

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF CIVILIZATIONS STUDIES**

PH.D. THESIS

**INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES OF AN OTTOMAN 'ĀLİM:
MADRASA EDUCATION AND THE MAKING OF A
SCHOLAR IN LATE SEVENTEENTH- AND
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ISTANBUL**

AYAZ ASADOV

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. TAHSİN GÖRGÜN**

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by

AYAZ ASADOV

**A thesis submitted to the Alliance of Civilizations Institute in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Civilization Studies**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. TAHSİN GÖRGÜN**

ISTANBUL, 2024

ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

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Name Surname: Ayaz Asadov

Signature:



ABSTRACT

INTELLECTUAL VIRTUES OF AN OTTOMAN 'ĀLIM: MADRASA EDUCATION AND THE MAKING OF A SCHOLAR IN LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ISTANBUL

Asadov, Ayaz

PhD in Civilization Studies

Student ID: 175071007

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID): 0000-0002-6394-4223

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This thesis delves into the question of what it meant to be an 'ālim in late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul, exploring it as a history of scholarly self. It conceptualises the making of an alim as a process of moulding into a specific scholarly selfhood through the cultivation of various intellectual virtues. The study's methodological focus is on an 'ālim's educational processes. It examines Ottoman discussions on higher education and theoretical discourses on learning primarily through the works of prominent scholars of the period, including Sājaqlīzāda Muhammad al-Mar'ashī (d.1732), Dāwūd al-Qārsī (d.1756) and Muhammed al-Mīmī al-Basrī (d.1749). Equally crucial to this study is the content analysis of educational materials, engagement with which is considered as technologies of scholarly self-formation. For this purpose, I utilise the works of *tartīb*, Ottoman accounts of educational curricula.

The study introduces *malaka* as the Ottoman concept for intellectual virtues, arguing that the key virtue was *istiḥdār*, tentatively translated as semantic fluency. Furthermore, it presents *muṭālī'* as a case study of an Ottoman scholarly self and

attempts a detailed reconstruction of this unique intellectual selfhood, primarily based on Müneccimbāşī Ahmed Dede's (d.1702) account.

While not a central argument, the study proposes an additional historiographical intervention by arguing for the presence of an Ottoman "pedagogical turn" manifested in the rise of *müderris-alim* figures and the emergence of new pedagogical genres during the period under investigation.

Keywords: Ottoman intellectual history, intellectual virtues, virtue epistemology, history of epistemology, malaka, scholarly selfhood, history of the scientific self, Ottoman education, educational philosophy, history of scholarship.

ÖZ

BİR OSMANLI ÂLİMİNİN ENTELEKTÜEL ERDEMLERİ:
MEDRESE EĞİTİMİ VE XVII. YÜZYIL SONU VE XVIII. YÜZYIL
İSTANBUL'UNDA BİR ÂLİMİN YETİŞMESİ

Asadov, Ayaz

Medeniyet Araştırmaları Doktora Programı

Öğrenci Numarası: 175071007

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORC-ID): 0000-0002-6394-4223

Ulusal Tez Merkezi Referans Numarası: 10641283

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Tahsin Görgün

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Bu tezde, XVII. yüzyıl sonu ve XVIII. yüzyıl Osmanlı İstanbul'unda âlim olmanın ne anlama geldiği, bir *ilmî benlik* tarihi olarak incelenmektedir. Bir âlimin yetişmesini, çeşitli entelektüel erdemlerin geliştirilmesi yoluyla belirli bir ilmî benliğe dönüşme süreci olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Bu amaçla, çalışmanın metodolojik odağı, bir âlimin eğitim süreçlerine yöneltilmiştir. Öncelikle, dönemin önde gelen âlimlerinden Saçaklızâde Muhammed el-Mer'âşî (ö. 1732), Dâvûd el-Kârsî (ö. 1756) ve Muhammed el-Mîmî el-Basrî'nin (d.1749) eserleri üzerinden Osmanlı yükseköğretim tartışmaları ve öğrenime dair teorik söylemler incelenmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, ilmî benlik oluşturma teknolojilerinde kullanılan eğitim materyallerinin içerik analizi de önemli bir yer teşkil etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, dönemin Osmanlı eğitim müfredatı üzerine yazılmış *tertîb* eserleri değerlendirilmiştir.

Bir âlim olmaya dair Osmanlı ilmî söylemlerini inceleyen bu çalışma sonuç olarak, bu tartışmalardaki *meleke* kavramının, modern erdem epistemolojisinin merkezî kavramı olan “entelektüel erdemler” bağlamında anlaşılması gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Bu argümanı temellendirdikten sonra *istihzâr* melekesini Osmanlı ilmî benlik anlayışının anahtar kavramı olarak incelemektedir.

Tezin son bölümünde ise bir Osmanlı ilmî benlik örneği olarak mü'tâlî kavramı incelenmektedir. Bu bölümde, temelde Münecimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin (ö. 1702) anlatısına dayanarak, özgün bir ilmî benliğin ayrıntılı bir yeniden inşasına teşebbüs edilmektedir.

Ayrıca çalışmada, merkezî bir argüman olmamakla birlikte, incelenen dönemde müderris-âlim şahsiyetlerin yükselişinde ve yeni pedagojik telif türlerinin ortaya çıkışında tezahür eden bir "pedagojik dönüşüm"ün varlığı savunulmakta ve bu bağlamda Osmanlı düşünce tarihyazımı ve dönemlendirmesi için farklı bir perspektif oluşturarak yeni bir teklifte bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı düşünce tarihi, entelektüel erdemler, erdem epistemolojisi, ilmî benlik, ilmî benlik tarihi, meleke, Osmanlı'da eğitim, eğitim felsefesi, epistemoloji tarihi, bilim tarihi.

DEDICATION

To my late father.



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A prevalent theme in Ottoman writings associates the ulema with the idea of world-maintenance. The sources frequently refer to this role of the ulema by describing them with expressions such as the guarantors of “the righteousness of the world” (*ṣalāḥ al-‘ālam*), the cause of the “consistency and continuity of the society” (*kıyām ve devām-ı cemiyyet*), the upholders of “the order of the world” (*nizām al-‘ālam*), and the “agents of the subsistence of the religion and world” (*sabab qiwām al-dīn wa al-dunyā*).

What did it take for ulema to qualify for the maintenance of the Ottoman universe? What qualifications were they expected to acquire for being tasked with this eminent role? What constituted their intellectual formation? In broader terms, this thesis seeks to address these questions. My answer will draw upon concepts such as the *scholarly self* and *intellectual virtues* as analytical tools. Before embarking on this exploration, however, a more precise understanding of the possible meanings of world-maintenance is necessary. What specific world was the ulema entrusted with upholding? What, exactly, did its maintenance entail?

It was a hallmark of Ottoman intellectuals to commence their scholarly discourses by considering manifold meanings and connotations of their subject matter. Far from being merely a perfunctory intellectual custom, this practice was grounded on the conviction that meanings built into the vocabulary can offer insights into the understanding of the subject matter that would otherwise remain sealed. Additionally, such analysis served the purpose of forging connections between lexical, everyday and theoretical domains, fostering unity across these realms. The subject of this thesis is the Ottoman ulema. The word ulema is the plural of the Arabic word *‘ālim*, which, lexically (*luḡhawī*), means ‘knower’ and morphologically serves as the agent noun of the three-lettered root verb *‘alima* (knew). When its lexical meaning is considered, it encompasses everyone: we are all an *‘ālim* of something. Being human means

knowing something; we are all knowers. However, we are differentiated by what we know and the quality of how we know. Emerging from this general multi-layered spectrum of knowing, the conventional (*iştilāhī*) use of the term ulema was reserved to signify a distinct group of knowers within the Ottoman society: experts possessing specific knowledge in specific ways.

