māturīdīs the designation "people of Sunna" is mentioned, they mean the Māturīdīs. Likewise in the books of Ashʿarīs, if "people of Sunna" is mentioned, they mean the Ashʿarīs.[589]

---

[584] A number of prominent post-Classical Ottoman Ḥanafī dogmas were largely silent towards doctrinal affiliation with the Māturīdī school. The widely-disseminated commentary on *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* by Abū al-Muntaha Aḥmad al-Maghnīsāwī (d. 1000/1592) is a good example. Although affirms Hanafi-Māturīdī doctrines, but it affords no mention of either school; see al-Maghnīsāwī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-fiq al-akbar,* Diaber Collection – Tokyo, MS 1062. (Attribution of this work, of which tens of manuscript copies are preserved in Turkish libraries, to Maghnīsāwī is problematic as Kātib Chelebī dates the book's completion at the year 939/1533 – *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, v.2, p.1287). In the second half of eleventh/seventeenth century, a similar indifference to "Māturīdism" is observed in Ḥussein b. Iskender al-Rūmī's (d. 1084/1674) *al-Jawhara al-munīfa* – a commentary on Abū Ḥanīfa's *Waṣiyya* (*Hadiyya*, v.1, p.323). This book also steers clear of identifying the doctrines of Ashʿarī and Māturīdī, although evidently vindicating the latter (see: al-Rūmī, Hussein b. Iskender, *al-Jawhara al-munīfa fi Sharḥ waṣiyyat Abī Ḥanīfa,* Hyderabad: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1321/1904). The same attitude is observed in the theological prelude to Ibn Iskender al-Rūmi's book on jurisprudence *Majma' al-muhimmāt al-dīniyya ʿala madhhab al-ḥanafiyya* (Riyadh: King Saʾud Manuscript Collection, 2/1377 f. 6817, 69 fols, written in twelfth/eighteenth century, fols.1b-2b).

[585] Nawʿī Efendi *fi al-farq bayna al-Ashāʿira wa al-Māturīdīyya* in Anon. *Risāla fi al-Basmala,* Dar al-Kotob al-Qawmiyya – Cairo, No.297 Majami' Taymur; other copies are extant in Turkey including Süleymaniye (Pertev Paşa Bö l. Nu: 607). It is not mentioned in *Hadiyya* (v.2, p.531) and *Osmanli Müellifleri* (v.2, p.437), but mentioned in *al-Aʿlām* (v.8, p.159). A critical edition based only on MS.1882 (Leiden) was published in Badeen, *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit,* pp.26-29. Biographical sources of Nawʿī Efendi (see footnote below) mention another short piece entitled *Risāla fi al-Kalām nafsī* (Epistle on inner divine Speech).

[586] Ali Ugur, *Ottoman ulama of mid-seventeenth century,* pp.x-xiii.

[587] For biography of Nawʿī Efendi see: al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar* v.4, p.474-475; *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.2, p.437; *Hadiyya,* v.2, p.531 and *al-Aʿlām,* v.8, p.159.

[588] Al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-Athar* v.4, p.475.

[589] Badeen, *Sunnitische theologie,* pp.26-27. He follows by inserting a famous quote on the two schools from Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* (see Chapter Three).

Nawʿī Efendi's epistle reads as an explanatory note on the disputes, and is not unexpected in an intellectual milieu marked by hegemony of later Ashʿarī theology vis-à-vis an increasing interest in sound creed in strict concord with Ḥanafi-Māturīdī principles. Indeed, it may have been a response to a question by a student of his – a common reason succinct pieces such as this are composed. Concerning the disputes he says:

> Difference between them is over seven ʿuṣūl and they are – praise God – not fundamental problems so that difference in them could lead to divergence and conflict in the principles of religion, [they are]:
> 
> i. Exception in faith in the saying "I believe, if God wills". Argued by Ashʿarī and rejected by Māturīdī.
> ii. Ashʿarī said: the felicitous (al-saʿīd) could become wretched (shaqy), but the wretched does not become felicitous. Espoused by Abū Ḥanīfa. I say: dispute over this could be seen as verbal, as verified by some scholars; that Ashʿarī said so in view of (man's) original predisposition, or eternally decreed destiny. As for Abū Ḥanīfa, it is to be interpreted at face value, and we take it as true.
> iii. The concept of kasb (acquisition); denied by Ashʿarī and Abū Ḥanīfa differed from him.[590]
> iv. Ashʿarī says: knowledge of God is made obligatory by revealed law. Abū Ḥanīfa says: by reason.
> v. Ashʿarī says: active attributes such as al-Rāziqiyya (Sustaining) are created in time (ḥāditha). Ab Ḥanīfa considers them eternal and uncreated (qāḍīma).
> vi. Abū Ḥanīfa argues that Prophets do not commit minor sins. Ashʿarī differed with him.
> vii. No sustenance (niʿma) is divinely bestowed on a disbeliever. Abū Ḥanīfa differed with him (i.e. Ashʿarī).[591]

Nawʿī minimizes the differences between the two doctrines, which he had already defined as ultimately one and the same. As such, the influence of Ashʿarism on his approach to the disputes is evident. For example, on the dispute over felicity and wretchedness he is in line with al-Subkī in defining it as a verbal dispute.[592] A similar attitude is observed in another text from the second half of the eleventh/seventeenth century. *Al-Wasīla al-Aḥmadiyya* is celebrated commentary on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiya* by an Ottoman teacher at Bursa by the name of Rajab b. Aḥmad al-Bursawī (d. 1087/ 1677).[593] Commenting on the section 'Rectifying Creed' in Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa,* Bursawī wrote:

---

[590] Nawʿī here may appear to be making en error by claiming that Ashʿarīs "reject" the concept of *kasb*, where in fact it is widely understood that the opposite is true. But, it is also possible that he was referring to the Ashʿarī denial of the Māturīdī forumation of *kasb* (Badeen, *Sunniitische theologie,* p.28 and MS.297 Cairo: Taymur Collection).

[591] Badeen, *Sunnitische theologie,* pp.28-29. Next, he outlines three more disputes: i) prescribing the unbearable and ii) rational recognition of good and evil – both by quoting Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī's *Tawḍīḥ;* iii) the name and the nominatum (al-ʿIsm wal musammā) as not identical according to some Ashʿarīs, in contradiction with Māturīdīs – based on Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's *Bidāya.* Then he says 'as such the disputes are ten, and limiting them to seven is lacking' (ibid).

[592] See al-Subkī, Tāj al-Din, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya al-Kubra,* v.3, pp.383-384.

[593] *Hadiyya,* v.1, pp.365-366.

(Rectifying Creed); that is, making it identical with the doctrine of *ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a,* which comprises of the two methods of Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs. Between them there have been few controversies; but, they do not amount to ascribing either doctrine to heresy or error.[594]

Bursawī makes no further mention of the disputes beside these words.[595]

## 4.4 Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah (d. 1098/1687) and the Canonization of Late Ottoman Māturīdism

Our survey so far of key encounters between Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs during the eleventh/seventeenth century revealed a growing awareness of Māturīdism in Ottoman *kalām* literature in the face of a persistence of Ash'arī minimalist and conciliatory approach to the Controversies. More importantly, in the absence of a new extensive appraisal of Māturīdism and its place in relation to other doctrines, prominent Ottoman Māturīdī texts were largely influenced by prevalent Ash'arī discourses on the controversies between the two schools. This situation is inverted towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century at the hand of Aḥmad b. Ḥasan Bayāḍīzādah (d.1098/1687),[596] in particular his masterwork *Ishārāt al-marām min 'Ibārāt al-Imām* (Intended Remarks from the Words of the Master – i.e. Abū Ḥanīfa) which is arguably the most extensive theological examination from a strictly Māturīdī perspective that have reached us from post-Classical Muslim intellectual history. The book sets out with a list of over fifty disputed problem between Māturīdism and Ash'arism. Bayāḍīzādah avowed to critically examine each one of them, and scrutinize the

---

[594] Rajab Ibn Aḥmad *al-Wasīla al-Aḥmadiyya,* Tokyo Diaber Collection, No. 1023, fols.25b.

[595] He refers to a marginal annotation on another book of his (a volume on ethics entitled *Jami' al-Azhār*) where he supposedly discussed the disputes in further detail. Another noteworthy Ottoman work possibly from the eleventh/seventeenth is the relatively extensive theological manual *Durar al-'aqā'id wa ghuraru kulli-sā'iqin wa qā'id,* which contains in the concluding two pages a brief bullet-point comparison between the two schools. The book – written in Turkish – touches on the following disputes: i) assent in faith; ii) exception in faith; iii) role of reason in belief; iv) divine Wisdom; v) *Takwīn* and createdness of active Attributes; vi) felicity and wretchedness; vii) prescribing the unbearable; viii) sending Messengers as necessary upon God – seen as possibly verbal; ix) *kasb* and *jabr* (See Al-Sīwāsī, Abd al-Majīd Aḥmad, *Durar al-'aqā'id wa ghurar kull sā'iq wa qā'id,* Gazi Husreve-Begova Biblioteka, Kat. Br.742, fols.109b-110a). However attribution of this work to the renowned master of Halveti Ṣūfī order Abd al-Majīd b. Muharrem al-Sīwāsī (mentioned earlier this chapter) is problematic. Although the book is attributed to him in *Hadiyyat al-'ārifīn* (v.1, p.620), MS. Gazi Husrev-Begova is signed with the authorship of a certain *Aḥmad* al-Sīwāsī. Furthermore, the book has been attributed to different authors by cataloguers of various manuscript collections; for example it is attributed to: al-Sunbuli, Sinan Yūsuf b. Ya'qub al-Halveti (d.989/1582) in MS. 614 Suleymaniye H. Hüsnü Paşa; 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bazdawī in MS. 06 Mil Yz A 8404 Milli Kütüphane-Ankara; Abū 'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Amāsī in MS. Cairo Timuriye 9 and MS. 1025 Suleymaniye Kılıç Ali Paşa.

[596] For the biography of Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah see al-Muḥibbī, *Khulasat al-athar,* v.1, pp.181-182; *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.164; *al-A'lām,* v.1, p.112; al-Khānjī, *al-Jawhar al-asna,* pp.37-39; "Introduction" to Bayāḍīzādah, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan *Ishārāt al-maram min 'Ibārāt al-Imām* (edited by Yūsuf Abd al-Razzaq), Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, 1949 [reprinted by al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya lil-Turath, 2008], pp.3-17; Ali Ugur, *Ottoman ulama of mid-seventeenth century,* pp.578-580 and "Bayāḍīzādah Ahmed Efendi" by Ahmet Zeki İzgöer in *TDV,* year: 2005, vol: 6, pages: 55-56.

minimalist and overly conciliatory approach of Ashʿarism in an attempt to restore the status of Māturīdī as the grand master of Sunnī *kalām.*

Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah (son of Bayāḍī) was born in Istanbul into a scholarly family of Bosnian background. His father Ḥasan Efendi, known as Bayāḍī, was once judge in Mecca and teacher at one of the prestigious Eight Colleges at Istanbul. He also built a school in Istanbul known as *al-Bayāḍiyyah.*[597] His son Aḥmad studied under prominent ulama in his hometown and had prolonged contact with *Shaykh al-Islām* Abū Saʿīd Efendi.[598] Under the reign of Mehmed IV, and after teaching briefly at Edirne and Istanbul, Bayāḍīzādah became judge at different cities including Aleppo in 1077/1666 and Mecca in 1083/1672, the latter being the place where he composed his *Ishārāt al-marām.*[599] In the latter years of his life he became *Rumelī qāḍī al-ʿaskar* (Judge of the Army in the Balkans), before dying in seclusion having fallen into disfavor with Ottoman authorities.

In his forward to the first critical edition of Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt al-marām* (published in Cairo in 1949)*,* the last great Ottoman advocate of Māturīdism Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī comments on the enduring legacy of Bayāḍīzādah and his contributions in theology; he says: '[Bayāḍīzādah was famed for] his ingenuity in the science of *kalām;* notable scholars after him would succumb to his conclusive investigations (*taḥqīqātuhu*), especially those who wrote after him on the controversial problems between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism.'[600] Bayāḍīzādah was quickly acknowledged as a leading authority on Māturīdī *kalām* among contemporary scholars, such as the Meccan-based Yemenī Zaydī scholar Ṣāliḥ b. Mahdī al-Maqbalī (d. 1108) in his book *al-ʿAlam al-Shāmikh.*[601] Al-Maqbalī was a fierce critic of Ashʿarism and Māturīdism alike, but the influence of Bayāḍīzādah on his judgment on Ḥanafī theology is clearly indicated.[602]

---

[597] Al-Khānjī, *al-Jawhar al-asna,* p.73. Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah's son – named Ḥāmid – was also a scholar, see al-Khānjī, p.59.

[598] See Ali Ugur, *Ottoman ulama of mid-seventeenth century,* pp.253-255. Bayāḍīzādah also studied under the Ḥanafī mufti at al-Quds, renowned scholar and jurist Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn Abi al-Lutf al-Qudsi (d. 1104/1692). He is described as 'nearing perfection in rational and traditional sciences' (*Silk al-durar,* v.3, pp.2-5).

[599] Concerning Bayāḍīzādah's term as judge at Mecca, al-Muḥibbī (*Khulasat al-athar,* v.3, p.195) refers to an epistle written in his praise by the preacher of the Holy Mosque (*al-Masjid al-Haram*) Ali al-Ayyubi (d. 1086/1675).

[600] Bayāḍīzādah, *Ishārāt,* p.9.

[601] See *al-Aʿlām,* v.3, p.197. Al-Kawtharī said: 'notice al-Maqbalī, despite his defiance and hyperbole, monstrosity and arrogance, he reckoned on him (Bayāḍīzādah) in his book *al-Alam al-shāmikh*' (al-Kawtharī in Bayāḍīzādah, p.9).

[602] He wrote: 'Māturīdīs are Muʿtazilah [as gleaned] from their doctrines of rational recognition of good and evil and the rationalization of the acts of God, among others. Ibn al-Subkī had tried to encapsulate them in thirteen problems over which they differed with the Ashʿarīs. Some said less, some said more; the Judge al-Bayāḍī – from

*4.4.1* *A Study of Bayāḍīzādah's* Ishārāt al-Maram min ʿIbārāt al-ʿImām

### 4.4.1.1 Formal Structure

Bayāḍīzādah intended his *Ishārāt al-marām* to be a valiant vindication of the original theology of Abū Ḥanīfa. The book's impressive bibliography comprises over one hundred odd title – covering *Ḥadīth* compendia, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, in addition to a wide range of Ashʿarī, Māturīdī and Muʿtazilī *Kalām* classics. This serious and scrupulous study sought to drive home once and for all the idea that Māturīdism is indeed a faithful reflection of Ḥanafī *Kalām* – the author's unrivaled choice of doctrine. To Bayāḍīzādah, there is no doubt that Abū Ḥanīfa – seen as the founder of Sunnī theology – engaged in *Kalām* which he defines as integral to religious knowledge.[603] Against the Muʿtazilah who invalidate the authenticity of the transmitted theological statements of Abū Ḥanīfa (the backbone of the present work), Bayāḍīzādah traces the intertextual history of Abū Ḥanīfa's books such as *al-Fiqh al-ʿakbar* and the *Waṣiyya* in the literature of some thirty prominent scholars (spanning the period between the fourth/eleventh and the ninth/seventeenth century) wherein they are cited or quoted.[604]

Bayāḍīzādah takes a unique approach in which the conventional "commentary" is redefined. Although *Ishārāt al-marām* is ideally a "commentary" on the books of Abū Ḥanīfa, on closer examination, the book is in fact inconsistent with contemporary genres and prototypes. An unusual feature of the book is that it is not based on a single work, but it draws on every statement attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa as preserved in the entire corpus attributed to him. More remarkably, the book does not observe the sequence of any of Abū Ḥanīfa's books, but follows its own plan: it is divided into an Introduction and three main parts: i) On Rational Necessity to Know God; ii) Eternal Attributes; iii) Active Attributes. Indeed this observation is part of the book's originality, and testifies to Bayāḍīzādah's own critical attitude towards traditional *kalām* scholarship of his time.

---

our age assumed position of Judge at Mecca in 1084/1673 and he is a Rūmī – even considered the dispute between the two camps to be over fifty [odd] problem [and they are according to him] among the discipline's fundamental and subtle problems. He [also] alluded that they are more than that. It is evident from those discussions [of his] that they (Māturīdīs) are Muʿtazilah in the fundamentals of religion' (Al-Maqbalī, Ṣāliḥ b. Mahdī *al-Alam al-shāmikh fi ithar al-ḥaq ʿala al-aba' wal mashāyikh,* Cairo, 1328 [1910], pp.6-7). Bayāḍīzādah's influence on the history of the  Ashʿarī-Māturīdī debate will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
[603] Bayāḍīzādah, pp.35-37.
[604] Bayāḍīzādah, pp.21-23.

#### 4.4.1.2  Sources

Despite the densely theological nature of *Ishārāt al-marām*, it nevertheless draws on a wide spectrum of scholarship. A discernible feature of the book is the extensive use of *ḥadīth* literature. Bayāḍīzādah pays special attention to the authenticity of Prophetic and other relevant traditions by scrutinizing chains of narrations and taking a comparative approach to *ḥadīth* texts. This includes the six Sunnī canons of authentic traditions, annals of history, in addition to commentaries by later scholars.[605] Interestingly, the book contains scant reference to Ḥanafī chronological biographies – *ṭabaqāt* (we find only one reference to Ibn Abī al-Wafā' al-Qurashī's *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyya,* a standard classic on the topic[606]). On the other hand, sources on the biography of Abū Ḥanīfa occupy a prominent place in the book's bibliography. Bayāḍīzādah frequently cites from seven major volumes of *manāqib* (virtues) of Abū Ḥanīfa and his students. Furthermore, Bayāḍīzādah does not rely exclusively on *kalām* texts in support of Māturīdī doctrines, but also refers to theological arguments contained in Ḥanafī legal manuals and collections of rulings (*fatāwā*).[607]

In terms of theological texts, some observations may be pointed out. Next to the works of Abū Ḥanīfa, Ashʿarī literature have the biggest share of *Ishārāt al-marām*'s list of sources, and Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (which occurs eighty-four times) is the most frequently cited source. Interestingly, ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's *Mawāqif* is referred to more often than the celebrated commentary on it by al-Jurjānī – an especially popular text during the Classical Ottoman period. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has more books cited in the *Ishārāt* than any other author; Bayāḍīzādah refers to seven of his books, in particular Rāzī's Qurʾānic *Exegesis* (referred to twenty-five times). In addition to texts belonging to the later (post-Rāzī) Ashʿarī tradition, Bayāḍīzādah is no less attentive to early Ashʿarī masters. References to the works (and opinions) of al-Bāqillānī, Ibn Fūrak, ʿIsfarāʾīnī, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, al-Juwaynī, Ghazālī and al-Shahrastānī abound in the book.

As for Māturīdī sources, Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī's *Tabṣira* is the foremost sources with twenty-eight citations. Next to Abū l-Muʿīn, other Māturīdī classics used by Bayāḍīzādah include Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣabūnī's *Kifaya*, al-Samarqandī's *Ṣaḥāʾif,* and Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī's *Iʿtimad.* Interestingly, methodical Māturīdī works such as *Uṣūl al-dīn* of Abū al-Yusr al-

---

[605] In particular Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's Commentary on Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (*Fatḥ al-Bārī*).
[606] Bayāḍīzādah, p.155.
[607] Such as Fakhr al-Dīn Hassan ibn Mansūr's (died 592 AH) *al-Fatawā al-Khāniyya.*

Bazdawī and *al-Tamhīd* of Abū Shakūr al-Sālimī were hardly used (referred to only once and twice respectively). Leading source of later Māturīdism in Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* is Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī's *Ta'dīl al-'Ulūm* which is quoted nearly as many times as Abū l-Mu'īn's *Tabṣira.* Another central Ḥanafī figure in the book – although with Ash'arī leanings – is Ibn al-Humām whose *Musāyara* and other works are cited twenty seven times.

Unlike the general absence of reference to the original writings of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī (with the exception of two isolated citations; one to a book by Ash'arī on *Creeds,* and another named *al-Nawādir*), Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* is significant in containing rare direct references to the works of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, in particular his – until recently – long-lost *Book of Monotheism.*[608] In light of the fact Bayāḍīzādah composed his book while serving as judge at Mecca, it is likely that he came across the same copy of the *Book of Monotheism* which Ḥasan Kāfī al-Āḵḥiṣārī indicated nearly seventy years before that he had seen, and which in fact inspired him to write his popular defense of Māturīdism (*Rawḍāt al-jannāt*).[609] The other book of Māturīdī used by Bayāḍīzādah is his *Exegesis* of the Qur'ān (*Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunna*) which is cited ten times.

Last point on the sources of Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* concerns his attitude to Ottoman theological scholarship. Clearly Bayāḍīzādah had access to a reasonable number of Ottoman works.[610] Nevertheless he was more conservative in using them as references. Chief Ottoman source in it is al-Fanārī's *Fuṣūl al-badā'i'* – an early Ottoman work on principles of jurisprudence (cited five times). Ibn Kamāl Pasha and Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* are both cited three times. Of Interest is the fact Bayāḍīzādah quotes prominent Ottoman al-Khayālī's commentary on the Māturīdī *Creed* of Khiḍr-Beg, and ignores the author's most famous work (his *ḥāshiya* on Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-aqā'id*).

---

[608] Bayāḍīzādah, p.181.
[609] It is not entirely clear whether this Meccan copy is the same as the extant, so far *only* known copy of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* which is preserved in Cambridge University Library (Add. no. 3651). Following a formal inquiry with Near and Middle Eastern Department (Manuscripts and Printed Collections - Cambridge University Library) in late January 2015, no information was provided on the origin of the manuscript besides the name of the dealer (known as "Dr. Sethian") from whom it was purchased on 21st of May, 1900.
[610] Ottoman scholars cited in the *Ishārāt* are: 'Alī Qūshjī, Qarabāghī, Qasṭallānī and Kafawī.

### 4.4.1.3 On Doctrinal Affiliation

Bayāḍīzādah intended his *Ishārāt al-marām* to be a comprehensive study of theology in the general sense of the term. Thus, the book comprises in-depth discussions of the arguments of Muslim philosophers, schools of the Muʻtazilah, Karrāmiyya (Anthropomorphists), Ḥashawiyya (Corporealists), Ẓāhiriyyah (Literalists), and traditionalist Hanbalites (including one reference to Ibn Taymiyya). But, the book's central motif is undoubtedly the position of Māturīdī *Kalām* in relation to Ashʻarism. Bayāḍīzādah makes no secret of his argument in the preamble to the *Ishārāt*. After affirming Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as chief narrator of the *kalām* books of Abū Ḥanīfa (the primary source of his book), he says:

> And so: Māturīdī is *not* among the followers of Imām Ashʻarī because – as some have imagined – he was "the first" to defend the doctrine of the Sunna. As for what has been argued – that most of his difference [with Māturīdī] is verbal (*lafẓī*) – it is an illusion (*wahm*); verily it is real (*maʻnawī*). But it is in the implications of doctrines (*tafārīʻ*) that do not necessitate heresy. This is because Māturīdī was the propounder of the doctrine (*madhhab*) of the Imām (Abū Ḥanīfa) and his associates who defended the doctrine of the Sunna long *before* Ashʻarī; for at no point in time was there an absence of scholars who bring victory to Religion.[611]

It seems that Bayāḍīzādah's book came as a reaction against an intellectual backdrop whereby Ashʻarī is presumed to be the foremost theologian of Islam and Māturīdī is a mere follower of him. A marginal annotation to the above quote – written near the author's lifetime, possibly by one of his students – specifically refers to the inflammatory statements made by ʻIṣām al-Dīn al-'Isfarā'īnī (discussed in Chapter III) and ʻAli al-Qārī (mentioned above) in which Māturīdī is made subordinate to Ashʻarī and the disputes deemed frivolous and unimportant.[612] Bayāḍīzādah tasks himself with proving the opposite; that Māturīdī is the leading theologian of Sunnism, whose doctrinal positions are consistent, logical and - more importantly – in faithful harmony with the school of Abū Ḥanīfa. Closer reading of Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* shows he took a systematic approach to undermining Ashʻarī *kalām.* This is successfully achieved by Bayāḍīzādah's unwavering focus on the fact Ashʻarīs are deeply divided over key doctrines of their school. In the *Ishārāt* we find a wide gap between the original theology of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʻarī (founder of the school) and the majority (*jumhūr*) of his followers; "many", "some", "early", "prominent" and "pioneering" Ashʻarīs" are said to be consistent with Māturīdism on key problems rather than common Ashʻarism.

