

**ON THE PROBABILITY OF THE CREATION OF THE IBN
TAYMIYYA SCHOOL OF OTTOMAN THOUGHT
VIA BIRGIWĪ MEḤMED EFENDĪ
– A Critical Approach –**

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Abstract

Ottoman religious thought is divided into two essential schools named after Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and Ibn Taymiyya. The Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī School is identified with Māturīdism, whereas Ottoman scholar Birgiwī MeḤmed Efendī (929-981/1523-1573) is considered a disciple of the Ibn Taymiyya School. Birgiwī's *madhhab* is often described as Salafī, Ḥanbalī, Ash'arī, or Māturīdī. This study assesses such claims using evidence from the sources whose attribution to Birgiwī is indisputable. An analysis of Birgiwī's works clearly shows that he is a member of the Māturīdī School. Nevertheless, the study reveals the necessity of reviewing certain classifications, denominations, and generalizations. Based on Birgiwī's extant works, this paper makes several objections to his being considered a representative or member of the Ibn Taymiyya School and demonstrates that Birgiwī is completely aligned with Māturīdī with regard to theological issues.

Key Words: Birgiwī MeḤmed Efendī, Ibn Taymiyya, Salafism, Māturīdism, Ottoman religious thought

Introduction

The Ottoman Empire existed for centuries and covered a vast geographical area. Studies on this era adopt numerous approaches and use a variety of definitions and classifications. According to one of these classifications, Ottoman religious thought is principally shaped by two schools: the ‘Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī School’ and the ‘Ibn Taymiyya School.’ According to this classification, Birgiwī Meḥmed Efendī (929-981/1523-1573) is a representative of the Ibn Taymiyya School.¹

The influence of Ibn Taymiyya in Wahhābī circles made his other circles of influence the subject of scholarly research. Prior to Wahhābism, Ibn Taymiyya’s views influenced certain scholarly circles in the vast Ottoman territory. In the history of Islamic sects, Salafism comes to mind as the first to incorporate the opinions of Ibn Taymiyya. According to certain academics, Salafism, however, is an ideology rather than a *madhhab*.² The acceptance of Salafism as a *madhhab* is unwelcome (*bid‘a*) to those who are tied to the *Salaf*.³

By consulting Birgiwī’s extant works, this study intends to reveal possible objections to his positioning within the Ibn Taymiyya School.

Birgiwī and the Ibn Taymiyya School

Birgiwī was born in Balıkesir in 929/1523.⁴ His father was mudarris Pīr ‘Alī who provided Birgiwī with his initial education.⁵ Birgiwī later

¹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Yeniçağlar Anadolu’sunda İslam’ın Ayak İzleri: Osmanlı Dönemi, Makaleler-Araştırmalar* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011), 178 (hereafter cited as *Osmanlı Dönemi*).

² Mehmet Hayri Kırbaçoğlu, “Maziden Atiye Selefî Düşüncenin Anatomisi,” *İslâmiyât* 10/1 (2007), 142.

³ Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *al-Salafiyya: marḥala zamanīyya mubāraka lā madhhab Islāmī* (8th edn., Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 2006), 219 ff.

⁴ In Birgiwī’s words, “I was born on the tenth day of Jamādī al-awwal in the year nine hundred twenty-nine (929).” See Muḥammad ibn Pīr ‘Alī al-Birgiwī, *Vasiyyet-nâme: Dil İncelemesi, Metin, Sözlük, Eklr İndeksi ve Tıpkıbasım* (ed. Musa Duman; Istanbul: Risale Yayınları, 2000), 122 (hereafter cited as *Vasiyyet-nâme*).

⁵ Abū Muḥammad Muştafâ ibn Hıusayn ibn Sinân al-Janābī, *al-‘Aylam al-zâkbir fî aḥwâl al-awâ’il wa-l-awâkbir* [also known as *Tārīkh al-Janābī*] (MS Istanbul,

left for Istanbul and attended courses taught by Akhī-zāda Meḥmed Efendī (d. 974/1563) and Qāḍī-‘askar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī (d. 983/1575). He was also a follower of ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaramānī (d. 972/1564-5), the Bayrāmī sheikh. At the recommendation of his sheikh, he resumed his courses and *irshād* activities. He was subsequently appointed *mudarris* of Dār al-Ḥadīth, which was built in Birgi at the behest of ‘Aṭā’ Allāh Efendī (d. 979/1571), the mentor of Sultan Selīm II (1566-1574).⁶ He spent the remainder of his life in Birgi, pursuing educational and writing activities. He became known by the name Birgiwī (from Birgi). In the twilight of his life, Birgiwī returned to Istanbul to advise Soqollu Meḥmed Pāshā (d. 987/1579), the Grand Vizier. Birgiwī passed away in 981/1573 and was interred in Birgi.⁷

Birgiwī’s views remained influential for many years. According to classical references, Birgiwī had many followers during the Ottoman era. Terzioğlu found the expression “*kbulaḥfā*’ of Birgiwī” among fatwās by As‘ad Efendī (Sheikh al-Islām between 1615-1622 and 1623-1625) and also “Birgiwīs” in a treatise written by one Ḥājī Aḥmad in 1056/1646-1647.⁸

Nuruosmaniye Library, no: 3100), 427a. Muḥammad ibn Bahā’ al-Dīn (d. 953/1546), the cousin of Birgiwī, consulted Pīr ‘Alī before writing a commentary on *al-Fiqh al-akbar* by al-Imām Abū Ḥanīfa; see Ḥājī Khalīfa Muṣṭafā ibn ‘Abd Allāh Kātib Chalabī (as Kātib Çelebi), *Mizānū’l-Hakk fī ibtīyārī’l-ebakk* [= *Mizān al-ḥaqq fī ikbtīyār al-aḥaqq*] (translated into Turkish Orhan Şaik Gökyay and Süleyman Uludağ; Istanbul: Kabcacı Yayinevi, 2008), 51, 179, 297.

⁶ For a description of Birgiwī’s educational activities at the madrasa, see Huriye Martı, *Osmanlı’da Bir Dâru’l-Hadis Şeybi: Birgivî Mehmed Efendi* (Istanbul: Dâru’l-hadis, 2008), 59 ff.

⁷ ‘Alī ibn Bālī, *al-‘Iqd al-manzūm fī dbikr afāḍil al-Rūm* [as an annex to *al-Sbaqā’iq al-Nu‘māniyya* by Ṭāshkuprī-zāda] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1975), 436-437; Naw‘ī-zāda ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadā’iq al-ḥaqqā’iq fī takmilat al-Sbaqā’iq* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), II, 179-181; For further information and sources about the life of Birgiwī, see Kasım Kufrevî, “Birgewī,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition* (eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs; accessed June 16, 2015), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1434.

⁸ Derin Terzioğlu, *Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyāzī-i Mişrī, 1618-1694* (PhD dissertation; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1999), 200, 202; id., “Sunna-minded sufi preachers in service of the ottoman state: the *naşihatnâme*

Ottoman religious thought is generally categorized into the ‘Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī School’ and the ‘Ibn Taymiyya School.’ Within this division, Birgiwī is typically positioned as a follower of the Ibn Taymiyya School:

Ottoman scholars preferred two regions, namely, the Middle East and Central Asia, for education in the religious sciences. (...) Whoever studied and was specialized in these regions essentially brought two theological schools into the Ottoman lands. The first is the Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (or briefly Fakhr al-Rāzī) school, preferred by the Ottoman central government during the establishment of the Ottoman religious bureaucracy; and the second is the Ibn Taymiyya school, which was initiated as a reaction to the former in the 16th century.

Based on reason (‘*aq̄l*’) and ideas (‘*ra’y*’), the Fakhr al-Rāzī School was strongly represented by prominent scholars during the post-Ghazālī era (d. 1111) from the 12th to the late 14th century, including Najm al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsarī (d. 538/1144), Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286), ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1335) Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 766/1364), Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), and Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413).⁹

Numerous studies repeat these views about the foregoing classification. Māturīdism is described under the heading of “the Fakhr al-Rāzī School and followers,” indicating that Māturīdism replaced the Rāzī School. The Rāzī School is therefore identified with Māturīdism, and the same scholars are mentioned as representatives of both:

Māturīdism, one of the two major faith schools in Sunnī Islam (Ash‘arism is the other), was founded by Muḥammad Abū Maṣṣūr al-

of Hasan addressed to Murad IV,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010), 255 (The records by Terzioğlu about the manuscripts are as follows: As‘ad Efendī, *Fatāwā-yi Muntakhab* (MS Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Kasıdecizade, no: 277), 1b-6b, 46b; İḥāji Aḥmad, *Risāla-i ‘ajība* (MS Istanbul: Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Bağdat Elyazmaları, no: 404), 96b-98b.

⁹ Ocağ, “Ottoman Intellectual Life in the Classical Period,” in H. C. Güzel, K. Çiçek, and S. Koca (eds.), *The Turks* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), III, 749-750; Ocağ, “Religious Sciences and the Ulema,” in Halil İnalçık and Günsel Renda (eds.), *Ottoman Civilization* (translated into English by Ellen Yazar and Priscilla Mary Işın; Ankara: Ministry of Culture, 2003), I, 260-261.