When the study of Ottoman ulema is placed within the framework of a broader history of scholarship, as an inquiry into a specific group of knowers, several key questions emerge. Firstly, there are questions pertaining to the scope and nature of their knowledge that should be tackled: What were the Ottoman ulema the knowers of? Moreover, the inquiry should be focused on the forms of knowing they cultivated, raising not only epistemological concerns about the qualities of their knowledge but also questions about their intellectual character and epistemic selfhood. More importantly, the educational question of how such an ‘ālim was made has to be pursued.

To locate the ulema within the broader landscape of knowers, I will begin by sketching a framework informed by contemporary and Ottoman discourses on the sociology of knowledge.¹ This will provide a heuristic for understanding certain Ottoman notions, as Ottoman authors frequently discussed the knowledge of the ulema in terms of their social role, and to elucidate the notion of world-maintenance. While a reader might find this discussion somewhat unconventional at the outset of the introduction, its placement serves a crucial purpose. The fundamental concepts introduced here are essential for orienting the reader throughout the thesis. As the author, I found these concepts immensely helpful in framing my own thinking, and they will be equally valuable for the reader’s understanding. Subsequently, I will complement them with a few representative examples from Ottoman thought that discussed the ulema at the social level. This is important because the remainder of the thesis focuses on the individual level, analysing the learning of an alim as a form of cultivation of

¹ For this, I primarily draw on Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Penguin Books, 1991), Alfred Schütz, "The Well-Informed Citizen: An Essay on the Social Distribution of Knowledge," *Social Research* 13, no.4 (December 1946): 463-478, and Sāçaklīzāde, *Tartīb al-‘ulūm* (Istanbul: Hikemiyat, 2020).

intellectual virtues. Such an individual-level analysis gains its full meaning when the social framework runs in the background.

After establishing this initial framework, I will proceed with a more conventional introduction, outlining the thesis structure and key research questions and reviewing the relevant literature.

1.1. Sociology of Knowledge and Knowledge of an 'Ālim

The existence of a society relies on a stock of knowledge. This stock of knowledge is a vast pool that encompasses not only theoretical knowledge but also various forms of common sense and practical knowledge, such as knowledge of languages, social roles, values, and beliefs- anything that guides the thinking and actions of members of a society and makes everyday life possible. Being a member of a society means taking part in that society's stock of knowledge. However, it is not possible for any individual to possess the entirety of a society's stock of knowledge. Knowledge must be socially distributed.

The distribution of knowledge is not equal. Not everyone knows everything, nor do they know the same things. This is primarily because not every piece of knowledge from the stock of knowledge falls within each individual's zone of relevance or interest. Alternatively, as Ottoman thinkers would say, some knowledge is not associated with one's state (*lā yaqa' fi hāl*) and will not benefit the person (*nāfi*).

Furthermore, even when we know the same things as our fellowmen, our knowledge may differ according to our modes of knowing. I am not merely referring to the nuances that arise from subjective interpretation. More than that, it is about the degree of knowing we get by, which is contingent upon the relevance and interest of the subject matter to us. Let me briefly elaborate on this.

Knowledge of a thing, which is not directly relevant to me, at the level of "mere blind belief" or *taqlīd* is sufficient. However, the same thing may fall into someone else's

zone of primary relevance² requiring from them an exercise of more epistemic agency requiring a more expert kind of knowledge with its justification, *taḥqīqī* or *tadqīqī* form of knowing involving *dalīl*. Given that developing expertise requires significant time and effort, it is impractical for individuals to acquire expertise in multiple areas essential for society's collective survival (another reason why knowledge is socially distributed). In the *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun likens the mastery of expertise in any crafts, including the intellectual ones, to the dyeing process. He argues that once individuals immerse themselves in a specific field of knowledge and acquire its distinct "colour," it becomes difficult to attain another with the same level of proficiency in another area. Therefore, we distribute cognitive labour and rely on each other's knowledge³.

One central issue related to a society's stock of knowledge is its reproduction—how this knowledge is passed on to new members and subsequent generations. Sociologists of knowledge differentiate between two kinds of knowledge, aiding in thinking about the issue of knowledge reproduction. According to this perspective, a society's stock of knowledge can be broadly classified as either generally relevant or role-specific.

The category of generally relevant knowledge is the social stock of knowledge pertaining to common issues affecting everyone. This type of knowledge encompasses matters that are not only of general interest but also accessible to all members of the society. An important feature of generally relevant knowledge is that its acquisition does not require the exercise of much epistemic agency and can be acquired either through immediate experiences or simply through interaction with other members of society. This process is termed informal learning in educational discourses, while sociologists of knowledge refer to it as primary socialization. Through primary socialisation, individuals gain knowledge of language, various motivational and interpretative schemes, and knowledge of other aspects of everyday life, to which

² Schütz roughly outlines four "zones of relevance" each requiring a different degree of precision of knowledge. See Schütz, *Well-Informed Citizen*, 469.

³ Recently, the emerging field of social epistemology has taken an interest in these matters, not only from the perspective of understanding the link between social organisation and knowledge production, but also in particular with regard to questions surrounding reported knowledge, often discussed under the term "testimony." See, for example, Sanford Goldberg, *Relying on Others: An Essay in Epistemology* (Oxford, 2010).

Muslim scholars would refer as *'urf*, turning one into a member of a specific community.

The knowledge internalised through primary socialisation occurs during childhood or at the earliest stages of an individual's life. However, not all the knowledge acquired at this stage is immediately applicable. Some of it is anticipatory for conducts that are socially defined for later phases of an individual's life. The knowledge acquired through primary socialisation is of significant importance to an individual, as it forms the basic structure of all subsequent socialisations. It constitutes the “base world” for everyone in the society. It is passed on to new members of the community through initial, pre-theoretical validation or *legitimation*, to use the precise term, primarily through language. For example, the kinship vocabulary that a child learns inherently legitimises the existing kinship structure. The transmission of knowledge at this level may also involve legitimation through rudimentary theoretical statements found in proverbs, ethical maxims, and wise sayings of the specific community.

Generally relevant knowledge is not sufficient for the continuation of a society. Theoretically, if all the problems in a human community were general, then such a community would subsist on a very basic stock of knowledge without further socialisation, as all the sectors of the social stock of knowledge would be generally relevant. However, such a society can only be imagined; no such society exists in the real world. The social distribution of knowledge and division of cognitive labour are necessities.

The knowledge required to take on specific roles emerging from the division of labour within a society is acquired through secondary socialisation. It is secondary in the sense that it occurs after an individual's initiation into society. Each specific role encompasses a segment of knowledge which, with its role-specific vocabularies, schemes of interpretation and norms of behaviour, constitutes a new semantic field for its knower. The knowledge of ulema corresponds to this level (and beyond) of knowledge, which I will explicate shortly.

One feature of role-specific knowledge is that its transmission requires reinforcement by specific pedagogical techniques. In some instances, if the role in question is highly complex, a need may also arise to develop specialised agencies or full-time educators (e.g. *madrassa*, *mudarris*) within that field who are trained to instruct new members in the respective field. Another noteworthy aspect of role-specific knowledge is that it involves more than the acquisition of the routines that have an immediate necessity for the performance of that role. In order to fulfil the role to the fullest extent, it might be required that one is initiated to other bodies of knowledge from society's total stock of knowledge that is indirectly related to this role. To illustrate this point, Berger and Luckmann give the example of a judge in their book: Being a judge certainly requires more than the knowledge of the law due to the legal relevance of a much more comprehensive range of human affairs therefore their knowledge, placing them to the primary relevance zone of a judge. These may include the knowledge of the values, and attitudes. The judge must possess the appropriate "knowledge" in the domain of emotions. For instance, they must be able to restrain their feelings of compassion, which represents a significant psychological prerequisite for this role.⁴

The 'subworlds' internalised in secondary socialisation are generally partial realities in contrast to the 'base-world' acquired in primary socialisation. Each specific sub-world becomes more distant from everyday life as it develops, and can become purely theoretical. Specialised bodies of knowledge form the basis of legitimation at this level. Because of its complexity, this knowledge is entrusted to dedicated individuals who transmit it through formal training processes.

