

The Intellectual Interaction of a Hıjāzī Scholar with the Lands of Rum

Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī's Criticism of the Hınanfī-Māturīdī Tradition in His Treatise *Jilā' al-Anzār**

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Translated by Ayaz Asadov***

Abstract: Şadr al-Sharī'a's (d. 747/1346) four premises (*al-muqaddimāt al-arba'*), which were formulated to refute Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) argument negating human volitional acts and to re-articulate the principles of the Hınanfī-Māturīdī tradition on the subject in a theoretical language, and Mehmed Birgivi's (d. 981/1573) later explanations on these premises have shaped the discussions on free-will and human action in the lands of Rum. Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, an Akbarian-Ash'ari scholar who operated in Hıjāz during the 17th century and was influential in the lands of Hıjāz, Damascus and North Africa, wrote numerous works on this subject. With his treatise *Jilā' al-Anzār*, al-Kūrānī also got involved in the version of the discussion that occurred in the lands of Rum and analyzed the views of Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgivi. Al-Kūrānī evaluated and challenged the dominant Hınanfī-Māturīdī tradition in his time and addressed various issues such as the possibility of proving human moral responsibility through the notions of particular will (*al-irāda al-juz'ıyya*) and performance (*ıqā'*), whether the states (*ahwāl*) were subject to creation, and if the will needed a cause for making choices. Moreover, he focused on the establishment of a middle position between absolute freedom (*tafwıd*) and absolute determinism (*jabr*). This paper aims to contextualize al-Kūrānī's views and criticisms within the related intellectual history by suggesting that, similar to the interactions he had with other intellectual circles, al-Kūrānī's interactions with the lands of Rum through his criticism of the dominant Hınanfī-Maturidi tradition of the time was connected to his purpose of opening up space for his own intellectual position and views that had the ambition to reconcile the different schools of thought.

Keywords: voluntary act, volition, particular will, *ıqā'*, *al-Muqaddimāt al-arba'*, Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, Şadr al-Sharī'a, al-Birgivi

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I. Introduction

A person's relation to their acts and the process through which those acts emerge are among the issues that have been disputed since the formative period of Islamic thought. The possibility of human moral responsibility and the ethical debate of the knowledge of good and evil hinge on the meaningfulness of voluntary human actions. A coherent account of volitional acts is possible only after developing a framework for God's relationship with the universe and constructing a cosmology accordingly, and all these have to not contradict the scripture. The explanations for voluntary acts also vary based on one's attitudes toward each of these variables. Therefore, the traditions of *kalām*, *falsafa*, and *taṣawwuf* and the schools within them have explained voluntary action by emphasizing its different aspects, which has led to differences of opinions between scholars within the same schools.

Early Ash'arī theologians like al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 418/1027), and al-Juwāynī (d. 418/1027) had divergent views on certain issues when explaining voluntary actions. These scholars were all in agreement in accepting volitional acts, yet they put forward different views on the human role in the emergence of these acts and the essence of acquisition (*kasb*) which was used to express the relation between a person and their voluntary action.¹

Al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) views on the subject can be considered a major moment of rupture in the Ash'arī school of thought. With the argument he formulated, al-Rāzī had concluded that divine will was the ultimate determinant in choosing the existence or non-existence of a thing and that human beings were unable to choose between the option of doing or desisting from an action with their free-will. Another major conclusion of his argument was that *kasb*, which had been unanimously accepted by the early Ash'arī thinkers, was a mere nominal concept without any correspondence. Consequently, al-Rāzī drew the conclusion that all human acts take place out of necessity (*iḍṭrār*)² and this idea largely influenced later theological thought.

On the other hand, the early representatives of the Māturīdī theological tradition agreed upon the acceptance of voluntary acts by proving human will and

- 1 Sayyid Sharif Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Umayrah, III Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1997) 207.
- 2 Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣal*, ed. Hüseyin Atay, (Qom: Intishārāt-i Sharif Riḍā, 1999), 455–8, 470; Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī, *Mahsūl fī 'ilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut, (Damascus: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 2012), I, 26–8.

power.³ However, the early version of the explanation became inadequate after al-Rāzī's argument, in which he rationally accounted for determinism (*al-jabr*). Şadr al-Sharī'a (d. 747/1346) understood the absurdity of discussing voluntary acts without considering this argument and laid out the ontological principles of the connection human will and acts had with good and evil through the fundamentals of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition using the theoretical and philosophical language that dominated the Ash'arī discourse on the subject.⁴ In order to refute al-Rāzī's argument, addressing the issue from the perspective of causality, Şadr al-Sharī'a attempted to create a space for human freedom by including human will and performance (*iqā'*) into the elements of the complete cause that gives rise to the volitional acts. He based this attempt on four sequential premises (*al-muqaddimāt al-arba'*) which sparked off intense debates within Ottoman intellectual circles after the second half of the 15th century and brought a different viewpoint to the discussions on human acts.⁵

Later in the 16th century, Meḥmed al-Birgiwī (d. 981/1573) as an Ottoman representative of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition addressed the subject of particular will (*al-irāda al-juz'iyya*), which he described as Satan's worst contrivance in his *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*. Confirming the premises put forward by Şadr al-Sharī'a, he acknowledged human will ontologically as a state (*ḥāl*) that is decisive in the emergence of an action. In addition, he rearticulated some of Şadr al-Sharī'a's views and supported them with different pieces of evidence.

Al-Birgiwī's emphasis on particular will and the arguments and concepts he deployed influenced the scholars who were authoring works on the subject. Independent treatises were written on the relevant part of al-Birgiwī's work and many in particular referred to his views mentioned in his treatise on particular will and the four premises.⁶

3 Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu, "Māturīdī Kelâmında İnsan Hürriyeti Meselesi" [The Problem of Human Freedom in al-Māturīdī's Thought], *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (The Journal of the Faculty of Divinity of Ankara University)*, 30 (1988): 165–6.

4 Şükrü Özen, "Tenkihu'l-usûl", *DİA*, XL, 456.

5 For Ottoman scholarship on *al-Tawdīh* and *al-Talwih*, see İmam Rabbani Çelik, "XV. yy Osmanlı Düşüncesinde *Telviḥ* Haşiyeleri: Teklife Dair Tartışmalar" [The super-commentaries on al-Talwih in the XV th. century Ottoman thought: Debates on *taklif*] (Doctoral thesis, Marmara University Institute of Social Sciences, 2020), 66–105.

6 Meḥmed Birgiwī's *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya* and Khādimi's commentary on this were received as reliable books and became reference sources in the discussions on particular will in particular. I would like to thank Dr. Mehmet Kalaycı, who called my attention to this. For the treatises on particular will

As much as Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī had been a sūfi scholar who had grown up far from the center of the Ottoman Empire and operated in the Ḥijāz region, he was not so far as to miss the debate around the four premises and the relevant sections of *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* that had set the agenda for the scholars in the lands of Rum. He authored a critical appraisal of the four premises called *Jilā' al-Anzār* (Polishing of the Views). Later, he added an appendix to this treatise that examined al-Birgiwī's opinions. While addressing the ideas on human action that dominated the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition during his time, he compared the ideas that were put forward in these works with those of the founding thinkers of this tradition and examined whether the claims in the post-classical period overlapped with the explanations developed in the classical period. He also tried to open a space for the views he had defended in his prior works, making an attempt to base these views that he had expounded by referencing the Ash'arī and Akbarian texts,⁷ which were also based on Ḥanafī-Māturīdī thought.

John O. Voll's research pointed out the connection al-Kūrānī had with the renewal movements in the 18th century and showed the way Salafi fundamentalist ideas had their origin with him by revealing his teacher-student relationships with reformers such as Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (d. 1205/1792) and Shāh Wali Allāh al-Dahlawī (d. 1176/1762).⁸ This thesis he developed through a network analysis was later expounded by Basheer Nafi, who traced al-Kūrānī's views in his works that had served as sources for the renewal movements.⁹

Taking a critical stance toward this scholarship, Khaled el-Rouayheb argued that, although Voll and his followers had related the 18th century renewal movements with the internal dynamics of Muslims, they still presupposed an

that cited al-Birgiwī, see Aḥmad 'Aṣīm Kutahyawī, *Risāla-i Irāda-i Juz'īyya* (Istanbul: Maṭba'a-i 'Āmīra, 1285), 2; Ismā'īl Ḥamīdī, *Risāla-i Irāda-i Juz'īyya*, İBB Atatürk Library, Municipal Manuscripts 0942, 107b; and Dāwūd al-Qarsī, *Risāla fī bayān al-irāda al-juz'īyya*, Hacı Selim Ağa Library, Hacı Mahmud Efendi 1273. 55b.

7 See Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *Maslak al-sadād ilā khalq af'āl al-ibād*, Süleymaniye Library, Cârullah Efendi 2102, 2a–2b, 15b, 16b; Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *İmdād dhawi al-isti'dād li-sulūki maslak al-sadād*, Süleymaniye Library, Reisülküttāb 1179, 121a, 122a–23, 128b for examples.

8 John Voll, "Muḥammad Ḥayyā al-Sindī and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb: An Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madīna", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38/1 (1975): 33–34; John O. Voll, "Abdallah ibn Salim al-Basri and 18th Century Hadith Scholarship", *Die Welt des Islams* 42/3 (2002): 363–4.

9 Basheer M. Nafi, "Taṣawwuf and Reform in Pre-Modern Islamic Culture: In Search of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī", *Die Welt des Islams* 42/3 (2002): 310, 322–43.

intellectual stagnation or decline in Arab lands and the Hijāz between the 13th-18th centuries. As part of his criticism, he called attention to the intellectual dynamism that had been present in the region in the 17th century. He brought to light the richness of the themes in the discussions that had taken place on certain topics among the interconnected scholars in this locale of knowledge. In his studies, el-Rouayheb emphasized the impact the Iranian scholarly circles and the scholars who grew up there had had on the intellectual developments in the Hijāz. He also briefly mentioned the relationships that al-Kūrānī had established with the lands of Rum through the students who'd travelled to the Hijāz from there.¹⁰ However, he neither addressed the connection al-Kūrānī had established with the intellectual agenda of the scholars in the lands of Rum, which represented the dominant Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition, nor the way the intellectual circles had impacted the Hijāz intellectually. This study contributes to el-Rouayheb's findings and draws attention to the fact that, along with the Iranian intellectual circles that had fed intellectual thought in the Hijāz, the lands of Rum also had an impact on the scholars who operated in the Hijāz.

By focusing on al-Kūrānī, Naser Dumairieh calls attention to the richness of intellectual life in the Hijāz.¹¹ However, because of the wide scope of his study, he only examined al-Kūrānī's views in broad strokes and left out the contacts he had established in the lands of Rum.