Māturīdī (d. 333/944) in Samarqand. Based on *‘aql* and *ra’y*, the school achieved great progress thanks to efforts by scholars educated in the Transoxiana and Khwārizm, such as (...) ‘Umar al-Nasafī, al-Zamakhsharī, (...), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, (...) who were notable names in the *muta’akkbirūn* tradition.¹⁰

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s criticisms of Māturīdism during his discussions with Māturīdī scholar Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 580/1184) can be read today in al-Rāzī’s own works.¹¹ Therefore, it could be possible to oppose against this categorization through al-Rāzī’s own writings. Other sources and studies about the Rāzī School and its disciples or followers also mention the names of certain scholars within the context of restrictions to the definitions of terms such as wisdom (*ḥikma*), logic (*manṭiq*), and investigation (*taḥqīq*).¹² In the abovementioned categorization, these scholars are known for “concentrating on *‘aql and ra’y*,” therefore, these features must be taken into account when positioning them within the Rāzī/Māturīdī School.¹³ Nevertheless, descriptions about Birgiwī, which place him at the center of the opposite side (the Ibn Taymiyya School), prove that the classification was also based on *madhhab* identities:

Thus, as early as his lifetime, Birgiwī gave birth to a second and purist Sunnī approach as an alternative to the pragmatic Sunnī theology of the Ottoman central government; therefore, even though he is actually a Ḥanafī, it would not be incorrect to associate him with Ibn Taymiyya, or even the Ḥanbalī School.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ocak, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 175; id., “Religious Sciences and the Ulema,” 261; id., “al-Ḥayāt al-dīniyya wa-l-fikriyya,” in Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu (ed.), *al-Dawla al-‘Uthmāniyya: tārīkh wa-ḥadāra* (translated into Arabic by Ṣāliḥ Ṣa‘dāwī; Istanbul: IRCICA, 1999), II, 247.

¹¹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rāzī, *Munāzarāt Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī bilād Māwarā’ al-nahr* (ed. Fatḥ Allāh Khulayf; Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1966), 53, and 14, 17, 23.

¹² For sources, studies and other details about the Rāzī School, see Mustakim Arıcı, “İslām Düşüncesinde Fahreddin er-Razi Ekolü,” in Ömer Türker and Osman Demir (eds.), *Fahreddin Râzî* (Istanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2013), 167-202.

¹³ Indeed, in his discussion of Birgiwī’s attitude toward *bid‘a*, Ocak says, “Even though he was a Ḥanafī, he followed the Ibn Taymiyya School in this respect,” *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 222.

¹⁴ Ocak, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 179-180; id., “al-Ḥayāt al-dīniyya wa-l-fikriyya,” 251; id., “Religious Sciences and the Ulema,” 263. For similar opinions, see Hulusi Lekesiz,

Birgiwî himself states his affiliation with the Ḥanafî School.¹⁵ He also mentions the names and views of al-Zamakhsharî, Qāḍî al-Bayḍāwî, (Fakhr al-Dîn) al-Rāzî, and Abû Manşûr¹⁶ (al-Mâturîdî) who all are accepted to be main figures of the other school.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Birgiwî never mentions the name of Ibn Taymiyya in any of his works. Birgiwî's disagreement with contemporaneous scholars on some issues¹⁸ does not change the fact that he was Ḥanafî and Mâturîdî. Birgiwî often refers to Ḥanafî books on jurisprudence and fatwâ to justify his views. It is well-known that Mâturîdism "is not represented in the same manner in every region."¹⁹ It would therefore be inaccurate to identify the various opinions of Birgiwî exclusively with Ḥanbalism, the Ibn Taymiyya School, and Salafism.

Ahl al-sunna is often divided into three main subcategories: Salafiyya (Athariyya, Ḥanābila), Mâturîdiyya, and Ash'ariyya. This traditional three-part classification, which includes Ḥanbalî scholars,²⁰

"Osmanlı İlmî Zihniyeti: Teşekkülü, Gelişmesi ve Çözülmesi Üzerine Bir Tahlil Denemesi," *Türk Yurdu* 11/49 (1991), 24, 25; Fahri Unan, "Dinde Tasfiyecilik Yahut Osmanlı Sünniliğine Sünnî Muhâlefet: Birgiwî Mehmed Efendi," *Türk Yurdu* 36/382 (1990), 34-35.

¹⁵ If asked "to which *madbbab* do you belong in deeds?" tell them "Imâm Abû Ḥanîfa," but never say "Abû Ḥanîfa's *madbbab* is right and the others are deviant." *Vasiyyet-nâme*, 107. See also Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa al-Muḥammadiyya wa-l-sîra al-Aḥmadiyya* (ed. Muḥammad Ḥusnî Muştafâ; Aleppo: Dâr al-Qalam al-ʿArabî, 2002), 399.

¹⁶ Birgiwî, *Inqâdb al-bâlikîn* in *Rasâ'il al-Birgiwî* (ed. Aḥmad Hâdî al-Qaşşâr; Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2011), 73.

¹⁷ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 201; id., *Inqâdb al-bâlikîn*, 54.

¹⁸ The Cash waqf, one of the subjects Birgiwî expresses a dissenting opinion, had already been discussed by the Ottoman scholars who preceded him. Abû Ḥanîfa and his followers expressed various opinions about these foundations. For the scholars who participated in these discussions prior to Birgiwî, see Tahsin Özcan, *Osmanlı Para Vakıfları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 28 ff.

¹⁹ Mehmet Kalaycı, *Tarihsel Süreçte Eşarîlik-Maturîdîlik İlişkisi* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2013), 129.

²⁰ ʿAbd al-Bâqî ibn ʿAbd al-Bâqî Ibn Faḥîh Fişşa al-Mawâhibî al-Ḥanbalî, *al-ʿAyn wa-l-atbar fî ʿaqâ'id abl al-atbar* (ed. ʿIşâm Rawwâs Qalʿajî; Damascus: Dâr al-Maʿmûn li-l-Turâth, 1987), 53; Abû l-ʿAwn Shams al-Dîn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Sâlim al-Saffârîni al-Ḥanbalî, *Lawâmi' al-anwâr al-babiyya wa-sawâti' al-asrâr al-atbariyya li-sbarḥ al-Durra al-muḍiyya fî ʿaqd al-firqa al-marḍiyya* (2nd edn., Damascus: Muʿassasat al-Khâfiqîn wa-Maktabatuhâ, 1982), I, 73.

is generally accepted despite certain variations.²¹ Nevertheless, Wahhābīs, who also identify with the Ḥanbalī School, claim that Māturīdiyya and Ash‘ariyya are not sects that will attain salvation (*al-firqa al-nājiya*). According to this exclusivist Wahhābī view, “Ahl al-sunna is but a sect,” and Ibn Taymiyya is the one who declared the faith of Ahl al-sunna.²² As we will discuss later, some certain researchers who adopt Wahhābī views conclude that Birgiwī adhered to the Māturīdiyya and criticize him for his views showing that they do not agree with Ibn Taymiyya’s ones.

Allegations of References to Ibn Taymiyya in Birgiwī’s Works

Birgiwī incorporates the views of many scholars into his works. For example, Birgiwī’s *al-Ṭarīqa* includes many references to al-Ghazālī.²³ Relevant studies have identified similarities between his views and those of al-Ghazālī in *Iḥyā’*.²⁴ We also know²⁵ that Birgiwī did express dissidence with al-Ghazālī when it occurs.²⁶ Birgiwī also frequently consults many sources that discuss similar themes, such as those by Ḥanafī scholar Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983).²⁷

²¹ Sa‘d al-Dīn Mas‘ūd ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Taftāzānī, *Sbarḥ al-Maqāsid* (ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayra; 2nd edn., Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1998), V, 231; Abū Sa‘d Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn ‘Uthmān al-Khādīmī, *al-Barīqa al-Maḥmūdiyya fī sbarḥ al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* (Istanbul: Shirkat-i Şaḥāfiyya-i ‘Uthmāniyya, 1316), I, 201; Abū l-Fayḍ Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā ibn Muḥammad al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf al-sāda al-muttaqīn bi-sbarḥ Iḥyā’ ulūm al-dīn* (3rd edn., Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002), II, 8; İsmail Hakkı İzmirli, *Yeni ‘İlm-i Kalām* (Istanbul: Awqāf-i İslāmiyya Maṭba‘asi, 1339-1341), I, 98.

²² Şālih ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Āl al-Sheikh, *al-La’ālī l-babiyya fī sbarḥ al-‘Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya* (ed. ‘Ādil ibn Muḥammad Mursī Rifā‘ī; Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āşima, 2010), I, 88-90; Muḥammad Şālih al-‘Uthaymīn, *Sbarḥ al-‘Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya li-Sheikh al-islām Ibn Taymiyya* (ed. Sa‘d ibn Fawwāz al-Şumayl; 6th edn., Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2000), I, 53.