However, this is not the complete account of the knowledge in society. There remains a need for a theoretical body/bodies of knowledge in the stock of knowledge that can meaningfully and comprehensively integrate various semantic domains and discrete institutional processes. Such cognitive constructions are referred to as a "symbolic universe" by which the entire society with all its various aspects now makes sense: "The symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of all socially objectivated

⁴ Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction of Reality*, 94.

and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as events taking place within this universe.⁵”

Furthermore a symbolic universe needs legitimation; this is described as “universe maintenance”. For Berger and Luckmann, the conceptual machineries of universe maintenance include mythology, theology, philosophy and science. In the following section, you will find the role of ulema within society is also expressed in similar terms.

Ottoman thinkers also grappled with the question of how knowledge was socially distributed. I will explore the conceptual work put forth by Sājaqlīzāda, who utilised the deontic categories of *uṣūl al-fiqh* to deal with the division of cognitive labour. While the application of deontic categories to knowledge was not entirely novel, Sājaqlīzāda expanded upon the earlier discourse, refining his perspective through dialogue with established sources from previous scholars⁶. Muslim moral discourses typically identify five deontic categories (obligatory, recommended, permissible, reprehensible, and prohibited)⁷, though variations existed, with some scholars further subdividing these categories or adding new elements. My focus lies on two critical categories of obligations from Sājaqlīzāda's framework: *farḍ al-‘ayn* (individual obligation) and *farḍ al-kifāya* (communal obligation). It is essential to highlight that in addition to the deontic categories, Sājaqlīzāda's framework considers the categorization of human obligations into three broader categories of beliefs (*i‘tiqād*), actions (*fi‘l*), and abstinencia (*tark*).

Of the general body of knowledge, *farḍ al-‘ayn* is the knowledge that the subject has to acquire concerning their individual responsibilities, i.e. the beliefs, actions and abstentions that arise from a particular state (*hāl*) in which they find themselves. Due to this association with *hāl*, *farḍ al-‘ayn* is also called *ilm al-hāl*. We can think of *hāl* in parallel with Schütz's concept of the primary zone of relevance. Unsurprisingly, a person's *hāl* is not static. A person's responsibility for knowledge, therefore, changes

⁵ Ibid., 114.

⁶ Sājaqlīzāda begins his discussion with a reference to Ibn Nujaym's (d.1563) *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wa-al-nazā‘ir*, which has a very brief treatment of the matter. Not only did Sājaqlīzāda further develop and extend the idea, he also disagreed with some of Ibn Nujaym's discussions.

⁷ In Arabic these are *farḍ*, *mustahab* or *mandūb*, *mubāh*, *makrūh* and *ḥarām*.

as their state evolves. Some segments of *farḍ al-‘ayn* encompass know-that of the basic beliefs that are necessary for qualifying to be a member of the symbolic universe. Other knowledge for which a person is individually responsible includes the knowledge of non-temporal (*fī kull al-waqt*) obligations such as ethical responsibilities (*farā'id al-akhlāq*) and prohibitions. However, other individual responsibilities relate to specific circumstances (*ba‘d al-waqt*), such as the knowledge related to fasting and prayer, which only becomes an obligation when a person reaches a certain age or time.

The key criterion for *farḍ al-‘ayn* knowledge is mainly⁸ its ability to guide an action. At this level, epistemic responsibility towards knowledge does not necessarily involve deep conceptual understanding or strict justification. Consider Sājaqlīzāda's example: every adult is obligated to acquire sufficient knowledge of tajwid to prevent meaning-altering errors in reciting the Qur'an. However, Sājaqlīzāda clarifies that this does not mandate a formal study of the science of tajwid; basic recitation rules can be learned from others without delving into the study of the systematised science of tajwid, which would fall under *farḍ al-kifāya*. The Ottomans had a tradition of compiling generally relevant knowledge of *farḍ al-‘ayn* in the books of *ilm-i hāl*. These books constituted a significant component of the pre-madrasa educational curriculum taught in *kuttabs*, which were institutions offered on a bigger scale than madrasas.

Farḍ al-kifāya refers to the undertakings which are needed by the community as a whole in relation to their livelihood (*al-ma‘āsh*) and the afterlife (*al-ma‘ād*). To illustrate the relationship between *farḍ al-kifāya* and *farḍ al-‘ayn*, Sājaqlīzāda uses the example of a community in which commercial activities are commonplace. In such a society, individuals directly involved in commercial activities are responsible for knowing the relevant legal proscriptions and interdicts (*muharrāmāt*) pertaining to their trade. However, this responsibility is *farḍ al-kifāya* for those not directly involved ("ghayr matjarin"). If someone within the town (*al-balda*) possesses this knowledge, the communal responsibility would be lifted from non-commercial members of the town. However, the individual responsibility remains with those directly engaged in

⁸ I have added the qualifier of "mainly" because it is a matter of scholarly debate whether mere true belief or justified true belief is sufficient (meaning sufficient to fulfil the *farḍ al-‘ayn*) for basic tenets of faith. One major position requires individuals to know the fundamentals of belief with their justifications. They regard the imitative knowledge alone as insufficient for inclusion within the "universe".

commerce, who must individually acquire this knowledge to avoid prohibited actions in their transactions. Another link between the two types of responsibility is that the transmission of *farḍ al-‘ayn* knowledge itself is also considered a *farḍ al-kifāya*.

Sājaqlīzāda adds another dimension to the discussion: the levels of knowing (*marātib al-‘ilm*), akin to different degrees of precision of knowledge or types of knowledge in Schütz’s model. He discusses three categories: *iqtisār*, *iqtisād*, and *istiḡṣā’*, which were commonly used in relation to the 3-staged model (beginner, medium and advanced) of learning that goes back to al-Ghazali (d.1111). These relate to two aspects: justification (*dalīl*) and the scope of the subject matter.

The level of *iqtisār* signifies knowing a domain without its justification, while *iqtisād* involves engaging with justifications, or *adilla*. Sājaqlīzāda offers his own definition of these three levels as follows: *Iqtisār* involves mastering the most common issues of a subject, whereas *iqtisād* refers to knowing the common issues of the subject and their justifications. Finally, *istiḡṣā’* is the comprehension of even the rare issues of the scientific discipline, which resembles what Berger and Luckmann conceptualise as “pure theory”.

Sājaqlīzāda's use of an example from kalam to illustrate these levels of knowledge responsibility is significant. It brings the theoretical discussion into a practical context, making it easier for the reader to grasp the concept. The question he poses is: how much knowledge is necessary regarding divine unity and attributes, which are subjects systematically treated in kalam? The distinction lies in whether this knowledge is required to fulfil an individual or a communal obligation. Sājaqlīzāda posits that for a Muslim to fulfil their individual obligations pertaining to belief, it suffices to possess basic knowledge of divine unity and attributes without their justification. However, for the latter, mere acquaintance, even at the *iqtisār* level, proves inadequate. This is because the *iqtisār* level lacks the necessary justification and conceptual legitimation needed to dispel potential doubts among people or to effectively counter arguments from challengers through "munazara".

Returning to the question of ulema, it is important to recognize that the sciences studied at the madrasa level corresponded to *farḍ al-kifāya* (collective obligation)

knowledge. These sciences were required for the persistence of society and were not immediately relevant to the life of an individual and therefore was not part of their distributed cognitive labour. The minimum requirement for being an alim (religious scholar) involved possessing knowledge of the sciences deemed *fard al-kifāya*, at least at the *iqtisād* level. *Sājaqlīzāda* importantly adds that while *istiḡṣā* (comprehensive knowledge) is desirable, it was a rare attainment.

1.2. Ulema and the Maintenance of the Universe

The Ottoman commentaries on ‘Aḡud al-Dīn al-Ījī’s (d. 1355) short epistle on practical philosophy, known as *al-Akhlāq al-‘Aḡudiya*⁹, constitute an invaluable source for the study of the perception of the role of ulema held by various Ottoman authors. As a paradigmatic example of its genre, *al-Akhlāq al-‘Aḡudiya* is structured around the analysis of the individual and society at three levels: at the individual level outlining a theory of moral virtues, at the household level discussing the individual as a member of its immediate social unit (*siyasat al-manzil*), and the wider societal level. The final section, referred to as *tadbir al-mudun*, briefly references the major classes of society attracting Ottoman commentators’ attention. Al-Ījī identifies four social classes: the *people of knowledge* (or *people of pen* in some versions), the military, the merchant class, and the farming class. Ottoman elaborations on the people of knowledge contain the views on the role of ulema from this wider societal perspective.