Another study in Turkish has also discussed al-Kūrānī's biography and views on *taşawwuf* while briefly referring to his connection with the intellectual circles of Rum.¹² Other studies are also found in Turkish concerning the critical editions of

10 Khaled el-Rouayheb, "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38/2 (May 2006): 263-4, 271-7; Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Current in the Ottoman Empire and Maghreb* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 272-347.

11 Naser Dumairieh, "Intellectual Life in the Hijāz in the 17th Century The Works and Thought of İbrāhīm al-Kūrānī (1025-1101/1616-1690)" (PhD dissertation, McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies, 2018).

12 Ömer Yılmaz mentions al-Kūrānī's contact with this intellectual circle by talking about his treatment of the issues of the faith of the Pharaoh, the existence of Kih̄r, and the ruling on the kissing of the hand, issues that were on the intellectual agenda of the lands of Rum. However, Yılmaz does not discuss al-Kūrānī's views or the criticism he expressed on the issue of human action through Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgīwī's texts. Ömer Yılmaz, İbrāhīm Kūrānī: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tasavvuf Anlayışı (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005), 59-60.

his treatises,¹³ yet the research dealing with his views from this point of view and investigating the intellectual traditions that he had been in touch with is limited.¹⁴

By presenting al-Kūrānī with the stance of a Sūfi-scholar who lived and operated in the Hījāz regarding the issues discussed in Ottoman intellectual circles, this study aims to examine the criticism he levelled in his works at a scholarly community with whom he'd had no direct or strong connection. To do this, I will first discuss the historical and intellectual background in which al-Kūrānī had developed his theory of human action. I will then go on with an analysis to locate the position his treatise *Jilā' al-Anzār* had among his other works on human action and to identify the connection among these works. Afterwards, I will focus on his criticisms directed at the major scholars of the post-classical Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition, Ṣadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgīwī, and place them into a historical and intellectual context.

II. Three Different Centers of Knowledge Toward the 17th Century and al-Kūrānī's Intellectual World

In the 15th-16th centuries, the regions of al-Shām, Egypt and Hījāz were dominated by an intellectual tradition that focused on humanities such as the language sciences and history as well as transmitted-religious sciences such as *hadīth* and *fiqh*. These locales of knowledge were under the rule of the Mamlūks and had a particularly prominent interest in *hadīth*. *Hadīth* were widely taught both in institutions such as madrasas and mosques as well as in private gatherings in the palace and homes. The last memorizers (*ḥuffāz*) and prominent scholars of *hadīth* such as Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), Badr al-dīn al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451) and Shams al-Dīn

13 Al-Kūrānī's views have been briefly examined in the critical editions of the numerous books he authored. See Erol Öztekin, "İbrahim Kūrānī'nin Matlau'l-cūd Adlı Eseri [Al-Kurani's Matla' al-Jud]" (MA thesis, Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, 2007); Muhammed Bilal Gültekin, "Osmanlı Âlimlerinden İbrahim Kūrānī ve 'Cilāu'l-Fuhūm fī Tahkiki's-Sübūt ve Ru'yeti'l-Madūm' Adlı Eseri [From Ottoman scholars İbrahim Kūrānī and his book named 'Cilāu'l-Fuhūm fī Tahkiki's-Subūt ve Ru'yeti'l-Madūm']" (MA Thesis, Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, 2017).

14 One thesis studied his views on human action in the treatise *Maslak al-sadād* in detail, yet it focused on his contacts with North Africa and Shām only. See Şerife Nur Çelik, "İbrāhīm el-Kūrānī'ye Göre İnsan Fiilleri *Meslekü's-sedād* Risalesi Bağlamında [Human acts according to İbrahim al-Kūrānī - within the context of the epistle titled *al-Maslak al-Sadād*]" (MA thesis, Sakarya University, 2019). İrfan İnce references İbrahim al-Kūrānī in passing in his PhD dissertation examining 18th century Madina. İrfan İnce, "Medina im 12./18. Jahrhundert: Politische Strukturen, Beziehungen und Konflikte, mit Einblicken in den Gelehrten Diskurs", (PhD dissertation, Fakultät für Philologie der Ruhr-Universität, 2014), 270-1.

al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) were among the notable names who'd been educated in Cairo during this period.¹⁵

The intensity of activities on hadīth-centric knowledge that were dominant during the Mamlūk period was influential in shaping the cognitive structure of the scholars there and led to the prevalence of a removed attitude toward metaphysics, philosophy and logic. This intensity also had an influence on the formation of the dominant understanding in other disciplines. This dominant understanding in the region manifested itself in a high number of authorships on the *takhrīj* [the process of tracking down the sources of a hadith and adjudging its status] of *fiqh* books and the compilation of hadīth narrations dealing with the rulings and biographies of jurists. Hadith-centric attitudes of the prominent jurists of this region were found in works from Ibn al-Humām (d.861/1457), Ibn Qutlubogha (d.879/1474), Zakariya al-Anṣārī (d. 926/1520) and Zayn al-Dīn ibn Nujaym (d. 970/1563) and are important examples pointing to this.¹⁶

Compared to the dynamism in the transmitted-religious sciences within the Mamlūk geography, philosophical-rational sciences like philosophy, logic, kalām and astronomy were on the rise in the intellectual circles of Persia.¹⁷ In the observatory established in Marāgha in the 13th century by order of Hülāgū, distinguished scholars in philosophical-rational sciences such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), al-Kātibi (d. 675/1277), al-Abharī (d. 663/1265) and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 710/1311) had the opportunity to meet with each other and these sciences experienced their golden age.¹⁸ Afterward, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (d.726/1325), 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-'Ījī (d. 756/1355) and Quṭb al-din al-Rāzī (d. 766/1365) passed on the scientific tradition they had inherited from the scholars who had come together in the observatory to other scholars such as Muhammad ibn Mubārakshāh (d. post-784/1382), al-Taftāzānī (d. 784/1382) and Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), who played important roles through their students in the continuity of these sciences, both in the lands of Rum and in Iran. While al-

15 For hadith scholarship during the last Mamlūk century, see Halit Özkan, *Memlûklerin Son Asrında Hadis* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2014), 29–33, 121–56.

16 Following the Mongol invasion, a need emerged to preserve the intellectual accumulation of the Islamic tradition. Because of this reason, the transmissions and works of compilations also came to the fore in this region, and a more conservative attitude dominated the intellectual mentality, see Hasan Tuncay Başoğlu, "Eyyübiler ve Memlûkler Dönemi Fıkıh Yazımı [Fiqh Literature at the Time of the Ayyubids and Mamluks]", *İslam Tetkikleri Dergisi [Journal of Islamic Review]* 10/1 (March 2020): 238–71.

17 Başoğlu, "Eyyübiler ve Memlûkler Dönemi Fıkıh Yazımı", 234–5.

18 Harun Kuşlu, *Nasîruddin et-Tûsî'de Önergeler Mantiği* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2016), 23, 51.

Taftāzānī's students Burhān al-Dīn Ḥaydār al-Harawī (d. post-830/1426), Fakhr al-Dīn al-A'jamī (d. 860/1460), and Sayyid 'Ali al-A'jamī (d. 860/1455-56) were effective in this tradition being transferred to Ottoman scholars,¹⁹ Şadr al-Dīn al-Dashtakī (d. 903/1498) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502) who had studied under al-Jurjānī's students continued the tradition of philosophical-rational sciences in the Iranian intellectual circles.²⁰

The Ottoman conquest of Mamlūk-ruled territories and the emergence of the Safavids as a political power foreshadowing Shī'ism in the 16th century were among the factors that influenced the dominant intellectual character in the lands of Rum. The increased emphasis on Sunnism and its *madhhab* [school of thought] in the works that were authored during this period is associated with the Ottoman Empire positioning its Sunnī identity against the Shī'ī Safavids.²¹

Similarly, the emergence of ideas prioritizing transmission-based sciences and criticizing theoretical-rational sciences are connected with the conquest of Mamlūk lands.²² While the glosses written in the 15th-16th centuries mainly concentrated on the books that addressed the issues with a theoretic-philosophical language going beyond the boundaries of the *madhhab* such as *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, *Tajrid al-'Aqā'id*, and *al-Talwīḥ*, the number of studies done on these texts decreased in the subsequent centuries.²³ This can be considered in connection with the shifting intellectual trends.

The Safavid increasingly imposing restraints upon the Sunnī scholars and exclusively appointing Shī'ī scholars to official teaching positions led to a wave of

19 İmam Rabbani Çelik, "XV. Asır Osmanlı Entelektüel Çevresi İçin Teftāzānī Ne İfade Eder?: Haşiye Literatüründe Otorite İsim Olarak Teftāzānī", *Osmanlı Düşüncesi Kaynakları ve Tartışma Konuları*, Ed. Fuat Aydın, Metin Aydın and Muhammet Yetim (Istanbul: Mahya Yayıncılık, 2018), 192-3.

20 Harun Anay, "Devvānī", *DİA*, IX, 257; Hilal Görgün, "Sadreddin Deşteki", *DİA*, Ek 1, 323.

21 Mehmet Kalaycı, "Mâtüridi-Hanefi Aidiyetin Osmanlı'daki İzdüşümleri" [Projections of Mâtüridite-Ḥanafite Identity on the Ottomans], *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi (Cumhuriyet Theology Journal)* 20/2 (2016): 34-46; Helen Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture? Arab Scholars and Ottoman Sunnization in the Sixteenth Century", *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750*, Ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Boston: Brill, 2020), 31.

22 Mehmet Kalaycı, "Bir Osmanlı Kelâmcısı Ne Okur? Osmanlı İlim Geleneği Çerçevesinde Beyâzizâde'nin *Mecmû'a fi'l-mesâ'il-l-müntehabe* Adlı Eseri", *Osmanlı'da İlm-i Kelâm*, Ed. Osman Demir, Veysel Kaya, Kadir Gömbeyaz and U. Murat Kılavuz (Istanbul: İSAR Yayınları, 2016), 59-75; Pfeifer, "A New Hadith Culture?", 32.

23 The gloss written by Sayyid Sharif Jurjānī on *Tasdid al-Qawā'id*, a commentary on *Tajrid al-'Aqā'id*, was among the important texts that the scholars of the land of Rum wrote glosses on. In particular, a high number of glosses are found on *Tajrid* during the 15th-16th centuries, see Kâtib Chalabi, *Kashf al-Zunūn* Eds. Şerafettin Yaltkaya and Rifat Bilge (Lebanon: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, n.d), I, 346-51.

immigration in the 16th century and beyond. Some of the Sunnī scholars who had been compelled to leave the Iranian lands due to political pressure settled in Damascus, Diyarbakir, Hijāz and Istanbul.²⁴ The intellectual dynamism that occurred due to these migrations resulted in the establishment of scholarly gatherings in which theoretic-rational sciences were taught in Damascus, Egypt and the Hijāz, where the transmitted-religious sciences were widely studied. The interest in these sciences grew among the students of knowledge and brought about the “opening of the gate of verification.”²⁵ Al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690) was a Sufi scholar who operated in the Hijāz immediately after these developments in the second half of the 17th century.