---

[611] Bayāḍīzādah, p.23.
[612] Ibid.

In light of this divided Ashʿarī front (according to Bayāḍīzādah), the *Ishārāt* is forwarded with a list of some fifty disputed problems that occur strictly between the "common opinion of the majority" (*jumhūr*) of the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs. This way, Bayāḍīzādah in fact sets in concrete an exhaustive list of controversies which are defined as the necessary concomitant of Sunnī *kalām.* Contrary to conciliatory or "verifying" Ashʿarism – which this book is a rebuttal of – each controversy is to be treated as real (*maʿnawī*) with unavoidable philosophical ramifications. Bayāḍīzādah's list of disputes in the outset of his book also serves as a map for the discussions that will follow.

### 4.4.1.4  Translation of Bayāḍīzādah's "Fifty Māturīdī Doctrines Opposed by Ashʿarism"

[Ontology]

(1) Existence and necessity are the essence [of Divine Self] upon verification. It is the chosen opinion of Ashʿarī contrary to them (Ashʿarīs) as will be discussed in Part One.

(2) If the Name (*ʿism*) refers to meaning, it is the essence of the Nominatum (*al-musamma*); (3) it is not divided – like divine attributes – into what is an essence and what is not an essence; (4) nor is it defined as neither itself nor other than itself. This is the favored opinion of many of them as will be discussed in Part Two.

(5) The Maker (*al-Ṣāniʿ*) is truly knowable. Chosen by some of them. And it is the correct opinion, as in the book of *Manāʾiḥ* by al-ʿĀmidī. Will be discussed in Part Three.
(6)  Active Attributes of God originate in one eternal-essential attribute which is Existentiation (*takwīn*) – i.e. the principle of creation *ex nihilo*; (7) it is not the essence of the existentiated (*mukawwan*).
(8) Existence (*baqaʾ*) is continual being (*wujud mustamir*) and not an additional [divine] attribute. Chosen by al-Bāqillānī, the ʿUstādh (ʿIsfarāʾīnī) and many of them.

[Epistemology]

(9) Hearing (*samʿ*) without the medium of a sense (*jāriḥa*) is a divine attribute other than Knowledge (*ʿilm*); (10) the same applies to Seeing (*baṣar*). Favored opinion of Imām al-Ḥaramyn (al-Juwaynī) and al-Rāzī and many of them.
(11) Cognition of smell (*sham*), taste (*dhawq*) and touch (*lams*) is not an attribute other than Knowledge.
(12) Perceiving something through the senses is not knowledge but only a means to it (*ālātuhu*)
(13) The Intellect (*al-ʿaql*) is not only "necessary knowledge". A chosen opinion by many of them.
(14) The reasoning mind makes obligatory knowledge of the existence of God, including God's monotheism, Knowledge, Power, Speech, and Will; also, the createdness of the world and its extraordinary indication to the truthfulness of the Messenger; (15) the Messenger is to be believed and not rejected or doubted, not by virtue of revelation alone.

[Good and Evil]

(16) Good (in the sense of being worthy of praise and reward), and evil (in the sense of deserving blame and punishment) are both rational (ʿaqlī) – i.e. the Wisdom of the Creator is known upon reasoning.

(17) As for reward, and that it is in the form of dwelling in Paradise, and punishment, that it is in the form of hell-fire, they are known through revelation alone. This is the favored opinion of many early Ashʿarīs.

(18) No abrogation (naskh) for something whose goodness or evil is incontestable – such as necessity of belief and that disbelief is forbidden. This is chosen by the Ashʿarīs in the point above.

(19) Good and evil are the signification (madlūl) of God's command and prohibition which reflect His eternal Wisdom.

(20) Rational recognition of Good and evil – in the sense God's acts invariably carry good consequences – is only conceptual; God does no evil because of his divine Wisdom.

(21) That God does no evil is a matter of common consensus (ijmaʿ).

(22) It is mentally inconceivable for God to do unjust and improper acts.

(23) Punishing the righteous is impermissible.

(24) Pardoning disbelief is mentally impossible; as it contradicts Wisdom, the rational mind rules it out.

(25) Prescribing the unbearable is impermissible as it contravenes the person's ability and the criterion [of belief]. This is the favored opinion of Abū ʿIsḥāq al-ʾIsfarāʾīnī and Abū Hāmid al-ʾIsfarāʾīnī.

[Acts of God]

(26) That acts of God are rationalized on the basis of Wisdom and choosing the best for creatures is a result of God's benevolence and not obligatory upon Him. This is the chosen opinion of the author of al-Maqāṣid (al-Taftāzānī) and many of their (Ashʿarī) jurists.

(27) Ambiguous statements regarding divine Attributes are accepted at face value without interpretation, while maintaining that the intended meaning is something else known only to God. This is the chosen opinion of Malik, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad bin Hanbal, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qaṭṭān and al-Qalānisī.

[Divine Attributes]

(28) Eternal inner Speech (al-kalām al-nafsī) is not heard [by humans], but only what points to it is. This is the chosen opinion of the Ustādh (ʿIsfarāʾīnī) and his followers.

(29) [Al-Kalām] al-nafis: is the eternal Word of God which is bereft of the formations of sound and letter. This is the doctrine of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf), and chosen by Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī and many of them (Ashʿarīs).

(30) Seeing (ruʾya) is a sort of spiritual vision whereby something may be seen truly or in a figurative sense. This is the opinion of Malik, al-Shāfiʿī, the Ustādh (ʿIsfarāʾīnī), and al-Ghazālī.

(31) Traditional proof (dalil naqlī) furnishes certainty if multiple proofs point to the same fact. This is the chosen opinion of the authors of al-Abkar (Sayf al-Dīn al-ʿĀmidī) and al-Maqāṣid (al-Taftāzānī).

(32) Love is doing what is praiseworthy. It is not absolute divine Will and only relates to good deeds. This is the opinion of many of them (Ashʿarīs).

[Acts of Man]

(33) Effect of man's power (istitāʿa) alternates between two opposites (good and evil). Chosen by many of them (Ashʿarīs).

(34) Man's choice (*ikhtiyār*) affects the description of the act and not its coming into existence. (35) Man's two-sided effective powers are [his] acquisition (*kasb*) not simultaneous occurrence of man's acts without any effectual powers. This is the opinion of al-Bāqillānī as stated in the *Mawāqif*; and the opinion of the Salaf as stated in Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa*. It is also the favored opinion of Abū 'Isḥāq al-'Isfarā'īnī and the last opinion of Imām al-Ḥaramayn (al-Juwaynī) – (36) that man's choice affects the creation of the act with divine aid, because the two powers of man would have to be equal.

[Belief]

(37) Faith (*imān*) does not increase of decrease – i.e. assent to the point of certainty. The chosen opinion of Imām al-Haramyn, al-Rāzī, al-'Āmidī, and al-Nawawi.
(38) That people's faith differs in terms of strength and weakness is not doubtable because as far as assent is concerned it relates to "knowledge" which is a criterion of belief. This is the chosen opinion of Ashʿarī (according to one report), al-Bāqillānī, and many of them (Ashʿarīs).
(39) Divergence over the substance of faith in the early period of Islam refers to increase and decrease. But, in subsequent centuries it refers to qualitative aspects in the sense of enlightenment and prolonged manifestation of the fruits of faith.
(40) Faith of a person living afar from civilization is sound though it is founded on emulation. This is the opinion of Malik, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad bin Hanbal, al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qaṭṭān, al-Karābīsī, and al-Qalānisī.
(41) Exception in faith which alludes to doubt even if it relates to the fruits of faith [is unacceptable]. This is the favored opinion of al-Bāqillānī, al-'Ustādh, and Ibn Mujāhid.

[Other Disputes]

(42) The wretched may become felicitous and vice versa. Chosen by al-Bāqillānī.
(43) Sustenance (*rizq*) to the disbeliever is a blessing by God.
(44) Repentance which is the result of desperation (*ya's*) is acceptable. This is favored by many of them (Ashʿarīs).

[Prophethood]

(45) Prophets do not commit minor sins by mindful intention, and they are absolutely infallible from committing major sins. This is the opinion of the 'Ustādh; [the Ashʿarī] al-Nawawi said: this is the doctrine of verifying theologians and traditionalists.
(46) Masculinity is a criterion of prophethood. Chosen by many of them.

[Other Disputes]

(47) The *mujtahid* is prone to error, and truth is one in the sight of God. This is the favored opinion of al-Muḥāsibī, al-Qattan, the 'Ustādh Abū 'Isḥāq, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, and many of them (Ashʿarīs).
(48) Leadership of the Community (*Imāmah*) by the second-best person (*al-mafḍūl*) is acceptable. Chosen by al-Bāqillānī and many of them (Ashʿarīs).
(49) Death occurs by the [divine] creation of egress of the soul from the body. [Death is] not discontinuation of existence so that death is [an] existential [phenomenon]. This is also the opinion of al-Qalānisī.
(50) Accidents are not resurrected. Also the chosen opinion of al-Qalānisī and is one opinion attributed to Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī.[613]

---

[613] Bayāḍīzādah, pp.53-56.

#### 4.4.1.5 Analysis

Bayāḍīzādah's extensive defense of Māturīdī theology comprised at the same time one of the most comprehensive discussions of the Controversies since classical Māturīdism. His persistent preoccupation with the school of Ashʿarī by way of vindicating Māturīdī doctrines reminisces early Māturīdī writings; a prominent example from the end of the fifth/eleventh century is Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī whose *Tabṣira* (discussed in Chapters I and II) displays a reaction against the hegemony of Ashʿarī thought as the foremost doctrine of Sunnism. When Bayāḍīzādah composed the *Ishārāt* – nearly six centuries later – Ashʿarī theology was again the predominant doctrine of Sunnism having pioneered (particularly after Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī) the post-Classical "philosophical turn" in Sunnī *kalām* and the subsequent "paradigm of verification". As seen in the course of this chapter, prominent Rūmī-Ottoman Ḥanafī contributions to Muslim theology towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century were increasingly interested in preserving the "Māturīdī" character of their doctrine. But, such accounts were clearly lacking in terms of scope and methodical structure. Bayāḍīzādah considered defending the Māturīdī doctrine while trivializing the disputes with Ashʿarism an unfortunate anachronism; according to him, sound "verification" of opinions does not mean finding compromise, lukewarm solutions (as is the case in common contemporary Ashʿarism) but in propounding one opinion (i.e. Ḥanafī-Māturīdī) on a particular dispute as true.

A central feature of Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* is its thoroughly systematic nature. His "fifty disputes" between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism is unprecedented in Muslim theology. In refuting Ashʿarī accounts on the Disputes, in which they are normally defined as either few in number or unreal and verbal, Bayāḍīzādah subdivides all-embracing disputed doctrines between the two schools into numerous minor problems – each one of them constituting a worthwhile theological argument. Bayāḍīzādah's care to point out that his "fifty problems" are between the "Common Majority" (*jumhūr*) of the two schools serves in defining a "Common Māturīdī doctrine" against Ashʿarism. Furthermore, Bayāḍīzādah's use of "*Jumhūr*" terminology concurrently paints common Māturīdī theology as unified upon juxtaposition with Ashʿarism. Many Ashʿarī doctrines in Bayāḍīzādah's disputes are said to be in agreement with Māturīdism, including: *nine* opinions of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī

168

himself,[614] and *fourteen* opinions attributed to "many Ashʿarīs".[615] The *Ishārāt* also abounds with references to other divergences within Ashʿarism whereby opinions of prominent Ashʿarī masters, especially al-Bāqillānī, ʿIsfarāʾīnī, al-Juwaynī and al-Rāzī (among others), are presented as in line with common Māturīdism.[616] Bayāḍīzādah's systematic approach to the disputes is further demonstrated in his attempt – to the best of his ability – to group the disputes according to a thematic logic. This, again, is unprecedented in the disputes literature until Bayāḍīzādah's time, and it would become a template for future works in this genre of scholarship. As shown above, the fifty problems begin with ontology and epistemology; followed by a grouping of problems related to Good and Evil, and Divine Acts and Attributes. Bayāḍīzādah follows with disputes on the acts of man and belief, and finishing with miscellaneous problems which are left to the end.

Bayāḍīzādah left a powerful influence in terms of canonizing post-Classical Māturīdism, and defining the limits of the relation of the Māturīdī school vis-à-vis Ashʿarism. His masterwork *Ishārāt al-marām* was promptly noticed by contemporaries as a primary source of Māturīdī *Kalām,* and no doubt it would become a standard textbook for later Ottoman literature (especially during the twelfth/eighteenth century) on Māturīdism in general, and the Controversies in particular, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

---

[614] They are: that existence and necessity the essence of divine Self (Bayāḍīzādah, p.53); that eternal inner Speech is free of sound and letter formations (p.55); assent in belief as knowledge (ibid); accidents are not resurrected (p.56); reason and knowledge as identical (p.78); existence as not additional to divine Self (p.94); that divine Will does not include Pleasure and Love (p.159); that Moses heard eternal inner Speech without material formations (p.182); and, that ambiguous revealed injunctions are not interpretable (p.191).

[615] The name and nominatum (p.53); being as continual existnece (ibid); cognition of hearing and seeing without a sense (ibid); the mind is not necessary knowledge (ibid); eternal inner Speech (p.55); love relates to praiseworhty acts not absolute Will (ibid); power as effective in two opposite directions (ibid); assent as knowledge (ibid); repentance of the helpless (p.56); masculinity as criterion of Prophethood (ibid); the *mujtahid* errs sometimes (ibid); leadership of the second-best (ibid); unbounded number of divine names (p.116); existence is not an additional attribute (p.123).

[616] For example, al-Bāqillānī agrees with Māturīdī over the impossibility to see God in a dream (p.210). ʿIsfarāʾīnī (the Ustad) is said to agree with Māturīdī over necessity of reasoning in knowing God (p.84), the attribute of Hearing (pp.182-183), interpretation of ambiguous statements (p.188), prescribing the unbearable (p.249), and his agreement with the "verifying Māturīdīs" over the infalibility of Prophets (p.319). As for al-Juwayni, he is reported to agree with Māturīdism over: prescribing the unbearable (p.249). Furthermore, three opinions attributed to "early Ashʿarīs" are deemed identical with common Māturīdism, they are: use of traditional proofs (pp.46 and 55), that the sort of punishment and reward in the hearafter is known through traditional proof (p.54), and abrogation of the thing whose good or evil is incontenstable (ibid).

## 4.5 Conclusion: Reclaiming Māturīdism in Ottoman Ḥanafism

This chapter attempted to trace the changing doctrinal face of Ottoman theological scholarship following the Classical period discussed in the pervious chapter. This "change" is manifested in the growing interest in sound and orthodox Sunnī creed in concord with the legal school of Abū Ḥanīfa. The hegemony of later Ashʿarism which left strong marks on the content and nature of Ottoman theological inquiry during the classical period (until the end of the tenth/sixteenth century) begins to wane in the following century. We saw a gradual increase of interest in the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as the foremost source of Ḥanafī *Kalām* – a stark feature of the theology of eminent scholar al-Birkawī. But, al-Birkawī does not heed to doctrinal affiliation. Although he largely vindicates Māturīdī doctrines, neither Māturīdism nor Ashʿarism are mentioned in any of his extant works. Shortly after, "Māturīdism" and its derivatives appears more conspicuously as a sectarian nomenclature in the writing of celebrated Ottoman theologian Ḥasan al-Ākhiṣārī who wrote his magnum opus *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* following an encounter at Mecca with Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī's *Book of Monotheism.* Nevertheless, Ākhiṣārī takes a minimalist approach to the Disputes, and they do not constitute a central inquiry in his works. Other Ottoman discussions on the Disputes take a similar line of inquiry, and bear strong echoes of the Ashʿarī attitude towards the Disputes which is marked by their view that they are trivial and merely differences of expression with no genuine philosophical weight. This attitude reaches a climax among prominent Ashʿarīs of the eleventh/seventeenth century; a glaring example is Yahya al-Shāwī's *Qurrat al-ayn* in which he advocates that the disagreements with Māturīdism over twenty-one problems to be frivolous and theologically insignificant. In the face of this intellectual milieu, an Ottoman scholar from the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century by the name of Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah of Istanbul writes his highly influential *Ishārāt al-marām* (also written in Mecca and includes a rare direct reference to Māturīdī's *Book of Monotheism*) which is intended to fill the gap in Māturīdī scholarship – in particular, its relation to the later Ashʿarī tradition. Bayāḍīzādah's work is perhaps the most extensive text of strictly Māturīdī *kalām* since the writings of classical Transoxanian pioneers of the school. The disputes with Ashʿarī are now many in number (fifty problems) and each is to be treated as a doctrine with unavoidable philosophical repercussions. Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* would become a standard reference for later Māturīdī works, especially the – chiefly Rūmī-Ottoman – heyday of Controversies theological scholarship during the twelfth/eighteenth century.

CHAPTER FIVE


THE DEBATES BETWEEN ASHʿARISM AND MĀTURĪDISM AS
A PROMINENT GENRE OF LATE OTTOMAN THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE
(TWELFTH/EIGHTEENTH – THIRTEENTH/NINETEENTH CENTURY)

## 5.1 Introduction

Throughout the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries, the controversies between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism emerge as the theme of a sizable body of *kalām* literature produced in the Ottoman intellectual milieu. A comprehensive bibliographical survey of manuscript collections (with special focus on the libraries in Turkey) conducted for this study has led to the discovery of over forty titles – variable in size and scope – solely dedicated to the Controversies, in the form of comparative theological studies juxtaposing the two schools. The literature also includes books and short epistles on particular problems which by definition entail venturing into other relevant doctrines. A commonly debated argument centers on the problems of human choice (*ikhtiyār*) and divine predestination (*qadar*). This chapter provides a descriptive bibliographical survey of chief texts belonging to this genre, including relevant biographical information on the authors. It will also discuss further contributions to this genre from other thriving centers of learning in the neighboring Arab east (including Damascus, Baghdād, Cairo, Mecca, and Madīna). Ways in which this body of literature may be interpreted and analyzed will be discussed in Section Three of this chapter.

## 5.2 Ashʿarī-Māturīdī Debates (twelfth/eighteenth – thirteenth/nineteenth century): a Biobibliographical Survey

Full analysis of the presence of the Controversies as a "prominent theme" in Ottoman scholarship would require intertextual analysis of a wide range of scholarly literature – not least in *kalām* books, but it would extend to a wider scope of texts from legal, traditional and other rational disciplines. Nevertheless, the steady stream of incoming titles observable throughout the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries is certainly indicative of the extent to which critical relation between the two schools constituted a major theological concern.

As will be shown below, a number of works were composed on the Controversies by eminent Ottoman scholars who flourished predominantly in al-Rūm (Anatolia and the Balkans). These works were in the form of Compendia of the disputes – i.e. they take a universal approach by attempting to delineate the full breadth of the disputation in the form of comparative doctrinal discussions. However, the later Ottoman consolidation of the two schools of Sunnī orthodoxy took place over particular problems too; most notably, the problem of human choice and predestination which prompted the authorship of numerous titles by various prominent Ottoman scholars.

The theological strife surrounding the problems of free will, human choice and divine predestination has been described by notable Muslim theologians as among the most subtle debates in *kalām*.[617] In Ottoman theological discourses, the problem was brought to light in tandem with the growing interest in the Controversies during the eleventh/seventeenth century (see Chapter IV), but reached unprecedented profusion during the twelfth/eighteenth century. A leading source on this debate came from Birkawī – in particular a statement from his masterwork *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*. Birkawī sought to define the Ḥanafī position on the relation between human free will and divine predestination in the following words:

> We (humans) cannot defy what is ordained by God; if good deeds are ordained for us – including our striving (*sa'y*) and intent (*qasd*) – then, they will inevitably occur. If God had not ordained (human deeds), then they would not possibly occur. We are compelled by God (*majburun*) to act and abstain from action. So, leave behind the senseless chatter, and proclaim that God, though He is the Creator of all human and non-human acts – verily there is no Creator but He – but, humans have particular choices (*ikhtiyārāt juz'iyya*) and inner wills (*irādat qalbiyya*) that are inclined to either of the opposites: good and evil. These (particular choices and inner wills) have no external existence of their own so that they would have to be created.[618]

These words attempt to define a counter-doctrine to Ash'arī's *kasb* (acquisition) – which would develop into a concept known as *al-'Ikhtiyār al-juz'y* (Particular Human Choice) or *al-Irāda al-Juz'iyya* (Particular Will).[619] Indeed, the idea predates Birkawī. Traces of the concept are found in classical Māturīdism, and the terminology is also found in earlier Ottoman writings (the term *al-'Ikhtiyār al-Juz'y* is explicitly stated by Khayālī in his *Commentary* on

---

[617] See sections 2.4 and 3.3 above.
[618] Birkawī, *Ṭarīqa,* pp.59-60.
[619] For a study of Birkawī's influence on the Ottoman disourse of free choice and predestination see: Bruckmayr, Philipp "The Particular Will (*al-irādat al-juz'iyya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in *Kalām* Terminology on Human Agency and its Position in Naqshabandi Discourse" *European Journal of Turkish Studies,* Vol 13, 2011.

Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya*).[620] Ottoman scholars writing on the Controversies in the twelfth/eighteenth century were already aware of the infamous problematic of the theory of *kasb*; for example, Mastjizādah and Shaykhzādah both quote the common proverb "'*adaqqu min kasb al-'Ash'arī*" – meaning: "more subtle than Ash'arī's theory of acquisition" – which is used to describe the ambiguity of a given problem. Another aspect of this mode of scholarship concerning the Disputes is the divide among prominent Ash'arī masters over this doctrine, and the subsequent concept overlap. Ottoman Māturīdīs who engaged with the problem sought to disentangle the interrelation and seeming sameness between the Ash'arī and Māturīdī doctrines.[621]

Below is a list (in chronological order) of twenty-seven Rūmī Ottoman scholars who contributed to this literature with relevant bibliographical information on texts, spanning the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.