²³ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 52, 60, 95, 151, 152, 398, 412.

²⁴ Mustafa Çağrı, “Gazzālī’nin İhyā’sı ile Birgiwī’nin Tarikat-ı Muhammadiyye’sinin Mukayesesi,” *İslāmî Araştırmalar (Gazzālî Özel Sayısı)* 13/3-4 (2000), 473-478.

²⁵ See Martı, *Birgili Mehmed Efendi’nin Hadisçiliği ve et-Tarikatü’l-Mubammediyye: Tabkik ve Tablil* (PhD dissertation; Konya: Selçuk University, 2005), 290-291.

²⁶ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 151-153.

²⁷ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 52, 53, 54, 56, 59, 66, 105, 202, 253, 291, 301, 324, 370, 419-420.

Some scholars who associate Birgiwî with Ibn Taymiyya have given misleading examples to prove the connection. One of these is the claim that Birgiwî “mentions the name of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350)” in *al-Ṭarīqa*.²⁸ The alleged mention of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is actually a reference to Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201),²⁹ whose views Birgiwî reports.³⁰ Therefore, Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī is confused with Ibn Qayyim, the disciple of Ibn Taymiyya.³¹

Another error has been perpetuated by a translation of *al-Ṭarīqa* by Wadādī called *Takmilat al-Ṭarīqa*.³² Wadādī’s translation does not consist exclusively of text written by Birgiwî. Indeed, Wadādī introduces the work by indicating that “it is called *Takmilat al-Ṭarīqa* because some passages are derived and added from various books”³³ and admits that he has made additions from numerous sources.³⁴ Therefore, the references to Ibn Taymiyya in this translation are

²⁸ Lekesiz, *XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Düzenindeki Değişimin Tasfiyeci (Püritanist) Bir Eleştirisi: Birgîvî Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri* (Phd dissertation; Ankara: Hacettepe University, 1997) 114, and footnotes (hereafter cited as *Birgîvî Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri*). Lekesiz refers for the place in which the name Ibn Qayyim is mentioned to the manuscript of *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*. The bibliography gives the following citation: MS Ankara: Milli Kütüphane [National Library], Celal Ökten Manuscripts Section, no: 2178, 97b, (https://www.yazmalar.gov.tr/detay_goster.php?k=66009, 107).

²⁹ Abū l-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talbīs Iblīs* (ed. Sayyid al-Jumaylī; Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1994), 224.

³⁰ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 196. See also Martı, *Birgîli Mehmed Efendi’nin Hadisçiliği*, 284.

³¹ Ahmet Kaylı, *A Critical Study of Birgîvî Mehmed Efendi’s (d. 981/1573) Works and Their Dissemination in Manuscript Form* (MA thesis; Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2010), 57 and footnote 137.

³² See Unan, “Dinde Tasfiyecilik,” 42 (footnote 55) The author’s reference is to this translation, (Birgiwî, *Takmila-i tarjama-i Ṭarīqat-i Muḥammadiyya* [translated by Wadādī; Istanbul: Dār al- Saḫāna, 1256]), 412, 419, 436, 449, 450, 465, 466, 467.

³³ Wadādī, *Takmila-i tarjama-i Ṭarīqat-i Muḥammadiyya* (Istanbul: Dār al-Saḫāna, 1256), 3.

³⁴ See also İsmail Kara, *İlim Bilmez Tarih Hatırlamaz: Şerh ve Haşiye Meselesine Dair Birkaç Not* (2nd edn., Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2013), 49; Martı relates that Wadādī later faced criticisms due to his additions to the translation. In her PhD thesis on *al-Ṭarīqa*, Martı writes, “The name Ibn Taymiyya is not found in any of Birgîli [Birgiwî]’s works.” Martı, *Birgîli Mehmed Efendi’nin Hadisçiliği*, 126, 331, 332.

found in the passages added by Wadādī, and do not belong to Birgiwī himself. Most of the views, which are presented in the translation as if they belong to Birgiwī, are indeed nothing but additions by Wadādī. At least some of the comments and criticisms of Birgiwī that are based on this work should be comprehensively reassessed.

Numerous scholars insist on the presence of references to Ibn Taymiyya in Birgiwī's works,³⁵ referring to a PhD thesis by Yüksel on Birgiwī.³⁶ In the Turkish translation of his thesis, however, Yüksel indicates that Birgiwī "mentions the name of neither Ibn Taymiyya nor his disciples," noting the discovery that the tract called *Ziyārat al-qubūr* (*Visitation of Graves*) was not written by Birgiwī.³⁷ In a previous study, Yüksel wrote, "we do not find the name of Ibn Taymiyya"³⁸ in any work by Birgiwī.

According to scholars who believed in the connection between Birgiwī and Ibn Taymiyya, *Ziyārat* was considered "the clearest evidence of his awareness of the views of Ibn Taymiyya."³⁹ *Ziyārat* was actually written by Aḥmad ibn Meḥmed al-Rūmī al-Āqḥiṣārī al-Şarūkhānī (d. 1041/1631); nevertheless, the book was attributed to

³⁵ "An analysis of the books and treatises by Birgiwī clearly reveals the influence of Ibn Taymiyya above all, as well as other subsequent Ḥanbalī scholars. In his works, Birgiwī often recommends to his readers the books of the persons he mentions and quotes from his references." Ocağ, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 222; id., "İbn Kemâl'in Yaşadığı XV ve XVI. Asırlar Türkiye'sinde İlim ve Fikir Hayatı," in S. Hayri Bolay, Bahaeddin Yediyıldız, and M. Sait Yazıcıoğlu (eds.), *Tokat Valiliği Şeyhülislam İbn Kemâl Araştırma Merkezi'nin Tertip Ettiği Şeyhülislam İbn Kemâl Sempozyumu: Tebliğler ve Tartışmalar* (2nd edn., Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), 31, 32.

³⁶ Ocağ, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 234, and footnote 17.

³⁷ "Based on the *Risālat ziyārat al-qubūr*, which is attributed to Birgiwī, I wrote that Birgiwī might have been indirectly influenced by Ibn Taymiyya. ... The paper by Ahmet Turan Arslan (...), however, revealed that the treatise was not written by Birgiwī. Therefore, we have no grounds to claim that Birgiwī, who never mentioned Ibn Taymiyya or his followers in his works, was influenced by Ibn Taymiyya." Emrullah Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgivi'nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2011), 147-148.

³⁸ Yüksel, "Mehmed Birgivi," *Atatürk Üniversitesi İslâmî İlimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (1977), 184.

³⁹ Lekesiz, *Birgivi Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri*, 114, 115.

Birgiwî, whereupon it became famous and was printed several times.⁴⁰

Apparently, Shî'ā (Rāfiḍa) is the target of the descriptions and related criticisms found in *Ziyārat*.⁴¹ Therefore, any relationship between the conclusions derived from any of the information in this tract and members of other groups in the Ottoman era or the assessment of them as Birgiwî's observations of his environment are misleading.

In another work, *Majālis al-abrār*, al-Āqḥiṣārî again addresses issues about graves and refers to Ibn Qayyim and his sheikh (Ibn Taymiyya).⁴² Al-Āqḥiṣārî, as a Ḥanafî scholar under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya, is the subject of various studies.⁴³ Importantly, however, al-Āqḥiṣārî is connected to the Māturîdî School in his theological discussions.⁴⁴ Al-Āqḥiṣārî uses various Kalām and Sufi

⁴⁰ Ahmet Turan Arslan, "İmam Birgîvî'ye Nisbet Edilen Bazı Eserler," in İbrahim Gümüş (ed.), *1. Ulusal İslam Elyazmaları Sempozyumu (13-14 Nisan 2007) Bildiriler Kitabı* (Istanbul: Türkiye Çevre Koruma ve Yeşillendirme Kurumu [TÜRÇEK], 2009), 180-181. See also Yahya Michot, introduction to *Against Smoking: An Ottoman Manifesto*, by Aḥmad al-Rūmî al-Āqḥiṣārî (ed. and translated by Yahya Michot; Leicestershire: Interface Publications & Kube Publishing, 2010), 1.

⁴¹ The reference to *Manāsik al-ḥājj al-mashāhid*, which is attributed to al-Sheikh al-Mufîd by Ibn Taymiyya (*Ziyārat al-qubūr*, in *Rasā'il al-Birgiwî* [ed. Aḥmad Hādî al-Qaṣṣār; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-İlmiyya, 2011], 164) leads us to these opinions. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) wrote a refutation called *Minbāj al-sunna* against *Minbāj al-karāma*, which was written by contemporaneous Shiite scholar Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-İhillî (d.726/1325). In this work, Ibn Taymiyya attributes *Manāsik al-ḥājj al-mashāhid* to al-Sheikh al-Mufîd, whom he criticizes. See Taqî al-Dîn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-İḥalîm Ibn Taymiyya, *Minbāj al-sunna al-Nabawiyya* (ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim; Riyadh: Mu'assasat Qurṭuba, 1986), III, 419.