Al-Kūrānī's intellectual journey began in Shahrazūr, where the philosophical-rational sciences were dominant. There he studied the works from prominent thinkers of the post-classical period in the fields of the philosophical-rational sciences and language sciences, such as al-Rāzī, al-‘Ījī, al-Taftāzānī, al-Jurjānī, al-Dawānī, Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338), and Mollā Jāmī' (d. 898/1492). Of the transmitted-religious sciences, he studied them all Shahrazūr with the exception of hadīth and taṣawwuf. The books he read in these sciences had mainly been authored after the classical period.²⁶ He described his encounter with the science of ḥadīth as follows upon his arrival in Damascus upon leaving Shahrazūr:

24 After conquering Istanbul, Mehmed II personally invited scholars who'd been educated in Iran such as 'Alī al-Qūshjī and gave patronage to the scholars who'd escaped to the Ottoman lands after the death of Timur. During the period when Abū al-Su'ūd was sheikh al-Islam, with the establishment of the bureaucratic system, being an instructor in a madrasa became difficult for the scholars who'd not been educated in Ottoman madrasas and had not gone through a particular bureaucratic process. For instance, Muşliḡ al-Din al-Lāri (d. 979/1572), a student of Mir Ghiyāth al-Din al-Dashtakī, came to Istanbul and proved himself with his intellectual skills. However, he was not satisfied with the position given to him in a low-ranked madrasa and went to Diyarbakir and became an instructor in the Hüsrev Pasha madrasa. Şadr al-Din-zadeh Shirwānī (d. 1036/1627) migrated from Shirwān to Diyarbakir and became Vizier Naşūh Pasha's teacher. With the appointment of Naşūh Pasha to the position of grand vizier, Shirwānī received political patronage and was able to obtain a position in Istanbul in this way. Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Erken Modern Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Âlimler ve Sultanlar*, Tran. Gürzat Kami, (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2019), 73–76; Nev'izāde Atāyī, *Hadāiku'l-hakāik fī tekmileti'ş-Şakāyık*, Ed. Suat Donuk, (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2017), 608–609; Ramazan Altıntaş, “Sadreddinzade Şirvānī”, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi (TDV Encyclopedia of Islam)* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2010), XXXIX, 208.

25 While before the 17th century the study of the sciences of philosophy and logic appealed to a limited group of students, the arrival of scholars from Ajam lands allowed a wider audience the opportunity to become familiar with the works authored in these disciplines. See Khaled el-Rouayheb, “Opening the Gate of Verification”, 264–265.

26 Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *al-Amam li-iqāz al-himām*, (Hyderabad: Maṭba'at Majlis Da'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Nizāmiyya, 1328), 101–11; Abū Sālim Ayyāshī, *al-Riḥla al-'Ayyāshīyya*, Ed. Sa'id al-Fadili and Sulayman al-Qarshi (Abu Dhabi: Dar al-Suwaydi, 2006) I, 480.

*Until I reached Damascus, Egypt and the Hijaz in Bilād al-'Arab, I had not thought that there were still people on the earth who said "ḥaddathanā" and "akhbaranā" [meaning they'd narrated ḥadīth with its chain of narration].*²⁷

Truly when examining al-Kūrānī's ijāzah, while he did study the rational sciences with Sheikh Sultan al-Mazzāḥī (d. 1075/ 1664-65) in Egypt and Aḥmad al-Qushāshī in Madina (d. 1071/1661), he is additionally seen to have studied the books of prominent ḥadīth scholars, in particular Imām Bukhārī (d. 256/870), Muslim (d. 261/875), Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/889), Ibn Māja (d. 273/887), al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855).²⁸

Of the transmitted-religious sciences, he read the works of authors from different schools of thought,²⁹ such as Imām al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), Imām al-Māturidī (d. 333/944), al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), Ṣadr al-Sharī'a, al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), al-Sighnāqī (d. 714/1314), Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350), al-Isnawī (d. 772/1370), al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) and Ibn al-Humām (d. 861/1457), while the books of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī (d. 561/1165-66), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 638/1240), Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) and Molla Fanārī (d. 834/1431) were his main sources for taṣawwuf.³⁰

Al-Kūrānī's intellectual journey had started in geography, where philosophical-rational sciences were widely taught, and continued with his later encounter with *ḥadīth* from among the transmitted sciences. His subsequent reading of many books and familiarization with the intellectual issues of this discipline also informed the content of his ideas. After deepening his knowledge in the external sciences, another important development in his intellectual formation involved encountering al-Qushāshī (d. 1071/1660) and entering under his spiritual tutelage. Al-Kūrānī was firmly committed to his sheikh and influenced by his thoughts. Al-Qushāshī's eclectic views also affected al-Kūrānī and thanks to his intellectual accumulation, he was also able to further develop the ideas of his spiritual master. In this context, he treated the various principles of different disciplines of Islamic thought such as falsafa, kalām, and taṣawwuf in a holistic and reconciling manner

27 'Ayyāshī, *al-Riḥla*, I, 479–80.

28 al-Kūrānī had studied many other books on ḥadīth in addition to the ones mentioned here. See also al-Kūrānī, *al-Amam*, 2–43, 55–62.

29 al-Kūrānī, *al-Amam*, 17, 73, 76–8, 81–4, 91, 93, 100.

30 *Ibid.*, 118, 120–5.

and tried to establish a coherent and compatible framework for them. He also built his own views on this framework.

Al-Qushāshī and al-Kūrānī's eclectic attitudes were most apparent in their approach to human action. This is also the issue for which they were most criticized in terms of methodology. Al-Kūrānī's views on human action have their traces in al-Qushāshī's works. In *al-Ifāda bī mā bayn al-ikhtiyār wa al-irāda*, the first treatise al-Qushāshī authored as a sufi defending *waḥdat al-wujūd* to discuss the issue of human action, he aimed to ground Ibn al-'Arabī's views on *taklif*. In this work, he put forward the argument based on Ibn al-'Arabī's views that "The agent's power, but not alone, is effective (*muaththir*) in the creation of action,"³¹ and tried to substantiate this position by giving reference to al-Juwāynī.

The views he expressed in this work were not well-received in North Africa, to which al-Qushāshī himself was closely connected. The scholars of this region followed the Ash'arī-Sanūsī tradition and thus criticized him. In order to respond to these criticisms and explain the views he attributed to al-Juwāynī, al-Qushāshī authored *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*.³²

Al-Kūrānī's early works dealing with the issue of human action had aimed at averting the criticisms directed at the views of his sheikh, al-Qushāshī. In fact, his first claims about the issue were made in *Qaṣd al-sabīl*, a commentary on his sheikh's *al-Manzūma fī al-'aqīda*.³³ After this commentary, he authored numerous independent treatises that exclusively addressed the issue of human action and elaborated on and systematized the view that had first been expressed by his sheikh. A chronological introduction of his works on this specific issue is important in terms of positioning the treatise *Jilā' al-Anzār*, which happens to be the subject of this article.

31 On the issue of human action, the use of the *ta'thir* as creation and *mu'aththir* power as the origination (*ijād*) power is not unique to al-Qushāshī and al-Kūrānī. In *kalām*, *ta'thir* was used in the meanings of creating a thing out of nothingness and destruction of an existing thing. In this context, *ta'thir* means more than creation, and whether temporal power is *muaththir* is examined in the discussions on the creator of action. See al-Kūrānī, *Imdād dhawī al-isti'dād*, 117b; Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad b. Abū al-Faḍl al-Bakki al-Tūnūsī, *Tahrīr al-qawā'id*, Ed. Niẓār Hamādī (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ma'arif, 2008), 187.

32 Dumairieh, "Intellectual Life in the Hijāz", 324; Şafī al-Dīn Aḥmad Qushāshī, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, Istanbul Süleymaniye Library, Reşid Efendi 428.8, 112b–133b.

33 In the commentary, he wrote on al-Qushāshī's *'aqīda*, his treatment of the themes of *kasb* and *istiṭā'a* by giving reference to İmām al-Ash'arī and al-Juwāynī and the defense of his sheikh's views can be read in connection with the criticisms directed to al-Qushāshī at that time. Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *Qaṣd al-sabīl*, Koca Ragıp Paşa Library, Ragıp Paşa 802, 183b.

Al-Kūrānī's first independent work on human action was *al-Mutimma*.³⁴ It had been authored to respond to criticisms levelled at al-Qushāshī, and in it he argued that the effectiveness of the power of the agent is the necessary result of the principle of oneness (*tawhīd*) based on the view that the testimony of oneness signifies the oneness of God's action (*af'āl*) and His attributes (*ṣifāt*).³⁵ This treatise was followed by *al-'Ujālat dhawī al-intibāh* (authored on Rabi' al-awwal 24, 1070 [December 9, 1659]) in which al-Kūrānī addressed the issues of both human action and the monotheism implied in the testimony of oneness based on a common ground of discussion. In *Zayl al-Mutimma*, which was authored after 'Ujāla, he elaborated on the claims he'd made in *al-Mutimma* and responded to the questions that had been raised on 'Ujāla. In it, he tried to make the argument for the effectiveness of the power of human beings in line with God's permission.³⁶

Al-Ilma' al-muhit was authored in 1073/1662-63 following *Zayl al-Mutimma*. Al-Kūrānī penned it upon the request of his student Abū Sālim al-Ayyāshī, who wanted him to write a summary of al-Qushāshī's last work *al-Kashf wa al-bayān 'an masalat al-kash bi'l-iqān*. In this work, al-Kūrānī concentrated on and critiqued the views al-Taftāzānī expressed in *Sharḥ al-Maqāsīd* and discussed the issues around the meaning which his sheikh had attributed to the concept of acquisition (*kasb*).³⁷

The next work was *Maslak al-i'tidāl ilā fahm āyat khalq al-a'māl*, which al-Kūrānī authored in 1075 in the month of Shabān (February/March 1665). In this book, al-Kūrānī shifted his interlocutor and offered his views by criticizing the Mu'tazila and al-Zamakhsharī in particular. The aim al-Kūrānī had in mentioning his adherence

34 Al-Kūrānī did not date this treatise. However, in *Zayl al-Mutimma* which was written as an addendum to this treatise, he made prayer for the health of his sheikh and gave references to 'Ujālah, which had been authored on 24 Rabi' al-awwal 1070 [December 9, 1659]. This allows one to conclude that *al-Mutimma* had been written before its *Zayl* and also before al-Qushāshī's death. Dumairieh, "Intellectual Life in the Hījāz", 204; İbrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *al-Ujālah dhaw al-intibāh*, İstanbul Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2722, 178a.

35 İbrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *al-Mutimma li al-mas'ala al-muhimma*, İstanbul Süleymaniye Library, Şehit Ali Paşa 2722, 129a, 138a.