### 5.2.1    *Rūmī Ottoman Contributions*

### 5.2.1.1 'Abd al-Rahīm Shaykhzādah (d. 1137/1724)

Shaykhzādah is the author of a widely-disseminated work on the Controversies entitled *Naẓm al-farā'id wa jam' al-fawa'id* (Assembling Peculiarities and Collecting Points of Benefit). Despite the book's popularity (printed in Istanbul in 1288/1871, and in Cairo in 1317/1899 and 1323/1905), it was erroneously attributed to an Ottoman scholar bearing the same name who died in 944/1537.[622] But, the fact the book cites works that were composed over one hundred years later evidently invalidates this attribution. We know the correct death date of the author through Bursali Mehmed Ṭāhir (d. 1925) who notes in his biographical encyclopedia of Ottoman authors – *Osmanli Müellifleri* – that the specified work was composed by a scholar who died in 1137/1724; however, no further information on the author is provided.[623]

---

[620] Khayālī, *Sharḥ al-Nuniyya* [printed in the margin of Karsî, Dāwūd *Sharḥ al-qasida al-Nuniyya*], p.59. It is possible that Khayālī is the first to coin this term.

[621] Among the earliest Ottoman works dedicated to this problem is a one-page epistle, *fi al-ihtimalat al-waqi'a fi af'al al-'ibād* (the possible opinions concerning the acts of man), by Ḥanafī teacher Mûsâ Efendî Behlavanî b. Abd-Allâh Tôkâtî (d. 1133/1721). He says: 'uncertainty follows over whether the Ḥanafī sect is in agreement with Ash'arī over this problem or with the Ustādh ('Isfarā'īnī).' Tokati then states that the Māturīdī doctrine (as articulated in Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa*) is the best formulation on the problem (Mûsâ Efendî Behlavanî Tôkâtî *Risâle fî Beyânit-İhtimalatil-Vakıatı min Efalil-İbâd,* Diyarbakır İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 21 Hk 801/18, fols.208a-208b).

[622] His name is Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ali b. al-Mu'ayyad of Amasya, an Ottoman Ṣūfī (*Hadiyya*, v.1, p.563). This wrong assertion is emulated by Khayr al-Dīn al-Zirikly in *al-A'lām*, v.3, p.347.

[623] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.334, fn.1.

Shaykhzādah's *Naẓm al-farā'id* is a lucid and relatively extensive investigation of the Controversies. Shaykhzādah exclaims in the outset of his book at the labyrinthine nature of this topic which, according to him, had long been scattered in formidable *Kalām* classics. As such, *Naẓm al-farā'id* is intended to be a balanced delineation of arguments by both schools as relates to forty disputed doctrines between Ash'arism and Māturīdism. Shaykhzādah notes that he was encouraged to compose the present book having had access to "superior libraries",[624] which is reflected in the wide-range of cited sources therein.[625] All in all, *Naẓm al-farā'id* is more concerned with defining and justifying the Ḥanafi-Māturīdī position vis-à-vis Ash'arism. The influence of Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt al-marām* – which Shaykhzādah frequently refers to[626] – is indisputable. This is starkly manifested in the fact *Naẓm al-farā'id* addresses forty controversies between the "majority scholars" (*jumhur*) of the two schools. Shaykhzādah seems to have been a champion of Bayāḍīzādah (and possibly a student of his), who he reverently titles 'Judge of the Judges' (*qāḍī al-qudat*).[627] Shaykhzādah even mentions a commentary composed by him on an abridgement of Bayāḍīzādah's masterwork the *Ishārāt*.[628]

Given that *Naẓm al-farā'id* is a work dedicated to the Controversies, its discussions are concise and more focused than Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt*. Thematically, it is an improvement on the latter; Shaykhzādah outlines forty disputed doctrines between Ash'arism and Māturīdism in the following way:

> **Ontology:** (1) on the definition of Necessity; (2) is Necessity a non-entity? (3) is Existence something additional to Essence? (4) is [the essential attribute of] Perpetuity [*baqa'*] identical with Existence?
>
> **Divine Attributes:** (5) on the definition of the attribute of Power; (6) is the attribute of Will inclusive of love and pleasure? (7) on the attributes of Hearing and Seeing; (8) on the attribute of Speech; (9) is eternal inner Speech [*Kalām nafsī*] heard? (10) on the attribute of

---

[624] Shaykhzādah, Abd al-Raḥīm b. Ali *Naẓm al-farā'id wa jam' al-fawā'id* (edited by Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Na'sani)*,* Cairo: Matba'at al-Taqaddum, 1323/1905, p.3.

[625] Shaykhzādah's bibliography is predeominantly theological. It includes one reference to Māturīdī's *Book of Monotheism* (p.20), and numerous citations from Māturīdī's *Ta'wīlāt* (pp.17, 22, 23, 26, 40, 41, 47, 49, 50, 52, 59, 60, and 71). Some opinions of Māturīdī are copied from other works; such as: Qunawi's *Commentary* on the *Creed* of Ṭaḥāwī (p.33), and Laqānī's *Commentary* on *Jawharat al-tawḥīd* (p.55). Ottoman works cited include Khayālī's *Commentary* on Khiḍr-Beg's *Nuniyya* (p.46); Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* (p.77); and Birkawī's *Forty Prophetic Traditions* (p.63). Shaykhzādah quotes from two commentaries on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa*: al-Wasīla al-Aḥmadiyya of Rajab b. Aḥmad (p.77), and Khojazādah's *Commentary* (p.78). Ibn Kamāl Pasha's works are quoted more often than other Classical Ottoman scholars, including: Ibn Kamāl Pasha's *Tafsīr* (p.28); his work on principles of jurisprudence, *Taghyīr al-tanqīḥ,* (pp.31 and 77), and his *Risāla on Jabr and Qadar* (p.29).

[626] Shaykhzādah, pp.9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 23, 32, 51, 56, 66, 67, 72, and 80.

[627] Biographical sources on Bayāḍīzādah do not mention that he occupied this prestegious position.

[628] Entitled *Tahdhīb al-Ishārāt.* See Shaykhzādah, pp.17 and 19.

*takwīn*; (11) is the creation of beings a concomitant of the Divine utterance: "Be" [*kun*]? (12) is the name identical with the nominatum?

***Acts of God:*** (13) on the meaning of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*; (14) on the ambiguous statements of scripture [*fī al-mutaṣhābihat*]; (15) on felicity [*tawfīq*]; (16) on the imposition of an impossible task; (17) on the necessity of Wisdom in the acts of God; (18) is Wisdom is an eternal attribute of the Exalted God or not?; (19) is non-deliverance on threat of punishment (*wa'īd*) appropriate for God?; (20) does God do no evil?; (21) is forgiveness of disbelief rationally possible?; (22) on rational recognition of good and evil.

***Faith:*** (23) is belief made obligatory by reason?; (24) on the ultimate true meaning (*ḥaqīqa*) of faith; (25) is faith subject to increase or decrease?; (26) is faith of the emulator [*muqallid*] valid?; (27) do traditional proofs [*dalā'il naqliyya*] furnish certainty? (28) is faith created? (29) are faith [*imān*] and religion [*Islam*] one and the same? (30) merits of faith only count at the end of one's life; (31) does man's ultimate happiness and wretchedness change during his life?; (32) on exception in faith.

***Prophethood:*** (33) do Messengers and Prophets continue being Messengers and Prophets after their death?; (34) is masculinity a criterion of Prophethood? (35) are righteous laymen [*'awām al-bashar*] better than the angels in general [*'āmmat al-mala'ika*]?

***Acts of Man:*** (36) is actual power effective in two opposite ways?; (37) is man's power effective? (38) is occurrence of the act [*iyqa'*] a definable state or pure nothingness [*ma'dūm maḥḍ*]? (39) are good deeds salvageable by repentance following renegation of faith? (40) are non-believers punished for neglecting the obligations and duties [of religion]?

## 5.2.1.2 Muḥammad Sachalizādah (d. 1145/1732)

Muḥammad b. Ebi Bakr, better known as Sachalizādah (d. 1145/1732), was a renowned scholar from Mar'ash (a town near the modern Turkish border with Syria).[629] He mastered a wide-range of scholarly disciplines and studied under prominent sheykhs – including eminent Damascene scholar and mystic 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (discussed below), who granted him an *ijaza* in the Ṣūfī order.[630] Sachalizādah, thereafter, emerged as a popular teacher with a large following of students, as well as a prolific author; writing over thirty three different volume on a variety of subjects, including a number of critically-acclaimed works in *kalām.*

Sachalizādah's attitude towards the Controversies and the Māturīdī school was – unlike many fellow Rūmī Ottoman scholars – largely informed by Ash'arī theology. This is shown in his *Risāla fi al-ikhtiyār al-juz'ī* (Epistle on Particular Choice), which appears to be

---

[629] On the biography of Sachalizādah see: *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.325-327; *al-A'lām,* v.6, p.60; M. al-Sayyid Ahamd's Introduction to Sachalizādah, Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr al-Mar'ashi *Tartīb al-'Ulūm* (edited by Mumammad b. Ismail al-Sayyid Aḥmad), Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyya, 1988, pp.51-56.
[630] Nābulusī was a master of Naqshabandī and Qādirī orders, and it is possible he offered Sachalizādah *ijāza* in both.

composed by the early Sachalizādah. The problem of human agency is described in the opening words as 'an inquiry besieged by darkness.'[631] Sachalizādah attempts to provide an explanation to Birkawī's famous statement on the problem of human choice from his *Ṭarīqa*. Ultimately, he admonishes Birkawī's Māturīdī theory of "particular choice", and exposes inconsistencies in his argument. Nevertheless, Sachalizādah apologizes for him saying: 'to give Birkawī the benefit of the doubt, he must have written these words while engaged with other grave matters which came in the way of him pondering on what he had written.'[632] Sachalizādah's little concern with the Controversies speaks of his indifference to doctrinal affiliation with the school of Māturīdī whose name is entirely missing from Sachalizādah's *Risāla.*

### 5.2.1.3  'Abd Allāh Mastjizādah (d. 1150/1737)

A prominent book which reflects the early twelfth/eighteenth century Ottoman interest in the Māturīdī doctrine and its place in view of other schools of thought is *al-Masālik fi al-khilāfiyyāt bayna al-mutakallimīn wa al-ḥukamā'* (the Passages: on the Disputations between the Theologians and the Philosophers) by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. 'Uthmān Mastjizādah (d. 1150/1737). Mastjizādah led a successful scholarly career  as a teacher and judge in the Ottoman religious establishment.[633] His interests in theology were curiously diverse; he reportedly wrote annotations on Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Rushd (Averroes),[634] in addition to a *Risāla* on Good and Evil.[635] He also had a wider interest in intellectual disputation in the general sense – as shown from his work on the disagreements between al-Sayyid al-Jurjānī and al-Sa'd al-Taftāzānī (in Linguistics).[636]

---

[631] Sachalizādah, Muḥammad b. Ebi Bekr *Risāla fi al-Ikhtiyār al-Juz'y,* Milli Kütüphane-Ankara - Ankara Adnan Ötüken İl Halk Kütüphanesi Collection, MS.06 Hk 2219, fols.57a-59b.

[632] Sachalizādah, *Risāla fil al-Ikhtiyār,* fol.59b.

[633] As a teacher, he taught at different schools in Edirne, Yarḥiṣār and Istanbul before becoming teacher at one of the pristegious at Suleymaniye madrasas in Istanbul – a position he occupied between 1121/1709 and 1130/1718. After that, he served as teacher and judge at Slanik in the Balkans (1130/1718 – 1138/1726). Mastjizādah's success as a judge contined, leading to his appointment as judge at Istanbul (1145/1733), Judge of Anatolia (1146/1733), and culminating in the position of Kazasker of Anatolia, which he filled for a few months before he died in 1150/1737 (see, Seyit Bahgivan's "Introduction" to Mastjizādah, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Uthmān *al-Masālik fi al-khilāfiyyat bayna al-mutakallimīn wa al-hukama'* [edited by Seyit Bahgivan], Beirut: Dar Sader, 2007, pp.10-12). A short biography of Mastjizādah is also found in *Osmanli Müellifleri ,* v.2, pp.27-28.

[634] His annotations (*ta'līqāt*) on Ibn Taymiyya's *Minhāj al-Sunna* is preserved at Suleymaniye Aşir Efendi MS.559, and on Ibn Rushd's *Manāhij al-adilla* in Konya Yūsuf Aga MS.449 (Bahgivan in Mastjizādah, p.14). Bahgivan lists sixteen different work by Mastjizādah covering theology, logic, linguistics, *tafsīr, ḥādīth,* and Sufism (pp.13-17)

[635] Bahgivan in Mastjizādah, p.15.

[636] Printed by Maktab Sanayi' Matba'asi (Istanbul) in 1278/1862 and again in 1313/1896 (Bahgivan in Mastjizādah, p.13).

Mastjizādah composed the *Masālik* during the early years of his scholarly life – he wrote it in the year 1113/1702 and produced a final edited version of it in 1118/1706.[637] This work is unique in different ways. Although the *Masālik*'s central emphasis is the points of difference between Ash'arism and Māturīdism (it was famed as such as gleaned from the title given to it in extant manuscript copies), the book is much more than that. It attempts to map the complex overlap and divide between much of the opinions and doctrines of the philosophers and the Mu'tazilah in relation to the Sunnī doctrine of Ash'arism and Māturīdism. Furthermore, the *Masālik* follows a chronological sequence in the delineation of doctrines; thus, the book is divided into the following Sections (named *Masālik*, sin. *maslak*, meaning passage or opening):

> *Section I:* The opinions (*Maqālāt*) of the Philosophers in opposition to the Majority (*jumhūr*) of Theologians (51 doctrine)
>
> *Section II:* The rebuttals of the Majority of Theologians in opposition to the Philosophers (58 doctrine)
>
> *Section III:* Doctrines over which the Philosophers and Theologians are in agreement (21 doctrine)
>
> *Section IV:* The doctrines of the Mu'tazilah that are opposed to the Ash'arīs (129 doctrine)
>
> *Section V:* Ash'arī rebuttals of the aforementioned doctrines of the Mu'tazilah (123 doctrine)
>
> *Section VI:* Doctrines over which the Ash'arīs and Mu'tazilah are in agreement (36 doctrine)
>
> *Section VII:* Māturīdī doctrines opposed to the majority of the Ash'arīs (59 doctrine)
>
> *Section VIII:* Ash'arī rebuttals of the doctrines of the majority of Māturīdīs (52 doctrine)
>
> *Section IX:* Doctrines over which the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs are in agreement (65 doctrine)

Mastjizādah grounds his extensive analysis of the disputes between Ash'arism and Māturīdism in earlier controversies that appeared in Islamic history. Each disputed doctrine is traced to its origin along a historical continuum – which Mastjizādah explains in detail in the Introduction and Conclusion of the *Masālik.* He begins with the doctrines of Muslim philosophers (who appear following the translation movement under early 'Abbāsids in the 2nd/8th century) whose un-Islamic views were opposed by the Mu'tazilah (the earliest form of systematic theology in Islam). Because the latter – in their bid to refute the Muslim philosophers – became increasingly rational (i.e. distanced from the revealed-sources of

---

[637] Mastjizādah, p.26.

religion), they were opposed by Sunnī theologian. Foremost among them is Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī and his followers. Interestingly, while Mastjizādah outlines a staggering 123 doctrine of Mu'tazilah which are refuted by the Ash'arīs, he also cites 36 opinions over which the Ash'arīs and Mu'tazilah are in broad agreement.[638]

Mastjizādah's favourable incline to Māturīdism is shown in the fact he passes over in silence the latter's agreements with the Mu'tazilah (as would probably be pursued by an Ash'arī). In view of this, although Ash'arism and Māturīdism represent the sound doctrine of Sunnism, they differ over numerous doctrines that need to be highlighted. Mastjizādah exclaims at the prevalence of Ash'arī theology among the Ḥanafīs of his time in the concluding words to his introduction to the *Masālik*; he writes:

> In the plentiful and far-reaching regions of India (*bilād al-Hind*) and the plentiful and far-reaching regions of al-Rūm (Anatolia and the Balkans), and although they are predominately Ḥanafīs, the popular and widely-circulated [theological texts] are the theological books of the Ash'arīs, such as: *al-'Abkār* of al-'Āmidī, *Nihayat al-'uqūl* and *al-Arba'īn* of the Imām (al-Rāzī), *al-Mawāqif* and *al-Maqāṣid* and their *Commentaries.* As for the theological books of the Ḥanafīs – though abundant and ranging between long and short, abstract and detailed – none of them gained wide recognition in those lands except for short summaries such as: *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, the *Lāmiyya* of al-Oshī and the *Creed* of al-Nasafī.[639]

These words succinctly describe what the Ottoman Ḥanafī theologians saw as the inherent contradiction when followers of the legal school of Abū Ḥanīfa espouse the doctrines of Ash'arīs – a theology historically entwined with the theoretical paradigms of Shāfi'ī and Mālikī schools of law. The anachronism brought about by this historical negligence of the theology of al-Māturīdī among post-Classical Ḥanafī theologians was viewed by later Ottoman Ḥanafīs as an error of time which calls for a reassessment. Hence, preserving the "Ḥanafī" identity of theology through emphasis (and to an extent "revival") of Māturīdī theology became a prominent theme in Ottoman theological writings during the twelfth/eighteenth century leading to the formation of a genre of non-heretical theological

---

[638] Mastjizādah said the following about philosophical *Kalām*'s foremost advocate, Nasīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī: 'it is a marvel of marvels that the man who they call "the *muhaqqiq* al-Ṭūsī" (i.e. the erudite Ṭūsī) was initially among the missionaries of Ismailism, promoter of their secret doctrines (*amanatihim*), explicator of their arguments and proofs – indeed, he was among their *Imāms* to whom they refer on their common beliefs. He won the favour of their chief master (*ra'isuhum*) and close to him – he composed for him the *al-AKhalq al-Nasirī* and the prelude (*dibaja*) is in line with their invalid fundamentals, and corrupt principles. But, when their rulership (dawlatahum) turned upside down, and were indiscriminately massacred at the hands of Hulagu-Khān. But, when he (Ṭūsī) joined Hulagu-Khān and gained his confidence, he began to disown them and their doctrine, and set out to vilify and expose their pitfall and ugliness [...] I do not think he followed anything in that but the way of men of licentiousness (*ahl al-ibaha*): that the victor inherits the world (*al-dunya li-man ghalab*)' (Mastjizādah, pp.212-213.

[639] Mastjizādah, p.52.

disputes, as will be further shown below. Mastjizādah presents an important and early example of that. A noteworthy observation concerning Mastjizādah's *Masālik* is its reliance on Classical Ashʿarī and Māturīdī texts as primary material.[640] Interestingly, unlike many volumes on the Controversies from this period, Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* enjoys no explicit citation in the *Masālik.* This was perhaps intentional as the young Mastjizādah may have sought pure originality for his earliest work. Nevertheless, in light of the content of the *Masālik,* influence of Bayāḍīzādah cannot be ruled out.

No doubt Mastjizādah's *Masālik* is a significant contribution not only to the genre of theological Controversies but to later Islamic theology in general.

### 5.2.1.4 Aḥmad al-ʿAlamī (fl. first half of twelfth/eighteenth c.)

A noteworthy contribution to the debate from the first half of the twelfth/eighteenth century is the *Qaṣīda fī al-khilāf* (Didactic Poem on the Controversies) with commentary by an Ottoman teacher at Gebze (a town east of Istanbul) named Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl al-ʿAlamī al-Trabzoni[641] (preserved in Konya Provincial Public Library). Standard biographical sources provide no information on the author. But, we learn from the present work that al-ʿAlamī was a student of Istanbul-based preacher Sulaymān Fāḍil al-Rūmī (d. 1134/1721)[642] and that he composed the *Qaṣīda* during his teacher's lifetime.[643] Indeed, Fāḍil al-Rūmī may have been the inspiration for al-ʿAlamī's interest in the Controversies; he notes in the preamble to the *Qaṣīda* that Fāḍil a-Rūmī had addressed this topic in the latter's celebrated *Commentary* on Taftāzānī's *Tahdhīb al-kalām.*[644]

---

[640] His primary sources on Māturīdism include: the *Tabṣira* of Abū l-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115); the *Bidāya* and its commentary (*al-Kifaya*) of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī of Bukhārā (d. 580/1184); *al-ʿUmda* and *Iʿtimād* of Ḥāfiẓ al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310); and the *Ṣaḥāʾif* of Ashraf al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. after 690/1291). His Ashʿarī sources include: al-Abkār of al-Āmidī (d. 631/1234); and *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* by al-Jurjānī and al-Taftāzānī respectively (see Bahgivan in Mastjizādah, pp.27-28).
[641] The entry on him in *Karabulut,* p.204, is as follows: 'Aḥmad b. Ismaʿīl Abū al-Khayr al-Rūmī al-ʿUthmānī, better known as al-ʿAlamī. Died after 1112/1700'. He attributes to him a Turkish commentary on *Qaṣida al-munfarija* – a literary poem by famous scholar from al-Maghreb Yūsuf Ibn al-Naḥwī (d. 513 – 1119).
[642] *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.403.
[643] Al-ʿAlamī refers to him as 'our shaykh the virtuous (*al-fazil*), the austere (*al-Zāhid*), the erudite scholar (*al-allama*) Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Qasṭanṭīnī, *Sallamahu Allah* (may God protect him)'. See, al-ʿAlamī, Ismail b. Aḥmad al-Trabzoni *Qasida fi al-khilāf,* Konya İl Halk Kütüphanesi, BY9434, fol.76b.
[644] Various manuscript copies of it are available in Turkey, including: Süleyman Fazil b. Ahmed b. Muṣṭafa, *Haşiye ala Tehzibi'l-Kelam* Suleymaniye Çelebi Abd Allāh, MS.200. Fazi al-Rūmī's interest in the Controversies is further shown in another work of him on the problem of Verbal Speech - *Kalām lafẓī* (el-İstanbuli, Fazil *Risale fi'l-Kelami'l-Lafzı,* Suleymaniye Yazma Bağışlar MS.4140/42).

Al-ʿAlamī's work is a defense of Māturīdism. It registers that extant literature on the Controversies, including Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* – a primary source in his *Qaṣīda fī al-khilāf* – and al-Subkī's *Nūniyya,* were not sufficiently comprehensive. Indeed, the fact al-ʿAlamī chose to compose a poem on the Controversies from the Māturīdī point of view – modelled on the Ottoman Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya*[645] (particularly popular Ottoman *Creed* in the current century) – indicates that it was intended to be a rejoinder against the Ashʿarite Subkī's famous poem which had been for centuries the standard reference on the topic. Importantly, al-ʿAlamī particularly notes how, in *kalām* literature until his time, it had been commonplace for Ḥanafī theologians 'to adopt the opinion of Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī in the context of the Controversies out of the principle: "avoiding disputation" (*tark al-ʿawla*).'[646] Thus, al-ʿAlamī – by diversifying his sources and drawing on 'the reliable books of *Kalām,* Principles of Jurisprudence, Qurʾānic and *ḥadīth* commentaries'[647] – produces a list of fifty-nine disputes, outnumbering the Controversies in Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt*. Al-ʿAlamī does not strictly observe a thematic logic in his work, and majority of the Controversies therein overlap with Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt.* Nonetheless, al-ʿAlamī's work comprises a number of disputed doctrines that are not stated elsewhere.[648]

### 5.2.1.5 Muḥammad al-Qīrshahrī (d. 1165/1752)

Anthologies of the Disputes found in Turkish manuscript collections indicate a steady growth of the comparative theological literature in the second half of the twelfth/eighteenth

---

[645] Al-ʿAlamī, fol.78b. "*Nuniyya*" means the poem's rhyming finishes with the Arabic letter-sound "*Nūn*".

[646] Al-ʿAlamī, fol.77b.

[647] Ibid.