⁴² Aḥmad al-Rūmî (al-Āqḥiṣārî), *Majālis al-abrār*, in 'Alî Miṣrî Simjān Fawrā, [*Study on*] *Majālis al-abrār* (PhD dissertation; Medina: al-Jāmi'a al-İslāmiyya, 2007), 213, 215, 219, 654.

⁴³ For a discussion of Ibn Taymiyya's influence on al-Āqḥiṣārî, see Mustapha Sheikh, "Taymiyyan Influences in an Ottoman-Ḥanafî Milieu: The Case of Aḥmad al-Rūmî al-Āqḥiṣārî," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25/1 (2015), 1-20; Michot, introduction to *Against Smoking*, 1, 4, 8.

⁴⁴ 'Alî Miṣrî Simjān Fawrā, "*Dirāsa*" [*Study on Majālis al-abrār* by Aḥmad al-Rūmî (al-Āqḥiṣārî)] (PhD dissertation; Medina: al-Jāmi'a al-İslāmiyya, 2007), 13; Sheikh,

books as sources and indicates that it is the obligation (*uājib*) of every mature believer to derive authentic faith about Ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamā'a from the science of Kalām. He asserts that reasoning (*naẓar*) and deduction (*istidlāl*) are obligatory if one is to know Allah and argues that whoever leaves this path will be a sinner.⁴⁵

Comparison between Birgiwī's and Ibn Taymiyya's Views

Seeking to establish a connection between Birgiwī and Ibn Taymiyya, researchers have compared the views of the two scholars. These comparisons focus on numerous issues, including the concept of heretical innovation (*bid'ā*). Works by Birgiwī incorporate a variety of significant details on innovation; for example, he uses the concept "*al-bid'ā al-ḥasana*."⁴⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, however, rejects a division that includes "*al-bid'ā al-ḥasana*."⁴⁷

Another important point to consider regarding the connection between Birgiwī and Ibn Taymiyya is their attitudes towards Sufism. According to Birgiwī, Sufism consists of the purification of the heart from disgrace and its adornment with virtues, and he gives practical advice to its followers (*sāliks*).⁴⁸ However, Birgiwī criticizes his Sufi contemporaries.⁴⁹ Birgiwī accuses Sufis of claiming to be holders of hidden knowledge, of claiming that they obtain fatwā directly from the Prophet whenever they are in trouble and that otherwise they can access Allah in person and do not need to read scholarly books, etc. For Birgiwī, such Sufi views are false, and whoever hears and believes in them should be considered a heretic (*zindīq*). Birgiwī criticizes the Sufis of his time as ignorant because they claim that "knowledge is a veil."⁵⁰ In his criticism, Birgiwī respectfully cites al-Junayd al-Baghdādī, who says, "our knowledge and *madhhab* is bound through the Book and Sunna." Moreover, he quotes⁵¹ the

"Taymiyyan Influences in an Ottoman-Ḥanafī Milieu," 4.

⁴⁵ Al-Āqḥiṣārī, *Majālis al-abrār*, 2, 14, 15, 74, 144, 510.

⁴⁶ For details, see Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 25-26; Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgiwî'nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri*, 67, 68.

⁴⁷ Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtidā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm li-mukhbālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (ed. Nāṣir 'Abd al-Karīm al-'Aql; Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1994), II, 585.

⁴⁸ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 84, 235, 391-393.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 28, 47, 67, 362-364.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29-31, 236, 392.

views of certain great Sufis found in Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī's (d. 465/1072) *al-Risāla*.⁵² Birgiwī also cites the following phrases from Ḥanafī scholar Abū l-Layth al-Samarqandī: "If one learns jurisprudence but does not seek ascetic knowledge and wisdom, his heart hardens. A hardened heart is distant from Allah."⁵³

Miḥakk al-ṣūfiyya, which addresses Sufism and is attributed to Birgiwī,⁵⁴ refers to several texts on creeds popular among Ottoman scholars.⁵⁵ The axis proposed by Birgiwī reportedly found many supporters even in Sufi circles.⁵⁶

Birgiwī's criticism of the Sufi practices of *raqs* and *samā'* by music⁵⁷ does not necessarily make him a follower of Ibn Taymiyya.⁵⁸ Indeed, Birgiwī quotes many sources about *raqs*, including Ḥanafī fatwā sources. A treatise by 'Umar al-Nasafī, author of one of the most popular creed texts in Ḥanafī/Māturīdī circles and allegedly a member of the *Rāzī* School,⁵⁹ addresses this topic. This treatise by al-

⁵² Abū l-Qāsim Zayn al-Islām 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya* (eds. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd ibn Sharīf; Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.) 38, 45-46, 48, 57, 58, 61, 79, 87, 98.

⁵³ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 66-69.

⁵⁴ Kaylı (*A Critical Study of Birgiwī Mehmed Efendi's Works*, 138) found copies of this treatise recorded under al-Āqḥiṣārī's name; therefore, he claims they might belong to the latter.

⁵⁵ According to Lekesiz (*Birgiwī Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri*, 81), Birgiwī shows Sufis the right path to follow pursuant to the Salafī creed in *Miḥakk al-ṣūfiyya*. Nevertheless, the sources of this treatise do not support this finding. In the treatise, Birgiwī refers to the following works on creeds: *al-'Aqā'id* by 'Umar al-Nasafī (p. 11), *Iḥyā'* by al-Ghazālī (p. 13, 28), *al-Mawāqif* by al-Ījī (p. 14, 17), *al-Fiqh al-akbar* by Abū Ḥanīfa (p. 17), and *Sbarḥ al-'Aqā'id* by al-Taftāzānī (p. 19).

⁵⁶ Terzioğlu, "Bir Tercüme ve Bir İntihal Vakası: Ya da İbn Teymiyye'nin Siyasetü's-Şer'iyye'sini Osmanlıcaya Kim(ler), Nasıl Aktardı?" *Journal of Turkish Studies: Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 31/2 (2007), 267.

⁵⁷ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 362.

⁵⁸ Lekesiz, *Birgiwī Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri*, 112, 113.

⁵⁹ This treatise, called *Risāla fī bayān madbāhib al-taşawwuf* by al-Nasafī, exists in manuscript copies under different names. For information about the publication and translation of the treatise, see Ayşe Hümeýra Arslantürk, "Nesefî, Necmeddin," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXXIII, 572. Al-İḥurr al-Āmilî published this treatise in *Risālat al-itḥnay 'asbariyya fī l-radd 'alā l-ṣūfiyya* (ed. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Tafrishī al-Darūdī; Qom: al-Maṭba'a al-Ĥimiyya, 1400),

Nasafī is quoted in *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn*,⁶⁰ which was attributed to Birgiwī upon publication.⁶¹ Ottoman scholars prior to Birgiwī have also given fatwā against Sufis who perform *raqs* and *samā'*.⁶²

Al-ʿUrābī⁶³ states that in *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn*⁶⁴ there are quotations of critical expressions by Ibn Taymiyya, particularly about

23-25, available at <http://www.alhawzaonline.com/almaktaba-almakroaa/book/238-aqa'ed/0334-al%20ethna%203asharia/01.htm> (accessed October 3, 2009).

⁶⁰ In his master's thesis, *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn wa-kāshifat buṭlān al-mulḥidīn: al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Pīr ʿAlī ibn Iskandar al-Birgiwī – Dirāsa wa-taḥqīq – min auwal al-kitāb ilā qawlibī “wa-ammā thawāb al-ʿamal bi-l-sunna”* (MA thesis; Mecca: Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, n.d.), Sulṭān ibn ʿUbayd ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿUrābī studies the first chapter of *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn*. al-ʿUrābī claims that the published version of *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn* (eds. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyih and Tawfīq ʿAlī Wahba; Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-ʿArabīyya, 2010) comprises only the chapter studied in his own thesis and that there is no second part. (See <https://twitter.com/sultanalorabi/status/462506744607174656>, accessed May 3, 2014). Nevertheless, this is misinformation; the end of the text used in al-ʿUrābī's thesis is on page 150 of the Cairo edition of the book.

⁶¹ The expression “*ṣāhib al-Bayān*” in the text (Birgiwī, *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn*, 55) is construed by researcher al-ʿUrābī as Abū l-Maʿālī Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-ʿAlawī (d. 485/1092), the author of *Bayān al-adyān*, though only tentatively (see al-ʿUrābī, *Dāmighba*, 216). Nonetheless, an intertextual comparison shows that the quotations are from al-Nasafī. Birgiwī's notes to chapter 23 demonstrate that this information may have been cited from *Sirr al-asrār* by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jilānī. Indeed, chapter 23 of *Sirr al-asrār* has similar content; see Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Abī Šālih ʿAbd Allāh al-Jilānī, *Sirr al-asrār wa-maḥzar al-anwār fi-mā yaḥtāj ilaybi l-abrār* (eds. Khālīd Muḥammad ʿAdnān al-Zarʿī and Muḥammad Ghassān Naṣūh ʿAzqūl; 4th edn., Damascus: Dār al-Sanābil, 1995), 140.