36 No date is found in the copies of this treatise of al-Kūrānī that were accessed. However, based on the references made in 'Ujāla, that it had been authored on 24 Rabi' al-awwal 1070 (December 9, 1659), it can safely be assumed to have been written before 'Ujāla. Ömer Yılmaz noted that it had been written in 1655/1066. İbrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *Zayl al-Mutimma*, İstanbul Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2722, 146b-150b; Yılmaz, İbrahim Kūrānī, 226.

37 Abū Sālim al-Ayyāshī in *al-Riḥla'* gave information about this treatise and included the entire text as a chapter in his book. İbrāhīm al-Kūrānī, *al-Ilma' al-muḥiṭ bi-taḥqīq al-kash al-waṣat bayna tarāfayy al-iḥrāf wa-al-tafrīf*, İstanbul Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2722, 151b; al-'Ayyāshī, *al-Riḥla*, I, 604-20.

to the Ash'arī school of thought in his criticism of the Mu'tazila, by referring to *Qaşd al-sabīl* (the commentary he wrote on al-Qushāshī's creedal work), and his continuous emphasis on the differences between his views and the Mu'tazilite position was to refute the accusations against him and his sheikh.³⁸

In all of these mentioned works, al-Kūrānī dealt with human action, but he preferred to explain them in relation to the issue of *tawhīd* and adopted a defensive approach. However, the most comprehensive and compelling book in which al-Kūrānī discussed his own views in great detail and tried to prove them was authored on 23 Rabī' al-Awwal 1085 (June 17 1674) with the title *Maslak al-sadād*. In his previous works, al-Kūrānī had either dealt with the issues of both existence and divinity extensively while explaining human action, or he had referred to human action while addressing other themes such as *tawhīd* and immutable entities (*al-a'yān al-thābita*). However, in *Maslak al-sadād* all these other topics received little treatment, with the main focus being on the connection between human power and actions. In it, he tried to prove the legitimacy of his position and its conformity with the Ash'arī school by referencing scholars from different schools of thought, beginning with Imām al-Ash'arī and others such as al-Juwaynī, Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn al-'Arabī, Ibn al-Humām, and al-Jurjānī. By addressing the state of the created will and the link between power and action in connection with immutable principles, al-Kūrānī expressed his own intellectual position by stating his loyalty to the Ash'arī and Akbarian traditions and attempted to reconcile the ontological approach the Akbarian tradition had with theological principles of Ash'arī thought.³⁹

Al-Kūrānī's claims and approach in *Maslak al-sadād*, which treated the issues eclectically and tried to bring views from different traditions under a single umbrella, attracted strong criticism from both Sūfī and Ash'arī circles. While al-Kūrānī identified himself as a Sūfī who defended *wahdat al-wujūd* [the oneness

38 al-Kūrānī, *Maslak al-i'tidāl ilā fahm ayat khalq al-a'māl*, Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa 2722, 162a–162b.

39 16th-century scholars such as Bahā' al-Din Zada (d.952/1545), Bali Efendi of Sofia (d. 960/ 1553) and Sheikh Shaban al-Mudurnī (d. 1003/1594), whose views were close to Ibn al-'Arabī on *wahdat al-wujūd*, related the issues of human action and predestination to immutable entities and examined them from an Akbarian point of view. On the other hand, al-Kūrānī additionally tried to reconcile the Akbarian thought with the Ash'arism while maintaining this connection, which made him adopt a different attitude in terms of sources and methodology than these scholars. See Yasin Apaydın, Orkhan Musakhanov, *Kelam ile Tasavvuf Arasında: Bahâeddinzâde ve Kader Anlayışı*, (Istanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2021), pp. 57–58; Çelik, "İbrāhīm el-Kūrānī'ye Göre İnsan Fiilleri", 28, 31–34.

of being] and as a theologian of the Ash‘arī line of thinking,⁴⁰ his contemporaries claimed that his views belonged to neither of these two traditions and further claimed that these two ideas could not be reconciled on any common ground.

In fact, the first and the most trenchant criticisms of *Maslak al-sadād* came from the scholars of Maghreb, where the Ash‘arī-Sanūsī tradition was dominant; they had also criticized al-Qushāshī’s work from different perspectives. In their critique of al-Kūrānī’s views on human action, this region’s scholars Muhammad al-Mahdi b. Aḥmad and Hasan al-Yūsī focused on his claim about the effectiveness of temporal power. They argued that accepting this claim would require the act of creation to be attributed to beings other than Allah, and a person who adopts this view would become a disbeliever according to the consensus of the scholars. Al-Kūrānī, who authored works by bringing up the views scholars considered problematic, was accused of reviving reprehensible long-dead innovations. Al-Yūsī went even further in his criticism by claiming that Satan could not have found a more suitable person than al-Kūrānī, a self-considered Imām and scholar, to initiate temptation about human action, insinuating that the intentions behind the views al-Kūrānī had put forward in his works were not good.⁴¹

Another scholar who responded to *Maslak al-sadād* with an independent work was Sidi Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī, who’d taken lessons from al-Kūrānī himself. In two of his works, which he named *al-Isti’dād li-sulūki maslak al-sadād* and *Naqd Maslak al-sadād*, he drew attention to the issue of the effectiveness of the power of the subject and implied that the concepts al-Kūrānī used were ambiguous. He further stated that al-Kūrānī had made mistakes regarding the implications of the scriptural evidence he’d used and had some confusion in terms of employing the technical terms in accordance with the original meaning for which they’d been formulated. Sidi Muhammad also tried to draw attention to the internal contradictions of some of al-Kūrānī’s claims and examined his views comprehensively, especially in terms of the rules of logic and principles of kalām in order to show their weaknesses.⁴²

40 al-Kūrānī, *Maslak al-sadād*, 2b; al-Kūrānī, *Imdād dhawi al-isti’dād*, 110a.

41 Muhammad al-Qādirī, *Nashr al-Mathani*, Ed. Muhammad Hajji, Amad al-Tawfiq (Ribat: Rabat: Maktabat al-Talib, 1986), III, 8–9; Hasan al-Yūsī, *Rasa’il Abi ‘Ali al-Yūsī*, Ed. Fatimah Khalil al-Qibli, (Al-Dar al-Bayda’: Dar al-Thaqafah, n.d.) II, 617.

42 I could not access these two treatises by Sidi Muhammad. Nevertheless, al-Kūrānī made citations from both of these in *Imdād dhawi al-isti’dād* and attempted to answer the questions directed to himself. Based on the cited texts, it is possible to have an idea of their content. See al-Kūrānī, *Imdād dhawi al-isti’dād*, 123a–147a.

These treatises Sidi Muhammad wrote also contained questions that did reach al-Kūrānī. He responded to the questions and criticisms in *Imdād dhawi al-isti'dād*, which he authored on 13 Jamāzī' al-Akhir 1088' (August 13, 1677).⁴³ This treatise entails importance in terms of containing al-Kūrānī's explanation of the concepts he used as well as revealing the sources of the premises he employed in his thought.

Some students who attended al-Kūrānī's classes and were in contact with the intellectual circles in Damascus had delivered *Maslak al-sadād* and *Imdād dhawi al-isti'dād* to Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, who was known for his sufi orientation and asked various question about the views these works contained. Nābulusī examined these two treatises and authored *Tahrīq silsilat al-widād* in Shawwāl 1089 (November/December 1678) to address and critique al-Kūrānī's views by considering the criticisms of the scholars of al-Maghreb region, whom he referred to as "the supporters of Sanūsī." Nābulusī focused on the claim that the effectiveness of the power of the agent is possible with the permission of God. He tried to show the inconsistencies by considering all the possible connotations from the perspective of both the sciences of the apparent and the hidden (*'ulūm al-zāhir wa al-bāṭin*) and attempted to point to their methodological weaknesses.⁴⁴

As can be seen, al-Kūrānī interacted with the scholars from the intellectual circles of North Africa, the Ḥijāz and al-Shām through the works I have mentioned so far. In these treatises that he authored on human action, he mostly addressed the scholars of these regions by taking into account their scholarly precommitments and the works on their intellectual agenda. He formulated his own views by considering the accusations and criticisms that were made against him. However, in *Jilā' al-anzār bi tahrīr al-jabr fī al-ikhtiyār*, which was authored relatively later among his works, al-Kūrānī shifted his audience and wrote by focusing on the texts that were dominant in another tradition. This treatise was authored on 20 Jumādā al-Ākhir 1088 (August 20, 1677) shortly after *Imdād dhawi al-isti'dād*, which contained his answers to the questions from the Moroccan scholars. From the viewpoint of his own position, al-Kūrānī shifted the discussion on human actions to a very different terrain. He examined the argument of the four premises that Şadr al-Sharī'a had formulated in *al-Tawḍīḥ* and directed the discussions on human

43 Ibid., 110a, 149b.

44 Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, *Tahrīq silsilat al-widād* (in *Wasā'il al-taḥqīq wa rasā'il al-tawfīq*), Ed. Samer Akkach, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 61–63, 73–74; Şerife Nur Çelik, "İbrahim el-Kūrānī'nin Hâdis Kudreti Tasavvuru ve Abdülganî en-Nablusî'nin Eleştirileri" [İbrahim Al-Kūrānī's Ideas On Created Power and Abd Al-Ghanī Nābulusī's Criticisms] *Kocaeli Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi (Kocaeli Journal of Theology)*, 2, p. 2 (2018), 68–78.

action toward the scholars in the lands of Rum using the views al-Birgiwî expressed in *al-Ṭariqat al-Muḥammadiyya* on free-will.⁴⁵ Al-Kürānî, whose aim was not just to explain or critique these texts, evaluated the coherence of the views expressed in these two texts and claimed them to have contradictions in order to make room for his own views.