[648] (I) In the context of the Principles of Jurisprudence, al-ʿAlamī states that Māturīdīs uphold the principle that the prior judgement of all legal rulings is permissibility (*al-aṣl fī al-ashyāʾ al-ʿibaḥa*), and that this is in contradition with the Ashʿarīs who 'suspend judgement because reason has no share in knowing the rules of religion.' (Al-ʿAlamī, fol.80b). This doctrine is quoted from the Ottoman legal Commentatary by Muṣṭafa Aẓīmzādah – d. 1040/1630 (Aẓīmzādah's *ḥāshiya* on Ibn Malak's *Commentary* on the famous text of princples of Ḥanafī law *al-Manār* of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Nasafī [d. 710/1310]; see, *Kashf al-ẓunūn,* v.2, p.1823); (II) On the true nature of the human Self, al-ʿAlamī argues that al-Māturīdī contradicts the Ashʿarī view (al-ʿAlamī quotes Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashaʾriʾs *Maqālāt* and al-Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*) which rules that the human Self is nothing but the "ad hoc [physical] frame" (*haykal makhṣūṣ*). According to the Māturīdīs, the Self is an "abstract and subtle body" (al-ʿAlamī, fols.82b-83a); (III) An intersting Controversy which al-ʿAlamī extrapolates from Qurʾānic exegeses relates to whether Iblis (the Devil) was an Angel or a Demon. He quotes Abū Ḥayyan al-Andalusī's *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ,* which states that Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī ruled that the Devil was indeed an angel. For the counterargument, al-ʿAlamī cites an Ottoman *ḥāshiya* on al-Bayḍāwī's *Tafsīr* by Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykhzādah (d. 951/1544) who says: 'the majority of theologians – except the Muʿtazilah – are of the opinion that he (the Devil) was not an angel, but primarily a demon' (al-ʿAlamī, fol.90a).

century. A prominent example is the work titled *Sharḥ al-khilāfiyyāt bayna al-'Ash'arī wa al-Māturīdī* (Commentaries on the Disputations between Ash'arī and Māturīdī) by Muḥammad b. Walī al-Qīrshahrī (d. 1165/1752), who was a Ḥanafī muftī at the city of Izmir.[649] Qīrshahrī's work is among the longest of its type (extant manuscript copies of the work are between 143 and 190 folios) and presents detailed analyses of sixty-seven disputed doctrine.[650] He wrote in the preamble the following:

> [indeed,] the science of creeds (*'ilm al-'aqā'id*) is the most highly esteemed ...[religious science]; it provides robust proofs and solid explications... Books – brief and long – have been written in it. But, most of them consist of the principles (*qawā'id*) of the Ash'arīs and the vicissitudes of philosophers. Hence, I have compiled this summary (*mukhtaṣar*) encompassing the principles of our Māturīdī Masters (*A'mmatunā al-Māturīdiyya*). Then I followed it with a commentary, delineating its arguments and clarifying [some of] its ambiguities.[651]

### 5.2.1.6 Aḥmad al-Dabbāghī (d. 1165/1752)

Reflecting the intensity and wide-reaching nature of the Ash'arī-Māturīdī debate over human agency in twelfth/eighteenth century Ottoman theological discourses is a work entitled *al-Risāla al-munjiya* by the muftī and exegete of the Qur'ān Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Dabbāghī of Mar'ash (d. 1165/1752).[652] Dabbāghī urges readers to approach his *Risāla* with an alert and open mind, stating that he 'worked a whole year, day and night, to finish it'.[653] This exhaustive and detailed work attempts – much in the spirit of texts of this mode – to delineate the various opinions on the relation between human agency and divine predestination (i.e. the opinions of Ash'arīs, Mu'tazilah and Compulsionists), and to situate the Māturīdī view (as developed by Birkawī) in the constellation of these doctrines.

---

[649] *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.328; *Osmanli Müellifleri*, v.1, p.237; and *Kaḥḥale*, v.12, p.95. Al-Babani reports in the *Hadiyya* that Kirshehri's *Sharḥ al-khilāfiyyat* is prserved in Lalele library (an assertion followed by Bursali in *Osmanli Müellifleri*). If this copy is different from the two extant versions (see note below), it appears to be lost.

[650] el-Kirşehri, Muhammed b. Veli b. Resul *Şerhu'l-Hilafiyyat Beyne'l-Eş'ari ve'l-Māturīdī*, Suleymaniye Şehid Ali Paşa MS.1650, 143 fols. Another copy is preserved in Koprulu Mehmed Asım Bey MS.254 (190 folios).

[651] Kirşehri, Suleymaniye Şehid Ali Paşa MS.1650, fol.1b. Qīrshahrī then provides us with hints on the debating activity between Ash'arism and Māturīdism around the middle of the twelfth century AH. He says that after having produced the Commentary above, new ideas and subtleties occurred to him which he added to the original text, and disregarded the fact his book had already been widely-disseminated.

[652] *Osmanli Müellifleri*, v.1, p.308.

[653] Al-Dabbāghī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad *al-Risāla al-munjiya min tashni' al-Mu'tazilah wa waswasat al-Jabriyya fi madkhaliyat ikhtiyār al-'abd fi af'alihi al-'ikhtiyāriyya*, Dubai: Jum'a al-Majīd Manuscript Collection, MS.228778, 38 folios, written in 1170/1756 by Muṣṭafa b. Ḥasan, fol.2a-2b, and 37b.

### 5.2.1.7 Lubbī Muḥammad Efendi (d. 1166/1753)

Known as the Ḥāfiẓ: exegete of the Qur'ān, and Ḥanafī scholar. Acquired the title "Lubbī" after his magnum opus *Lubb al-tafāsīr* – a work in Qur'ānic sciences. He also wrote a *Risāla* on the verification (*taḥqīq*) of *irāda juz'iyya* (particular will), to disentangle the entanglements of Ash'arī and Māturīdī arguments on it.[654]

### 5.2.1.8 Muḥammad As'ad Abū Isḥāqzādah (d. 1166/1753)

A noteworthy highlight of the intensified Ottoman interest in the Controversies towards the end of the first half of the twelfth/eighteenth century is the *Risāla*[655] on the disputes between Ash'arī and Māturīdī attributed to Muḥammad As'ad b. Isma'īl Efendi, known as Abu Abū Isḥāqzādah (d. 1166/1753).[656] Esad Efendi was a prominent Ottoman scholar who became *Shaykh al-Islām* – the highest ranking religious authority in the empire. He hailed from an illustrious scholarly family (his father Abū 'Isḥāq was also *Shaykh al-Islām* and his grandfather Ibrahīm al-'Alā'ī was a celebrated Ottoman *'ālim*). As'ad Efendi's intellectual interests were diverse; in addition to the rational and religious disciplines, he was a famed as master of Turkish, an accomplished poet, and historian of music. In the context of the history of the Ottoman interest of the Disputes, As'ad Efendi's *Risāla* stands out for two reasons: the fact it is written by the highest religious authority in the empire, and – equally important – the fact it is (unlike majority of prior texts of this genre) written in Turkish, which meant it was intended for a wider scholarly readership.

### 5.2.1.9 Dāwūd al-Qarṣī (d. 1169/1755)

An influential advocate of Māturīdī theology, and whose works were widely-disseminated in the Rūmī Ottoman realm (in light of the various manuscript copies extant in Turkish libraries), is Dāwūd b. Muḥammad, better known as Dāwūd al-Qarṣī (from the northeastern Turkish town of Kars, near Armenia).[657] Qarṣī studied in Istanbul and Egypt, and was steeped in the rational sciences. He contributed to Ottoman literature in rational sciences over forty volumes – mostly in logic, *kalām,* and linguistics. However, he is specially noted for his contribution in *kalām*. Among his popular texts in the latter is a work written

---

[654] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.2, p.12.
[655] Published in Istanbul in 1287/1870 and preserved in Suleymaniye Hacı Maḥmūd Ef. No.1686 (Ebu İshak Zade, Mehmed Esad b. İsmail Efendi el-İstanbuli, *Risale fi İhtilafati'l-Matüridi ve'l-Eş'ari*, İstanbul : [publisher unknown], 1287/1870, pp.278-286).
[656] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, pp.238-239 and Muhammet Nūr Doğan "Esad Efendi, Ebûishakzâde", *TDV*, year: 1995, vol: 11,  pp. 338-340.
[657] On al-Qarṣī's biography see: *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.309; *al-A'lām*, v.2, p.334.

around the year 1159/1746 entitled *Risāla fi bayān mas'alat al-ikhtiyārāt al-juz'iyya wa al-'irādat al-qalbiyya* (Epistle on elucidating the problem of "Particular choices and Inner wills"), which– as the title indicates – is dedicated to discussing Birkawī's problematic statement from the *Ṭarīqa* on the problem of human agency.[658] Qarṣī composed this *Risāla* out of conviction that "human agency" is a serious theological inquiry deserving of great attention. He describes it as a 'pivotal problems of the Principles of Religion, and integral to the investigations of reason and tradition. Yet, it has not been explained in an independent and conclusive way in the extant books.'[659] Qarṣī expresses dissatisfaction with the arguments put forward by Ash'arīs  – by saying: 'solving this dispute on the basis it is merely verbal, as pursued by the *rationalists*, is unacceptable'[660] – and determines that the Māturīdī opinion (as articulated by Birkawī) is the 'truest intermediary position on the problem.'[661]

Qarṣī's uncompromising Māturīdism is further delineated in his commentary on Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya.*[662] This work – written towards the end of his life and would become a popular text in the field (published in Istanbul in 1318/1900) – abounds with critical responses to Ash'arī doctrines.[663] Interestingly, Qarṣī supplants the commentary with a Turkish translation of Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya.* Indeed, Qarṣī seems to hold in high regard the propagation of Māturīdism to wider audiences – as seen from a number of works attributed to him which were composed in Turkish.[664] That the leading source and inspiration for Qarṣī's theological program is the tradition of Birkawī is unquestionable.[665] In this view, strict Māturīdism combined with a critical attitude towards philosophical *kalām* seem to be the defining parameters of the theology of Qarṣī.[666]

---

[658] Al-Qarsi, Dāwūd b. Muḥammad *Risāla fi bayan mas'ala al-ikhtiyārāt al-guziyya wa al-irādat al-qalbiyya,* Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, Kat br.711, written in 1159/1746 by Shahri Ḥāfiẓ Ahmed ef., fols.87b-97a. The scribe Ḥāfiẓ Ahmed Efendi states that he transcribed the work from the author in person in the year 1159 AH.

[659] Karsî, *Ikhtiyārat,* fol.87b.

[660] Karsî, *Ikhtiyārat,* fol.89a.

[661] Karsî, *Ikhtiyārat,* fol.93b. Karsî in the same work denounces the Ash'arī view whereby Power (*qudra*) is the ultimate referent to *takwīn* as a 'lukewarm justification' (fol.97a). He also interestingly refers to Sa'd al-Taftāzānī as 'the grand shaykh of *ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama'a*' (fol.94a).

[662] Al-Karsî, Dāwūd b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-qasida al-Nuniyya,* Istanbul: Sharikat Sahafiyya, 1318/1900.

[663] Karsî discusses the following disputes with Ash'arī in his *Sharḥ al-Nuniyya*: rebuke of Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī's opinion that necessity is identical with essence (Karsî, *Sharḥ al-qasida*, p.13); the attribute of *takwīn* (pp.30-31, and 38); that power [*qudra*] is not the ultimate principle of creation *ex nihilo* (p.33); on felicity (p.52); good and evil (p.53); human free will and divine predestination (pp.55-58); rational necessity to know God (pp.58-59); prescribing the unbearable (p.60); faith of the emulator (p.122-123).

[664] Karsî's theological volumes composed in Turkish include: *Risāla fil al-'aqā'id* [Epistle on Creeds] (Milli Kutuphane A/4468/2); *R. fi al-Sifat al-Ilahiyya* [Epistle on Divine Attributes] (Karahisar, 18369/3, fols.48-55); *Muqaddimat al-Islam* [Introducing Islam] (Balikesir 1034/5, fols.119-123, written in 1163 AH); *al-Ma'lumat al-nafi'a* [*Risāla* on Beneficial Knowledge] (Gazi Husrev 672/9). This list is based on *Karabulut*, pp.1113-1115.

[665] Karsî composed *Commentaries* on different works of Birkawī, including (supposedly) a Turkish *Commentary* on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* (*Karabulut*, p. 1115). Interestingly, Karsî spent the latter years of his life in Birgi (near Izmir, hometown and burial place of Birkawī) where he died (*Karabulut*, p.1113).

[666] Karsî's primary sources in theology are the texts of al-Taftāzānī and al-Jurjānī, and he seldom cites works from later philosophical Ash'arīsm. Although in the context of the Sunni-Shi'i divergence, but Karsî's strongly-

### 5.2.1.10 Muḥammad Qāḍīzādah al-Ispīrī (d. 1173/1760)

Muḥammad ʿĀrif Efendi, better known as Qāḍīzādah, was a Ḥanafī jurist, theologian and astronomer from the town of Ispīr in the eastern Anatolian province of Erzurum – where he occupied the position of *muftī* for thirty years.[667] Early in his career (in the year 1130/1718), Qāḍīzādah contributed to the incessant Turkish (Rumi) Ottoman defense of Māturīdism a *Risāla* on "human agency" entitled: *Mumayizat madhhab al-Māturīdiyya ʿan al-madhāhib al-ghayriyya* (Distinctiveness of the Māturīdī Doctrine from the Doctrines of Others).[668] In this work, Qāḍīzādah seeks to disentangle the overlap between Ashʿarī's theory of *kasb* (which hinges on compulsionism by giving man no real effectual power) and the Māturīdī doctrine articulated by Birkawī (which at face-value appears to agree with aspects of Ashʿarism).[669] Qāḍīzādah's overall concern is to define the "true Māturīdī" position on the problem of human agency against Ashʿarism, and in particular Ashʿarī-influenced Ḥanafī theologians, such as the Egyptian Ibn al-Humām (discussed in Chapter II).[670] Qāḍīzādah also furnishes twelfth/eighteen century Ottoman Māturīdī literature with a *Commentary* on Ḥasan Kāfī Ākḥiṣārī's *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* – a prominent early vindication of Māturīdism in the Ottoman milieu (discussed in Chapter IV).[671]

### 5.2.1.11 Muḥammad al-Kafawī al-Āqkirmānī (d. 1174/1761)

A leading contributor to Ottoman Māturīdism – and the growing literature on the Controversies – from the early second half of the twelfth/eighteenth century is the renowned scholar and judge at Mecca Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa al-Āqkirmānī (d. 1174/1761).[672] Āqkirmānī composed around thirty seven title mostly in logic, theology, philosophy, and

---

worded deunciation of al-Ṭūsī in his *Sharḥ al-Nuniyya* –– by giving him labels such as: "cursed" and "degradant" (pp.129-130) – reveals the author's low opinion of a pioneer of philosophical *kalām* who was once highly celebrated in Ottoman scholasticism (see Chapter III).

[667] For the biography of Qāḍīzādah see: *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.333; *Kaḥḥale*, v.10, p.115; *Karabulut*, p.3475-3476.

[668] Critically edited by Edward Badeen in his *Sunnitische theologie*, pp.62-79.

[669] Qāḍīzādah says - after explaining Ashʿarī's theory of *kasb* – 'because of the ambiguity of Ashʿarī's *kasb*, it acquired proverbial meaning, as in the saying: "more ambiguous than Ashʿarī's *kasb*" [*akhfa min kasb al-'Ashʿarī*] (Badeen, *Sunnitische theologie*, p.77).

[670] Qāḍīzādah's sources in the *Mumayiza* are exclusively by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa, Taftāzānī, al-Jurjānī, Ḥasan Chelebī al-Rūmī (Ottoman scholar, and grandson of al-Fanārī, d. 886/1481 – *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.153); Ibn al-Humām, and al-Birkawī. No text of philosophical Ashʿarīsm is cited.

[671] Qāḍīzādah al-Ispīrī, Muḥammad *Şerhu Ravzati'l-Cennat*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi, no: 1269, written by the author in 1131 AH, 100 fols.

[672] *Hadiyya*, v.2, p.332; *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.214; *Kaḥḥale*, v.12, p.27; *Karabulut*, pp.3225-3 228.

linguistics. However, his most prominent contribution was in theology – in particular to the Ash'arī-Māturīdī debate. This is shown in his *Risāla fi af'āl al-'ibād wa al-'Irāda al-ju'ziyya* (Epistle on Acts of Man and Particular Will).[673] Written around 1144/1731,[674] this relatively extensive work would gain immense popularity (around seventy catalogued copy of it exist in Turkish manuscript collections; and, it was published in Istanbul in 1283/1866 and again in 1289/1872).[675] Āqkirmānī intended this *Risāla* for a wide spectrum of readers – by stating that he composed it in Turkish 'for the greater public interest,'[676] and the fact he avoids citations and references. The *Risāla* is divided into eight chapters each of which containing a thorough investigation of a doctrine on human Agency; these doctrines are: i) the Determinists; ii) Mu'tazilah; iii) Abū 'Isḥāq al-'Isfarā'īnī; iv) al-Bāqillānī; v) the Philosophers; vi) Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī; vii) Ash'arīs; viii) Māturīdīs. In the last (and longest) chapter, Āqkirmānī attempts to distinguish the Māturīdī doctrine on human agency (as articulated by Birkawī) from the common Ash'arī position.[677]

### 5.2.1.12 Abu Sa'īd Muḥammad al-Khādimī (d. 1176/1762)

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa, better known as Abu Sa'īd al-Khādimī, was a prolific Ḥanafī jurist and follower of the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī order from the town of Khādim (or Hādim; near Konya in central Anatolia).[678] Abu Sa'īd was a renowned teacher at the Āyā Ṣofia mosque in Istanbul and a relentless author on various subjects (including Ḥanafī law, *tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth*, Sufism, logic, and theology). His best known work, the extensive commentary on Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa* entitle *al-Barīqa al-Maḥmūdiyya*, shows the author's special interest in the controversies between Ash'arism and Māturīdism. In an appendix to the commentary, Abū

---

[673] Āqkirmānī, Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa Hāmid *Af'al al-Ibad wa irāda guz'iyya bayananda bir Risāla,* Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, No: Kat. Br. 746, written in 1179/1765, 55 fols. A translation (presumably into Arabic) of Āqkirmānī's *Risāla* was written by Istanbulli Suleyman Pasha Osmanli Müellifleri [d. 1308/1890 in Baghdād] (*Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.2, p.250).

[674] Based on the earliest recorded manuscript copy which is dated at the year 1144/1731 (see *Karabulut,* p.3225).

[675] Information based on Islam Araştirmalari Merkezi's electronic database of Turkish libraries.

[676] Āqkirmānī, *Af'al al-'ibād,* fol.1b.

[677] An insight into Āqkirmānī's attitude to Ash'arī philosophical theology is given in his *Nubdha fi asma' al-funūn wa Manāqib al-muṣannifin* (Summary on the names of scholarly disciplines and the virtues of authors) – which appears to be an abridgement of Ṭāshkubrī'zādah's *Encyclopedia of sciences* (discussed in Chapter III). In the section dealing with *'Ilm al-Kalām,* Āqkirmānī ignores the detailed list on classics of *kalām* provided by Ṭāshkubrī'zādah  (in which philosophical Ash'arī works are dominant), and suggests only two titles: the Māturīdī work *Ta'dīl al-'Ulūm*  by Bukhāran Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī, and the Ottoman Khojazādah's reappraisal of Ghazālī's *Tahāfut* (see: Āqkirmānī, Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa Hāmid *Nubda fi ta'rifat al-funun wa Manāqib al-muṣanifin,* Oriental Manuscripts at the State Library of Berlin, No: Landberg 394, fol.31a).

[678] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, pp.296-298; *al-A'lām,* v.7, p.68; Muṣṭafa Yayla "Hādīmi, Abū Saîd" , *TDV,* year: 1997, vol: 15,  pp.: 24-26; *Karabulut,* p.3225-3228.

Saʿīd gives a list of seventy-three disputed doctrines between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism – the longest ever in the context of the history of this genre of theological literature.[679] Abū Saʿīd's interest in the Controversies is further shown in other theological works of his, including: *Commentary on the Disputes between Māturīdism and Ashʿarism,* and *Risāla* on *Qaḍāʾ* and *Qadar.*[680]

### 5.2.1.13 Rāghib Pasha (d. 1176/1762)

Ottoman scholar, poet, and statesman. Born and raised in Istanbul. Served as governor in Egypt, Raqqa, Aleppo and Damascus, and became *Ṣadr Aʿẓam* (Grand Vizier) in 1170 AH.[681] His most renowned work is *Safīnat al-Rāghib wa dafīnat al-muṭālib,* a multi-thematic scholarly compendium which contains noteworthy deliberations on Māturīdī-ʾAshʿarī disputes (published in Bulaq, Cairo in 1255/1839).[682]

### 5.2.1.14 Kara Khalīl Pasha (d. 1189/1775-76)

A compendium of the disputes entitled *al-Masāʾil al-mukhtalifa bayna al- Ashʾariyya-wa al-Māturīdiyya* (the Disputed Problems between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism) is attributed to a particular author named Kara Khalīl.[683] The cataloguer of the only known copy of this work advise the author to be Kara Khalīl Pasha of Corlu (north-eastern town in European Turkey) – a high-profile political figure and once governor of Egypt. (Nevertheless, this attribution remains inconclusive.[684])

### 5.2.1.15 Ibrāhīm al-Madhārī (d. 1190/1776)

Ibrāhīm b. Muṣṭafa al-Madhārī al-Ḥalabī.[685] Ḥanafī jurist and Man of Letters. Born in Aleppo and educated in Egypt, Madhārī finally settled in Istanbul where he died. He is the

---

[679] El-Hādīmi, Ebu Said *Barika Maḥmūdiyya fi Sharḥ ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya wa Sharīʿa nabawiyya fi sira Aḥmadiyya,* Cairo: Matbaʾat al-Halabi, 1348/1930, [4 vols.], v.1, pp.246-248.

[680] Abū Saîd Muhammed b. Mustafâ el-Hâdimî *Şerhü İhtilâfî Beyneʾl-Mâturīdīye veʾl-Eşʿâriye*, Adana İl Halk Kütüphanesi, MS. 01 Mü 1075/4, 61a-78a; *Risale fiʾl-Kadai veʾl-Kader* Suleymaniye Reşid Efendi MS.1017.

[681] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.2, pp.190-192; *al-Aʿlām,* v.6, p.123.

[682] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.2, pp.190. He also wrote a work entitled *Taḥqīq wa Tawfiq* (Verification and Harmonization), which dealt with 'the disputed problems between the masters of Sunnī doctrines.' (Ibid, p.191). But, it is described in *Hadiyya* as 'an elaboration of the conditions of Sultan Maḥmūd II, the Grand Viziers, and Chief Judges' (v.2, p.334).

[683] Suleymaniye, Hafiz Efendi, No: 150, 20 folios.

[684] *Sicill-i Osmani,* v.2, p.297. It is possible this work was by Kara Halil al-Rūmī (d. 1123/1711) who was a prolific scholar and esteemed judge with numerous contributions to theology (*Hadiyya,* v.354 - 355).