⁶² Ferhat Koca, “Osmanlı Fakihlerinin Semâ, Raks ve Devrân Hakkındaki Tartışmaları,” *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 5/13 (2004), 27, 59. In his study Koca touches upon views of numerous scholars about the issue before and after Birgiwī, including Abū l-Suʿūd. Also see Reşat Öngören, “Osmanlılar Döneminde Semâ ve Devran Tartışmaları,” *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 11/25 (2010), 123-132.

⁶³ Al-ʿUrābī, *Dāmighba*, 105, 125, 130, 228.

⁶⁴ Birgiwī, *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'īn* (eds. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyih and Tawfīq ʿAlī Wahba; Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-ʿArabīyya, 2010), 60.

the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*).⁶⁵ According to Evstatiev, these findings are based on solid textual analysis and are significant because they enable us to establish a connection between Ibn Taymiyya, Birgiwī, and Qāḍī-zādalis.⁶⁶

The unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) is also criticized by Ḥanafī scholars such as ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bukhārī (d.841/1438).⁶⁷ Moreover, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bukhārī accuses Ibn Taymiyya of anthropomorphism and claims it would be blasphemy to call him Sheikh al-Islām.⁶⁸ *Dāmigha* also includes citations from many other scholars. The initial quotations⁶⁹ that appear at the beginning of the book are relevant to this discussion. The first quotation is from *al-Tawḍīḥ*, a work on *uṣūl al-fiqh* by Ṣadr al-sharī‘a (d. 747/1346). The quotation is about the learning of Kalām, Sufism, and Fiqh together.⁷⁰ The second citation is from *Sbir‘at al-Islām*, the popular work among Ottoman scholars on catechism (*‘ilm-i ḥāl*) and ethics (*akblāq*), by Imām-zāda (d. 573/1177), the Ḥanafī faqīh.⁷¹ According to this quotation, whoever demands only Kalām from Allah is a heretic (*zindīq*), whoever demands only asceticism is an innovator (*mubtadi‘*), and whoever demands only jurisprudence is a sinner (*fāsiq*). One who displays competence in all attains salvation.⁷² Al-

⁶⁵ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatawā* (ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim; Medina: Mujamma‘ al-Malik Fahd li-Ṭibā‘at al-Muṣḥaf al-Sharīf, 2004), II, 122.

⁶⁶ Simeon Evstatiev, “The Qāḍīzādeli Movement and the Revival of *takfīr* in the Ottoman Age,” in Camilla Adang, Hassan Ansari, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke (eds.), *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfīr* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2015), 232.

⁶⁷ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Bukhārī, *Fāḍīḥat al-mulḥidīn*, in Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-‘Awḍī, *Fāḍīḥat al-mulḥidīn wa-nāṣiḥat al-muwahḥidīn* (MA thesis; Mecca: Jāmi‘at Umm al-Qurā, 1414).

⁶⁸ For details, see Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 16.

⁶⁹ Birgiwī, *Dāmighat al-mubtadi‘in*, 34.

⁷⁰ Al-Taftāzānī, *Sbarḥ al-Talwiḥ ‘alā l-Tawḍīḥ li-matn al-Taṅqīḥ fi uṣūl al-fiqh* (ed. Zakariyyā ‘Umayrāt; Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1996), I, 16.

⁷¹ Recep Cici, “İmamzāde, Muhammed b. Ebû Bekir,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXII, 210-211.

⁷² Sayyid ‘Alī-zāda, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān: Sbarḥ Sbir‘at al-Islām* (Istanbul: al-Maṭba‘a al-‘Uthmāniyya, 1317), 41.

‘Urābī indicates that he could not obtain any information about *Shir‘at al-Islām*.⁷³ However, he notes some details about the joint publication of some of Birgiwī’s works with commentaries on *Shir‘at al-Islām*.⁷⁴ Al-‘Urābī draws other erroneous conclusions about Ḥanafī authors referenced in the *Dāmigha* who wrote particularly about issues related with Sufism. Also, it could be noted that there is a fatwā that *Shir‘at al-Islām* should not be allowed to be read, because it includes nonsense stuff such as those in *Iḥyā’* by al-Ghazālī. The fatwā allows only those who know the Sufi creed and have specialized knowledge of the Salafī creed to read *Shir‘at al-Islām*.⁷⁵

Dāmigha includes long citations from al-Ghazālī. For example, one citation from al-Ghazālī’s *Minbāj al-‘ābidīn*⁷⁶ covers many pages.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, sources that are more or less contemporaneous with Birgiwī do not attribute the *Dāmigha* to him. *Hadiyyat al-‘ārifīn* by ‘Ismā‘īl Pāshā al-Baghdādī (d. 1920) and subsequent authors of bibliographical works mention *Dāmigha* to have been authored by Birgiwī. The assertion that the lack of association between Birgiwī and this work during his lifetime was due to his fear of Sufi molestation is groundless.⁷⁸ Indeed, he fearlessly addresses and criticizes many other controversial aspects of Sufism in *al-Tariqa* and other works. Janābī Muṣṭafā Efendī (d. 999/1590) asserted that Birgiwī never refrained from telling the truth for Allah’s sake, even when he addressed the Sultan.⁷⁹

An analysis of the creed issues shows that *Dāmigha* was written by a Māturīdī scholar. According to the author, men are equal in faith and differ in their deeds, but deeds are not a part of faith. It is necessary (*wājib*) to know Allah (Ṣāni‘) through reason; moreover, the good or evil nature of things can be known through reason. For

⁷³ Al-‘Urābī, *Dāmigha*, 161.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 82, 83, 84.

⁷⁵ <http://fatwā.islamweb.net/fatwā/index.php?page=showfatwā&Option=FatwāId&Id=118878> (accessed February 5, 2016).

⁷⁶ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Minbāj al-‘ābidīn ilā jannat Rabb al-‘ālamīn* (ed. Maḥmūd Muṣṭafā Ḥalāwī; Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1989), 112, 114, 117.

⁷⁷ Birgiwī, *Dāmighat al-mubtadi‘īn*, 203, 207, 230.

⁷⁸ For details, see al-‘Urābī, *Dāmigha*, 101-103.

⁷⁹ Al-Janābī, *‘Aylam al-zākhir*, 427a.

the author, man would be responsible to believe in Allah even if no prophet were sent because reasoning and deduction are man's primary obligations. He interprets attributes of Allah such as his hand, face, descent etc. by associating them with meanings such as His power or His favour.⁸⁰ A scholar with such views would be considered a Mâturîdî.

Relationship between Ibn Taymiyya, Birgiwî, Qāḍîzādālîs and Wahhābism

The Qāḍîzādālîs' and Wahhābîs' interventionist attitudes toward society's religious life result in a tendency to establish a connection between these two groups. Therefore, the views of Birgiwî and Ibn Taymiyya, two reputable references of these sects, are often compared, especially on the base of their views that constitute the foundation of an interventionist approach. Indeed, it could be asserted that there are contradictions between the writings of Birgiwî and the practices of his followers. Sources reveal that Birgiwî was typically direct and blunt. According to Janābî Muştafâ Efendî, Birgiwî was a strictly religious person (*mutasbarri*⁸¹) who feared molestation from nobody when he told the truth for Allah's sake. He was determined about commanding good and forbidding wrong (*al-amr bi-l-ma'rûf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*), even if he addressed the Sultan. He was a custodian of the Qur'ân and a patron of knowledge and had an abstemious personality with regard to eating and clothing.⁸¹ Cook emphasizes Birgiwî and his followers' views about the prevention of evil.⁸²

For Birgiwî, commanding good and forbidding wrong is a communal obligation (*farḍ al-kifāya*) that must be sufficiently discharged, if can afford, on condition that not to harm people. The expressions found in verses (*āya*) and ḥadîths indicate that this is an obligation for every person. In contrast, commanding wrong and forbidding good is the attribute of hypocrites,⁸³ as indicated in the

⁸⁰ Birgiwî, *Dāmîghat al-mubtadi'in*, 220.

⁸¹ Al-Janābî, *Aylam al-zākbir*, 427a.

⁸² Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 323.

⁸³ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 281.

Qurʾān.⁸⁴ When discussing the subject of *riyāʾ* (doing good deeds for show), Birgiwī gives following examples: to manifest knowledge during sermons and discourses, to show care for the attitudes of *Salaf*, to command good before the public, to show anger against evil and to seem worried about sin.⁸⁵ When addressing sedition (*fitna*), Birgiwī speaks to preachers and muftīs about how to prevent sedition among the people. Birgiwī recommends that they remain aware of the customs of the public, of what people may accept or reject, of what they strive to fulfill or seek to avoid. He also advises that the public be addressed in the most appropriate manner possible. Any deed intended to command good and forbid wrong could become a sin if it leads to the promotion of evil or pushes someone into an undesired position. About the hazard of sedition, the verse “fitna is worse than killing”⁸⁶ is more than enough.⁸⁷ The records of conflicts among Birgiwī’s followers are proof that his warnings were overlooked. Moreover, there appear to have been different mentalities among those who read his works.