Tāṣkōprizāde (d. 1561), for example, notably explains that this class encompassed individuals with knowledge and expertise, including *fuqahā*, *qāḏī*, physicians, astrologers, writers, arithmeticians, and other experts who are "agents of the subsistence of the religion and world" (*sabab qiwām al-dīn wa al-dunyā*)¹⁰.

⁹ Despite being overly concise, this text was not marginal; on the contrary, it enjoyed considerable popularity among Ottoman scholars and attracted multiple commentaries, serving as a foundation for rich intellectual discussions on ethics, society, and politics. For the Arabic original of the text, see Mustakim Arıcı, “Adududdīn el-Īcī’nin Ahlāk Risalesi: Arapça Metni ve Tercümesi,” *Kutadgubilig: Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları*, no. 15 (2009): 135-172. An English translation of the full-text is available in Feryal Salem, “Adud al-Din al-Iji’s Ethics: A Translation of al-Akhlāq al-Adudiyya and Some Notes on its Commentaries,” *Mysticism and Ethics in Islam*, ed. Bilal Orfali, Atif Khalil and Mohammed Rustom (Beirut: AUB Press, 2021), 249-272.

¹⁰ Tāṣkōprüzāde, Aḡmad Efendi. *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-‘Aḡudiya (Ahlak-ı Adudiyye Şerhi)*, ed. and trans. into Turkish by Elzem İçöz and Mustakim Arıcı (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014), 235.

Ṭāṣkōprizāde reiterates this idea later in the text, discussing a different classification of society based on individuals' relation to good (*khayr*) and evil (*sharīr*). Some are inclined to good, some to evil, and some are neutral. Those inclined to good are further divided into those whose good extends to other members of society and those whose goodness is limited to themselves. Ṭāṣkōprizāde argues that the people of knowledge, such as legal experts (*aṣḥāb al-iftā'*) and writing professionals (*aṣḥāb al-kitāba*¹¹), represent those whose good extends beyond themselves. His examples for this group also include *qaḍā* experts, who fulfilled both juridical and extra-judicial functions in Ottoman society. He identifies them as one of "the most fundamental cornerstones of benefit" in society and refers to the idea of world-maintenance stating that the "legitimate righteousness of the world" hinges on *quḍā* (*a 'ẓam al-arkān nafa'an wa 'alayhim ṣalāḥ al-'ālam shara'an*)¹².

In the same paragraph, a reference to the notion of *nizām al-'ālam* is also found, mentioning that the intelligent agree (*ittafaqa jumhūr al-'uqalā'*) on the idea that the world's order manifests through the rightful functioning of the ulema.

Müneccimbāṣī's (d.1702) commentary on the same texts employs similar explanations on the people of knowledge. In his account, these include scholars "who establish the tenets of religion through textual and intellectual proofs and dispel doubts and ambiguities according to the levels of intellect and understanding¹³," and thus "safeguard Muslims from deviation and error in what their beliefs entail as necessities of the religion". The *fuqaha* "who engage in issuing legal opinions on emerging issues and incidents, and deal with legal judgement on occurrences based on texts and inference with which the courts render judgments and prevent conflicts¹⁴" are also included among the people of knowledge. These two groups of scholars preserve the inner and outward dimensions of normativity.

¹¹ Müneccimbāṣī had a different notion of *aṣḥāb al-kitāba* which I briefly discuss in the following passage.

¹² Ṭāṣkōprizāde, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiya*, 237.

¹³ Müneccimbāṣī Ahmed Dede, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiya*, ed. Asiye Şen Aykıt in "Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlāk-ı Adūd Adlı Eseri: Metin Tahkiki ve Değerlendirme" (PhD diss., Marmara University, 2013,) 492: *yaqumūna al-aqā'id al-dīniya bi-l-adilla al-naqlīya wa al-'aqlīya wa yadfa'ūna 'anha al-shubha wa al-shakwa bi-ḥasab maratib al-aḥsan wa al-'uqūl*.

¹⁴ Müneccimbāṣī Ahmed Dede, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiya*, 492.

Another group of people of knowledge highlighted in Müneccimbāşī's account is kuttāb. Müneccimbāşī underscores that one should not confuse them with the scribes. Kuttāb here refers to the spokespersons of kings and sultans, who are a group of eloquent individuals possessing complete malaka enabling them to articulate eloquent speech in accordance with the requirements of the situation (*al-kalām al-bāligh al-muṭābiq lī muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*) and the appropriate considerations accepted among eloquent speakers in prose. Therefore, they are often equated with poets.

The societal role of ulema was also expressed through the analogies borrowed from the common theoretical models. For example, Ṭāşköprizāde likens ulema to water among the major four elements '*anāşir arba'a*'. We find the details of this analogy in a later Ottoman commentary on al-Ījī's same text by Ismā'īl Mufīd al-Istanbūlī (d.1802) explains that ulema is like water for being the cause of existence and continuity¹⁵, referring to the existence and continuity of societal reality.

Another compelling analogy of this kind is in the late seventeenth-century text by Ḥuseyn Efendi, (d.1691), known as Hezārfenn i.e. the Polymath. In his *Precise Exposition on the Foundations of the House of Osman* ("Talkhīş al-Bayān fī Qawānīn Āl Uthmān"), he likens the ulema to blood in humoral theory. According to the humoral theory, the animal self is a subtle essence and due to its subtlety, it cannot occur in the body and needs the blood to carry it through the vessel to the far parts of the body, reaching all the limbs. Just like blood is the holder of the animal soul and gives "life" to the body. The scholar of the sound path delivers noble knowledge to the illiterate and unknowledgeable, enabling them to benefit from it, just like blood enables the body's limbs to benefit from the animal soul. This is vital because the animal soul is the cause of the subsistence and continuity of the body, and knowledge is the cause of subsistence and continuity of the society and state ("kıvam ve devam-ı cem'iyet ve develete sebebdir") in a similar way; the author argues¹⁶.

¹⁵ Ismā'īl Mufīd al-Istanbūlī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiya*, ed. and trans. Selime Çınar (Istanbul: Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2014), 199: *hadhihi al-tā'ifa al-'ülā bi-manzilat al-mā' fī kawnihi sabab al-ḥayā wa al-baqā'*.

¹⁶ Hezārfenn Ḥuseyn Efendi, *Telhīsü'l-b eyan fī Kavanin-i Âli Osman*, ed. Sevim Ilgürel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), 196.

Another notable example is from a seventeenth-century text *Maşāliḥ al-Muslimīn wa Manāfi' al-Mu'minīn*. Right at the beginning of the discussion of the affairs of the ulema, the author adds a descriptor that the order of the universe is attained through this class of people: "*nizâm-ı âlem bunlardır.*" Later in the text, this association is repeated when the text's anonymous author states that ulema's affairs must be attended to first "as the order of the universe is due to them" and also that they can concentrate on their *muṭāla'a*¹⁷.

Now, how do we make sense of all these? Görgün has previously drawn attention to the association between ulema and social order. He has raised the question of:

Hence, given that the vocation of the 'ulama is knowledge, *nizâm-ı âlem* must be something related to or reliant on knowledge. We can re-pose the question again: What kind of knowledge is it that *nizâm-ı âlem* depends on and manifests through it?¹⁸

Görgün offers a comprehensive sociology of knowledge to contextualise these ideas. His formulation of this question is akin to what was discussed above on the maintenance of the symbolic universe. In Görgün's account, the primary conceptual machinery of universe-maintenance in Ottoman society is *usul al-fiqh*. While Görgün was interested in the knowledge practised by the ulema to maintain the *nizâm-ı âlem*, my work is interested in the intellectual formation of the agents of this role.