[685] *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.39 *al-Aʿlām,* v.1, p.74. His *nisba* is spelled "Midari" or "Madari" (in *Hadiyya*). Based on manuscript catalogue entries, it is spelled Mizārī. The selected spelling is based on Kawtharī's edition.

author of *al-Lum'a fi taḥqīq mabāḥith al-wujūd wa al-hudūth wa al-qadar wa afʿāl al-ʿibād* (the Radiant Light: verifying the problems of Existence, Incipience, Predestination, and the Acts of Man). Printed in Egypt in 1939, with an introduction and critical annotations by renowned late advocate of Māturīdism al-Kawtharī, the work consists of relatively extensive arguments of *kalām*, with special reference to the Ash'arī-Māturīdī points of dispute.[686] Madhārī also composed a commentary on Khiḍr-Beg's Māturīdī creed, *Jawāhir al-ʿaqā'id* (also known as the *Nūniyya*).[687]

### 5.2.1.16 ʿAbd Allāh Efendi (d. 1190/1776)

Ottoman Arabist; born, raised and died in Istanbul. He wrote a *Risāla* on *al-Ikhtiyār al-juz'y* (particular choice).[688]

### 5.2.1.17 Muḥammad al-Ispīrī (d. 1194/1780)

Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ispīrī.[689] Born in Antep (currently: Gaziantep, in Southeastern Anatolia), and studied in Kilis and Aleppo, taking residence in the latter where rose to the position of grand muftī in the city. He also entered Istanbul and had intellectual exchanges with local *ulama*. Among his celebrated scholarly output (which covers logic, Ḥanafī law, *tafsīr*, and theology) is the *Risāla fi mas'alat al-Ikhtiyār al-Ju'z'y* (Epistle on the problem of Particular Choice).[690]

### 5.2.1.18 ʿIsām al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1195/1781)

Ismaʿīl b. Muḥammad.[691] Born and educated in the central Anatolian city of Konya. He rose to great prominence in the Ottoman *ulama* class following a distinguished teaching career in Aleppo and Istanbul. Qūnawī was appointed Chief of Instructors (*Ra'īs al-Muʿallimīn*) at Dār al-Saʿāda in Istanbul by the Sultan Muṣṭafa III (reigned from 1171/1757 until his death in 1187/1774); then closely associated with his successor ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd I (r. until his death

---

[686] Al-Madhārī, Burhān al-Dīn İbrāhīm b. Muṣṭafa al-Ḥalabī, *el-Lüm'a fi'l-Hudus ve'l-Kıdem ve'l-Kaza ve'l-Kader*, Cairo: Matba'at al-Anwar, 1358/1939. Numerous copies abound in Turkish manuscript collections. The book also contains references to Bayaḍīzādah.

[687] Entitled *Silkü'n-Niẓām li-Cevahiri'l-Kelam*. Various copies of it are preserved in Turkish libraries, including: Suleymaniye, H. Hüsnü Paşa, No: 1146, written by Derviş Ahmed, 180 fols.

[688] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.368.

[689] *Silk al-durar,* v.4, pp.120-121; *al-Aʿlām,* v.7, p.156.

[690] Mentioned by Murādi in *Silk al-durar,* v.4, p.121.

[691] *Silk al-durar,* v.1, p.258; *al-Aʿlām,* v.1, pp.325-326.

in 1203/1789). Qūnawī is particularly noted as an exegete of the Qur'ān. But, he also composed a number of works in *kalām*, including: a treatise on the disputed problem of *Taklīf ma la yuṭāq* (prescribing the unbearable),[692] and a *ḥāshiya* on Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī's *al-Muqaddimāt al-Arba'a* – a famous Ḥanafī rebuttal of Ash'arism over the problem of good and evil.[693]

### 5.2.1.19 ʿUmar al-ʿĀmidī (d. 1200/1786)

ʿUmar b. Ḥusayn.[694] From Āmid (currently: Diyarbakir, in southeastern Turkey). Amidi became foremost teacher and muftī in the city, and was renowned for expertise in literary, mathematical and much of the rational disciplines. He wrote around the year 1162/1749 an abridgement of Mastjizādah's *Masālik* (discussed above).[695]

### 5.2.1.20 Sūlaymān Mustaqīmzādah (d. 1202/1788)

Sūlaymān Saʿd al-Dīn Mustaqīmzādah.[696] Istanbul-based man of letters, Ḥanafī jurist, Naqshbandī Sūfī, and calligrapher. Highly prolific Ottoman writer from the second half of the twelfth/eighteenth century – writing copiously in Ḥanafī law, biography, logic, medicine, and Sufism among others.[697] In theology, he wrote a Turkish piece entitled *al-ʿIrāda al-ʿaliyya al-jaliyya fi al-ʿirāda al-juz'iyya wa al-kuliyya* (the Manifest Divine Will: on the Particular and Universal Will).[698] He also wrote a defense of Birkawī on the problem of "renewal of faith".[699]

---

[692] El-Konevi, Isamüddin İsmail b. Muhammed b. Muṣṭafa *Risale fi Ma la Yutak*, Suleymaniye, Kılıç Ali Paşa, fols.217-220.

[693] Mentioned by Murādi in *Silk al-durar,* v.1, p.258. Other works in *Kalām* by the author – preserved in the manuscript volume – recorded in Suleymaniye Library (Kılıç Ali Paşa, 570) – are: *Risale fi'l-Meadi'l-Cismani* (fols.215-217); *Şerhu Kelimeti't-Tevhid* (fols.202-213); and, *Şerhu Risaleti'l-İlmi'l-Kadim* (fols.169-194).

[694] *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.424; *Kaḥḥale,* v.7, p.282.

[695] Tokyo, Daiber, No: 1141, fol.43a-49a. Seyit Bahgivan – critical editor of the *Masālik* – raises doubts about the attribution of this work to Āmidī, and inclines to believing that he was only the copyist of the work and not the author (Mastjizādah, p.17).

[696] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, p.168-169; *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.405; *Al-A'lām,* v.3, p.127.

[697] In one estimate (*Karabulut,* pp.1238-1247) he wrote 143 unique volume. He was also a translator of Arabic and Persian scholarship into Turkish.

[698] Preserved in Suleymaniye, Hacı Maḥmūd Ef., No: 1997, fols.25-27.

[699] Original copy written by the author is preserved in Cairo, Egyptian National Library, No: 837, fols.208-211. Mustakimzade also translated Birkawī's *Forty prophetic traditions* into Turkish.

### 5.2.1.21 Muḥammad Komonjelī (d. 1203/1789)

Muḥammad b. Aḥmad; Ottoman theologian, died in Istanbul and buried in the cemetery of Emir Buhari Naqshbandī *tekke*. He composed a Turkish translation of Birkawī's *Ṭarīqa,* a Commentary on Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya,* and a *Risāla* on *Irāda juz'iyya.*[700]

### 5.2.1.22 Ḥayātī al-Elbistānī (d. 1229/1813)

Aḥmad b. Aḥmad;[701] Ḥanafī jurist, logician, poet, and linguist. He served as judge at Bosnia before taking residence in Istanbul where he taught at Āyā Ṣofia. Among his scholarly contributions is a short piece on *al-Irāda al-juz'iyya.*[702] He also wrote an encyclopedia of sciences entitled *Tuḥfat al-jinān,*[703] and a work in logic composed in Turkish.[704]

### 5.2.1.23 Muḥammad al-ʿAlā'ī (d. 1234/1818)

Contributing to the Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputation on human agency is the *Risāla fī al-Irāda al-juz'iyya* by Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa al-ʿAlā'ī – a Naqshbandī Ṣūfī and teacher of Ḥanafī law and *ḥadīth* at Konya. He also composed commentaries on manuals of the principles of Ḥanafī law.[705]

### 5.2.1.24 ʿAbd al-Salām Efendi al-Mardīnī (d. 1259/1843)

After a learning trip – taking him to Aleppo, Damascus, Egypt, and Istanbul – ʿAbd al-Salām Efendi returned to his native city of Mardīn (in southeastern Turkey) where he served as Ḥanafī muftī until his death.[706] He combined scholarly expertise in *ḥadīth* traditions and history with rational sciences (including rhetorics, logic, and theology). In the latter, he wrote *Risāla fī masā'il ithnay-ʿashar al-mutanāzaʿ fīha bayna Abī al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī wa Abī Manṣūr al-Māturīdī* (Epistle on Twelve Disputed Problems between Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī).[707]

---

[700] *Osmanli Müellifleri,* v.2, p.8. Spelling of the *nisba* is approximated as it was not found in the Latinized index to the 1333 AH Istanbul edition of *Osmanli Müellifleri.*

[701] *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.183; *Osmanli Müellifleri,* v.1, p.284; *Karabulut,* pp.588-589.

[702] Preserved in Milli Kütüphane-Ankara - Samsun Vezirköprü İlçe Halk Kütüphanesi Collection, No: 55 Vezirköprü 665/1, fols. 1b-2a. Another copy entitled Risâle fî Beyâni Ef'âli'l-İbâd is located in Milli Kütüphane-Ankara - Ankara Adnan Ötüken İl Halk Kütüphanesi, No: 06 Hk 2366/2, fols. 89b-90a.

[703] Preserved in Baghdād, Maktabat al-Awqāf al-ʿĀmma, No: 5220, 178 fols, written in 1226 (*Karabulut,* p.589).

[704] Published in Istanbul in 1281/1864 (Ibid).

[705] *Hadiyya,* v.3, p.359; *Kaḥḥale,* v.12, p.31.

[706] *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.572; *Osmanli Müellifleri,* v.1, pp.381-382; *al-Aʿlām,* v.4, p.6; *Kaḥḥale,* v.5, p.229.

[707] *Osmanli Müellifleri,* v.1, p.381.

### 5.2.1.25 Muḥammad Ṣaḥḥāflar-shaykhīzādah (d. 1264/1874)

Ottoman scholar and historiographer, whose writings attracted the admiration of Sultan Maḥmūd II (r. 1223/1808 until his death in 1255/1839). As'ad Efendi served as judge of the army and judge at Ūskūdār (in Anatolian Istanbul), and founded a library named after him located near Āyā Ṣofia.[708] Despite specializing in history, he wrote on a variety of subjects, including a number of theological volumes. Of the latter is a work in Turkish entitled: *Risāla fi bayān al-Ikhtilāf bayn al-'Ashʿarī wa al-Māturīdī fi al-Iʿtiqād* (Epistle delineating the disputation between Ashʿarī and Māturīdī in Matters of Creed). [709] He also wrote the following works: *Ṣifat al-takwīn* (On the Divine Attribute of Existentiation), *Bayān farq al-'Ism wa al-Musammā* (Delineating the Difference between Name and Nominatum), and a *Risāla* on *Irāda Juz'iyya.*[710] All of these works revolved around Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputes.

### 5.2.1.26 Duvarlarli Hajī 'Uthmān Efendi (d. 1297/1880)

From Kutahya in western Turkey. He studied in Khādim – near Konya in central Anatolia – under students of renowned muftī Shahīd Aḥmad Efendi (d. 1248/1832). He published a work investigating the problem of *Irāda al-juz'iyya.*[711]

### 5.2.1.27 'Abd al-Raḥīm Efendi (d. 1303/1886)

Scholar and Ṣūfī, originally from Pristina (modern capital of Kosovo). [712] He became a close associate of Muḥammad Nūr al-ʿArabī (d. 1305/1887) – a renowned Ṣūfī of the Malāmatiyya order and advocate of the doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī.[713] 'Abd al-Rahim's scholarly output was primarily in Sufism, but he also composed a *Risāla* on *Irāda juz'iyya.*

---

[708] *Hadiyya,* v.2, p.372; *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.3, pp.24-26; Münr Aktepe, M.. "Esʿad Efendi, Ṣaḥḥāflar-<u>sh</u>ey<u>khi</u>-zāde seyyid Meḥmed." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.* Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference. 10 December 2015 <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/esad-efendi-sahhaflar-sheykhi-zade-seyyid-mehmed-SIM_2209>.
[709] Preserved in Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi, No: 37 Hk 3906, copied by Muhammed Şükri, 6 fols. This work is not mentioned by Bursali in *Osmanli Müellifleri* .
[710] Three of them mentioned in *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.3, p.26.
[711] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, pp.309-310.
[712] *Osmanli Müellifleri* , v.1, pp.132-133.
[713] *Hadiyya,* v.2, p.386.

*5.2.2 The Ashʿarī Reception*

The Rūmī Ottoman defense of Māturīdism, as reflected and articulated in the uninterrupted stream of titles on the controversies between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism, was an intellectual movement which began to take definitive shape following Bayāḍīzādah's 'Ishārāt in the latter years of the eleventh/seventeenth century, and which continued well into the final years of the Ottoman empire – towards the end of the thirteenth/nineteenth century. That this mode of theological writing is pioneered by Rūmī Ottoman scholars should be sufficiently proven by the survey above whereby majority of books and epistles were overwhelmingly produced by Ottoman scholars who flourished in Anatolia – the geographical region corresponding to modern Turkey.[714]

Meanwhile, titles in this genre were also produced by scholars working in other flourishing centers of learning in the empire (such as Mecca, Madīna, Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdād). In view of the voluminous stream of anti-'Ashʿarī works that issued forth from learning centers in al-Rūm, Ashʿarī theologians elsewhere (particularly in the neighboring Arab east) responded by writing a number of rejoinders which were typically marked by the Ashʿarī "minimalist and conciliatory" approach to the Disputes. A number of these works – in particular in relation to problem of human agency – drew on an alternative continuum of development with illustrious Ashʿarī-Shāfiʿī scholar Ibrahīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690) as its focal point of reference.[715] Kūrānī was a highly prolific scholar of a wide range of sciences (including *ḥadīth*, theology, logic, and philosophical Ṣūfism) who was based in the thriving scholarly center of Madīna and attracted a large student following. With over one hundred title to his name – most of which of seminal importance – Kūrānī left an enduring legacy on the intellectual life throughout the Muslim world, especially during the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries which is the period in question. Indeed, detailed analysis of Kūrānī's theology and its place in late Ashʿarī thought falls out of the scope of this study. But, it is useful to note that his conceptualization of the problem of human agency (delineated in his famed *Maslak al-sadād fi masʾala khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād* – the Rightful Course on the Problem of Createdness of the Acts of Man) provoked intense debate in Ashʿarī circles as

---

[714] Will be discussed further in the last section of this chapter.
[715] On Ibrahīm al-Kūrānī see: *Silk al-durar,* v.1, pp.5-6; Nafi, Basheer M. 2002. "Taṣawwuf and Reform in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture: In Search of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī." Die Welt des Islams 42, 3: 307–55.

it proposed a new and revised interpretation of Ashʿarī's theory of *kasb*.[716] As will be shown below, titles in this genre that were produced by Ḥanafī scholars outside the Rūmī (Anatolian-Balkan) Ottoman milieu – while undoubtedly incited by the latter's invariable vindication of Māturīdism in the their Disputes scholarship – inhered greater Ashʿarī influences.

### 5.2.2.1 Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sindī (d. 1138/1725)

From Madīna came an early reaction to the Ottoman literature on the Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputes – in a book entitled *al-Ifāḍa al-Madaniyya fi al-ʿIrāda al-juzʾiyya* (the Madīnan Elaboration on Particular Will)[717] by Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Sindī (d. 1138/1725).[718] Al-Sindī was a renowned Ḥanafī jurist, *ḥadīth* scholar, and Naqshbandī Ṣūfī: born in Sindh in modern Pakistan, and educated in Shushtar in Iran, then in his new hometown Madīna where he studied under Ibrahīm al-Kūrānī. As the title indicates, the tract sought to address the Ottoman "Birkawian" narrative on "particular choices and inner wills". But, the overriding concern in Sindī's *Ifāḍa* is the conciliation of theological conflict – particularly between Ashʿarism and Salafi Hanbalī doctrines, and to a lesser extent between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. Sindī's sources in the *Ifāḍa* comprise scant reference to Ottoman scholarship[719] (none to their literature on the Disputes) and draw primarily on Ashʿarī texts and the writings of Ibn Taymiyya and his student Ibn al-Qayyim.[720] This absence of Ottoman works on the Disputes is not surprising. Sindī wrote the *Ifāḍa* – his only work in *kalām* – in the year 1124/1712:[721] a time when this Ottoman literature was in its early formative stage.[722] Nevertheless, Sindī states in the forward to the book that he composed it following a request by a senior figure in Madīna,[723] who – quite possibly – may have been the officially-appointed

---

[716] Kūrānī's theological interests – marked by a revisionist attitude to Ashʿarī theology, in particular on the critical problem of human agency – seems to be a parallel development exclusive of contemporary Ottoman Māturīdī scholarship on the Disputes which clearly inhered critical responses to Ashʿarīsm. Further prosopographical and intertextual examination may unveil a connection between Bayāḍīzādah and Kūrānī – especially given they were contemporaries who lived in Mecca and Madina respectively.

[717] Al-Sindhi, Muḥammad b. Abd al-Hādī *al-Ifāḍa al-Madaniyya fi al-irāda al-juzʾiyya* (edited by Ali b. Abdah Ali al-Almaʾi), Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2007.

[718] *Silk al-durar*, v.4, p.66; *Hadiyya,* v.2, p.1107.

[719] Esepcailly Qūshjī's *ḥāshiya* on Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd.*

[720] For example, see his critical discussion (based on his teacher al-Kūrānī) of Ibn al-Qayyim's opinion on Ashʿarī in al-Sindhi, *al-Ifāḍa,* pp.165-168.

[721] This date is extracted from a rejoinder against al-Sindhi's *Ifāḍa* (in al-Ṣanʿānī, Muḥammad b. Ismail *al-Anfās al-Raḥmāniyya fi abhath al-Ifāḍa al-Madaniyya* (edited by Ali b. Abdah b. Ali al-Almaʾi), Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2007, p.391).

[722] The *Ifāḍa* was written nearly forty years after Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt,* and only six years after Mastjizādah had produced a final copy of his *Masālik.*

[723] *Ifāḍa,* p.128.

Ottoman Ḥanafī judge.[724] Sindī's *Ifāda* gained popularity among scholars in Ḥijāz. In 1169/1756,[725] eminent Yemeni scholar and defender of Salafism Muḥammad b. Ismaʿīl al-Sanʿani (d. 1182/1768) wrote a lengthy rejoinder against it, in which he reproves Sindī for tarnishing his clean record as foremost traditionalist of the Ḥaramayn with a book in *kalām*.[726]

### 5.2.2.2 ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731)

In Syria, revealing pieces of evidence on the early perception of Ottoman Māturīdism in Ashʿarī circles are given in the writings of illustrious Damascene scholar and mystic ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731).[727] Like Sindī, the unbroken concomitance of Ḥanafism and Māturīdism – which was increasingly observed in Ottoman scholars from the early twelfth/eighteenth century onwards – is not found in Nābulusī who combined Ḥanafī legal orientation with staunch Ashʿarism. Already in the year 1085/1675 (when he was around 34 years of age) Nābulusī – in a correspondence with a fellow *ʿālim* in Antep (in southeastern Anatolia) – emphatically affirmed that 'good and evil are scriptural, not rational,'[728] in reference to the famous Ashʿarī-Māturīdī debate on the problem. In 1093/1682, Nābulusī strictly followed Ashʿarī tenets in his celebrated *Commentary* on the *Tarika* of Birkawī – an Ottoman scholar he nevertheless held in high esteem.[729]

At the turn of the twelfth century AH, however, Nābulusī begins to acknowledge Māturīdism as a school on a par with Ashʿarism, and scrutinizes its doctrines. In 1100/1689, Nābulusī completed a shorter work entitled *al-Kawkab al-sārī fī ḥaqīqat al-juzʾ al-ʿikhtiyārī* (the Moving Star: on the Truth of Particular Choice)[730] in which he defines the problem, and confines divergent opinions to three sects: the Literalists, Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs. Nābulusī sufficiently dwells on the latter doctrine in order to explain it. In the end, he determines – in line with his Ṣūfī interpretation of Ashʿarism, and contrary to the Māturīdīs – that 'as

---

[724] We know that al-Sindhi was closely associated with Yūsuf al-Shirwani (d. 1134/1722) who served as official Ottoman Ḥanafī judge at Madina around that time (*Silk al-durar,* v.4, pp.239-240). Sindhi reportedly said that the day Shirwani died 'is the day the *Fiqh* of Abū Ḥanīfa died' (*Silk al-durar,* v.4, p.240).

[725] Al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Anfās al-Raḥmāniyya,* p.391.

[726] al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Anfās al-Raḥmāniyya,* pp.182-183. Interestingly, while Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* is absent from Sindhi's *Ifāda*, we find a few refernces to it in Ṣanʿānī's work (pp.360 and 393) in which he is acknowedged as the mouthpiece of later Māturīdism.

[727] *Silk al-durar,* v.3, pp.30-38; *Hadiyya,* v.1, pp.590-594; *al-Aʿlām,* v.4, pp.32-33; Akkach, Samer *Intimate invocations: al-Ghazzi's biography of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641 – 1731),* Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012.

[728] Critically edited in Akkach, Samer *Letters of a Ṣūfī scholar: the correspondence of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731),* Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010, p.9.

[729] Al-Nābulusī, Abd al-Ghanī *al-Hādīqa al-nadiyya fi Sharḥ al-ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* Cairo, 1276/1859, v.2, p.508.

[730] Al-Nābulusī, Abd al-Ghanī *al-kawkab al-sārī fī ḥaqīqat al-juzʾ al-ikhtiyāri* (edited by Muḥammad Ragib al-Tabbakh), Halab: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿIlmiyya, 1931.

dictated in majority of creeds, nothing ultimately affects anything; and good deeds have no influence on [bringing about] God's contentment [with the righteous.]'[731] Shortly after, Nābulusī was exceptionally disturbed by a work on the disputed problem of whether it is permissible for God to un-deliver on his threat of punishment by an unnamed scholar from al-Rūm who – in his defense of the Māturīdī position – had described upholders of the opposite view (traditionalists and Ashʿarīs) as non-believers. In 1103 AH, Nābulusī wrote a valiant refutation and gave it the following provocative title: *al-Qawl al-sadīd fī jawāz khulf al-waʿīd wa al-rad ʿala al-jāhil al-Rūmī al-ʿanīd* (the Sound Argument on the Permissibility of Non-deliverance on Threat of Punishment and a Response to the Stubborn and Ignorant Roman – i.e. Anatolian).[732] Remarkably, Nābulusī's *al-Qawl al-Sadīd* discusses in clear terms the ethnic dimension of the Ashʿarī-Māturīdī debate in which he responds to this unnamed Roman who, by accusing Traditionalists and Ashʿarīs as upholders of erroneous creed, was in fact referring to the Arabs – who were predominantly adherents of either of these doctrines.[733] Thus, Nābulusī dedicates a large part of the book to the virtues of Arabs and that the Māturīdī doctrine being defended by the Roman rests on an uninformed grasp of the Arabic language.[734]

In later years, Nābulusī would compose a more robust and thorough consideration of Māturīdī theology – in a book entitled: *Taḥqīq al-intiṣār fī ittifaq al-'Ashʿarī wa al-Māturīdī ʿala khalq al-Ikhtiyār* (Achieving Victory: on the agreement between Ashʿarī and Māturīdī that Human Choice is Created).[735] The book ventures beyond the problem of human agency and discusses the controversies between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism in a general sense. Nābulusī, in keeping with the typical Ashʿarī approach to the Controversies, attempts to minimize

---

[731] Nābulusī, *al-Kawkab al-sārī*, p.19.

[732] Al-Nābulusī, Abd al-Ghanī *al-Qawl al-sadid fi jawaz khulf al-wa'id wa al-rad 'ala al-jahil al-Rūmī al-'anid,* Maktabat al-Haram al-Makkī, MS 3820. Interestingly, in late Ottoman al-Babani's entry on Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (*Hadiyya,* v.1, p.593), the word "Rumi" is replace with "man" to avoid the suggestive insult to Ottoman Turks in the original title.