Several studies about the Qāḍizādalis indicate their relationship with Birgiwī.⁸⁸ Both Birgiwī and the Qāḍizādalis are mentioned in connection with Ibn Taymiyya and the Wahhābis.

The Salafī movement, started by Ibn Taymiyya, gave birth to the Birgiwī School in the 16th century, to the Qāḍizādali movement in the 17th century and to Wahhābism in the 18th century within the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁹

Michot dubs Birgiwī the “spiritual father of Ottoman Puritanism” and argues that the Qāḍizādali movement, which emerged under the influence of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim, was the precursor of Wahhābism.⁹⁰ For Currie, there is a striking similarity between the

⁸⁴ Q 9:67.

⁸⁵ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 90.

⁸⁶ Q 2:191.

⁸⁷ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 224.

⁸⁸ Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age: 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 143.

⁸⁹ Ocak, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 218-219. For comparison, see id., “İbn Kemâl’in Yaşadığı XV ve XVI. Asırlar Türkiye’sinde İlim ve Fikir Hayatı,” 31, 32; id., “Religious Sciences and the Ulema,” 263; Lekesiz, *Birgiwî Mehmed Efendi ve Fikirleri*, 106.

⁹⁰ Michot, introduction to *Against Smoking*, 2.

Qāḏīzādālīs and the Wahhābīs, and he cites several scholars to establish a connection between the two groups.⁹¹

An important source of evidence for the connection between Ibn Taymiyya and the Qāḏīzādālīs is the Turkish translation of Ibn Taymiyya's *al-Siyāsa al-shar'īyya*. This translation is attributed to Qāḏī-zāda Meḥmed Efendī (d. 1045/1635).⁹²

ʿĀshiq Chalabī (d. 979/1572) made an expanded translation of this work by Ibn Taymiyya into Ottoman Turkish under the title *Miʿrāj al-ʿiyāla wa-minhāj al-ʿadāla* and presented to Selīm II, the Sultan of the Ottoman State. *Tāj al-rasāʾil wa-minhāj al-wasāʾil* (or *Nuṣḥ al-ḥukkām sabab al-niẓām*), reportedly translated by Qāḏī-zāda, makes certain additions to the translation by ʿĀshiq Chalabī. Qāḏī-zāda Meḥmed presented his translation to Murād IV (r. 1623-40), the Ottoman Sultan.⁹³

One who accepts certain statements in the text by Qāḏī-zāda can by no means be a follower of the Ibn Taymiyya School. One example will be sufficient. According to the text, there are four letters in the name of Sultan ʿMurād,ʼ and this is equal to the number of letters in the word ʿAllah,ʼ this coincidence comprises countless mysteries.⁹⁴

In her study of this translation, Terzioğlu declares that Qāḏī-zāda's translation was plagiarized from ʿĀshiq Chalabī and notes the following:

Recently, many modern historians interested in this movement (Qāḏī-zādālīs) bear in the back of their minds the parallelism between this

⁹¹ James Muḥammad Dawud Currie, "Kadizadeli Ottoman Scholarship, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, and the Rise of the Saudi State," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26/3 (2015), 265-288.

⁹² Ocak, *Osmanlı Dönemi*, 224.

⁹³ Vecdi Akyüz, "Preface," in Ibn Taymiyya, *Siyāset: es-Siyāsetü ʿş-şerʿīyye* (translated into Turkish by Vecdi Akyüz; 2nd edn., Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1999), 6-7.

⁹⁴ Qāḏī-zāda Meḥmed [Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad], *Tāj al-rasāʾil wa-minhāj al-wasāʾil* (MS Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Hacı Mahmut Efendī, 1926), 11a-b. A similar assessment is made by ʿĀshiq Pāshā, who made an earlier translation of the same book, about the fact that the name of Selīm II, the Sultan of the Ottoman State, consists of four letters. See Pīr Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ʿĀshiq Chalabī, *Miʿrāj al-ʿiyāla wa-minhāj al-ʿadāla* (MS Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa, 1556), 14.

movement and various ‘radical,’ ‘fundamentalist,’ or – as a less political and more academic expression – ‘salafī’ Islamic movements. Furthermore, several historians consider Ibn Taymiyya as an important junction within the intellectual genealogy of such Islamic movements and accordingly want to establish a connection between the Qāḍīzādālīs and the Ibn Taymiyya School. Nevertheless, neither Ibn Taymiyya nor his *al-Siyāsa al-shar‘iyya* seems to have been a particular inspiration for the Qāḍīzādālī – sharī‘a emphasized – movement that appeared in the 17th century.⁹⁵

As is seen in the example of ‘Āshiq Chalabī, you do not have to be on the ‘Salafī,’ as described today, axis to translate a text by Ibn Taymiyya. Indeed, neither Qāḍī-zāda Meḥmed of Balıkesir nor Mehmed Effendi of Birgi, the main inspiration of the movement named after him in the 16th century, grant a special place to Ibn Taymiyya in their respective works.⁹⁶

Remarks on Birgiwī’s Views on Kalām

For Birgiwī, *‘ilm al-kalām* is a communal obligation (*farḍ al-kifāya*).⁹⁷ Nevertheless, it should be learned and taught by those who are faithful and clever and have no sympathies with deviant sects.⁹⁸ Kalām includes logic.⁹⁹ Birgiwī’s attitude toward Kalām and logic is

⁹⁵ Terzioğlu, “Bir Tercüme ve Bir İntihal Vakası,” 270.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 266. Referring to a PhD thesis by Hüseyin Yılmaz, Terzioğlu argues that Birgiwī’s works include references to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya but not to Ibn Taymiyya. Yılmaz makes a similar claim, referring to a paper titled “Mehmed Birgiwī” by Emrullah Yüksel. See Hüseyin Yılmaz, *The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Süleymān the Lawgiver (1520-1566)* (PhD dissertation; Ann Arbor: Harvard University, 2005), 78. As mentioned above, Yüksel, in his subsequent writings, indicates that “Birgiwī never mentioned the name of Ibn Taymiyya or his disciples in his works;” these findings should be reassessed.

⁹⁷ A master’s thesis has been written about Birgiwī’s views on Kalām. Nevertheless, we could not obtain this thesis. ‘Āṭif İbrāhīm Aḥmad, *al-Birgiwī wa-āwā‘ub^h l-kalāmiyya* (MA thesis; Cairo: Jāmi‘at al-Qāhira, 2013), available at <http://cu.edu.eg/ar/Cairo-University-Faculty-News-2489.html> (accessed April 18, 2013).

⁹⁸ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 55. See also Khaled El-Rouayheb, “The Myth of ‘The Triumph of Fanaticism’ in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Die Welt des Islams* 48/2 (2008), 200.

considered explicit evidence that he was not influenced by Ibn Taymiyya.¹⁰⁰

The theological opinions of Birgiwî can be found in his *Waşıyyat-nâma*, several tracts and a chapter dedicated to the subject in *al-Ṭarîqa*.¹⁰¹ *Al-Risâlat al-i'tiqâdiyya*,¹⁰² a work containing detailed and systematic information on theological issues and considered the Arabic version of *Waşıyyat-nâma*, was published under the name of Yahyâ ibn Abî Bakr (d. 893/1488).¹⁰³

It has been found that Birgiwî based his writings about kalâm in *al-Ṭarîqa* on *al-ʿAqâ'id* by ʿUmar al-Nasafî.¹⁰⁴ Quotations from al-Nasafî's text are frequent, as are certain extracts, changes in order, varying expressions, and additions. Birgiwî presents a 'Mâturîdî creed' in short.¹⁰⁵

Birgiwî accuses certain Sufis of valuing *awliyâ'* above the Prophet, referring to al-Jurjânî's *Sharḥ al-Mawâqif* and to *Sharḥ al-Maqâşid* and *Sharḥ al-ʿAqâ'id* by al-Taftâzânî, which were mostly referenced works by Ottoman scholars.¹⁰⁶

Dāmighbat al-mubtadi'în, which is attributed to Birgiwî, also deals with theological issues in some parts, assesses the views of other

¹⁰⁰ El-Rouayheb, "From Ibn Hajar al-Haytamî (d. 1566) to Khayr al-Dîn al-Âlûsî (d. 1899): Changing Views of Ibn Taymiyya among non-Ḥanbalî Sunnî Scholars," in Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (eds.), *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 103.

¹⁰¹ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 44.

¹⁰² For an introduction to the contents of these works, see Martı, *Birgiwî Mehmed Efendi: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Fikir Dünyası*, 74.

¹⁰³ Marie Bernard, "Le muḥtaşar fî bayân al-i'tiqâd," *Annales Islamologiques* 18 (1982), 1-33.

¹⁰⁴ Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgiwî'nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri*, 57, 71, 72.