Overall, the sociology of knowledge offers an excellent perspective to make sense of these discourses, at least at a very general level. Ulema's relation to the social order is due to the fact that they possess the knowledge of *farḍ al-kifāya*, which is required for the continuation of the society. At the same time, ulema also has the duty of the maintainers of the symbolic universe, i.e. the social reality, through their conceptual knowledge of various disciplines.

Here, the discussion from the societal perspective concludes. In what follows, I will commence with a review of the literature on the ulema and intellectual life of the

¹⁷ "*Maşāliḥ al-Muslimīn wa Manāfi' al-Mu'minīn*," in *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 91-92.

¹⁸ Tahsin Görgün, "Osmanlı'da Nizâm-ı Âlem Fikri ve Kaynakları Üzerine Bazı Notlar", *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* XIII, no. 2 (2000), 184.

period. I will then delve into the notion of intellectual virtue, which is central to the thesis. Subsequently, I will engage in a brief methodological discussion and provide an outline of the main part of the thesis.

1.3. Literature Review

What types of questions have historians raised about the ulema and intellectual life of this era? I have identified five significant strands of scholarship and discuss them separately through exemplary works. The first category of the scholarship represents the oldest approach to the subject and has primarily been interested in viewing the ulema as an elite social group. It has raised questions about their career patterns, social mobility, and political involvement. Queries such as "What transformations did the ulema as a social class undergo?" and "What strategies did they develop to maintain their influence?" epitomise this approach.

The second body of scholarship I have examined comprises more recent work by intellectual historians scrutinising Ottoman ulema's scholarly productions. These historians have analysed ulema as producers of high academic knowledge and attempted to contextualise these works within broader frameworks of intellectual history.

The third type of literature I have explored encompasses works framed as "history of science," which utilise methodological advancements in the field. They aim to advocate for early modern non-European science through the concept of Ottoman science. However, their research agenda has predominantly focused on science's cultural and economic history, with a notable absence of attention to the theoretical writings of Ottoman scholars. The main challenge for this scholarship is the projection of the term "science" in its restricted sense, based on the current classification of knowledge into science and humanities, onto the Ottoman scientific culture. As Daston and Most have observed¹⁹, this issue is linked to a broader problem within the history of science, in general, and not only Ottoman science. I will discuss this issue in greater

¹⁹ Lorraine Daston and Glenn W. Most, "History of Science and History of Philologies," *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1086/681980>.

detail in the second part of the article, where I will also suggest potential avenues for future research for historians of Ottoman science.

The fourth strand of scholarship that emerged from my review is also framed within intellectual history. Instead of concentrating on the academic thoughts and writings of the ulema, this approach delves into more popular intellectual discussions surrounding politics and history. The fifth and final body of scholarship I review centres on the debate surrounding the "Ottoman Enlightenment" in the eighteenth century.

1.3.1 Ulema as an elite social class

One prominent area of inquiry has been the career patterns of the ulema, explored mainly within the framework of institutional history. This scholarship, essentially treating the ulema as an elite interest group, has endeavoured to explain the *ilmiye* institution as a career path, examined the ulema's involvement in high politics, and investigated their interactions with other elite groups. Until recently, this constituted the main focus of scholarship on the period. A major example is Zilfi's monograph, a comprehensive and detailed account examining the political activities and influence of the ulema, as well as their interactions with the Ottoman military-administrative establishment. Her central focus is on what she terms the "ulema aristocracy," particularly on how the eighteenth-century *ilmiye*, with its "great family" characteristics, differed from the individualised guarantees of the *ilmiye* of the previous century. Zilfi contends that the eighteenth-century *ilmiye*, with its exceeding stability and aristocratic professional environment, was distinct not only from other institutions but also from its own immediate history. This is consistent with a central theme in Zilfi's other works, which is the idea that the early *ilmiye* was a meritocratic institution valuing individual scholarly accomplishments however by the eighteenth century, it had evolved into one reflecting "the interests of eminent ulema families and the workings".²⁰ She suggests the higher *ilmiye* underwent a transformation into "a closed corporation"²¹ through the conferral of privileges by the sultan, enabling the

²⁰ Madeline C. Zilfi, "Elite Circulation in the Ottoman Empire: Great Mollas of the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 26, no. 3 (1983): 318, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3631889>.

²¹ Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica 1988), 48.

manipulation of recruitment processes. This resulted in an unprecedented number of ulema children benefiting from these prerogatives. Such privileges involved manipulating recruitment to favour their offspring, shortening terms in office, providing stipends for unemployed ulema, and awarding honorific titles without the incumbent actually performing any duties. These measures effectively solidified the dominance of “great families” within the *ilmiye*. While acknowledging that most of these practices can be traced back to the late sixteenth or seventeenth century, Zilfi argues that the unique and transformative feature of the eighteenth century was the institutionalisation of these practices. She attempted to provide an account explaining how certain conflicts of interest groups and other relevant developments paved the way for the great family *ilmiye* of the eighteenth century. Overall, this perspective presents the ulema as participants in "battles for the religious mind of Istanbul" and "battles over 'trifles' of careers and status."

Another significant work on the ulema of this period is Nizri's *Ottoman High Politics and Ulema Households*. Expressing dissatisfaction with the "sporadic attention" given to the study of the ulema as a group and as individuals, particularly outside the popular academic focus on the "glorious centuries" of Ottoman expansion and the reform periods of the nineteenth century, Nizri aims, like Zilfi, to shed light on the career path of ulema and their involvement in high politics and interactions with other elite groups. While Zilfi focused on families, Nizri's unit of analysis is households, known as *kayı*, which he argues were widely recognised by historians as the primary source of political power and patronage during the early modern period.

Nizri takes a microhistorical approach, focusing on the case of a single scholar, Şeyhulislam Feyzullah Efendi (d.1703), described as "one of the most influential Ottoman figures in the late seventeenth century."²² Through Feyzullah Efendi's story, Nizri constructs a comprehensive narrative that investigates how an Ottoman alim attained, sustained, and eventually lost influence within the framework of his role as a member of the Ottoman learned elite (ulema) and the leader of a prominent Ottoman household.

²² Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

Nizri's portrayal of an Ottoman alim does not account for an intellectual or a scholar, a completely absent dimension. Feyzullah Efendi, instead, emerges as a resourceful elite individual employing diverse strategies to expand and fortify his household, implementing political tactics to ensure the longevity of his political impact, and securing reliable sources of income crucial for the household's survival²³.

Another work adopting a similar approach to studying the Ottoman ulema is Sarıkaya's examination of the Khādimī family. Sarıkaya attempts to explain how this previously unknown family rose to prominence within the "the elite 'ilmiyye-establishment, which is often described as a closed circle of just a few scholarly families". Employing a "network perspective," Sarıkaya argues that the Khādimī family's rapid ascent and significant prestige stemmed from "their connections to personalities of religious and political influence, especially through their far-reaching scholarly and Sufi networks."²⁴

The prevailing tendency of earlier scholarship on Ottoman ulema to focus almost exclusively on their political careers and bureaucratic roles creates the impression that the title of "ālim" in the Ottoman context was primarily a political or clerical category. This perspective is likely to have contributed to Hathaway's observation two decades ago, in her survey of 20th-century Ottoman Empire scholarship, that intellectual history remained a significant "lacuna". She noted that career patterns of the ulema were the sole aspect of intellectual life receiving notable scholarly attention²⁵.

1.3.2 Intellectual Pursuits of Ulema

Recent advances in the literature have begun to recognise Ottoman scholars and intellectuals as producers of knowledge and active participants in intellectual discussions. This shifts the image of an Ottoman alim from a member of a political

²³ A similar study on Feyzullah Efendi and his "family politics" is Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, "Family Politics of Ottoman *Ulema*. The Case of Sheykhülislam Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi and his Descendents", in *Kinship in the Altaic World - Proceedings of the 48th Permanent International Altaistic Conference (Moscow 2005)*, ed. Elena V. Boikova and Rostislav B. Rybakov (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 187–98.