That al-Kürānî had entered the intellectual realm of the lands of Rum, where he was weakly and indirectly connected,⁴⁶ with his work on the issues under discussion there is remarkable.⁴⁷ Prioritizing his Ash'arî-Süfi identity, al-Kürānî

- 45 Information about the nature of al-Kürānî's *Jilā' al-Anzār* is ambiguous. Naser Dumairieh registered *Jilā' al-Anzār* as a treatise on human action and additionally attributed a gloss on the premises (*muqaddimāt*) to him. However, while this gloss is truly registered as a gloss on the premises (*muqaddimāt*) in the Ḥamidiyya collection of Sulaymaniya Library (#1440), it is actually an edition of *Jilā' al-Anzār*, and the registration name seems to be chosen to reflect the content of the treatise. Meanwhile, by referring to Hilmi Kemal Altun, Rıdvan Özdiñç claimed *Jilā' al-Anzār* and *Maslak al-sadād* to be the same works and had simply been registered under different names. However, Hilmi Kemal Altun provided information only on *Maslak al-sadād* and did not state it to be the same work as *Jilā' al-Anzār*. Ömer Yılmaz attributed two different treatises to al-Kürānî with the names *Jilā' al-Anzār* and *Fi bayān al-muqaddimāt al-arba'a*, claiming the first to be on the issue of *qadar* and the second to involve al-Kürānî discussing the issues of *ikhtiyār* and *ḥusn-qubḥ*. Although *Maslak al-Sadād* and *Jilā' al-Anzār* were written on the same subject, upon examination, these are evidently two separate treatises written at different times. Biographical accounts (*tabaqāt*) also support this, as they mention them as two separate works. When comparing the glosses on the premises (*muqaddimāt*) that are attributed to al-Kürānî with *Jilā' al-Anzār*, they are seen to be the same works. Although the copies of the work that were read to the author were called *Jilā' al-Anzār* they appear to have later been registered as glosses on premises due to their content. A critical edition of the treatise has recently been published under the title *Jilā' al-Anzār*. Dumairieh, "Intellectual Life in the Hijāz", 216; Rıdvan Özdiñç, "Osmanlı İrade, Kaza ve Kader Risaleleri" [Ottoman Treatises on Free Will, Fate and Predestination], *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi (TALID)* 14/27 (2016): 194; al-Kürānî, *Jilā' al-Anzār*, 60a–73b; al-Kürānî, *Fi bayān muqaddimat al-arba'a*, Süleymaniye Library, Hamidiye 1440, 177a–187b; Yılmaz, İbrahim el-Kürānî, 231–2; İbrahim al-Kürānî, *Majmū' Rasā'il al-'allāma al-Mullā al-Kürānî*, Ed. Muhammad Barakat, Ali Muhammad Zeino and Sāriya Fāyiz Ajlūnî (Istanbul: Dar al-Lobab, 2020), III, 509–557.
- 46 When al-Kürānî was in Sham, he is known to have taught Turkish students and to have even learned the Turkish language from them. Scholars and students who travelled from Diyar al-Rum to Hijāz for pilgrimage or other occasions also likely met him in Madinah. Apart from Wali al-Din Jarullah, no other student has been identified from the lands of Rum. For this very reason, I have deliberately opted for the expression "indirect and relatively weak" with regard to al-Kürānî's intellectual contact with Rumelia. Yılmaz, İbrahim el-Kürānî, 169–70; Sami Arslan, "Eserden Müessire Seyr u Sefer: Cârullah Efendi'nin Derkenar Notlarının Biyografisine Katkıları" [A Journey from Art to Artist: the Contributions of Carullah Efendi's Marginal Notes to His Biography], *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi (FSM Scholarly Studies Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences)* 5 (June 30, 2015): 79–80.
- 47 Although some contemporary studies have mentioned that al-Kürānî had come to the lands of Rum and received education here, this information is neither mentioned by Ayyāshî, who recorded the life of al-Kürānî while listening to his journey from himself, nor in other biographical accounts. Al-Kürānî

had addressed the Ash'arī-circles in the Hijāz, Egypt, Morocco, and Southeast Asia in previous treatises. With *Jilā' al-anzār*, however, he turned to a different intellectual tradition and discussed the issues of that tradition. Moreover, he formulated his own position around the authorities of this new tradition. Another important point is that al-Kūrānī authored this text on the four premises not on *al-Talwīḥ* (i.e., Taftāzānī's gloss *al-Tawḍīḥ*), but instead on a text by Şadr al-Sharī'a who was a Ḥanafī-Māturīdī. Apart from a few references to Taftāzānī's statements, he mainly focused on the claims of Şadr al-Sharī'a and made evaluations about the aspects of the text in which he'd found the views of the author to be ambiguous and contradictory.

Meanwhile, he concentrated on the role of the particular will (*al-irāda al-juz'iyya*) in al-Birgwi's text with regard to the designation of the action in order to examine how determinism and *tafwīḍ* [delegation of matters] can be related with the aim of arriving at an opinion free from the contradictions he'd claimed existed in these texts. Thus, in addition to his own intellectual environment, al-Kūrānī became involved in the debates of a scholarly community that continued the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition during this period. The contact he established through texts with this intellectual center aimed on one hand to express his own views in a coherent way before a different tradition and to justify them within it. On the other hand, his goal was to question the consistency of the knowledge that was produced in this region based on that tradition.

III. Al-Kūrānī's Critique of Şadr al-Sharī'a

Şadr al-Sharī'a objected to al-Razī's argument on determinism (*jabr*) regarding the section where he discussed the *ḥusn wa qubḥ* [good and bad] of the commanded action (*ma'mur bih*) in the four premises that he'd put forward in *al-Tawḍīḥ*. His aim was to theoretically ground the voluntary actions. In this context, Şadr al-Sharī'a tried to explain the relationship between the agent and act based on the premises accepted in the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition. By adopting the dominant style of the language of the time, he tried to prove the voluntariness of human

did meet Turkish students and learn Turkish from them during his stay in Damascus; however, no information exists indicating that he'd come and studied in Rumelia. Yılmaz, İbrahim Kūrānī, 100–1; also see: Recep Cici, "İbrahim el-Kūrānī", *DİA*, XXVI, 426; A.H. Johns, "al-Kūrānī", *EP*, V, 433; al-Qadiri, *Nashr al-Mathani*, III, 5; Muhammed Halil Murādi, *Silk al-Durar* (Bulak: Matbaa-i Miriyye, n.d.), I, 5–6; Ayyāshī, *al-Rihlah*, I, 480.

action by considering the concepts, issues, and principles of philosophy and logic while remaining committed to the language of argumentation, which was central in the Ash'arī tradition.

In explaining the emergence of volitional acts, Şadr al-Sharī'a formulated an explanation around the notion of cause and attempted to prove the possibility of volitional acts within this theoretical framework. By including human will and performance into the complete cause that brings action into reality in the premises of his argument, he re-established the connection between human beings and their actions and laid a meaningful groundwork for obligation (*taklîf*).

In the first of these four premises, Şadr al-Sharī'a concentrated on the meaning of the act (*fi'l*) and concluded with two possibilities. The first is the verbal noun meaning, which is performance (*iqā'*) or doing in the sense of the realization of an act. The second possibility is the movement that occurs in the external world as a result of this realization.

In the second premise, he discussed the complete cause that necessitates the existence of an act, which ontologically falls under the category of possible. He demonstrated that the creation (*ijād*) is included in the complete cause. In the third premise, he treated the elements of the cause that brings the possible into existence and claimed that some of these elements have to be *hāl* [state]. He includes *iqā'* [performance] and *ikhtiyār* [choice], which for him are *hāl*, into the full cause.

In the last premise, he discussed the issue of possibilities that the will designates. He tried to justify that the will does not choose the preferable (*rājih*) possibility but rather either the non-preferred (*marjūh*) or among two equal (*mutasāwī*) possibilities.⁴⁸

In the four premises, Şadr al-Sharī'a dealt with the theoretical basis of the process through which human action eventuates and the connection the agent has with this process. After proving the premises, he explained the occurrence of a volitional act and *kasb* from this theoretical basis. By including *ikhtiyār* and *iqā'*, which are not subject to the creation and therefore to the will of God for being *hāl*

48 Şadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawḍīh li-kashf haqā'iq al-Tanqīh* (in *Kitāb al-Talwīh*), ed. Muhammad 'Adnan Darwish (Beirut: Dār al-Arḡam, n.d.), I, 380–97; Çelik, "XV. yy Osmanlı Düşüncesinde Telvîh Haşiyeleri" [The Super-commentaries on Talwîh in the XVth Century Ottoman Thought: Debates on Taklîf], 122–3; Asım Cüneyd Köksal, "İslâm Hukuk Felsefesinde Fiillerin Ahlâkiliği Meselesi - Mukaddimât-ı Erbaa'ya Giriş" [The Moral Dimensions of Actions According to the Philosophy of Islamic Law: Introduction to al-Muqaddimât al-Arba'a], *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* 28 (2012): 18–42.

but instead are connected directly to a person, within the necessary cause needed for the action to exist in the external world, Şadr al-Sharī'ā attempted to establish the person's connection to their action through *iqā'*. Şadr al-Sharī'ā defended that a person's role in their action is realized through *ikhtiyār* and *iqā'* and referred to the link that occurs between the temporal power and action when will attaches to an action. By saying that the performance (*iqā'*) of the act belongs to a subject and its creation belongs to Allah, he tried to develop a middle way between absolute determinism and absolute freedom.⁴⁹

Based on his own views, al-Kūrānī's assessment focused on the sections of the four premises that discuss the process of the emergence of an action through the coupling of divine and temporary will. Al-Kūrānī accepted the correctness of the fact that the action discussed in the first premise is likely to have two meanings and that the existence of the cause, which is treated in the second premise, necessitates the action. However, he disagreed with the statements about the nature of *iqā'* and the proof of the omnipotent creator (*al-fā'il al-mukhtār*) through the inclusion of states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause in the third premise. He also raised objections to the discussions on the occurrence of the will in the fourth premise.

Al-Kūrānī brought these issues to the fore because of their direct relation to the topics he had analyzed and the views he had defended in the works he had authored before *Jilā' al-anzār*. He also included the issues that had been left out by Şadr al-Sharī'ā based on his thought system and attempted to make room for his own views while drawing attention to the contradiction that had arisen.

A. The Essence of *Īqā'* and the Concern of Diverging from the View of Essentially Necessitating (*Mūjib bi al-Dhāt*)

The first premise has already shown how Şadr al-Sharī'ā had tried to determine the point at which the connection between a human and their actions takes place while dividing the meaning of action into two. The second premise states that the movement that exists in the external world and emerges from the verbal noun as the second meaning of action comes into being with the creation of God. Şadr al-

49 According to Şadr al-Sharī'ā, *iqā'* is not the creation (*ijād*) of an act. In his view, *iqā'* is a concept that corresponds to the realization of the act by the agent, and the existence of this act in the external world depends on the creation of God. In other words, the realization (*iqā'*) of the act is not sufficient for it to come into existence. The existence of the act in the external world occurs through the creation (*ijād*) of God, which is included in the complete cause. Şadr al-Sharī'ā, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, I, 402.

Sharī‘a argued that this creation is also a part of the complete cause that brings action into existence.