¹⁰⁵ Martı, "Tarikat-ı Muhammediyye," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XL, 107. Amîr Muştafâ (d. 1143/1731), who translated *al-Ṭarîqa* and is known as a "*ṭarîqa man/ṭarîqatchî*" due to his lectures on *al-Ṭarîqa* (see Martı, *Birgili Mehmed Efendi'nin Hadisçiliği*, 199, 336), also translated the chapter about creed in *al-Ṭarîqa* into Turkish under the title *Farâ'id al-ʿaqa'id al-babiyya* and comprehensively commented on them (see *Ṭarîqatchî Amîr Muştafâ, Farâ'id al-ʿaqa'id al-babiyya fî ḥall mushkilât al-Ṭarîqa al-Muḥammadiyya* (MS Istanbul: Nuruosmaniye Library, no: 2318).

¹⁰⁶ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 43, 47.

madhbabs and passes judgments on them. For al-ʿUrābī, the similarity of chapters including judgments on *madhbabs* in *Dāmīgha*¹⁰⁷ and *al-Ṭarīqa*¹⁰⁸ is proof that Birgiwī is the author of *Dāmīgha*.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, these similarities do not necessarily mean that both were written by the same author. Indeed, the texts resemble one another because they are based on the same sources. More precisely, both works refer to the Ḥanafī fatwā books, *al-Bazzāziyya* and *al-Tātārkhāniyya*¹¹⁰ and mention these by name. In fact, *Dāmīgha* quotes from *al-Bazzāziyya* and gives its author as al-Zāhid who is also explicitly mentioned as al-Zāhid al-Ṣaffār in *al-Bazzāziyya*;¹¹¹ however, perhaps because he did not read *al-Bazzāziyya*, al-ʿUrābī erroneously identifies al-Zāhid as the Muʿtazilī-Ḥanafī scholar Abū l-Rajāʾ Najm al-Dīn Mukhtār al-Zāhidī (d. 658/1260).¹¹² A comparison clearly shows, however, that the judgments about *madhbabs* were quoted from Māturīdī scholar al-Zāhid al-Ṣaffār al-Bukhārī¹¹³ (d. 534/1139).

We will not discuss all of Birgiwī’s views on Kalām; instead, we will limit the discussion to several controversial points attributed to him. Several researchers have drawn different conclusions about which *madhbab* Birgiwī belongs to.

Al-ʿUrābī claims that Birgiwī belongs to the Ibn Taymiyya School.¹¹⁴ For al-ʿUrābī, Birgiwī “has a tendency to express Māturīdī/Ḥanafī views on some theological issues.”¹¹⁵ Nonetheless,

¹⁰⁷ Birgiwī, *Dāmīgha* *al-mubtadiʿin*, 51.

¹⁰⁸ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 44.

¹⁰⁹ Al-ʿUrābī, *Dāmīgha*, 102-103.

¹¹⁰ Farīd al-Dīn ʿĀlim ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Indarapatī al-Dihlawī, *al-Fatāwā l-Tātārkhāniyya* (ed. Shabbīr Aḥmad al-Qāsimī; Deoband: Maktabat Zakariyyāʾ, 2010), VII, 286, 363.

¹¹¹ Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Kardarī al-Bazzāzī (Ibn al-Bazzāzī), *al-Fatāwā l-Bazzāziyya* [in the marginal note of *al-Fatāwā l-Hindiyya fī madhbab al-Imām al-Aʿzam Abī Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān*] (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kubrā al-Amīriyya, 1310), VI, 318.

¹¹² Al-ʿUrābī, *Dāmīgha*, 197.

¹¹³ Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Ṣaffār al-Bukhārī, *Talkhīṣ al-adilla li-qawāʿid al-tawḥīd* (ed. Angelika Brodersen; Beirut: Orient Institut, 2011), 727.

¹¹⁴ Al-ʿUrābī, *Dāmīgha*, 52, 105, 125, 130.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

the issues indicated by al-‘Urābī as ‘some’ are crucial for determining Birgiwī’s *madhhab*; indeed, whenever a difference emerges, Birgiwī adopts the Māturīdī approach. Therefore, it is inaccurate to associate him with the Ibn Taymiyya School. Researchers with Salafī/Wahhābī views who studied Birgiwī often rejected theological views of Birgiwī in the introduction (*dirāsa*) of their works referring Ibn Taymiyya.¹¹⁶

Tawhīd

Birgiwī begins his remarks about faith in *al-Ṭarīqa* by stating, “Allah is only one.”¹¹⁷ After stating that Birgiwī classifies divine unity (*tawhīd*) pursuant to the Māturīdī approach, al-‘Urābī claims that no salvation is possible without incorporating unity of worship (*tawhīd al-‘ibāda*) into the concept of unity. Ibn Taymiyya divides unity in types and claims that one cannot become monotheist and a believer without accepting unity of worship. Noting that polytheists of Mecca accepted the unity of God without unity of worship,¹¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyya says that “they were, however, polytheists; their belief in unity did not help them.”¹¹⁹ This shows the approach of al-‘Urābī, who quotes these phrases by Ibn Taymiyya¹²⁰ and considers salvation impossible without unity of worship, towards Birgiwī and the Māturīdī views.

According to Birgiwī, the faith of an imitator (*muqallid*) is valid; nevertheless, an imitator is a sinner because his beliefs are not based on evidence. Imitation is one of the troubles of the heart and is not permissible in creeds. Reasoning and evidence are needed, even if they are not in-detail (*wa-law ‘alā ṭarīq al-ijmāl*). Indeed, there are several Qur’ān verses that encourage reasoning and denigrate

¹¹⁶ The following master’s thesis is among the relevant studies: Fuhayd ibn Maṣṣūr ibn Zāmil ibn Lu’ayy al-Sharīf, introduction to *Aḥwāl atfāl al-muslimīn*, by Birgiwī (MA thesis; Mecca: Jāmi‘at Umm al-Qurā, 1434).

¹¹⁷ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 39. Also see id., *Vasiyyet-nāme*, 95; Ṭarīqatchī, *Farā’id*, 2b; Qāḍī-zāda Aḥmad [as Kadızāde Ahmed], *Birgiwī Vasiyyetnāmesi: Kadızāde Şerhi* (simplified by A. Faruk Meyan; Istanbul: Bedir Yayınları, 2009), 22.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar’ ta’āruḍ al-‘aql wa-l-naql* (ed. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim; 2nd edn., Medina: Jāmi‘at al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Su‘ūd al-Islāmiyya, 1991), I, 225.

¹¹⁹ Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Tadmuriyya: Taḥqīq al-itḥbāt li-l-asmā’ wa-l-ṣifāt wa-ḥaḥiqat al-jam‘ bayna l-qadar wa-l-sbar’* (ed. Muḥammad ibn ‘Awda al-Sa‘wī; Riyadh: Maktabat al-‘Ubaykān, 2000), 179.

¹²⁰ Al-‘Urābī, *Dāmīgha*, 55.

imitation in faith.¹²¹ A passage in *Dāmighba* reads, “The first obligation of a mature responsible believer is reasoning.”¹²² Ibn Taymiyya, however, criticizes the Kalām scholars who assert that reasoning is the primary obligation of the responsible person.¹²³

Divine Attributes

In *al-Ṭarīqa*, Birgiwī lists eight affirmative attributes of God (*al-ṣifāt al-thubūtīyya*): life (*ḥayāt*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), power (*qudra*), hearing (*sam‘*), seeing (*baṣar*), will (*irāda*), speech (*kalām*) and bringing into being (*takwīn*).¹²⁴ Bringing into being is a much-disputed issue between the Ash‘arī and Māturīdī scholars.¹²⁵ Birgiwī’s inclusion of *takwīn* among the eternal attributes of Allah shows his adherence to the Māturīdī School.¹²⁶

When discussing these attributes, Birgiwī indicates that Allah is not a matter (*jism*), substance (*jawhar*), or accident (*‘araḍ*) (*et cetera*).¹²⁷ According to Ibn Taymiyya, the expression of the existence or non-existence of matter, substance, and accident etc. for Allah (*lā nafy wa-lā ithbāt*) is among the heretical innovations censured by Salaf (*min kalām al-mubtadi‘*).¹²⁸

For Birgiwī, the vision of God is possible (*jā‘iz*) in terms of reason, and obligatory (*wājib*) in terms of revelation. However, there is no space, direction or distance for that vision.¹²⁹ Al-‘Urābī assesses this view from a Salafī perspective, saying, “People will laugh off one who says Allah will be seen albeit there is no direction.”¹³⁰ Birgiwī refers to fatwā books to make the claim that any word that attributes

¹²¹ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 41, 95.

¹²² Birgiwī, *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi‘in*, 223; al-‘Urābī, *Dāmighba*, 57.

¹²³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, XVI, 328.

¹²⁴ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 39.