[733] We read in the opening chapter to the book the following statement: 'Indeed, it is a wonder of wonders – for those to whom God unveiled the Divine Command and to those whom he did not – that there emerged in the lands of Anatolia (Bilād al-Rūm) a man from among the savages of arid steppes, and the wretches of wilderness, who speaketh of the infidelity of Arabs and the son of Arabs – while he is Ajami (non-Arab) and son of Ajam – despite the Arabs being the masters of Ajam and the Romans as is well-known and affirmed by the ulama' (Nābulusī, *al-Qawl al-sadid,* fol.2b).

[734] He cites a tradition attributed to classical narrator and scholar of Arabic al-Asma'i (d. 216/828) in which "undeliverance on threat of punishment" is not deemed a demerit in the Arab code of ethics (Nābulusī, *al-Qawl al-sadid,* fols.15b-16a).

[735] Critically edited in Badeen, *Sunnitsche theologie in osmanischer zeit,* pp.82-132.

conflict and undermine its significance.[736] Importantly, *Taḥqīq al-Intiṣār* – written in 1117/1706 – contains an early Ash'arī engagement with *Ishārāt al-marām* – Bayāḍīzādah's influential vindication of Māturīdism. In it, Nābulusī responds to – in his words – Bayāḍīzādah's "slandering (*tashni'*) of the doctrine of Ash'arī".[737] ' In the closing words to his *Taḥqīq al-intiṣār*, he asserts that disputation between the two schools is a needless latecomer into Sunnī theology because the Māturīdīs are one and the same with Ash'arīs 'if one reads the *classical* texts of theology (*kutub al-mutaqaddimīn fī 'ilm al-kalām*).' Nābulusī continues: 'I have composed a Commentary on *al-Tarika al-Muḥammadiyya* of the learned Birkawī of al-Rūm, may God have mercy on him, in which I adhered to the doctrine of Ash'arī on the problem of createdness of particular [human] choice, because I saw it in concord with the doctrine of Māturīdī...'[738]

### 5.2.2.3 ʿUthmān al-ʿUryānī (d. 1168/1754)

An interesting mid-twelfth/eighteenth century encounter with Ottoman Māturīdism is gleaned in the writings of Aleppo-born Ḥanafī jurist and theologian ʿUthmān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿUryānī (d. 1168/1754).[739] ʿUryānī taught in Istanbul, and resided in Madīna for eight year until he died. He composed a famous commentary[740] on Khiḍr-Beg's *Nūniyya* in response to another Commentary on the same work by a distinguished Ottoman teacher during the reign of Maḥmūd I (r. 1730/1143 until his death in 1168/1754) named Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ḥanafī, better known as al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rūmī (d. 1154/1742).[741] Al-Rūmī's commentary sought to

---

[736] Commenting on a statement by the Ash'arite al-Laqānī on the problem of human agency (discussed in Chapter IV), Nābulusī says: 'witness how he (Laqānī) made the doctrines three, not four, and defined one doctrine of the Sunna [...] and did not divide it into two parts: an Ash'arī doctrine and a Māturīdī doctrine – because Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs are not different over this problem, and their doctrine is one [...] As for the [actual] difference between Ash'arīsm and Māturīdism, it is over other problems – and this is not one of them. Al-Subkī in his *Nuniyya* has conciliated their doctrines and made the dispute between them verbal, except for five problems (Badeen, p.96).

[737] See discussion in Badeen, pp.110-114. Nābulusī's *Taḥqīq al-intiṣār* traces the origin of the Ash'arī-Māturīdī problematic on human agency to Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī, whose anti-'Ash'arī sentiment is strongly admonished by Nābulusī (see, in particular: Badeen, pp.86 and 130).

[738] Badeen, p.131. Nābulusī also wrote another work on the problem of human agency, entitled: *Taḥrīr silsilat al-widād fi mas'alat Khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād* (mentioned in Anon., *Mu'allafat 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī*, Tokyo Daiber, MS 1426, fol.3a). We know that Nābulusī was critical of Ibrahīm al-Kūrānī's revised Ash'arī theory of *kasb* from a prolix personal correspondence with Kūrānī (date in 1085 AH) in which he reproved the arguments in the latter's *Maslak al-sadad* (published in Akkach, *Letters of a Ṣūfī scholar*, pp.61-108).

[739] *Osmanli Müellifleri*, v.1, p.367; *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.658; *al-Aʿlām*, v.4, p.209. The Aleppan origin of ʿUryānī is asserted in *Hadiyya*. Zirikli, however, states in *al-Aʿlām* that he was born and educated in Kilis (which belonged to the adimination of the Ottoman *vilayet* of Aleppo until WWI).

[740] Al-Uryani, ʿUthmān b. Abd Allāh *Sharḥ al-qasida al-nuniyya*, Istanbul: Sharikat Sahafiyya 'Uthmaniyya, 1301/1884.

[741] On Ḥāfiẓ al-Rūmī, see: *Hadiyya*, v.2, pp.325-326. A copy of his Commentary on the *Nuniyya* is preserved in Suleymaniye Servili MS 181, fols.8-108.

refute the excessive Ash'arism in the famous Commentary on the *Nūniyya* by renowned classical Ottoman theologian Khayālī (discussed in Chapter III). In the opening words 'Uryānī quotes al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rūmī as saying:

> The Commentary attributed to Khayālī "is not cast in a way appropriate to the original text, as would not be overlooked by a discerning [scholar.]" He further adds: "Khayālī did not distinguish the doctrine of Māturīdīs from that of the Ash'arīs over the disputations which have occurred between them. Indeed, differentiating between them is imperative (*mina al-wājibāt*). It appears that he (Khayālī) did not notice that the original text is cast in Māturīdī terms; therefore he followed an Ash'arī line in pursuit of his arguments. Thus, entire stanzas were left unexplored; [in general,] he did not do justice to its compound problems and lexicon".[742]

'Uryānī protests al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rūmī's wholesale denunciation of Khayālī's Ottoman classic in virtue of its indifference to the disputes between Ash'arism and Māturīdism. His Commentary, therefore, was more of a counter-*ḥāshiya* to the one by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Rūmī, who he describes as "sluggish and uninformed". 'Uryānī stresses: 'I commit myself [in this volume] to refute the counter-arguments against the *mawla* al-Khayālī – which were put forward by that fanatic barefaced commentator – to the best of my effort and ability.'[743]

### 5.2.2.4 Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791)

Towards the end of the century, an important document on the status and perception of Ottoman scholarship on the Disputes in Egypt is given by the eminent Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791)[744] Al-Zabīdī's input on the impact of twelfth/eighteenth century Ottoman Māturīdism is noteworthy. Zabīdī was among the leading scholars in the second half of the twelfth century AH, with a diverse intellectual background.[745] He was born in 1145/1732 in Belgram (India) into a family that raced its roots to Wāsiṭ in Iraq. He then moved with his family to their new home of Yemen (settling in the then thriving learning center of Zabīd, and hence acquiring the title: al-Zabīdī) before moving to Egypt where he

---

[742] Uryani, *Sharḥ al-qasida al-nuniyya,* p.3.

[743] Ibid.

[744] *Al-A'lām*, v.7, p.70; Al-Kittānī, *Fahras al-faharis,* v.1, p.526–v.2, p.549; Reichmuth, Stefan *The world of Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (1732-91 : life, networks and writings,* Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2009.

[745] Kittānī in *Fahras al-faharis* (v.1, p.221) states that Zabidi studied under Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Jawharī al-Khalidī (d. 1182/1768) – Egyptian scholar from the second half of the twelfth century AH (*Hadiyya,* v.1, p.178; *Al-A'lām,* v.1, p.112). Interestingly, al-Jawharī had composed a work on the Disputes entitled *al-Farq bayna kalām al-Māturīdī wa al-'Ash'arī* (the Difference between the Theologies of al-Māturīdī and al-'Ash'arī) . This work by Jawharī, who was a Shāfi'ī-'Ash'arī scholar and an affiliate of al-Azhar, is one of the earliest Egyptian works in this genre (preserved in Umm al-Qura Central Library, Mecca, MS 1/1420, and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, MS 2004. The word "*kalām*" in title may also refer to the dispute over eternal Speech of God, and not theology in general).

stayed until he died. Zabīdī, a follower of Ḥanafī law and affiliate of the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī order, gained great fame during his lifetime – and  attracted matchless praise as an erudite scholar,  traditionalist, linguist, and historian. Among his widely-recognized works is the voluminous Commentary on Ghazālī's *'Ihya' 'Ulūm  al-Dīn*.[746] On the latter's Book II (named *Qawā'id al-'aqā'id* – "Fundamentals of Beliefs"), Zabīdī provides a lengthy discussion on the meaning of "sound creed" and the extant Sunnī schools of theology.

Zabīdī, writing as a historian without much intellectual engagement with concepts, sought in this elaboration to deliver a short bibliographical history of the Ashʿarī and Māturīdī disputes. The influence of the Ottoman literature on his discussions is evident. Zabīdī cites Bayāḍīzādah's *Ishārāt* and Shaykhzādah's *Naẓm al-farā'id* as the primary texts of Māturīdism.  He further quote's Bayāḍīzādah's statement in which Māturīdī is pronounced as the master of Sunnism who is earlier and superior to Ashʿarī (translated in Chapter IV); and – on the Disputes – Zabīdī copies the 'fifty doctrines' of Bayāḍīzādah verbatim from the latter's *Ishārāt.* Thus, we find Zabīdī dwelling more on difference rather than agreement in the context of theological orthodoxy, much in line with common Ottoman Māturīdī literature. The Ashʿarī and Māturīdī schools, nevertheless, are equally representative of Sunnī creed, and Zabīdī attempts to strike a balance on them.

### 5.2.2.5 Al-Ḥasan Abū ʿAdhaba (d. 1225/1810)

Although Abū ʿAdhaba (Al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin) is an obscure figure with nearly no biographical information available on him,[747] his *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya* would become a standard Ashʿarī examination of Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputes head-to-head with *Naẓm al-farā'id* by the Ottoman Māturīdī Shaykhzādah. This work – completed in 1172/1758 – was particularly popular after a number of early publications.[748] Abū ʿAdhaba's *Rawaḍa* – however – is based on a commentary (completed in 757/1356) on Subkī's *Nūniyya* by a student of his

---

[746] Al-Zabidi, Murtaḍa *Ithaf al-Sada al-mutaaqqin fi Sharḥ ihya' 'Ulūm  al-din*, Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyah: Beirut, 2002, v.2, pp.3-23.

[747] *Hadiyya,*  ; *al-A'lām,* v.2, p.198; al-Rashid, Muḥammad A. *al-I'lam bi tashih kitāb al-A'lām,* Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2001, p.54. I have followd  al-Rashid for the death date of the Abū ʿAdhaba, which is otherwise unknown in majority of sources. The author's name is commonly transliterated as "Abū ʿUdhba" (including in Watt's *Formative period).*

[748] Abū ʿAdhaba, al-Ḥasan b. Abd al-Muhsin *al-Rawda al-bahiyya fi ma bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Māturīdīyya,* Hyderabad: Dar al-Ma'arif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1322/1904.

named Nūr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.[749] As such, it follows Subkī's two-fold division of the problems into seven verbal (*lafẓī*) and six real (*ma'nawī*) disputes. We know Abū 'Adhaba specialized in Ash'arī theology in the fact he composed a Commentary on Sanūsī's *Creed* – entitled: *al-Maṭāli' al-sa'īda*.[750]

### 5.2.2.6 Khālid al-Baghdādī (d. 1242/1826)

Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Khālid al-Baghdādī; influential Kurdish scholar, reformist and founder of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya Ṣūfī order who hailed for Shahrazūr (in southeast Iraqi Kurdistān), and moved to Baghdād in his early education years.[751] After a spiritual journey which took him as far as India, Baghdādī returned to the Arab east and became foremost propagator of the Mujaddidi (i.e. reformed ) Ṣūfī teachings of Indian mystic and theologian Aḥmad Sirhindi  (d. 1034/1624). Especially in Iraq, Syria and Anatolia, Baghdādī attracted a large number of followers. As a scholar, Baghdādī was a Shāfi'ī with strong interest in *'Ilm al-kalām,* in which he wrote a famous work on the disputes between Ash'arism and Māturīdism entitled: *al-'Iqd al-jawharī fi al-farq bayna kasbay al-Māturīdī wa al-'Ash'arī* (the Jeweled Necklace: on the difference between Māturīdī and Ash'arī on  [man's] acquisition [of his deeds]). [752] In it, Baghdādī laments the problem's inherent ambiguity which has led some scholars to the erroneous conclusion that both doctrines are in agreement – he writes:

> One grand scholar of our time claimed that – having searched books throughout his life and found no difference between them – he had to determine that they are one and the same... [He said:] "I have seen many works on this problem, but none seriously attempted to verify it". To conclude that both powers and acquisitions are indistinguishable necessitates that both doctrines are one. But, their disagreement over this problem is too evident to be denied, and too famous to be ignored; therefore, it has become commonplace in all lands and regions to believe that power is effective according to Māturīdī, but not to the Ash'arī – whose doctrine was slandered by various sects as pure determinism.[753]

---

[749] See Watt, W Montgomery *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* Edinburgh: University Press, 1973, p.303. Manuscript copy of Shīrāzi's Commentary is preserved in Suleymaniey, Hāmidiye, MS 765, 46 fols.

[750] *Al-A'lām,* v.2, p.198.

[751] On Khalid al-Baghdādī's biography see: al-Alusi, Shihab al-Dīn Maḥmūd *al-Faydh al-warid fi Sharḥ marthiyyat mawlana khalid al-Naqshabandi* (edited by Aḥmad al-Mazidi), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 2011; al-Haydari, Ibrahīm Fasih *al-Majd al-talid fi Manāqib hazrat mawlana Khalid,* Istanbul: Hashimi Yaynevi, 2014; al-A'lām, v.2, p.294; *Fahras al-faharis,* v.1, p.277. Al-Baghdādī has been the subject of a number of recent studies, including: Albert Hourani, Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandī Order," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, pp. 75-89, and  Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandīyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early nineteenth Century*," Die Welt des Islams* 22, nos. 1-2 (1982): 1-36.

[752] Appended to al-Baghdādī, Diya' al-Dīn Khalid *Ḥāshiya ala al-Sialkutti 'ala al-Khayālī,* Istanbul, 1259/1843, pp.132-147.

[753] Al-Baghdādī, *H. Sialkutti,* pp.133-134

These words describe the "many books" in this genre and the fact Ash'arism – in the first half of the thirteenth/nineteenth century – had become reputed in scholarly circles as "pure determinism". Baghdādī's *al-'Iqd al-jawharī*, in virtue of the high stature of its author, was no doubt an influential contribution to the Ash'arī-Māturīdī debate. Later on, a Commentary on it was composed by an Ottoman Ḥanafī teacher named 'Abd al-Ḥāmid b. 'Umar al-Harputi (d. 1320/1902) – from Harput in eastern Anatolia.[754]

### 5.2.2.7 'Umar al-Hātifī al-Farūqī (fl. mid. thirteenth/nineteenth c.)

No information was found on this author of a relatively extensive work entitled *al-Risāla al-wajīza fi bayān al-farq bayna al-'Ash'arīyya wa al-Māturīdīyya* (the Brief Epistle on elaborating the difference between Ash'arism and Māturīdism).[755] We know the author flourished around mid-thirteenth century AH through the dedication of this work to famous governor of Egypt Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha (d. 1849/1265).[756]

### 5.2.2.8 'Abd al-Bāqī al-'Umarī (d. 1278/1861)

'Abd al-Bāqī al-'Umarī al-Fārūqī was leading Iraqi scholar and poet – originally from the city of Mosul. Al-Fārūqī received formal training in Ḥanafī law, and his poetry teems with scholarly allusions.[757] In his *Collected Poems* – posthumously published in Egypt as: *al-Tiryāq al-Farūqī* (Fārūqī's Panacea) – al-Fārūqī has a short piece (based on an original by Shafi'ī) in which he inadvertently defends Ash'arism and decries doctrinal affiliation; and avows the following in the concluding couplets:

> For what would say a Son of Māturīd?
> For what occurs occurs as You decreed
> And equally Your will men are sharing
> Some of them are wretched and some happy indeed
> Some to evil inclined, some to good abiding.[758]

---

[754] Entitled *al-Simt al-'abQārī*, see: *Hadiyya,* v.1, p.507.

[755] Al-Fārūqī, Omar al-Hatifi *al-Risāla al-wajiza fi bayan al-farq bayna al-'Ash'arīyya wa al-Māturīdīyya,* Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya, MS 324025. Another copy of it is preserved in Vatican Library, MS 1/1422. A critical edition has been published in Egypt (based only on the Egyptian copy), see: Marzuq, Imad Ḥasan *al-Farq bayna al-'Ash'arīyya wa al-Māturīdīyya,* Cairo: Maktabat Bustan al-Ma'rifa, 2009.

[756] Al-Faruqi, *Risāla wajiza,* fol.1b-2a.

[757] *Al-A'lām,* v.3, p.271.

[758] Abd al-Bāqi al-Fārūqī *al-Tiryāq al-fārūqī,* Cairo: Matba'at Ḥasan Aḥmad al-Tukhi, 1287/1870, p.64. Thanks to France Meyer for editing the verse translation.

### 5.2.2.9 Ibn Ḥamza al-Dimashqī (d. 1279/1863)

Ḥanafī jurist and theologian ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Darwīsh, better known as Ibn Ḥamza, was a respected scholar from Damascus where he served as trustee to the office Grand Muftī of al-Shām. We learn that he wrote "numerous books" through biographical sources.[759] However, most famous of his works is *al-Risāla al-Ḥamzāwaiyya fi al-tawfīq bayna al-Māturīdīyya wa al-ʾAshʿarīyya* (Ibn Ḥamza's Epistle on the harmonization between Māturīdism and Ashʿarism) – completed in 1268/1852.[760]

### 5.2.2.10 ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Azharī (d. 1303/1886)

Azhar-affiliate follower of Mālikī school of law, and the Halveti Ṣūfī order.[761]  Azharī wrote a long book entitled: *al-Manhal al-sayyāl al-dāfiʿ lima nashaʾa min khilāf al-ʾAshʿarī wa al-Māturīdī mina al-ʿIshkāl* (the Flowing Stream on averting the problematic of the dispute between Ashʿarī and the Māturīdīs).[762] Azharī authored this work (which was completed in 1295/1878) as a response to a written question sent to him by a fellow scholar.[763] It draws primarily on Ashʿarī sources, which is clearly the author's doctrine of preference. But, the book reflects on the nature of these disputes, and criticizes the common perception that they are merely differences of expression.

## 5.3 Interpreting a Body of Literature

Following the biobibliographical survey above, we can presume with certainty that interest in Māturīdism was a leading theological theme among Ottoman scholars who flourished in the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth. This interest was exemplified in a stream of titles which have as their focal-point the juxtaposition of Ashʿarī and Māturīdī doctrines and the comparative analyses of the problematic disputes between them. This incessant attentiveness to Māturīdism was pioneered by Rūmī Ottoman intellectuals, and the present study argues that it came after a period of Ashʿarī hegemony of theological discourses in the earlier years of the empire's lifetime. The legacy of the book of *al-ʿIshārāt* by Bayāḍīzādah (analyzed in Chapter IV) – which made significant steps towards

---

[759] Al-Baytar, Abd al-Razzaq *Hilyat al-bashar fi taʾrikh al-qarn al-thalith ʿashar* (edited by Muḥammad B. al-Baytar), Beirut: Dar Sader, 1993, p.920; Kaḥḥale, v.5, p.228.
[760] *Izah al-Maknun*, v.1, p.562.
[761] *Hadiyya*, v.1, p.502; *Al-Aʿlām*, v.3, p.276; *Kaḥḥale*, v.5, p.86.
[762] Al-Azhāri, Abd al-Hāfiẓ al-Saʿīdi *al-Manhal al-sayyal a-dafiʾ lima nashaʾa min khilāf al-ʾAshʿarī wa al-Māturīdī mina al-ʿIshkal* (edited by Sayyid K. Ḥasan), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 2008.
[763] Ibid, pp.17-20.

reinstating Māturīdism as the primary doctrine of Ḥanafī *kalām* – is further corroborated by the evident mark it left on key titles from this body of literature.

In most cases, these titles were produced by reputable scholars who were held in high esteem and served as either teachers or judges in the official Ottoman scholastic hierarchy. We also observe – in light of the chronological survey above – a growing interest in communicating the theme of disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism to the wider educated class which is shown in the composition of a number of widely-disseminated simplified treatises in Turkish language. This meant Ottoman scholars from al-Rūm – and perhaps encouraged by official authorities – were increasingly concerned with preserving a "unique" doctrinal identity for the theology produced in the Turkish-speaking realm. This is further gleaned from the Ashʿarī engagement with what was generally perceived as a Rūmī-Ottoman preoccupation with defending Māturīdism through exposing and highlighting opposition to its (dominant) rival Ashʿarism. In turn, Ashʿarīs from flourishing learning centres in the neighbouring Arab east – particularly in the Ḥijāz, Syria and Egypt – composed similar works (i.e. influenced by the Ottoman juxtaposing template) but cast in the typical Ashʿarī "minimalist and conciliatory" approach towards the Disputes.

It would seem that the later Ottoman fervor for Māturīdism as the rightly-suited doctrine for the followers of Ḥanafism was – to a great extent – confined to the Rūmī (Anatolian-Balkan) milieu. As we saw above, a number of prominent Ashʿarīs who critically engaged with the great Ottoman defense of Māturīdism between the eleventh/seventeenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries were, nevertheless, affiliates of the Ḥanafī legal variant. This was clearly manifested in the writings of Molla ʿAlī al-Qārī (from Mecca), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sindī (Madīna), ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (Damascus), ʿUthmān b. ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿUryānī (Aleppo then Madīna), and ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-ʿUmarī (Mosul and Baghdād).

More importantly, these disputes took on a bibliographic form. The dozens of titles that were composed in the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries in the theme of Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputations present – in their totality which includes the Ashʿarī rebuttals and reactions – a unique genre unprecedented in the history of the science *kalām*. As such, we are presented with a later Islamic genre of theological writing that is neither heresiographical nor properly theological, but is concerned with juxtaposition of the two schools of theology which are together deemed the representatives of Sunnī orthodoxy.

It may appear at a superficial level that this body of literature presents a narrow focus in comparison with otherwise detailed and extensive manuals of Classical and post-Classical *kalām.* This is misleading; these tracts, in fact, attempt to address an exhaustive list of major theological problems, both in its Ashʿarī and Māturīdī versions. But, the latter stand out from "typical" *kalām* texts in format and methodology; we observe a wide-range of (reaching up to seventy-three) theological problems presented not as isolated problems but as problems over which the two equal representatives of orthodox Sunnism intellectually differed. Hence, we are dealing with a new focus of *kalām* dialectics whereby the raison d'être is doctrinal affiliation – in the sense of asking the question: "what is the *true* doctrine held by each school on a given theological problem?". This is the case in the Ottoman Rūmī treatment of the Disputes, which seems to attempt a "purification" of genuine Māturīdism, in order to preserve a unique doctrinal identity and maintain a distance from the Ashʿarī rival. As such, it is crucial to highlight that the focal-point of the Rūmī Ottoman texts was not necessarily the invalidation of Ash'arī views; less so the accusation of heresy, the like of which is somewhat sensed in Classical Transoxanian Māturīdism.