²⁴ Yaşar Sarıkaya, "The Khādimīs of Konya: The Rise of a Scholarly Family from the Ottoman Periphery" (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 63; 75.

²⁵ Jane Hathaway, "Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, no. 1 (June 1, 2004): 38.

interest group to a multifaceted figure encompassing both scholarly pursuits and intellectual engagement.

Before discussing the specific aspects of scholarly life that have drawn the attention of intellectual and science historians, it is important to acknowledge that the scholarly output of the period remains largely unexplored. This lack of scholarship applies both to in-depth analyses of the intellectual oeuvre of single major figures (with only two existing studies, and both focusing on non-representative examples of "high" intellectual life) and to comprehensive studies of major intellectual debates.

Within this understudied field of Ottoman intellectual output, Ottoman logic has attracted relatively greater attention in Anglophone literature, primarily thanks to El-Rouayheb's scholarship. Three chapters of his seminal work, *Relational Syllogisms and the History of Arabic Logic*, are dedicated to Ottoman contributions to logic. In one of these chapters, through meticulous analysis of multiple 17 and 18th-century logic texts, he shows how, contrary to the prevailing assumption that the logic tradition was in a state of stagnation or decline during this period, Ottoman logicians decisively departed from the classic Aristotelian syllogistic models, actively investigating "unfamiliar" forms that were eventually integrated into logic treatises by the second half of the 18th century. Notably, El-Rouayheb's work also dedicates an entire chapter to the systematic analysis of a major work, *al-Burhān fī 'ilm al-mīzān*, by the prominent 18th-century logician Ismā'īl Gelenbevī (d. 1791). Gelenbevī's other treatise *Risāla fī qawlihi fī qawlihi ta'ālā wa-law 'alima llāhu ilā ākhirih*, which takes up a Qur'anic verse and treats it extendedly entirely in terms of its formal and material syllogistic aspect has been studied by Ahmed in a brief article in which he reconstructs part of Gelenbevī's argument and draws some broader inferences about Gelenbevī's approach reflecting on how the relation of logic to scripture was imagined²⁶.

In a section titled "The Ottoman Turkish Tradition," El-Rouayheb's *The Development of Arabic Logic* attempts to provide an overview of key themes, figures and works in Ottoman logic from 1600 to 1800. In a similar undertaking, Kuşlu's survey of the

²⁶ Asad Q Ahmed. "The Logic of God's Knowledge." *In Tradition and Reception in Arabic Literature: Essays Dedicated to Andras Hamori*, ed. Margaret Larkin and Jocelyn Sharlet (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019), 153–60.

works of foremost seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman logicians such as Şadrüddinzāde Meḥmed Emīn Shirwānī (d. 1627), Kara Halīl Tirevī (d. 1711), Yanyalı Es'ad Efendi (d. 1731), Veliyyuddīn Cārullāh Efendi (d. 1738), Abū Sa'īd al-Hādīmī (d. 1750) and Ismā'īl Gelenbevī (d.1791) is informative of the intellectual agenda of these scholars as well as the primary debates and positions taken in logical scholarship of the period.

Among Kuşlu's conclusions is that ulema increasingly found the forms of inferences developed within the Ibn Sinian-Aristotelian framework insufficient to solve some of the problems that pushed them to work on developing non-Aristotelian models of deduction. Such efforts have their roots in earlier periods of Islamic logic, but what made the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries different was that these attempts developed in such a way that the subject could be treated in its own terms. Kuşlu also talks about the vastness of the scholarly output produced during the period in various genres and the need for exploration before making any decisive conclusion on the characteristics of the logical scholarship in this period²⁷.

Further underscoring El-Rouayheb's engagement with Ottoman logic, his most recent article focuses on *al-Īsāghūjī al-Jadīd*, an eighteenth-century logic handbook by Dāwūd Qārsī (d.1756), whose works I analyse in Chapter 1. El-Rouayheb provides an edition of the work and prefaces it with a survey of its content, drawing comparisons with the classic logic treatise by al-Abharī (d. 1265).

However, the focus of this approach has not been exclusively on Ottoman logic.. El-Rouayheb's (2017) other major work on seventeenth-century Ottoman and North African scholarly trends delves into the burgeoning interest among Ottoman scholars in argumentation theory (*ādāb al-baḥth*) and the rise of what he called "Deep Reading" in "early modern Ottoman scholarly culture", referring to to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The interest in the Ottoman scholarship on argument theory extends El-Rouayheb's works. Multiple authors have studied Saçaklızāde and

²⁷ Harun Kuşlu, "Aristoteles Mantığını Aşma ve Yeniden İnşa Etme Gerilimi: 17. ve 18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı-Türk Mantık Tarihine Genel Bir Bakış," [Tension of Exceeding and Reconstructing the Aristotelian Logic: An Overview of 17th and 18th Century Ottoman-Turkish History of Logic] *Beytulhikme An International Journal of Philosophy* 10, no.3 (2020), 1121-1133.

Gelenbevî's works on argumentation theory. The two latest contributions come from Ince²⁸ and Oruç²⁹, both of whom have tried to introduce key Islamic and Ottoman argumentation theories into contemporary argumentation scholarship by considering the works of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman ulema.

Among the major ulema of the period, a scholarship has emerged on the works of As'ad al-Yānyawī, aka Yanyali Esad Efendi, a prominent müderris-alim and qāḍī who was also appointed to the committee of printing and translation. His translations and annotations increasingly attracted the attention of more technical scholarship recently³⁰. Although the studies available are not very detailed accounts, they provide in-depth analyses of short sections of his translations and annotations, showing us the intellectual interest of an Ottoman high academic like Yanyali Esad. This limited scholarship is also a harbinger of upcoming, more detailed accounts.

Küçük has attempted to treat Yānyawī's translation of El-Tā'limü's-Sālis differently with the aim of "elucidating the cultural meaning" and correcting Esad's false identification as "a product of mediaeval Islamic traditions" in the scholarship prior to him³¹. He argues that Esad's work has often been treated as part and parcel of Islamic thought, the content and the context of El-Tā'limü's-Sālis can be interpreted within the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment of the early eighteenth century, which itself can be read as a segment of a broader Ottoman intellectual movement. However, Baga has criticised Küçük's association of Esad Efendi with Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment for being a "forced effort" with insufficient evidence undermining his position as representative of the Ottoman-Islamic tradition of ulema of the time. Baga has further argued that Küçük failed to recognise Esad Efendi's contributions and preferences by

²⁸ Serkan Ince, "The Epistemological Orientation of Ottoman Argumentation Theory and Its Relation to Kalām: Some Reflections on Taşköprüzâde, Gelenbevî, and Saçaklızâde," *Journal of Argumentation in Context* 12, no.3 (2023): 278-306.

²⁹ Rahmi Oruç, "What do we do with arguments?: Situating Munāzara in Contemporary Argumentation Scholarship" (PhD diss., Ibn Haldun University, 2022).

³⁰ Silvia Di Vincenzo, "Reading Avicenna's Kitāb al-Şifā' in the Ottoman world: the Circulation of the Work within the School of As'ad al-Yanyawī," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 67 (2017-2018): 327-350; Charles Genequand and Teymour Morel, "Al-Yānyawī's Account of Porphyry," *Mélanges*, no. LXVII (October 2018): 351-61.

³¹ Harun Küçük, "Natural Philosophy and Politics in the Eighteenth Century: Esad of Ioannina and Greek Aristotelianism at the Ottoman Court," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 41 (2013): 126, 133.

presenting the work as a mere translation, reducing his “achievement” to authoring a work that would conflict with classical Ottoman thought³².

Though relatively recent and limited in scope, this new line of scholarship is significant in several ways. First, it challenges earlier historiographical narratives that painted the period as one of intellectual decline and stagnation, not only in the Ottoman Empire but also across the wider Islamic world. This goes beyond merely cataloguing key names, ideas, and works from the period. Its true merit lies in the effort to translate complex scholarly discussions into the language of modern terminology, something previous Ottomanists struggled with.