In the third premise, Şadr al-Sharī‘a expressed that *iqā‘* as the first meaning of action is a *ḥāl* and not directly subject to the creation of God. He stated that *iqā‘* eventuates as a result of the occurrence of their power once human will chooses between performing or not performing an action. By including choice (*ikhtiyār*), which represents will being attached to an action, and *iqā‘*, which is what connects the actor to the act, into the elements of the complete cause, the forces that are not subject to the will and creation of God directly but are under the control of human, become effectual in the origination of action. Şadr al-Sharī‘a had proven the existence of volitional acts and the possibility humans have to perform them by including *iqā‘* and *ikhtiyār* into the cause, and he maintained the principle that God is the creator of everything by attributing to God the creation (*ijād*), which is what brings the act into existence. In addition, the inclusion of states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause made it possible to prove that the contingent is temporary. When all the elements of the cause are accepted as coming from existing beings, these beings will eventually reach the Divine being through the chain of causation, and in that way, the problem of the eternity of the contingents will arise. Şadr al-Sharī‘a proposed that the necessary chain of causation here can be broken through the inclusion into the cause of states (*aḥwāl*), which do not come into existence with the power of God. He mentioned that the objections concerning the problems that arise when God is considered as a choosing agent (*al-fā‘il al-mukhtār*) can be avoided in this way.⁵⁰

Al-Kūrānī first discussed the third premise in relation to the essence of *iqā‘* and its relation to the act. Then he examined it in terms of the need for states (*aḥwāl*) to prove the creator is the choosing agent (*al-fā‘il al-mukhtār*) and criticized Şadr al-Sharī‘a’s views on these two issues. Al-Kūrānī’s first objection was that problem arises not from the things Şadr al-Sharī‘a had mentioned in *al-Tawdīḥ* but by completing the points missing in his views. His second objection concerned the proof of a creator who is a choosing agent by including states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause and was expressed in reference to the quiddity of divine essence.

In the first objection, al-Kūrānī dealt with the essence of *iqā‘* and argued Şadr al-Sharī‘a’s claim that no cause exists that necessarily brings *iqā‘* into existence to have contradictions. Because Şadr al-Sharī‘a accepted the act in terms of

50 Şadr al-Sharī‘a, *al-Tawdīḥ*, I, 385–94.

its verbal noun meaning (i.e., *īqā'* being accepted ontologically as a *ḥāl*), he had argued that *īqā'* does not exist in the external world and therefore does not emerge based on a cause. However, the existence in the external world of the occurrence that represents the movement of the action would necessitate the action to exist alongside the cause.⁵¹

Al-Kūrānī, on the other hand, stated that, when the will is attached to the occurrence of a thing, *īqā'* would also necessarily exist, because he defined *īqā'* as the relationship between power and a contingent being. As Şadr al-Sharī'a claimed, if *īqā'* does not emerge necessarily with the cause, then the occurrence that has been designated by the will and already has a complete cause should also not happen. This also allows for the possibility of "choice being realized without the choice-maker," which is agreed to be impossible.⁵²

Another intervention al-Kūrānī made here involved his bringing the effect (*ta'thīr*) to the fore alongside *īqā'*. By stating that the occurrence of an act, (i.e., how it comes into existence in the external world) depends on the effect as much as on *īqā'*. He actually argued that occurrence is impossible without both *īqā'* and effect. In other words, he stated *īqā'* alone to be insufficient for an action to exist. For him, even if *īqā'* is present, the action cannot exist without effect (i.e., origination [*ijād*]), and therefore *īqā'* should be understood in such a way that also encompasses the effect.

Şadr al-Sharī'a indirectly rejects the effectiveness of the power of the agent, however, by saying that God originates (*ijād*) the act. For the power of the subject to be considered effective in making an act, it needs to originate that act. Şadr al-Sharī'a did not use *īqā'* in the sense that would mean the creation of the act, but rather presented it as the relationship the subject's power has to the act, and thus avoids saying that the subject creates the act. In this sense, Şadr al-Sharī'a clearly distinguished between the origination (*ijād*) that corresponds to the creation of the act and the acquisition (*kasb*), which expresses the role the subject plays in the action, and emphasized that, without creation, *kasb* cannot bring anything into existence.⁵³

Al-Kūrānī, on the other hand, found his explanations of *īqā'* inadequate and suggested that, in order to complete the meaning of *īqā'*, the effect should also be

51 Ibid., 393.

52 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-anzār*, 62b, 66a.

53 Şadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, I, 402–3.

considered within it. Drawing attention to a point that Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a had avoided making, al-Kūrānī argued that talking about the moral responsibility in the context of action is impossible if one doesn’t accept the effectiveness of the temporal (*ḥādith*) power (*qudra*). He implied that humans can only arrive at a meaningful explanation here when *iqā‘* also includes the effect.⁵⁴

Al-Kūrānī’s second objection concerns Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a’s suggestion to include the states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause as a way to eliminate the view of God as necessarily creating (*mūjib bi al-dhāt*).⁵⁵ Al-Kūrānī employed a different strategy. He argued that God’s creation of acts is related to the perfection of His essence, not because of any necessity but based on choice. Because the perfection of essence requires God to be self-sufficient (*al-ghinā al-dhātīyya*), the relation of these attributes to the divine essence would not become a cause for a thing. In this context, he suggested that proving the choice of God in connection to the perfection of divine essence would be more accurate than including the states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause. Otherwise, any statement about states (*aḥwāl*) would mean that God’s perfection originates from them, and that would result in a contradictory conclusion.⁵⁶

Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a did not clarify the meaning of *iqā‘* nor did he use it in the meaning of the eventuation (i.e., origination [ijād]) of the act, which he delegated to God. Thus, he used *iqā‘* as a concept that corresponds to the performance of the act as the verbal meaning of the *fi’l* that is non-existent in the external world, not in the meaning of bringing the act into existence. Al-Kūrānī claimed Ṣadr al-Sharī’s explanation of *iqā‘* to be insufficient and raised an objection concerning the use of *iqā‘* that comprehends the effect. Al-Kūrānī used effect as *ijād* (i.e., creation) and stated that temporary power is effective whereas the *iqā‘* of an effective power is at the same time capable of bringing something into existence.⁵⁷

By also discussing al-Taftāzānī’s statements on this issue, al-Kūrānī pointed out that this form of explanation entailed some problems. Al-Taftāzānī had stated that accepting God as a choosing agent (*al-fā‘il al-mukhtār*) will bring about the result of the permissibility for Him not to do the acts despite having the choice. In this case, the situation results in which no effect exists despite the presence of a cause, and therefore choice is able to occur without a choice-maker (*al-rujhān bilā murajjih*).

54 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā’ al-Anzār*, 62b.

55 Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, I., 393–4.

56 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā’ al-anzār*, 62b.

57 al-Kūrānī, *Imdād dhawi al-isti’dād*, 117b.

Similarly, he argued that divine choice has to be either temporary or eternal, and in the case of the latter, the eternity of all the contingents that are affiliated with choice become necessitated. Accepting divine choice as temporal (*hādith*) would lead to the invalid situation of infinite regress among choices and contradiction of the subsistence of the temporal through the essence of God.⁵⁸

Al-Kūrānī accepted choice to be eternal, but unlike al-Taftāzānī, he defended the view that the eternity of choice would not entail the eternity of temporal beings. At the core of this claim stands the knowledge that God observes wisdom in what He orders and creates, which is agreed upon by the majority (*ijmā'*). From this perspective, the will of God then becomes subject to His knowledge, this knowledge then allocates the will within a certain time and space, and this allocation becomes subject to His wisdom. In other words, he argued that, by accepting God's will as eternal, the eternity of contingents becomes unnecessary, contrary to al-Taftāzānī's claim, and the limitation of the existence of the contingent with time and space can be explained by wisdom.

Likewise, no infinite regress will occur regarding temporal choices despite accepting choice to be temporal, and the chain that continues one after another will come to an end in divine wisdom. The possibility that al-Taftāzānī mentioned about the subsistence of temporal beings and the essence of God was refuted through choice's ontological status. This is because choice is considered as a relational state, and the subsistence of a temporal choice that is renewed (*tajaddud*) and created later due to lacking an external existence through divine essence unto eternity would not contradict the perfection of divine essence.⁵⁹

In the foreword he wrote before objecting to al-Taftāzānī's statements, al-Kūrānī discussed the temporal creation of the contingent in connection with divine knowledge and examined this issue in relation to the immutable entities (*al-a'yān al-thābita*) as handled within the Akbarian tradition. He stated that the knowledge of God relates to the reality/quiddity/individual instances of the temporal beings in eternity, and these realities individuate through essential (*dhati*) separation (*tamayyuz*). Al-Kūrānī further argued that, as a result of this separation, every entity possesses a specific disposition that exists in divine knowledge and is therefore determined by the will of God. Thus, each contingent exists due to its

58 Sa'd al-Din al-Taftāzānī, *al-Talwīḥ fi kashf ḥaqā'iq al-Tanqīḥ*, Ed. Muhammad 'Adnan Darwish (Beirut: Dār al-Arḩam, n.d.), I, 393–4.

59 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-Anzār*, 64a–64b.

disposition, and this disposition constitutes the basis of the temporal origination of the contingent.⁶⁰ Al-Kūrānī stated that, in the principle of *knowledge follows the known* in the kalām tradition, knowledge is an individual instance (*a'yān*), and he related the determination of human will to disposition with regard to the level of immutable entities.

Due to the disposition of a thing in eternal reality determining the future status of that thing, the existence or non-existence of a contingent is shaped according to its disposition. Because these eternal dispositions are effective on human will, human choices follow an eternal determination.

By adopting an integrative approach on the topic of the relationship between divine knowledge and will, he tried to combine the immutable entities of *waḥdat al-wujūd* with the eternal known (*ma'lūm*) of the kalām tradition. He argued that such a synthesis would not contradict the principles of the Ash'arī or Maturīdī traditions. In this respect, he noteworthy supported his own views by referencing Imām Ash'arī, al-'Ījī, and al-Jurjānī from the Ash'arī tradition and quoting narrations from the early jurists Abu Ḥanīfa and Imām al-Ṭaḥāwī, who are considered as the founding thinkers of the Ḥanafī-Maturīdī tradition. While objecting to a text by a Maturīdī author, he both emphasized his own Ash'arī-Shafi'ī identity and tried to justify his approach by identifying analogous ideas from the Ḥanafī-Maturīdī traditions.⁶¹

Al-Kūrānī's objections to the third premise are primarily about investigating whether the issues concerning human action would be resolved if the states (*aḥwāl*) were accepted as part of a complete cause. By including the states (*aḥwāl*) into the complete cause that brings about the contingent, Ṣadr al-Sharī'a attempted to establish the role of human agent in their actions and proved that God is the choosing agent and the existence of the contingent is unnecessary. Al-Kūrānī, on the other hand, found Ṣadr al-Sharī'a's explanation concerning the role humans have in their actions to be inadequate and drew attention to some of the problems that this approach contained. Al-Kūrānī disagreed with Ṣadr al-Sharī'a's view that *iqā'* does not take place out of any necessity because it is *ḥāl* and argued that *iqā'* cannot be understood separately from occurrence but has to necessarily emerge with the occurrence in the existence of a cause.

60 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-Anzār*, 63a–63b.

61 Ibid., 63b–64a.

Concerning the proof of God being a choosing agent, he argued that the starting point of the argument was fallacious. According to al-Kūrānī, the claim for God as a choosing agent being possible by including the states (*aḥwāl*) into the cause will lead to the acceptance of the position that God's perfection depends on something else. For al-Kūrānī, the perfection of divine essence itself points to His will.