The section on "Ashʿarī Reception" of the Ottoman Rūmī defense of Māturīdism highlights a different approach (or discourse) on the Disputes, which has been described throughout the thesis as being "minimalist and conciliatory". This approach – which matures in the late eleventh/seventeenth century (before the advent of the steady stream of Ottoman Rūmī contributions) – thrives on the Ashʿarī hegemony on Sunnī *kalām* and maintains that Ashʿarī-Māturīdī controversies are in fact trivial and unimportant, and that both schools are ideally one and the same. At this level, we are confronting two "discourses" on the Disputes: one conscious of doctrinal identity (Māturīdī), and another blurs the boundaries between the two schools (Ash'arī). Nevertheless, the body of literature exemplified by both schools has in common the template, format and maintaining that the opinions held by the opposite school are not necessarily invalid or amounting to infidelity and disbelief. In essence, unlike post-Classical Ashʿarism (and to an extent early Ottoman *kalām*), the leading criterion of these texts is doctrinal affiliation.

### 5.4 Conclusion: The Doctrinal Focus of Later Ottoman *Kalām*

This primary aim of this chapter is to identify and introduce thirty-seven scholars who flourished between the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries and contributed to a body of literature which has as a focal-point the debates between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism – the two schools of orthodox Sunnism. The evidently large number of texts covered in this biobibliographical survey strongly argues for the immense popularity of this theme in later Ottoman *kalām.* This survey is followed by a number analytical notes in section 5.3. A crucial distinction is made in this survey between the titles produced by Ashʿarī and Māturīdī affiliates. This distinction pursues (and further validates) an argument made throughout the chapters of this thesis: that each school, while addressing the same doctrinal controversies, in fact held two different approaches to them and each represented a self-contained "discourse". It appears that this body of literature represents in its totality a prominent genre of post-Classical *kalām* tradition and reflects an overarching concern with doctrinal affiliation by large segment of its practitioners.

CONCLUSIONS

## I.  Ashʿarism as Part and Parcel of Māturīdism's Self-Image

The preoccupation of Classical Māturīdism with the school of Ashʿarī has been noted in modern academic scholarship. The present study probes further into this by surveying key historical encounters between pioneers of the two schools and approximating a better understanding of the dynamics of their interrelation. This Māturīdī "preoccupation" with Ashʿarī continued beyond the Classical paradigm (Question 1 of this study) as exemplified in the renewed Ottoman canonization of Māturīdism which began in the late eleventh/seventeenth century and continued well into the next two centuries of the empire's lifetime. We saw that the ground-breaking treatise of *Isharāt al-marām* by Bayāḍīzādah – which became the cornerstone of later Māturīdism – aimed at debating fifty disputed points between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism and to restore the status of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as the chief theologian of orthodox Sunnism. Nearly all subsequent articulations of Māturīdism by Rūmī Ottoman scholars were conceived as a presentation of points of dispute between the two schools, and defined against its dominant and influential rival, Ashʿarism. In a general sense, it is rare to find an avowedly-Māturīdī theological tract – both Classical and post-Classical – which passes over in silence opposition to Ashʿarism. The latter seems to have invariably been part and parcel of Māturīdism's self-image.

The same, however, could not be said of Ashʿarism, which answers the Question 2 of this study: to what extent did each school represent a different "discourse" on the Controversies? Māturīdism's occupation with Ashʿarism implies a conscious attempt to demarcate and preserve a unique doctrinal identity which Ḥanafī scholars deemed to be the logical choice of doctrine in predominantly Ḥanafī intellectual contexts (such as Transoxania in the Classical period; al-Rūm in the post-Classical period). On the other hand, Ashʿarism – in light of its greater hegemony on the wider *kalām* narrative – did not treat Māturīdism and its associates as equal rivals whose opinions posed a definitive challenge to a general *kalām* inquiry. These two discourses transpired in the literature of the Controversies: while Māturīdī theologians treated each point of dispute with Ashʿarī as a worthwhile philosophical problem, Ashʿarīs considered them to be trivial and unimportant, an approach termed in this study as being "minimalist and conciliatory". In a general sense, Māturīdīs

tended to highlight that there are two or more opinions on a given problem, and that the Māturīdī one is the best among them; Ash'arīs, however, tended to blur the boundaries and propose for a given controversy a middle way or alternative interpretations, and concluding thereafter that there is no *real* difference in the first place. Importantly, both discourses held the two schools as equal representatives of orthodoxy, and the debate is largely maintained an intellectual exercise.

## II.     The Resurgence of Māturīdism in Later Ottoman *Kalām*

The historical and bibliographical survey of key encounters between Ash'arism and Māturīdism led to the identification of a general indifference to doctrinal affiliation in early post-Classical *kalām* – particularly in the works of the pioneers: Rāzī → Bayḍāwī → Taftāzānī → Jurjānī. When dealing with the origins of Classical Ottoman theology, we are confronted with the fact that Ash'arism occupied a central place in Ottoman Rūmī *kalām* texts – i.e. produced in the regions of Anatolia and the Balkans. The prosopographical and intertextual analyses of prominent scholars and popular theological texts from the Classical Ottoman period (ninth/fifteenth – late tenth/sixteenth century) strongly challenges the assertion that Ottoman theology was consistently a form of Māturīdism from its inception (which answers Question 3 of this thesis). This study demarcates the extent to which Ash'arism influenced early Ottoman *kalām,* and that Māturīdism – in fact – took a definitive form towards the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century. The following factors help to explain the later Ottoman fervour for the doctrine of Māturīdī which played out in full swing in the last two hundred years of the empire's lifetime:

> (1) Hegemony of later Ash'arism in Sunnī theological literature on Ottoman Ḥanafī theological writings during the formative years of Ottoman scholasticism.

> (2) Growing interest in dogmatics (affirmation of sound Sunnī creed) in line with Ḥanafī principles which was a trend particularly provoked in response to inter-Ṣūfī controversies.

> (3) The inconsistency in the scholarly practice whereby followers of Ḥanafism adhere to the doctrine of Ash'arī – a doctrine practically and traditionally associated with the legal variants of Malik and al-Shāfi'ī.

(4) Persistence of the Ashʿarī "minimalist and conciliatory" approach in the early attempts of Ottoman scholars to engage with the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. This was particularly due to the absence of a comprehensive reappraisal of theological problems from a purely Māturīdī perspective.

(5) The authorship of *Ishārāt al-marām* by the Ottoman Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah – a highly influential work which had as its focal-point the systematic refutation of (past and contemporary) Ashʿarī arguments and sought to restore the status of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī as the foremost theologian of Islam.

### III. Ashʿarī-Māturīdī Disputations as a Genre of Later Islamic Theological Literature

Although early Māturīdī classics abound with references to the theology of Ashʿarī, the earliest example of the juxtaposition and critical examination of the two schools in a single work goes back to Ibn Taymiyya, al-Ṭarasūsī, and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, all of whom belong to what this study defines as the later ("non-philosophical") *kalām* tradition. But, these titles remain prototypes of a genre yet to emerge in the later Ottoman intellectual milieu.

Extensive bibliographical and historical research (in extant manuscript collections – particularly in Turkey; as well as, biographical and bibliographical indexes) has led to the discovery of over forty title (varying in size and scope) of a genre as yet undefined in modern scholarship. The basis of this body of literature is the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism, reflecting the great Ottoman defense of Māturīdī theology and a series of rejoinders and reactions from other flourishing centres in the Arab East during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This study provides a biobibliographical survey – in chronological order – of the scholars who contributed to this genre with descriptive annotations on the works and authors. As such, this body of literature is introduced and defined, with information on primary sources relating to the authors and (where relevant) the whereabouts of unpublished texts (Question 4 of this study)

Assuming this body of literature to be distinctive genre of later Islamic theological scholarship (question five of this study) is based on the following three factors:

**(1) Identical but Different:** Unlike the underlying basis of polemics, rejoinders and rebuttals – examples of which abound in Islamic theological literature – these works inhere

the idea that both Ash'arī and Māturīdī schools belong to the "orthodox and mainstream" Sunnī fold. Texts on the Disputes from either points of view invariably exhibit and maintain a sense of "oneness of creed" – in other words, discussing points of difference remains a purely intellectual exercise. This is observed in the earliest-surviving prototypes as well as in the later works from the Ottoman period.

(2) **Disengagement of Interrelated Concepts**: Although marked by scholarly rivalry, these works sought to probe into an entangled web of interrelated concepts – particularly the problems of human agency, divine Attributes and the role of reason. The sheer similarity between the two schools in terms of overall objectives and principles contributes to the difficulty with which some concepts are treated. In the Māturīdī instance, scholars would attempt to define a "unique" doctrinal identity. Since the status quo accepts two schools as equal representatives of Sunnī orthodoxy, Māturīdī theologians seek to purify an "authentically Māturīdī" doctrine on a particular problem. In the Ash'arī case, however, theologians attempt to emphasize the insignificance of these subtle differences as highlighted by their Māturīdī counterparts.

(3) **Comparative Theology**: Indeed these works bear strong elements of Muslim heresiography in that they outline doctrinal differences and points of disagreement between two "sects" of Islam. But, unlike typical heresiographical literature which tend to divide the wayward sects of Islam in opposition to the "sect that will attain salvation" (*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamā'a*), these titles commonly declare Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs to be equal representative of sound and correct creed. Furthermore, in terms of formal structure, these works cannot be immediately classed as properly theological.

Given the wide-ranging concepts and problems that they deal with, the Ash'arī-Māturīdī disputation literature is closer in scope (but not in size) to small to medium-sized introductory tracts to the science of *Kalām.* But, in comparison with the plan of conventional manuals of *kalām* (beginning with introducing concepts and definitions, followed by thematic parts and divisions), the arrangement of problems and reasoning methodology in the Ash'arī-Māturīdī disputation literature follow a plan which perhaps may best be described as "comparative doctrinal theology".

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Finally, a note on the history of the later *kalām* tradition. In the field of doctrinal and theological sciences, the fact that Ash'arī-Māturīdī debates was a later Ottoman intellectual movement challenges – for example – the common wisdom which suggests early antagonism

between the two schools, followed by mutual tolerance in the post-Classical period. This, in fact, is the exact understanding of the relation between the two schools made by the Egyptian Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī who died in the year 845/1442. But, clearly this predates the advent of a body of literature of which more than forty titles are documented in this thesis. The present study showed that the relation between the two schools fluctuated beyond the simple antagonism-versus-tolerance template.

Also, whether this theological disputation literature fits in with the common understanding that Sunnī theology underwent a post-Classical (post-XII century) philosophical "turn" is an inquiry which demands further investigation. A preliminary examination of the attitude of scholars who engaged in these debates towards philosophical theology reveal a commonly-held antipathy to what they saw as the excessive involvement of philosophy in later Ashʿarī *kalām*. This is certainly evident in the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, Akmal al-Dīn al-Bābartī, Ibn al-Humām, Ākḥiṣārī, Bayāḍīzādah, Shaykhzādah, Mastjizādah, Sachalizādah, Qīrshahrī and others who have been discussed in this study. If we admit that the later *kalām* tradition comprises two modes of theology: philosophical theology, and anti (or semi)-philosophical, but historically-later, theological scholarship, then the Ashʿarī-Māturīdī disputation literature belongs to the latter. It seems more of a parallel development – and to a certain extent – a reaction to the philosophy-laden theology of later Ashʿarism. In view of this, presupposing a "turn" in Sunnī theology appears problematic in view of a historical continuum which does not end in the ninth/fifteenth but extends to the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

Study of the disputations between Ash'arism and Māturīdism offers valuable insights on the history and development of both schools. Historically, however, disputing and opposition to the other was – by and large – a Māturīdī phenomenon. Preoccupation with the Ash'arīs is observed in the earliest Māturīdī texts (with the exception of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī himself), and continued through to the post-Classical period when Ash'arism had established unrivalled doctrinal predominance in mainstream Sunnism. Then, of necessity, this study is also a historical survey of the school of Māturīdī in terms of its relation to Ash'arism – which was to a great extent part and parcel of the school's self-perception.

The school of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī emerged as the mouthpiece of the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa in the fourth/tenth century. We saw in chapter one that beyond the Transoxanian origins of the doctrine, the science of *kalām* had acquired heretical associations in other parts of the Muslim world. Although some leading Ḥanafīs – particularly in Iraq and west Khorāsān – were followers of Mu'tazilism, there were more Ḥanafīs who preferred a traditionalist theology based on the transmitted creedal statements attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa (the authenticity of which invariably rejected by the Ḥanafī Mu'tazilah). A brief historical-geographical survey of leading Ḥanafīs towards the end of the fourth/tenth century showed that the science of *Kalām* in Transoxania did not have the heretical associations it assumed – in varying degrees – in other parts of the Muslim world. Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī originated a theological system which judiciously employed *Kalām* in defense of a Sunnī doctrine based on the transmitted statements of Abū Ḥanīfa (Abū Manṣūr was also a chief narrator in them).

Abū Manṣūr's theology did not quickly spread to other centers of Ḥanafism, and it was certainly largely unknown in Iraq, home to Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ash'arī – a contemporary of Māturīdī whose teaching would in a short space of time become recognized as a leading Sunnī *madhhab.* Ash'arism – like Māturīdism – employed the science of *kalām* for the defense of Sunnī traditionalism. Ash'arīs' traditionalism was – however – not based on Abū Ḥanīfa and it principally attracted followers of the Mālikī and Shāfi'ī schools of law. The origins of the 'disputes' discussed in this study go back to the critical relation between Ash'arīs and their Ḥanafī counterparts during the classical period. We saw aspects of the changing attitude of the Ash'arīs towards Abū Ḥanīfa and his ideas concerning faith, the definition of religion and divine attributes. Although Ash'arīs were largely unaware of the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī during the classical period, their critical engagement of some Ḥanafī

doctrines constitutes the basis of the Disputes, Doctrinal Disagreements, or Intellectual Controversies that would eventually become a leading theme and prominent genre of religious literature under the Ottomans.

On the other hand, Ashʿarī figures prominently in classical Māturīdī writings, and – as we saw in chapter two – pioneers of the school critically engaged with many doctrines which they saw as opposed to the common doctrine of Sunnism (*ahl al-sunna wal-jamāʿa*). This divergence between the attitude of the early Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs to each other is also the root of a defining feature of the later literature of disputes. As far as the classical period is concerned (covering the fourth/tens to the end of the sixth/twelfth century), we note that while Ashʿarīs were largely silent or indifferent to Ḥanafī doctrines that may be at odd with their theological system, Māturīdīs consistently and astutely engaged with Ashʿarī opinions that they deemed to disagree with their principles. Ashʿarī indifference to its Māturīdī counterpart was even more comprehensive in the more philosophically-inclined Ashʿarī texts of the seventh and eighth centuries. This later Muslim *Kalām* tradition, although largely affiliated with Ashʿarism, was more concerned with discussions from philosophy, science and methods of reasoning rather than defense of certain doctrinal positions.

Later examinations and perceptions of the great Classical intellectual debate between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism – which is especially conspicuous in many canonical Māturīdī texts – led to the attempt to revisit their points of disputes. Beginning with the early eighth/fourteenth century, we witness the emergence of an approach defined by juxtaposition of the two schools and discussing their points of disagreement. Interestingly, some the earliest scholars who wrote on these disputes were powerful critics of the increasing philosophisation of Ashʿarī *Kalām* – in particular Ibn Taymiyya and al-Subkī.

The Ottoman, who would dominate over large parts of the Muslim world from the ninth/fifteenth century to the modern era, endorsed Ḥanafism as the official school of law. We note in chapter three how the classical Ottoman period (mid ninth/fifteenth towards the end of tenth/sixteenth century) largely operated within the radius of later Ashʿarism the Ottomans, although Ḥanafī Turks, espoused and defended Ashʿarī doctrines and Ashʿarī texts constituted the main texts of their school's curricula. A by-product of Ashʿarism having generally a preferential status among early Ottoman scholars was a concomitant indifference to the disputes with Māturīdism, or – when upon encounters with problematic doctrines –

the persistence of the typical Ashʿarī approach to the disputes with Māturīdī as minimal and carrying no philosophical weight.

In the eleventh/seventeenth century, we notice a changing face of Ottoman theology; we observe the growing interest in dogma and sound creedal positions – as opposed to argumentation and analytical verification – in theological literature. As far as doctrinal affiliation is concerned, Ottoman theologians would affirm their Ḥanafī identity more than before. This continuum of development – discussed in Chapter Four – can be divided into the following stages: (1) It begins with renowned Ottoman scholar al-Birkawī, who affirms sound Sunnī creed in line with the theology of Abū Ḥanīfa. Then, (2) with Ḥasan Kāfī al-Āḳḥiṣārī, who plays a key role in the renewed popularization of the theology of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī and is among the earliest to consider his doctrine to be a faithful reflection of the creed of Abū Ḥanīfa. (3) As the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism were largely dominated by the Ashʿarī approach – and in light of a common tendency to undermine the status of Māturīdī, even among followers of Ḥanafism – we have the next major phase in Ottoman Māturīdism at the hands of Aḥmad Bayāḍīzādah and his seminal work *Ishārāt al-marām min Ibarat al-Imām.* This work was a valiant defense of Māturīdism and its arguments revolved around fifty disputed doctrines between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism. It was the most thorough and serious examination and reappraisal of Māturīdī theology since the classical period, and was quickly acknowledged as the new authoritative standard of Māturīdism. In this view, Bayāḍīzādah brought to light a reinvigorated Rūmī-Ottoman Māturīdī canon.

After Bayāḍīzādah, and from the early twelfth/eighteenth century, interest in Māturīdism intensified in Ottoman scholarship in general. Furthermore, this interest took a bibliographical form and we observe a continuous stream of titles on the disputes between Ashʿarism and Māturīdism well into the thirteenth/nineteenth century. Ottoman scholars, who mostly hailed or flourished in the geographical area corresponding to modern-day Turkey, produced titles in defense of Māturīdism and in defining its place vis-à-vis other schools of doctrines, in particular Ashʿarism. This unyielding Ottoman affirmation of Māturīdism received critical responses in the nearby Arab east – in the intellectual centers of al-Ḥaramyn, Cairo, Damascus, and Baghdād. By the thirteenth/nineteenth century, a genre of *kalām* was in place which includes – in addition to the pioneering Ottoman vindications of Māturīdism – works to the opposite effect by Ashʿarī theologians. This study argues that this genre, which is neither heresiographical nor consistent with the literature of proper *kalām,* was a novel product of later Islamic theology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

## I.    Cited Manuscripts

Āk̲h̲iṣārī al-Bosnawi, Ḥasan Kāfī *Niẓām al-'ulama ila khatam al-anbiya'*, Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, MS Kat. Br. 896 (written in Prusac in 1026/1617 by Khalīl an-Nawabadi).

_____ *Azhār al-'Rawḍāt fi Sharḥ 'Rawḍāt al-jannāt,* Staatsbibliothek Berlin, MS or.quart.56.

Āqkirmānī, Muḥammad b. Muṣṭafa Hāmid *Af'āl al-Ibad wa irāda guz'iyya bayānanda bir Risāla,* Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, MS Kat. Br. 746, (written in 1179/1765, 55 fols).

_____ *Nubda fi ta'rifat al-funun wa manāqib al-musanifin,* Oriental Manuscripts at the State Library of Berlin, MS Landberg 394, 60 fols.

Al-'Alamī, Isma'īl b. Aḥmad al-Trabzoni *Qaṣīda fi al-khilāf,* Konya İl Halk Kütüphanesi, MS BY9434.

Ibn 'Allān, Muḥammad Ali *al-Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya ala al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* King Sa'ud University Manuscript Collection, MS 214/m,'ayn/504 (written in 1121/1710).

_____*al-Mawāhib al-fatiḥiyya ala al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* uncatalogued (320 folios, last owned in Damascus by Hussein b. 'Ismā'īl al-'Amiri, known as Ibn al-Ghazzi, in 1263/1847).

Birkawī, Muḥammad bin Pīr 'Alī, *Vaṣīyet-nāme,* Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, MS B. or. 045.

_____ *Tuhfat al-mustarshidin fi bayān madhāhib firaq al-muslimin*, University of Tokyo Daiber Collection, MS 1136.

Al-Dabbāg̲h̲ī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad *al-Risāla al-munjiya min tashni' al-Mu'tazilah wa waswasat al-Jabriyya fi madkhaliyat ikhtiyār al-Abd fi af'ālihi al-'ikhtiyāriyya,* Dubai: Jum'a al-Majīd Manuscript Collection, MS 228778 (original copy preserved in Damascus written in 1170/1756 by Muṣṭafa b. Ḥasan, 38 folios)

Al-Danūsharī, 'Abd Allah *Risāla fi kalimat la ilaha illa Allah,* Jum'a al-Majīd Centre for Culture and Heritage Dubai, MS 370782.

Al-Fārūqī, 'Umar al-Hātifī *al-Risāla al-wajiza fi bayān al-farq bayna al-'Ash'arīyya wa al-Māturīdīyya,* Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya, MS 324025 (25 fols).

Al-Kafawī [al-Kafaoui], Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān *Kata'ib A'lām al-akhyār [Ṭabaqāt al-Kafaoui],* Iran Kitāb-Khānah-i Majlis-i Shura-yi Milli, MS 4133.

Al-Mag̲h̲nīsāwī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar,* University of Tokyo Daiber Collection, MS 1062.

Al-Nābulusī, 'Abd al-Ghanī *al-Qawl al-sadid fi jawaz khulf al-wa'id wa al-rad 'ala al-jahil al-Rūmī al-'anid,* Maktabat al-Haram al-Makki, MS 3820.

Naw'ī Efendi *Fi al-farq bayna al-Asha'ira wa al-Māturīdīyya* in Anon. *Risāla fi al-Basmala,* Dar al-Kotob al-Qawmiyya – Cairo, MS 297 Majamī' Taymūr.

Al-Qarṣī, Dāwūd b. Muḥammad *Risāla fi bayān mas'ala al-ikhtiyārat al-guziyya wa al-irādat al-qalbiyya,* Gazi Husrev-Begova Bibllioteka, MS Kat br.711  (written in 1159/1746 by Shahri Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmed ef., fols.87b-97a).

Rajab Ibn Aḥmad *al-Wasīla al-Aḥmadiyya,* University of Tokyo Daiber Collection, MS 1023.

Ramaḍān Efendi, Ramadan b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-shaykh ramadan b. Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī ʿala Sharḥ al-Saʿd...,* Manuscript Collection at King Saʾud University, MS 214/sh. r. (3899), (written by Musa b. Aḥmad in 1017/1608).

Al-Rūmī, Ḥusayn b. Iskender, *Majmaʾ al-muhimmāt al-Dīniyya ala madhhab al-Ḥanafīyya,* Riyadh: King Saʾud Manuscript Collection, MS 2/1377 f. 6817 (69 fols, written in twelfth/eighteenth century).

Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī *Taʿdīl al-ʿUlūm ,* Oriental Manuscripts at the State Library of Berlin, MS Landberg 394).

Sachalizādah, Muḥammad b. Ebi Bekr *Radd al-Jalal,* University of Tokyo Daiber Collection, MS.1125, fols.5b-10a.

_____ *Risāla fi al-Ikhtiyār al-Juzʾy,* Milli Kütüphane-Ankara - Ankara Adnan Ötüken İl Halk Kütüphanesi Collection, MS 06 Hk 2219, fols.57a-59b.

Al-Shāwī, Yaḥya b. Muḥammad*, Qurrat al-ʿAyn fi jamʾ al-bayn*, Riyad: ʿAbd al-Aziz Manuscript Library, MS 3 (1205), written in 1233/1818.

_____ *Qurrat al-Ayn fi jamʾ al-bayn,* al-Haram al-Makki Library, MS.1426.

Al-Sīnopī, Ilyās b. Ibrahīm *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-ʿAkbar,* Manuscript Collection at King Saʾud University, MS 214/sh.sh. (1438), written by Aḥmad al-Dalenjawi in 1100/1688.