Such efforts enable discussions with the density and technicality that El-Rouayheb deems "unavoidable in any serious probing of the ulema's intellectual life... who underwent years of arduous training and grappled with concerns often as abstruse and highbrow as those of present-day academics."³³ This perspective underscores the importance of not glossing over the content of their works or dismissing them as mere products of their social or political context when seeking to recover their scholarly concerns.

Furthermore, this approach proves fruitful in rewriting the history of mainstream disciplines like philosophy and logic, which have suffered from Eurocentric biases and historiographical gaps. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these works possess the potential to enrich contemporary debates in their respective fields. We see this already in examples where argumentation theory draws inspiration from Ottoman scholarship. Such efforts align with Farahat's "dialogical" approach to the Islamic tradition, where the analysis of historical material can yield conceptual models that inform contemporary discussions in ways unavailable within the dominant philosophical discourses³⁴.

³² Mehmet Sami Baga "Yanyalı Esad Efendi'nin Fizika Tercümesine Dair Bazı Notlar" [Some Remarks on As'ad al-Yānyawī's Translation of Physics], *Beytulhikme An International Journal of Philosophy* 13, no. 4 (2023): 213-14.

³³ El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*, 6.

³⁴ Farahat talks about four different ways of engagement with Islamic tradition found in the literature namely noncritical, critical-historical, critical-comparative, and dialogical. He himself adopts a dialogical approach by which he makes suggestions for the “resolution of contemporary problems in theological and moral thought.” See, Omar Farahat, *The Foundation of Norms in Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 17-19.

1.3.3 History of “Ottoman Science”

There is also a recent scholarship on the period, which is framed as the history of Ottoman science. A common feature of this scholarship is that it works with a narrow definition of science in its modern narrow sense, limiting it to natural sciences. On the other hand, these works also share the common feature of adopting a broader notion of science in the sense of treating it as a broader enterprise involving cultural, political and economic aspects, not simply as scholarly output. This scholarship has instead focused on the economic and other processes that are considered to be vital in the practice of scientific activities, rather than on the scholarly work of Ottoman ulema (which is partially due to their narrow conception of science).

Küçük has become an emerging voice in the field, advocating for materialist historiography for the study of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman science. In his argument, the material aspect of science, both in the sense of physical and monetary material, has not played as significant a role as it should in our understanding of modern science in Muslim polities and the omission of the material component for him has contributed to “chauvinistic gerrymandering,” in the history of “Islamic science.” Küçük offers materialist reading as an alternative to what he refers to as “idealist” and “civilizationist” approaches that he perceives as prevalent in the study of non-Western science. He argues that in the case of Ottoman sciences, it has manifested as science being regarded as part of the Islamic tradition and either without requiring any material basis to survive or unchanging material basis. He further believes that the idealist intellectual history in the Ottoman setting has led to an excessive focus on Muslim scholars and Islamic science (it is not made clear what he refers to as Islamic science; is it the term used in the secondary scholarship to discuss natural sciences or so-called classical madrasa disciplines).

For him, the equivocation of “Islamic science” with Ottoman science is problematic for several reasons. First of all, no “Islamic world” existed in the early modern period, according to him, especially with the conflict between Ottomans and other Muslim powers. Also, Ottoman scientists wrote in Turkish, not Arabic, suggesting that their intended audience was local, not a broader Islamic audience. Thirdly, both the sources

and the ends of practised science diverged from the textual legacy of the so-called Islamic tradition. Fourthly, he argues that no evidence suggests that Ottoman "scholars qua scholars" referring to ulema (distinguishing them from other practitioners of knowledge such as marketplace physicians, timekeepers, astrologers, accountants or courtiers) of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries produced science beyond repeating a well-worn canon of elementary textbooks. The final problem he sees is the exclusion of the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire from the domain of science due to the "over-Islamization," which, for Küçük, deserves more emphasis in the accounts of Ottoman science. Küçük materialises these ideas and his materialist historiography that are outlined in his programmatic essay³⁵ in his recently published book *Science without Leisure*, the primary argument of which is that the "decline in the material conditions of scholarship"³⁶ caused the decline in theoretical scholarship among the ulema.

The second major monograph on the period that claims to be doing the history of Ottoman science is Shefer-Mossensohn's. The book, counterintuitively, is not about Ottoman science itself in the sense of the study of the body of knowledge in terms of its content. Instead, it concentrates on unravelling the social and cultural dynamics responsible for the emergence of Ottoman science. The author articulates this perspective, stating, "Instead of focusing on "what"—that is, the finished product (unambiguously formulated, solid knowledge)—I focus on "how": the processes by which Ottomans were engaged with knowledge and the value invested in these procedures."³⁷

Furthermore, the book does not centre on a specific time frame; rather, it explores various facets of scientific activity in the Ottoman Empire, primarily spanning the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, occasionally extending into the nineteenth century. The analysed aspects of Ottoman science include what qualified as knowledge, the spaces and methods of learning, how knowledge was acquired and transmitted, and the

³⁵ Harun Küçük, "Early Modern Ottoman Science: A New Materialist Framework", *Journal of Early Modern History* 21, 5 (2017): 407-419.

³⁶ Harun Küçük, *Science without Leisure: Practical Naturalism in Istanbul*, 16.

³⁷ Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans: The Cultural Creation and Exchange of Knowledge* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 13.

role of the state in knowledge production, particularly through the patronage mechanism.

1.3.4 Ottoman Political Thought

Recent scholarship in the field of Ottoman studies has also delved into more popular intellectual debates of the period in question, particularly those concerning the perceived failures of the Ottoman Empire. Menchinger, in particular, has shown a keen interest in these matters. His biographical monograph on Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi (ca. 1735–1806), an eighteenth-century Ottoman historian, courtier, and intellectual), exemplifying this trend, stands as the sole detailed account of an individual intellectual from this era. While not exclusively an intellectual biography, as it also explores personal and professional aspects, the book provides a valuable analysis of intellectual discussions. Given its distinctive focus on a single intellectual figure from the period and the absence of comparable studies, this work significantly contributes to our understanding of the thought world of eighteenth-century Ottoman intellectuals.

The primary question raised by Menchinger through the example of Vâsîf Efendi's intellectual project is how the Ottomans comprehended and rationalised their empire's setbacks, which posed challenges to the ruling ideology. Menchinger demonstrates that, amidst the century's turmoil, Vasif Efendi's approach involved seeking new and creative solutions by adapting, reinterpreting, and reshaping the intellectual legacy of a thousand years of Islamic culture. This entailed a willingness to tinker and, in some cases, to bend or break fundamental precepts of Ottoman thought to address the empire's challenges.

Menchinger introduces the notion of modernity to describe Vasif Efendi's intellectual project, defining it as an emerging intellectual mindset or attitude, an episteme or worldview³⁸. This category aims to capture intellectual developments by attributing a significant degree of agency to the Ottomans, as seen in the example of Vâsîf Efendi and his circle, highlighting changes that occurred mostly through internal dynamics. Menchinger demonstrates how Vasif Efendi's discourses draw from a long

³⁸ Ethan L Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans: The Intellectual History of Ahmed Vasif* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 8.

tradition of philosophy (*hikmet*), moral education (*edeb*), and the perfection of the soul (*tazkiye*) to formulate his approach to moral reform and refinement. This involves reconsidering, altering, and redeploying major legal and ethical concepts, such as *adala* and *nizâm-ı âlem*, a central concept in Ottoman discourses expressing the entirety of moral and political relations in a just, harmonious balance³⁹. While not engaging with the technical intricacies of the concepts Vâsîf employs, Menchinger effectively outlines the sources and traditions that likely shaped his thinking.

Menchinger particularly focuses on what he calls Vâsîf Efendi's "philosophy of history," offering a detailed exploration of his historical and philosophical perspective on the transformations unfolding during his lifetime. Through close analysis of his works, Menchinger reveals the complexity and underlying rationale behind Vâsîf's views, highlighting how they address the moral and historical quandaries stemming from the empire's instability. Notably, Vâsîf Efendi's concerns extend beyond the immediate challenges of Ottoman military decline and reform agendas. He goes beyond, outlining a broader framework for understanding the universe, causality, and historical change, even venturing into the mechanisms of history itself. This, in essence, forms the core of his "philosophy of history"⁴⁰.