B. The Problem of Predestined Will and Determinism in Choice

As mentioned before, Şadr al-Sharī'a tried to prove in the fourth premise that, when making a choice, the will is not subject to any predetermination and makes choices by inclining toward the equal or less-worthy among the possibilities to choose from. In order to make this argument, he gave the example of a person escaping from a predator, one that is frequently mentioned in kalām books. According to this example, when a person is running away from a beast of prey, has two roads in front of him, and chooses one, this choice is directed toward one of the equal possibilities. With this example, Şadr al-Sharī'a tried to demonstrate that the human will can make choices without being subject to any influence and to prove that the will can be directed to equal possibilities. In order to prevent the will from being subject to any predetermination, he argued that it was directed to the preferred possibility in addition to the equal ones.⁶² The main objection that al-Kūrānī raised here was to restrict the possibilities the will can choose from.

In al-Kūrānī's view, this restriction Şadr al-Sharī'a gave cannot be applied to God's will, which is connected to His knowledge. Because God observes wisdom in His creation and commands, according to the consensus, the relation to the preferable (*rājiḥ*) should be accepted. A contingent due to its essence is also capable of existence and non-existence. However, divine knowledge as the inventor (*kāshif*) of reality (i.e., the individual instances [*a'yān*] in eternity) relates to the state foreseen by their disposition. In this case, if a disposition of a contingent requires existence, God in accordance with His wisdom knows it with His knowledge, and the will which follows knowledge and manifests according to the disposition turns toward the preferable. On this very point, al-Kūrānī indicated that the will relates to a possibility that lies outside Şadr al-Sharī'a's restriction concerning the possibilities the will assigns and argued this limitation of the will to turn either

62 Şadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawdīḥ*, I, 394–5.

toward the equal or the preferable to be invalid. Therefore, al-Kūrānī amended Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a’s definition of the will from “an attribute that assigns either equal or non-preferable possibilities” to “an attribute that chooses either a preferable, non-preferable, or equal possibility.” He suggested the first definition to have no correspondence to divine will.⁶³

The second issue al-Kūrānī examined here is whether or not human will is determinant in the action. By bringing into the discussion the oft-mentioned example from kalām books of a person escaping from a predatory animal and choosing one of the two paths confronting him, Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a claimed to prove the relation of the will to either the equal or non-preferable and suggested that human will makes choices without being subject to any influence. Al-Kūrānī argued that, although the person in the situation in the mentioned example has the belief that he is choosing among equal choices, whatever he wills is connected to the divine will, and therefore he does not choose any of the choices independently. While divine will is stated to manifest according to the choices of the agent in the future, something the subject wills without divine will being attached to it cannot come into existence. On the contrary, whatever divine will attaches to will come into existence necessarily. For this reason, the subject’s obligation in choosing, which is also emphasized in the title of the treatise, signifies this situation exactly, according to al-Kūrānī.

He underlined that, once one accepts that the eventual existence or non-existence of a thing cannot occur outside of the divine will, any explanation about human will becomes useless.⁶⁴

Al-Kūrānī argued that Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a had misunderstood the Ash‘arī tradition by missing the context of their arguments against the Mutazilites. Mutazilites actually believed that human beings are morally responsible because their will is the independent performer of the action. According to al-Kūrānī, the Ash‘arīs challenged this view of the Mutazilites with the argument of determinism because it rejects divine determination (*qadar*) and leads to the impotence of divine will. Therefore, this argument is more about bringing the divine will to fore than the rejection of will. Al-Kūrānī emphasized that the Ash‘arīs accept the existence of

63 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā’ al-anzār*, 64b–65a.

64 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā’ al-anzār*, 65a–65b.

human will. However, they don't view the human will sufficient to originate an action that needs the assignment and choice of the divine will.⁶⁵

As can be seen, al-Kūrānī's objections to the fourth premise is primarily about the definition of will and its connection to action. By drawing attention to the inadequacy of Şadr al-Sharī'a's definition of will, he proposed a more comprehensive definition of both divine and temporal will.

The second main objection here is the aim of the four premises, which is the argument of determinism in the Ash'arī tradition and the role of temporary will with regard to action. In this argument that Şadr al-Sharī'a had formulated to prove that volitional acts emanate from human beings, he tried to explain the role of human actions with *iqā'* and choice, which are *ḥāl*.⁶⁶ As mentioned before, while al-Kūrānī did accept *iqā'* as *ḥāl*, he stated that it emerged necessarily with the complete cause. Thus, he rejected the uncreated state of *iqā'*, which was the first issue by which Şadr al-Sharī'a had opened space for human freedom without subjecting it to necessity.⁶⁷

Discussing the nature of will and hence choice, al-Kūrānī stated in the second criticism that much as will is attributed to human beings, nothing can occur outside the will of God and therefore the particular will is insufficient at bringing an act into existence. Al-Kūrānī accepted the possibility of two approaches on the issue of the will being effective in making an action: either the temporal will as per the Mutazilites or the divine will as per the Ash'aris allocates the action. He claimed that attempts like Şadr al-Sharī'a's to reconcile these two views would lead to a contradiction.

C. Making of an Action and the Nature of Acquisition (*Kasb*)

After putting forward the four premises to refute al-Rāzī's argument for determinism, Şadr al-Sharī'a mentioned how the difference between volitional and forced actions is known through the knowledge of consciousness (*wijdān*) and

65 Ibid., 66a.

66 Şadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawḍīḥ*, I, 399–401

67 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-anzār*, 61a–62b, 65a.

that this difference is also distinguished from the realization of acts in accordance with one's will. However, for Şadr al-Sharī'a, although human will is influential in determining action, it is insufficient on its own to bring action into existence. As a matter of fact, that an action is unable to take place despite a person's will or, conversely, an action is able to occur despite the lack of human will are both possible. In this sense, just as one can know the existence of the will through *wijdān*, one can also know that the will is not effective (i.e., not the creator [*mūjid*]) of the action. Şadr al-Sharī'a defended that the action come to existence ultimately through the creation of God and explained what happens before the creation in the process of making of the action.⁶⁸

According to Şadr al-Sharī'a, God creates power in human beings, and this power is directed to one of the possibilities that the will chooses. Şadr al-Sharī'a used the concept of intention (*qaṣd*) for the determined inclination of the will toward an action and exertion (*şarf*) for the channeling of this intention toward power (*qudra*). In Şadr al-Sharī'a's account, while power is created by God, exertion belongs to the subject. He highlighted that exertion is created without any inclination and is not subject to divine determination. The element that determines exertion is choice.⁶⁹ In this framework, much as action in the meaning of movement in the external world gains its existence with divine creation, the choice of doing or not doing an act is actualized by the choice of the subject, which does not depend on the creation of God.

Concerning Şadr al-Sharī'a's views on these, al-Kūrānī repeated his objection in the fourth premise and emphasized that the exertion (*şarf*) of a subject cannot take place outside the will of God. By criticizing Şadr al-Sharī'a's statements that exertion is not created with an inclination nor willed by God, al-Kūrānī argued the tendency of exertion (i.e., of power) toward a direction as the result of human will would contradict the principle of God as all encompassing.

He further argued these statements from Şadr al-Sharī'a to also differ from the views of Abū Ḥanīfa, Imām Yūsuf, and Imām Muhammad and then supported his own position with the narrations from Imām Shafi'ī and al-Bayhaqī. In his

68 Şadr al-Sharī'a, *al-Tawdīh*, I, 399–400.

69 Ibid., 400–1.

attempt to amend Şadr al-Sharī'a's views in light of rational and scriptural evidence, al-Kūrānī stated establishing a middle position between determinism and free-will through particular will-centered explanations to be impossible. Instead, he claimed that a resolution could be reached by viewing God's will as the choice maker and the power of the subject as dependent on divine will but also effective (*mūjid/creator*).⁷⁰

When examined as a whole, al-Kūrānī's criticisms of Şadr al-Sharī'a appear to be aimed at opening up space for his own views. The fundamental claim in al-Kūrānī's works is about proving that the temporal power is effective (creative) in line with divine will by subordinating human will to it. His view of will being based on immutable entities in the *wahdat al-wujūd* tradition asserts the predetermination of temporal will. In other words, the eternal knowledge of God knows the non-created (*ghayr majhūl*) but separated (*mutamayyiz*) individual instances (reality/essence) of the contingent. Because these realities are separated from each other, they possess dispositions that direct the will of the contingent later in the future.

As both dispositions and temporal will as directed by these dispositions are known in the knowledge of God, divine will makes choices according to this knowledge. Therefore, the primary entity that determines volitional action is the will of God, and human will makes choices in accordance with divine will. Al-Kūrānī, having made temporal will ineffective with regard to action, suggested that the problem of moral responsibility can be solved by having temporal power be creative (i.e., effective [*muaththir*]) rather than referring to the will-centered explanations.

While diverging from the Mu'tazilite position by making the creative ability of temporal power dependent on divine will, he also attempted to reconcile acquisition (*kasb*) from the Ash'arī tradition with the immutable entities of the Akbarian tradition under a single roof with an eclectic attitude. His critique of Şadr al-Sharī'a's views regarding particular will and consequent emphasis of divine will, as well as his proposal to use *iqā'* in a way that would entail creation are also manifestations of his own positions.

70 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-anzār*, 66b–67a.

IV. Al-Kūrānī's Critique of Al-Birgiwī

Al-Birgiwī discussed the issue of particular will in the section “Tricks of the Shaitan” in *al-Tariqah al-Muhammadiyah* and considered doubt regarding the predetermination of human will as a major temptation from the Shaitan.⁷¹ On this issue, al-Birgiwī followed Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a’s views and brought supporting arguments for the freedom of human will while directing criticisms at the Ash‘arī determinism argument.⁷² This section of the text on free will became very influential among the scholars after him and served as a primary source for new works authored about the debates on free will, particularly after the 16th century.⁷³

Al-Kūrānī’s choice of al-Birgiwī’s text, whom he referred to as the Virtuous of the Rum, after writing his critique of Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a’s four premises is related to the fact that these two works were the primary references for the discussions on volition within Ḥanafī-Maturīdī circles. By focusing in his critique on these two authors who had shaped the views of the scholars in the lands of Rum, al-Kūrānī was contesting the scholars who were considered to be the authorities in these circles. By claiming these scholars to have contradictions in their views, he tried to eliminate them and thus prepared the groundwork for his own views. While responding to the criticisms the Sūfī-Ash‘arī circles made against his earlier works, he would be able to try and reach all the schools of thought consistently by correcting the purported contradictions in the Ḥanafī-Maturīdī tradition on one hand and proposing that his position was the ultimate conclusion on the other hand. This attitude al-Kūrānī had also gives the impression that he had a claim transcending the schools of thought about the possibility of reaching a single opinion concerning the problems of human action.