Al-Sīwāsī, ʿAbd al-Majīd Aḥmad, *Durar al-aqaʾid wa gurar kull saʾiq wa qaʾid,* Gazi Husreve-Begova Biblioteka, MS Kat. Br.742.

## II.    Primary Sources in Print

Abū Adhaba, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Muhsin *al-Rawḍa al-bahiyya fi ma bayna al-Ashaʾira wa al-Māturīdīyya,* Hyderabad: Dar al-Maʾarif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1322/1904.

Al-Ākḥiṣārī, Ḥasan Kāfī *Nūr al-yaqīn fi ʿuṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Zuhdi A. al-Bosnawi), Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykan, 1997.

Al-Asadabadi, ʿAbd al-Jabbar b. Aḥmad, *Fadl al-Iʿtizal wa ṭabaqāt al-Muʿtazilah,* edited by Fuʾad al-Sayyid, Tunis: al-dar al-Tunisiyya lil nashr, [date unknown].

Ibn ʿAsākir, Ali b. al-Ḥasan, *Tabyīn kathb al-muftarī fi mā nusiba ʾila al-ʾImām al-ʾAshʿarī* (edited by Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī), al-Tawfiq Press, Damascus, 1347[1928].

Al-ʾAshʿarī, ʿAlī bin ʿIsmāʿīl, *Maqālāt al-ʾIslamiyeen wa ikhtilaf al-Mussalin,* Saida: al-Maktaba al-ʾAsriya, 2009.

_____ *Al-ʾIbāna ʿan ʿuṣūl al-diyāna* Beirut: Dar Ibn Zaydun, [undated].

Al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn Ḥajar Aḥmad b. ʿAlī *al-Durar al-kāmina fi aʾyan al-miʾa al-thamina,* Hyderabad: Dar al-Maʾarif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1349/1930 [4 vols].

Al-Azharī, ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Saʿīdī *al-Manhal al-sayyal a-dafiʾ lima nashaʾa min khilāf al-ʾAshʿarī wa al-Māturīdī mina al-ʾIshkal* (edited by Sayyid K. Ḥasan), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 2008.

Al-Bābartī, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-ʿaqīda al-Tahāwīyyah* (edited by ʿAbd al-Salām Shannar), Beirut: Dar al-Beiruti, 2009.

_____ *Sharḥ waṣiyyat al-'Imām 'abi Ḥanīfa* (edited by Muḥammad al-'Aydi and Ḥamza al-Bakri), Amman: Dar al-Fath, 2009.

Al-Baghdādī, ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. Tahir *al-Tabṣira al-Baghdādīya* (published as *"kitāb 'uṣūl al-Dīn"*), Beirut: Manshurat dar al-'afaq al-jadida, , 1981.

_____ *al-farq bayna al-firaq*, Cairo: Maktabat Nashr al-Thaqafa al-Islamiyya, 1948.

Al-Baghdādī, Diya' al-Dīn Khālid *Ḥāshiya ala al-Sialkutti 'ala al-Khayālī,* Istanbul, 1259/1843.

Bahā' al-Dīn-zādah, Muḥammad *al-Qawl al-faṣl: Sharḥ al-fiqh al-Akbar lil'Imām Abi Ḥanīfa* (edited by Rafiq al-Ajam), Beirut: Darl al-Muntakhab al-Arabi, 1998.

Bayāḍīzādah, Aḥmad b. Ḥasan *Ishārāt al-marām min 'Ibārāt al-Imām* (edited by Yūsuf 'Abd al-Razzaq), Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babi al-Halabi Press, 1949 [reprinted by al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya lil-Turath, 2008].

Al-Bayṭar, ʿAbd al-Razzāq *Ḥilyat al-bashar fi ta'rīkh al-qarn al-thālith 'ashar* (edited by Muḥammad B. al-Baytar), Beirut: Dar Sader, 1993.

Al-Bazdawī, Abū l-Yusr *'uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Hans Peter Lans), Cairo: al-Maktaba al-'Azhāriyya lil-turath, 2003.

Al-Birkawī, Muḥammad b. Pir Ali *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya fi bayān al-sira al-nabawiyya al-'Aḥmadiyya,* Istanbul: Matba'at al-Haj Mahram Efendi, 1280/1863.

Al-Burīnī, al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad *Tarājim al-a'yān min abnā' al-zaman* (edited by Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjid), Damascus: Matbu'at al-Majma' al-'Ilmi bi Dimashq, 1963.

Chelebī, Kātib *Fezlektu akwali'l-akhyar fi 'ilm't-tarih ve'l-ahbar* (edited by Seyyid Mumammad es-Seyyid), Ankara, Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 2009.

_____ *Sullam al-w'uṣūl ila ṭabaqāt al-fuhul* (edited by Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Qāḍīr al-Arna'ut), Istanbul: Ircica, 2010 [6 vols.].

_____ *Mīzān al-ḥaqq fī ikhtiyār al-aḥaqq,* Istanbul: Matbaa-yi Ebuzziya, 1306/1888.

_____ *Kashf al-ẓunūn 'ann asami al-kotob wa al-funūn,* Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthanna, 1941.

Ibn Fūrak, *Sharḥ al-'ālim wa al-muta'allim* (ed. Aḥmad al-Sayih & Tawfiq Wahba), Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Dīniyya, 2009.

Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid, *Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayn al-'Islam wa al-Zandaqa,* edited by Mahmoud Bijou, 1993.

_____ *al-Mustaṣfa* (edited by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Salām al-Shafi), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993.

_____ *al-Mankhul min ta'liqat al-'uṣūl* (edited by Muḥammad H. Hito), Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1980.

Al-Khādimī, Abū Sa'īd *Bariqa Maḥmūdiyya fi Sharḥ ṭarīqa Muḥammadiyya wa Sharī'a nabawiyya fi sira Aḥmadiyya,* Cairo: Matba'at al-Halabi, 1348/1930, [4 vols.].

Al-Ḥaydarī, Ibrahīm Fasih *al-Majd al-tālid fi manāqib hazrat mawlana Khālid,* Istanbul: Hashimi Yaynevi, 2014.

Al-'Isfarā'īnī, Abū al-Muẓaffar *al-Tabsir fi al-Dīn wa tamyiz al-firqa al-najiya an firaq al-halikin* (ed. M. Z. al-Kawtharī) Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Azhāriyya, 1998.

Al-Jurjānī, 'Alī b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 1998 [8 vols.].

Ibn Kamāl Pasha *Khams rasa'il fi al-firaq wal madhāhib* (edited by Seyit Bahgivan), Cairo: Dar al-Salām publishers, 2005.

Al-Khabbāzī, Jalāl al-Dīn *Kitāb al-Hādī fi 'uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Adel Beybek), Istanbul, 2006.

al-Khānji al-Bosnawi, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad *al-Jawhar al-'Asna fi tarajim ulama wa shu'ara' Bosna* (edited 'Abd al-Fattah Muḥammad al-Hilw), Cairo: Hajr Publishers, 1992.

Al-Kindī, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-wulat wa k. al-Qudat* ( edited by al-Mazidi and 'Ismā'īl), Dar al-Kotob al-'ilmiyya, Beirut, 2003.

Al-Kittānī, 'Abd al-Ḥayy *Fahras al-fahāris wa al-athbāt wa mu'jam al-ma'ājim wal mashyakhāt wa al-musalsalāt* (edited by Ihsan Abbas), Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1982 [2nd ed.].

Al-Kurdī, Faraj-Allah Zaki (compiler) *Majmu'at al-hawashi al-bahiyya 'ala Sharḥ al-'aqā'id al-Nasafīyya* [4 vls.], Cairo: Matba'at Kurdīstan al-'Ilmiyya, 1329/1911.

Al-Laknawi, Muḥammad *al-Fawa'id al-bahiyya fi tarajim al-Ḥanafīyya* (edited by Aḥmad al-Zu'bi), Beirut: Dar al-'Arqam, 1998.

Al-Lamishi, Abu-l Thana' Maḥmūd bin Zayd *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li qawa'id al-tawḥīd,* edited by 'Abd al-Majīd Turki, Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-'Islami, 1995.

Al-Maqbalī, Salih b. Mahdi *al-Alam al-Shāmikh fi ithar al-haq ala al-aba' wal mashayikh,* Cairo, 1328/1910.

Al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad b. Ali *Durar al-'uqud al-fariḍa fi tarajim al-'a'yan al-mufida* (edited by Maḥmūd al-Jalili), Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-'Islami [4 volumes], 2002.

_____ *al-Mawa'iḍ wa al-i'tibār fi dhikr al-khiṭṭ wa al-'āthār,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 1997.

Al-Māturīdī, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad *Ta'wīlāt ahl al-Sunna* (edited by Majdi Basaloum), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyya, 2005. [10 volumes]

_____ *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (edited by Fathalla Kholeif) Bayreuth: Dar el-Machreq, 1970.

Mastjizādah, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Uthmān *al-Masālik fi al-khilāfiyyat bayna al-mutakallimin wa al-hukama'* (edited by Seyit Bahgivan), Beirut: Dar Sader, 2007.

Al-Munāwī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf *Kitāb Sharḥ al-'Allama al-Munawa ala Sharḥ al-Qaṣīdar al-'ayniyya fi al-nafs wal-ruh lil ra'is Ibn Sina,* Cairo: Matba'at al-Mawsu'at, 1900.

Al-Muqaddasī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-'aqālīm,* Leiden: Brill, 1877.

Al-Nābulusī, 'Abd al-Ghanī *al-kawkab al-sārī fi ḥaqīqat al-juz' al-ikhtiyāri* (edited by Muḥammad Ragib al-Tabbakh), Halab: al-Matba'a al-'Ilmiyya, 1931.

_____ *al-Hādīqa al-nadiyya fi Sharḥ al-ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya,* Cairo, 1276/1859.

Al-Nadīm, Abū Faraj Muḥammad, *al-Fihrist* (edited by Ayman Fu'ad al-Sayyid), 4 volumes, London: Mu'assasat al-Furqan, 2009.

Al-Narshakhī, *Tarkih Bukhārā,* edited by Amin Badawi and Naṣr TarRāzī, dar al-ma'arif, Cairo, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1993.

Al-Nasafī, Abū al-Mu'īn Maymoun b. Muḥammad, *Tabṣirat al-'Adilla fi 'uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Husayn Atay), Ankara, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1993.

Al-Qārī, Mulla Ali, *Marqāt al-Mafātīḥ Sharḥ mishkat al-masabih,* Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2002, 9 vols.

_____ *Sharḥ al-amali,* Istanbul: Salah Bilci Kitābevi, [undated].

_____ *Minah al-rawd al-'Azhār fi Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-akbar* (edited by Wahby Sulaymān Ghawji), Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-'Islamiyya, 1998.

_____ *al-Qawl al-sadid fi khulf al-wa'id,* Tanta: Dar al-Sahaba lil-Turath, 1992.

_____ *al-Qawl al-sadid fi khulf al-wa'id,* Tanta: Dar al-Sahaba lil-Turath, 1992.

Al-Qarṣī, Dāwūd b. Muḥammad *Sharḥ al-'allama Dawūd b. Muḥammad al-Qarsi al-Ḥanafī lil Qaṣīda al-Nūniyya al-tawḥīdiyya,* Istanbul: Matba'at Sharikat Sahafiyya, 1318/1900.

Al-Qasṭallānī, Muṣṭafa *Serh-il Akaidi kesteli,* Istanbul: Salah Bilici Kitābevi, [undated].

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr *'Asma' mu'allafat Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya* (edited by Salah al-Dīn al-Munajjid), Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-Jadid, 1983.

Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* Beirut: Dar 'Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, [3rd edition; 32 vols.] 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Munaẓarāt fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fi bilad mawara'annahr* (edited by Fathullah Kholeif), Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Muḥaṣṣal afkar al-mutaqaddimin wal muta'akhirin mina al-'ulama wal hukama' wal mutakallimin,* Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Husayniyya, 1323/1905.

Al-Rūmī, Ḥusayn b. Iskandar, *al-Jawhara al-munifa fi Sharḥ waṣiyyat Abi Ḥanīfa,* Hyderabad: Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Niẓāmiyya, 1321/1904.

Sachalizādah, Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr al-Mar'ashi *Tartīb al-'Ulūm* (edited by Mumammad b. Isma'īl al-Sayyid Aḥmad), Beirut: Dar al-Basha'ir al-Islamiyya, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Nashr al-Ṭawāli'* (edited by Muḥammad Yūsuf Idris), Amman: Dar al-Nūr al-Mubin, 2011.

Al-Sālimī, Abū Shakūr *Tamhīd abi Shakūr* Delhi: al-Matba' al-Fārūqī, 1309 [1891].

Al-Ṣabūnī, Nūr al-Dīn *al-Bidāya fi 'uṣūl al-Dīn* (edited by Bakr Topaloglu), Istanbul: al-Maktaba al-Hanifiyyah, 1979.

A-Samarqandī, Abū l-Layth *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-'akbar* (edited by 'Abdallah al-'Ansari) Doha: Al-shu'un al-Dīniyyah, [undated]

Al-Samarqandī, Shams al-Dīn *al-Ṣaḥā'if al-'ilahiyyah* (Aḥmad al-Sharīf), Kuwait, 1405 [1985].

Al-Ṣan'anī, Muḥammad b. Isma'īl *al-Anfās al-rahmāniyya fi abḥāth al-Ifaḍa al-Madaniyya* (edited by Ali b. 'Abdah b. Ali al-Alma'i), Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2007.

Al-Shahrastānī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (edited by Muḥammad S. al-Geylani), Cairo: Muṣṭafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1975 [3 vols.].

Shaykhzādah, 'Abd al-Rahīm b. 'Alī *Naẓm al-farā'id wa jam' al-fawā'id* (edited by Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Na'sani), Cairo: Matba'at al-Taqaddum, 1323/1905.

Al-Sindī, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Hādī *al-Ifaḍa al-Madaniyya fi al-irāda al-juz'iyya* (edited by Ali b. 'Abdah Ali al-Alma'i), Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2007.

Al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-kubra* (edited by Mahmoud al-Ṭanāḥī and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Ḥilou), Cairo: Dar 'ihya' al-kotob al-'Arabiyyah, [undated].

_____ "al-Sayf al-mash'hūr fi Sharḥ 'aqīdat abi Manṣūr" in Yeprem, M. Saim *Māturīdī'nin Akide risalesi ve serhi*, Istanbul: Marmara Universitesi Ilahiyat Fakultesi, 2000.

Al-Taftāzānī, Sa'd al-Dīn *Sharḥ al-Talwih 'ala al-tawdih*, Cairo [reprinted by Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'ilmiyyah, undated]:, 1377 [1957].

_____ *Sharḥ al-'aqā'id al-Nasafīyyah* (edited by Muḥammad A. Darwish), Istanbul: Fazilet Neshriyat ve Ticaret, [undated].

_____ *Sharḥ al-maqāṣid* (edited by 'Abd al-Rahman Umayrah), Beirut: 'Alam al-Kotob, 1998.

Ṭāshkubrī'zādah, Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafa *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniyya fi ulama' al-dawla al-'uthmaniyya* [followed by *al-'iqd al-manthum fi thikr afadil al-Rūm* by al-Aydini, Ali b. Bali] (Edited by Muḥammad Tabatabai), Tehran: Library, museum and documentation centre of Islamic Conslutative Assembly (Majlies-e Shura-ye Eslami), 2010.

_____ *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda wa misbah al-riyada fi mawdu'at al-'Ulūm* (editor unknown), Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, 1985.

Al-Turkistānī, Hibat Allāh b. Aḥmad *Sharḥ al-'aqīdah al-Tahāwīyyah* (edited by Jad Allah Bassam), Amman: Dar al-Nūr al-Mubin, 2014.

Al-'Uryānī, 'Uthmān b. 'Abd Allāh *Sharḥ al-Qaṣīda al-Nūniyya*, Istanbul: Sharikat Sahafiyya 'Uthmaniyya, 1301/1884.

Al-Zabīdī, Murtaḍā *Itḥāf al-Sada al-mutaaqqin fi Sharḥ iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, Dar al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyah: Beirut, 2002.

## III.    Selected Secondary Sources

Akkach, Samer *Letters of a Ṣūfī scholar: the correspondence of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731)*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010.

_____ *Intimate invocations: al-Ghazzi's biography of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641 – 1731)*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012.

Badeen, Edward *Sunnitische Theologie in osmanischer Zeit* Orient-Institut: Instanbul, 2008.

Bruckmayr, Philipp "The Spread and Persistence of Māturīdī Kalām and Underlying Dynamics" *Iran and the Caucasus*, v. 13 no. 1, pp. 59- 92, 2009.

_____ "The Particular Will (*al-irādat al-juz'iyya*): Excavations Regarding a LatecʿUmar in *Kalām* Terminology on human Agency and its Position in Naqshabandi Discourse" *European Journal of Turkish Studies,* Vol 13, 2011.

Ceric, Muṣṭafa *Roots of synthetic theology in Islam : a study of the theology of Abū Manṣūr Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944)* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1995.

Frank, Richard M. *Texts and studies on the development and history of Kalām* (edited by Dimitri Gutas) Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005-c2008.

_____ "the Science of Kalām," Arabic Science and Philosophy 2 (1992), 7 – 37.

_____ *Al-Ghazālī and the ʿAshʿarite School* Duke University Press, 1994.

Ghawji, Wahba S., *Nathra ʿilmiya fi nisbat kitāb al-ʾIbāna Jāmiʿuhu ʿila al-Imām Abi al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī,* Dar ibn Hazm, Beirut, 1989.

Gimaret, Daniel *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* Paris: Cerf, 1990.

Al-Habashi, ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad *Jāmiʿ al-shuruh wal-hawashi,* Abū Dhabi: al-Majma' al-Thaqafi, 2004.

İhsanoğlu, Ekmeleddin (editor and co-author) *History of the Ottoman State and Civilization* (translated into Arabic by Salih Saʿdawi), Istanbul: IRCICA, 1999.

_____ Ihsanoglu, Ekmeleddin "the Madrasas of the Ottoman Empire" published by Foundation for Science and Technology and Civilisation (UK), no. 4055, April 2004.

Jackson, Sherman A., *On the boundaries of theological tolerance in Islam: Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghāzalī's Fayṣal al-Tafriqa bayna al-Islam wa al-zandaqa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Katip Chelebi, *The balance of Truth* (translated by G. L. Lewis), London: Geogre Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957.

Kholeif, Fathalla *A study on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and his controversies in Transoxiana* Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq, 1966.

Ma'rouf, Bashar Awwad  in "Abū al-Ḥasan al-'Ashʿarī 'inda mutarjimih ila al-qarn al-thamin al-hijri" [Biographies of Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʾAshʿarī's until the eighth century AH.], *al-Jathwa*, v.1, April 2003.

Madelung, Wilfred "The Spread of Māturīdism among the Turks" in *Religious and ethnic movements in medieval Islam* Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain: Variorum ; Brookfield, Vt., USA: Ashgate Pub. Co., 1992.

_____ "Abu'l Muʿīn al-Nasafī and Ashʿarī Theology" in C. Hillenbrand (ed.), *Studies in honour of C. E. Bosworth, The sutlan's turrent: studies in the Persian and Turkish culture,* Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Makdisi, George 'Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History I' *Studia Islamica,* No. 17 (1962), pp. 37 – 80.

_____ 'Ashʿarī and the Ashʿarites in Islamic Religious History II' *Studia Islamica,* No. 18 (1963), pp. 19 – 39.

Marmura, Michael E. "Ghazālī and Ashʿarism Revisited" in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, vol. 12 (2002) pp. 91-110.

McCarthy, Richard J. *The theology of al-'Ashʿarī,* Imprimerie Catholique: Beyrouth, 1953.

Melchert, Christopher *The formation of the Sunnī schools of law, 9ᵗʰ – 10ᵗʰ centuries C.E.,* Brill, Leiden, 1997.

Al-Muqaddasi (Basil Anthony Collins - Translator): *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions. AḤasan al-TaQāsim Fi Maʿrifat al-Aqalim.* Garnet Publishing, Reading, 1994.

Ozervarli , M. Sait "The Authenticity of the Mansucript of Māturīdī's Kitāb al-Tawḥīd: A Re-Examination" *Islam Arastirmalari Dergisi*, Vol 1, 1997, pp. 19 – 29.

Pessagno, Merc J. "Irāda, Ikhtiyār, Qudra, Kasb: the view of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī" *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 104, No. 1, Studies in Islam and the Ancient Near East Dedicated to Franz Rosenthal (Jan. – Mar. 1984), pp. 177 – 191.

Al-Qassar, Aḥmad Hādī (editor) *Rasa'il al-Birkawī,* Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-ʿIlmiyya, 2005.

El-Rouayheb, Khaled "Post-Avicennan Logicians on the Subject matter of Logic: Some thirteenth- and fourteenth-century discussions" *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy,* vol. 22 (2012), pp. 69 – 90.

_____"Sunnī Muslim Scholars on the Status of Logic, 1500 – 1800" *Islamic Law and Society,* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2004), pp. 213 – 232.

_____ "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the seventeenth Century" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May, 2006), pp. 263-281.

Rudloph, Ulrich *Al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand* (translated by Rodrigo Adem) Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Schmidtke, Sabine (editor) *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

al-Shāfiʿī, Ḥasan *Al-Madkhal ila dirasat ilm al-Kalām*, Karachi, Idarat al-Qur'ān wa al-Uloom al-Islamiyyah, 2001.

Sonmez, Kutlu *Imām Māturīdī ve Māturīdīlik*, Ankara: Otto Yayınevi, 2003.

Street, Tony "Concerning the life and works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī" in *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society - A Festschrift in Honour of Anthony H.Johns* (edited by Tony Street and Peter G. Riddell), Leiden ; NY ; Koln: Brill, 1997, pp.135-147.

al-Taftāzānī, Mas'ud ibn ʿUmar *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam* (translated with notes and introduction by Earl Edgar Elder) Columbia, Columbia University press, 1950.

Ugur, Ali *The Ottoman Ulama in the mid-seventeenth century: an analysis of* Waka'i'ul-fuzala *of Mehmed Seyhi Ef.,* Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1986.

Watt, W MontgʿUmary *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* Edinburgh: University Press, 1973.

_____ *Islamic philosophy and theology: an extended survey* Edinburgh: University Press, 1985.
_____ *Islamic Creeds: A Selection.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

_____*Free will and predestination in Early Islam,* Luzac, 1948.

Winter, Tim *the Cambridge companion to classical Islamic theology* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Wisnovsky, R., "The nature and scope of Arabic philosophical commentary in post-classical (ca. 1100-1900 AD) Islamic intellectual history: Some preliminary observations", in P. Adamson, H. Baltussen and M.W.F. Stone, eds, *Philosophy, Science and Exegesis in Greek, Arabic and Latin Commentaries, Vol. 2, Supplement to the Bulletin of the Institute Of Classical Studies 83/1-2*, London: Institute of Classical Studies (2004), 149-191.

_____"One Aspect of the Avicennian Turn in Sunnī Theology" In *Arabic Sciencecs and Philosophy,* vol. 14 (2004), pp.65-100.

Yaman, Hikmet "Small theological differences, profound philosophical implications: notes on some of the chief differences between the Ash'arīs and Māturīdīs", in *Ankara universitesi ilahiyat fakultesi dergisi,* 51:1 (2010), pp.177 – 194.

Abū Zahra, Moḥammad Aḥmad *Tarikh al-madahib al-'islamiyya,* Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, [undated].