¹²⁵ Al-Khādīmī, *al-Bariqa*, I, 211, 315; Ṭarīqatchī, *Farā‘id*, 29a; al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid*, V, 232; al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf al-sāda*, II, 8, 250; Kalaycı, *Tarixsel Süreçte Eşarilik-Maturidilik İlişkisi*, 288.

¹²⁶ Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgivi’nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri*, 72.

¹²⁷ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 39.

¹²⁸ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, III, 81.

¹²⁹ Birgiwī, *al-Ṭarīqa*, 39-40.

¹³⁰ Al-‘Urābī, *Dāmighba*, 68.

space to Allah will become unbelief.¹³¹ This view of Birgiwî is evidence of his differentiation from Ibn Taymiyya.¹³²

According to Birgiwî, Allah is the creator of good and evil, including the deeds of his objects (‘*abds*). In turn, the object has free will to choose his actions that is subject to reward or punishment.¹³³ Similar opinions are expressed in *Dāmighba*.¹³⁴ Birgiwî’s thoughts on human deeds and free will are entirely compliant with the Ḥanafî-Mâturîdî approach.¹³⁵ Birgiwî criticizes the Ash‘arî conception of predestination. Mentioning the name of al-Ash‘arî, Birgiwî claims that his view called *al-jabr al-mutawassîṭ* is actually no different than *al-jabr al-mahḍ*. Although he does not mention Mâturîdî, his explanations fit the Mâturîdî perspective.¹³⁶ Moreover, Birgiwî and his *al-Ṭarîqa* are believed to have a special role in the spread of the concept of the particular will (*al-irâda al-juz‘iyya*), which is highly relevant to this topic.¹³⁷ For Birgiwî, the object cannot be held responsible for something that exceeds its power,¹³⁸ therefore, he must be affiliated with the Mâturîdî approach because he differs from the Ash‘arî approach.¹³⁹

Faith (Īmān)

According to Birgiwî, faith is to approve (*taşdiq*) and acknowledge (*iqrār*) those things clearly brought by the Prophet.¹⁴⁰ Deeds are not included in the truth of faith. Faith is synonymous with Islām. Faith neither increases nor lessens. It is not permissible to say, “I am a believer, inshā’ Allāh” (exception in faith).¹⁴¹ Birgiwî’s views accord

¹³¹ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 43.

¹³² El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 15.

¹³³ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 40; Ṭarîqatchî, *Farâ'id*, 54b.

¹³⁴ Birgiwî, *Dāmighbat al-mubtadi‘in*, 225, 226.

¹³⁵ Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgivi'nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri*, 93.

¹³⁶ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 118. For details, see Çağrıç, “Gazzâlî'nin İhyâ'sı ile Birgivi'nin Tarikat-ı Muhammediyye'sinin Mukayesesi,” 477.

¹³⁷ Philipp Bruckmayr, “The Particular Will (*al-irâdat al-juz‘iyya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in Kalām Terminology on Human Agency and Its Position in Naqshbandi Discourse,” *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 13 (2011), 4.

¹³⁸ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 40.

¹³⁹ Ṭarîqatchî, *Farâ'id*, 61b.

¹⁴⁰ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 41, 84.

¹⁴¹ Birgiwî, *al-Ṭarîqa*, 41; cf. Birgiwî, *Vasiyyet-nâme*, 104; Ṭarîqatchî, *Farâ'id*, 120a.

with those of al-Imām al-Māturīdī on imān and Islām.¹⁴² Ibn Taymiyya mentions al-Māturīdī and his belief that “all human are equal in terms of faith; faith either is or is not, it is indivisible,” a view that differs from his own.¹⁴³

For Ibn Taymiyya, the definition of faith as “approval of heart, acknowledgement of tongue” is actually associated with Murji’a.¹⁴⁴ It is permissible to say, “I am a believer, inshā’ Allāh” (exception in faith).¹⁴⁵ Imān and Islām are different.¹⁴⁶ Deeds are part of faith.¹⁴⁷ Faith increases and lessens;¹⁴⁸ it changes and becomes fragmentary in terms of virtue.¹⁴⁹ The divisions that constitute faith, may partially fade away or survive.¹⁵⁰

Once deeds are included within the description of faith, some interesting interpretations inevitably follow. According to Ibn Qayyim, a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, unbelief and belief, polytheism and unity, piety and wrong, hypocrisy and faith may be simultaneously present in a person. This is one of the most fundamental principles. Ahl al-bid‘a, however, opposes this argument.¹⁵¹ Though he expresses himself differently, Ibn Taymiyya seems to have adopted the same approach.¹⁵² Nevertheless, we should also note his acceptance of “unbelief that does not dismiss one from religion” (*kufr lā yanqul ‘an al-milla, kufr dūn kufr*).¹⁵³ A

¹⁴² Yüksel, *Mehmed Birgivi’nin Dinî ve Siyasî Görüşleri*, 94, 95.

¹⁴³ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, VII, 582.

¹⁴⁴ Id., *al-Īmān* (ed. Muḥammad al-Zubaydī; Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1993), 172; id., *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, XIII, 50.

¹⁴⁵ Id., *al-Īmān*, 384-388; id., *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, VII, 439, 509.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, VII, 6.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 151, 177; VII, 308, 330, 642.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Īmān*, 28, 32, 204, 211, 216, 279, 308, 330; id., *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, III, 151; VI, 479; VII, 223, 505; XIII, 51; XIX, 188.

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, III, 355; VII, 517, 647; XI, 654; XVIII, 270.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, VII, 517.

¹⁵¹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Kitāb al-ṣalāt* (ed. ‘Adnān ibn Šāfākhān al-Bukhārī; Mecca: Dār al-‘Ālam al-Fawā’id, 1431), 60.

¹⁵² Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū‘ fatāwā*, VII, 353, 404, 520.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, VII, 350, 312, 325.

person who commits a major sin (*murtakib al-kabira*) is a believer with incomplete faith (*nāqiş al-imān*).¹⁵⁴

According to Wahhābī commentators of Ibn Taymiyya, Māturīdiyya is out of Ahl al-sunna; it is a deviant (*ḍāllā*) sect.¹⁵⁵ Birgiwī adopts the same views as the Māturīdī scholars about faith and almost all theological issues discussed among other Sunnī *madhhabs*. Therefore, it is impossible to claim that Birgiwī is affiliated with the Ibn Taymiyya School or Wahhābism.

Conclusion

Birgiwī has been described as a ‘Salafī’ and a representative of the Ibn Taymiyya School of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, when we elaborate various studies, we can see that the concepts developed on Ibn Taymiyya School and its alleged representative Birgiwī are complicated. Birgiwī’s dissenting character in several controversial issues during his lifetime has been highlighted. The sensitiveness in some issues such as criticisms against those who are considered heretics and Sufī circles has been widely seen as if they are specific to only Ibn Taymiyya and mentioned only in Ibn Taymiyya’s work. As Birgiwī hints in his notes, the Ḥanafī circle and tradition had already dealt with these issues and dissenting opinions; thus, it is a deficiency to overlook and ignore this fact.

Assumptions have been made about the relationship between Ibn Taymiyya and Birgiwī. Because of the discovery that *Ziyārat al-qubūr* was not written by Birgiwī, it is necessary to review the arguments asserting this connection that have been based on this treatise. The references to translations of Birgiwī’s *al-Ṭarīqa* also require revision because they are occasionally based on additions by the translator and not on Birgiwī’s original writings. Moreover, the findings based on erroneous information, such as the confusion of Ibn Qayyim, a disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, with Abū l-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, who lived and died in an earlier period, should be corrected. There are some quotations in *Dāmighat al-mubtadi‘in* that have been attributed to Birgiwī. Nevertheless, there are doubts about whether

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, 354.

¹⁵⁵ Āl al-Sheikh, *al-La’ālī l-babiyya*, 88-90; al-‘Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-‘Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya*, I, 53.

the book was really written by Birgiwī. Moreover, its contents reveal a completely Māturīdī text.

Birgiwī's views are consistent with the Māturīdiyya from the conventional classification of three sub-categories of Sunnī Islam: Salafiyya, Māturīdiyya and Ash'ariyya. It is noteworthy that who assessed Birgiwī's thoughts with a Salafī approach found them ridiculous or associate with the ideas of polytheists. On the other, the traditional categorization of Ottoman religious thought as the Rāzī (Māturīdī) School and Ibn Taymiyya School is also open to criticism in terms of *madhhabī* identities. Recognizing this, this study aimed to reveal the issues of Birgiwī's *madhhabī* association. Considering Birgiwī's views on creeds, it seems impossible to dissociate him from the Māturīdīs and to categorize him as a member of the Ibn Taymiyya School. Birgiwī is a Ḥanafī scholar, sensitive to religious deviations in society, and affiliated with Māturīdī approaches to theological problems. Various sub-classifications may be established within Māturīdism. Indeed, Māturīdism is represented in different ways in different regions. However, it seems impossible to trace the Ibn Taymiyya School of the Ottoman Empire through Birgiwī. The developments that occurred after Birgiwī's death also require further study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Kadir Gömbeyaz for proofreading and commenting on this study.

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