Al-Kūrānī’s criticism of al-Birgiwī primarily concentrated on the relationship between particular will and divine will. Similar to Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a, al-Birgiwī considered choice to not be subject to creation as it is ontologically a *hāl* whereas will is capable (*qābil*) of choosing from among existing possibilities. While God made the

71 Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a used the notion of choice (*ikhtiyār*) for the inclination of human will toward a certain act, whereas al-Birgiwī referred to it as particular will (*al-irāda al-juziyya*). Here, to remain faithful to the authors’ uses, I have used the respective terms while discussing the materials related to each author.

72 Meḥmed al-Birgiwī, *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyah*, Ed. Muḥammad Nādīm al-Nadwī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2011) 199–201.

73 For some references to al-Birgiwī, see Qarsi, *Risala fi bayān al-irāda al-juz'iyya*, 56b–57a; Hāmīdī, *Risāla al-irāda al-juz'iyya*, 107b; Kutahyawī, *Risāla al-irāda al-juz'iyya*, 2.

particular will almost a condition for creating an action, al-Kūrānī claimed divine knowledge to encompass everything. Nevertheless, he argued that the decree of choice and the power of divine will based on this knowledge and what had been written about them in *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz* [the Preserved Tablet] would not lead to determinism with regard to human beings. According to al-Birgiwī, although all kinds of existence depend on divine knowledge, will, and power, particular will is required in an action, and therefore human will is effective in the emergence of action. In order to further clarify the determination of human volitional acts through divine knowledge, will, and power, he gave the following example:

*If any day Zayd knew and willed what Amr would do, and wrote them down into a notebook, and Amr did exactly the things Zayd wrote down, would Zayd be considered to have forced Amr to those acts? Would Amr have the right to say that he himself performed those acts considering that Zayd knew, willed and wrote them down? Truly, Amr did all those acts not because of Zayd's knowledge, will and writing, rather with his own choice and the determinism here is out of the question.*⁷⁴

With this example, al-Birgiwī emphasized that knowledge is not an effective attribute but reveals an already existing thing, whereas will is what determines the existence and non-existence of a thing. He proposed that information about the attribute of knowledge regarding the choice of will as a known does not direct the choice of the will; therefore, the choice of a human being known to God's eternal knowledge would not harm moral responsibility.

He stated that, with this form of explanation, the middle position between determinism and free-will can be established in the way that the *salaf* scholars had argued. He further argued no difference to exist between absolute determinism and the Ash'arī version, which suggests that "Human beings are predetermined in their choices."⁷⁵

In al-Kūrānī's view, the meaning of al-Birgiwī's assertion about human will being determinant in acts is that the particular will is the independent choice-maker, which is actually the view of the Mu'tazilites. Arguing that this position goes against both scriptural evidence as well as the views of the founding scholars of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition, al-Kūrānī further suggested that al-Birgiwī's position was also internally inconsistent. For human will to be able to establish an act, it has

74 al-Birgiwī, *al-Tariqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, 200.

75 al-Birgiwī, *al-Tariqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, 200.

to either make a choice independently of divine will or has to follow it. In the case of the former, particular will determines the acts and does not follow divine will. However, for one who accepts the second possibility, the ultimate determinant in action is divine will, and minor will follows it.

In al-Kūrānī's view, al-Birgiwī defended two irreconcilable positions at the same time by saying that the particular will establishes the act and that nothing can take place outside divine will. By considering that divine will is subject to knowledge and knowledge is subject to the known (i.e., the future choices of human beings), al-Kūrānī rejected the possibility of divine will being subjected to particular will and pointed out the importance of identifying the entity that establishes the action.

Al-Kūrānī's other objection was directed at the example al-Birgiwī had given in order to explain the relation between particular will and divine will. Al-Kūrānī considered this example to be a discrepant analogy for comparing divine knowledge, executive will, and creative power with the temporal knowledge, will, and power that are subject to God's willpower. While additionally emphasizing the incapability of the created to change anything that God wills and decrees, as Abū Ḥanīfa had also mentioned, he stated that al-Birgiwī had given this example from the external world and that it had no basis in terms of God's attributes.⁷⁶

According to al-Kūrānī, the subjugation of human will and power to divine will and power does not eliminate the existence of volitional acts. Instead, it halts the ability of the person to choose from possible options independently of God and to create their chosen possibility. Emphasizing the impossibility of realization of anything outside of God's will, as mentioned in the scripture and narrated from the early scholars, he argued that predetermination regarding human choice should be understood as its subjugation to divine will. In this way, he objected to al-Birgiwī's statements criticizing the Ash'arī argument of determinism and viewing it to be useless. For al-Kūrānī, the deterministic position the Ash'arīs defended was on the contrary useful in terms of accepting God's eternal decree and determination.

Claiming that determinism requires absolute negation of the particular will and that delegation (*tafwīd*) demands the acceptance of the particular will as an independent determiner, al-Kūrānī expressed the middle path with the statement "The agent's compulsion is in his will," which emphasizes human will and its

76 al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-anzār*, 66b-67a.

dependence on divine will. He claimed Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgiwī to have fallen into a contradiction by both accepting the view of delegation (*tafwīd*) and bringing the divine will to the fore regarding particular will.⁷⁷

Just as al-Kūrānī had mentioned particular will and intention (*qaşd*) to be relational (*nisbi*) states without existence in the external world, he also considered both to be contingent and temporal. Therefore, he suggested that they do not need the creation of a space in the material world for them to exist, but in terms of their essences, they were dependent on the creator. By making choice and intention subject to creation, al-Kūrānī invalidated the arguments of Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgiwī and found their explanation inadequate and contradictory.⁷⁸

The treatise is understood to have reached the lands of Rum following its authorship and to have gotten responses for the criticisms it contained regarding Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgiwī. References were made to al-Kūrānī's views, and responses were made to his objections both in the glosses on the four premises as well as for the commentaries on al-Birgiwī, indicating that scholars in this intellectual circle were somehow aware of his views. Ali al-Nisārī's support for one of al-Kūrānī's objections in his gloss on the four premises⁷⁹ and Khādīmī's defense of al-Birgiwī against al-Kūrānī's criticisms in his commentary on *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya* are among the notable examples.⁸⁰ Moreover, Sheikh al-Islam Muştafa Şabri Efendi dedicated part of his work on human action in the modern period to criticizing al-Kūrānī's views and brought objections, particularly in regard to the will of the subject being determined through eternal dispositions.⁸¹ Al-Kūrānī's influence on the scholars of the lands of Rum should not be considered as limited to these works. One can find the manifestation of his views in many books discussing particular will and temporal power. However, a detailed presentation of these works resides beyond the scope of this study, and therefore I have limited myself to the partial indication of its impact on the literature.

77 Ibid., 69a-70a.

78 Ibid., 70b-71a.

79 For a comparison of positions that view the will as *ḥāl* and created, see al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-Anzār*, 70b-71a; Ali Nisārī, *Ḥaşiyya 'ala al-muqaddimat al-arba'*, Süleymaniye Library, Laleli 715.

80 Khādīmī narrated al-Kūrānī's objection to al-Birgiwī with the word "qıla" (was said) and tried to respond to it. See al-Kūrānī, *Jilā' al-Anzār*, 69b-70a; Khadimi, *al-Bariqa*, II, 188.

81 Muştafa Şabri, *Mawqif al-bashar tahta sultān al-qadar* (Cairo: Dār al-Basa'ir, 2008), 270-89.

V. Conclusion

Al-Kūrānī was a Sūfī scholar who was influential in numerous reservoirs of knowledge both during his life and afterward through the works he authored and the views he defended. While being expressive about his commitment to the Ash‘arī-Akbarian tradition in general, he proposed a view on the theme of human action that encompassed all the schools of thought in *taṣawwuf* and kalām and defended it with an eclectic attitude. The ideas he formulated in his works by citing the views of the founding thinkers of the Ash‘arī tradition had a significant impact on the Ash‘arī-dominant regions of the Ḥijāz, al-Shām, and North Africa, with which he had direct contact through his students. Through *Jilā’ al-Anzār*, he levelled the criticisms he had directed toward the Ash‘arī tradition at the scholars of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition in the lands of Rum, a region with which he had indirect and relatively weak contact, and thus entered the intellectual debates there. The fact that al-Kūrānī followed the scientific activities in the lands of Rum and wrote an answer is a remarkable indicator that the scholars of Ḥijāz were in contact with the intellectual happenings in this region.

By making intervention in the debates on human action, which were mainly discussed through the views of Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a and Imām al-Birgiwī in the lands of Rum, he opened up space for his own views by criticizing these two authorities in this intellectual reservoir in *Jilā’ al-Anzār*. Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a and al-Birgiwī had viewed performance (*iqā‘*) and choice (*ikhṭiyār*) to be states (*ḥāl*), and states are not created, as they are not considered *mawjūd*. According to this assumption, they grounded the volitionality of action and detached particular will from all other influences, confining it only to the disposition of the human being. By criticizing the basic claims of this position, al-Kūrānī pointed out that, ultimately, divine will is what establishes the volitional action and proposed human will to not be devoid of causes but to make preferences according to predispositions (*isti‘dād*). Moreover, he argued that, although *iqā‘* and *ikhṭiyār* are ontologically states, they cannot lie outside God’s will and power and that the states are contingent and created, notwithstanding their non-existence in the external world.

Another objection that al-Kūrānī raised on this issue that he’d also leveled at the Ash‘arī tradition is related to the rejection of the creativity (i.e., effectiveness) of power (*qudra*). Al-Kūrānī considered Ṣadr al-Sharī‘a’s understanding of *iqā‘* to be incomplete and argued that *iqā‘* can have a meaningful place in action only if understood as inclusive of creation (i.e., effect). Based on this, he viewed humans to be effective (i.e., creative) in their actions.

Al-Kūrānī's objection to the views that dominated the post-classical period both in the Ash'arī and Māturīdī traditions as well as his claim that these views contained contradictions were connected with his efforts to make room for his position. His narration of views from his earlier works while rectifying the assumed contradictions in the writings of Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgiwī, as well as his statement in the last section of *Jilā' al-anzār* suggesting that the most comprehensive position on this subject had been mentioned in the treatises of *Maslak al-sadād* and *İmdād dhawī al-isti'dād*, can be read within this context. Al-Kūrānī's argument that the ultimate explanation that can be reached by eliminating the contradictions that existed in the Ash'arī and Māturīdī traditions was, according to him, his own position also implies that he defended the possibility of a single position that transcends all the schools of thought.

Another significant point is his use of evidence from the founding thinkers of the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī tradition while challenging the views of Şadr al-Sharī'a and al-Birgiwī. His appeal to the ideas of the earlier thinkers of the school was also important for containing an implicit critique of the later periods of the school for having moved away from their original position.

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