In another article, Menchinger delves into the debate surrounding fate, free will, and predestination within the Ottoman intellectual landscape of the period. He provides valuable context and background on key concepts and sources, such as the flourishing literature on "particular will." Building on this foundation, Menchinger draws out broader implications of these debates, particularly their connection to early modern Ottoman reforms in bureaucracy and the military. Challenging the simplistic association of Ottoman thought with fatalism, Menchinger paints a nuanced picture of Vâsîf Efendi's philosophy. In Menchinger's account, Vâsîf Efendi actively rejects both the passive acceptance of divinely ordained outcomes and the denial of human agency. While not entirely revolutionary, Vâsîf's ideas tap into established currents of thought,

³⁹ Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans*, 84.

⁴⁰ Ethan L Menchinger, "A Reformist Philosophy of History: The Case of Ahmed Vâsîf Efendi," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014): 141-168.

tracing their lineage back to figures such as Kâtib Çelebi and even earlier thinkers, as Menchinger argues.⁴¹

Some related discussions have been dealt with under the theme of Ottoman political thought. In his work on the development of what he has called Ottoman political thought, Sariyannis has examined some of these debates. He treats the eighteenth century in two separate chapters, each representing two major positions of traditionalism and westernisation. He identifies the main features of the “traditionalist” views as continuing the “mirror for princes” eclectic tradition while adding original ideas on the reorganisation of the army, the landholding system, or the economy. Significantly, he notes the extraordinary emphasis on non-military matters, from the economy to town planning, which sharply contrasts with the second stream of political ideas, the “Westernizers,” who preferred to focus on army reforms. Another feature of the Traditionalist strand, according to Sariyannis, was their preference for more concrete and specific discourses over the theoretical musings which writers from the preceding period were inclined to pursue.⁴²

1.3.5 Ottoman Enlightenment?

Another historiographical perspective on intellectual life in the late 17th and 18th centuries centres on the concept of Enlightenment. Some scholars have sought to advocate for the presence of an indigenous Ottoman Enlightenment during this era. The term "Enlightenment" in the Ottoman context was introduced by the German scholar Reinhard Schulze, sparking a historiographical debate in the 1990s regarding the existence of an "Islamic Enlightenment." Schulze proposed that there were independent agents of innovation within the 18th-century Islamic world. He argued that this innovation should be acknowledged as Islamic Enlightenment once separated from its Western-specific aspects. He tentatively suggested that elements of 18th-century Islamic mysticism and even Islamic jurisprudence indicate a shift towards a more anthropocentric worldview, replacing the theocentric perspective. For him, this

⁴¹ Ethan L Menchinger, "Free Will, Predestination, and the Fate of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 77, no. 3 (2016): 449.

⁴² Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), 326-428.

new perspective was rooted in the belief in the human capacity to establish their own order⁴³.

A different iteration of this idea was later adopted by historians who sought to establish parallels between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, attempting to incorporate the former into the Enlightenment movement. For instance, Küçük's (2012) work proposes that the defining features of Ahmed III's regime resembled those of the early Enlightenment: cosmopolitanism, sociability, religious tolerance, and the appreciation of philosophy and social mobility. He justifies the use of the term "Enlightenment" by arguing that there is no other convincing way to characterise the intellectual developments in early eighteenth-century Istanbul than as a kind of Enlightenment movement. Küçük provides an extensive list of developments, framing them as signs of Enlightenment: "deconfessionalization and revalorization of philosophy, the rise of naturalism, the Sultan's worldly and enterprising efforts to seek public recognition and support for his mandate in a way that teetered on republicanism, new and more rational interpretations and practices of Islam, the deliberate exercise of religious tolerance, and the re-alignment of court practices along more civil – as opposed to military or religious - lines, which collectively amount to cultural openness and the erosion of the old order."⁴⁴

Erginbaş also advocates the concept of Ottoman Enlightenment to understand the intellectual developments of the 18th century, focusing his analysis primarily on the figure of İbrahim Müteferrika (d.1747), whom he identifies as "a man of the Enlightenment in the Ottoman context." Erginbaş's examination of Müteferrika's printing enterprise, his perspectives on Ottoman military organisation, and his critical evaluation of Ottoman society during his era lead him to conclude that these aspects collectively present a compelling argument for the existence of Enlightenment ideas in the Ottoman context. For him, Müteferrika championed scientism, which he defines as "seeking the causes of events and rational solutions to problems not specified in

⁴³ On this see Reinhard Schulze, "Was Ist Die Islamische Aufklärung?" *Die Welt Des Islams* 36, no. 3 (1996): 276–325. and Rudolph Peters, "Reinhard Schulze's Quest for an Islamic Enlightenment," *Die Welt Des Islams* 30, no. 1/4 (1990): 160–62,

⁴⁴ Harun Küçük, "Early Enlightenment in Istanbul" (PhD diss., University of California, 2012), 6.

religious law,"⁴⁵ adopted a positive approach to change and renewal, and defended the dissemination of knowledge, particularly humanistic and scientific knowledge, through printing. Although these ideas of Ottoman Enlightenment may not entirely mirror their European counterparts, Erginbaş maintains that we can discern the early seeds of enlightened thought within the 18th-century Ottoman Empire.

A recent contribution to the discussion has been made by Sariyannis, who agrees that certain parallels can be identified between the claimed Ottoman and Western/Central European models of Enlightenment. These include the "democratisation of knowledge," the "massive diffusion of individual reasoning as a legitimate source of truth," and the "disenchantment of the world." However, the significant impediment preventing the transformation of these ideas into a full-fledged "Ottoman Enlightenment" was their lack of integration into the institutional education curriculum of the Ottoman Empire. The failure to include these ideas in the curricula of the medrese institutional education hindered the development of a tangible movement that could rightfully be termed an "Ottoman Enlightenment." The failure to include these ideas in the curricula of the medrese institutional education hindered the development of a tangible movement that could rightfully be termed an "Ottoman Enlightenment."⁴⁶

Labelling the 18th-century Islamic intellectual developments as an "Enlightenment" has also been challenged. El-Rouayheb rejects this approach, arguing it "stretches the term too thin" and imposes a Western framework. He recommends that individual intellectual currents and works be examined on their own terms before comparisons or global conclusions are drawn. It is only when solid historical narratives are established that meaningful comparisons become possible.⁴⁷

I should briefly interject here that of the five key historical approaches I have outlined, only two deal with the ulema, "Ottoman scholars qua scholars", the main high scholarly community of the Ottoman period. Of these two, only one examines the

⁴⁵ Vefa Erginbaş, "Enlightenment in the Ottoman Context: İbrahim Müteferrika and His Intellectual Landscape," in *Historical Aspects of Printing and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East*, ed. Geoffrey Roper (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 95.

⁴⁶ Marinos Sariyannis, "The Limits of Going Global: The Case of 'Ottoman Enlightenment(s),'", *History Compass* 18, no. 9 (September 1, 2020): e12623.

⁴⁷ El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*, 8.

ulema's scholarly life as the main agents and producers of high Ottoman knowledge. However, even scholars who adopt this perspective argue that the scholarly activities of the Ottoman ulema remain largely unexplored. Moreover, examining Ottoman scholarly learning has the potential to enrich our understanding of the Ottoman intellectual milieu by revealing the core intellectual values, key ideas, expertise, and methodologies that shaped it. A serious examination of Ottoman intellectual training and learning practices, essential for understanding the intellectual identities of the Ottoman ulema, their specific skills, habits of thought, and critical approaches, is yet to be undertaken. In contrast to Anglophone academia, Turkish scholarship has commendably done some work on the education of the ulema, identifying the subjects and textbooks, but the content of the educational materials remains curiously unexamined. Historians seem to assume its irrelevance or find it unnecessary for deeper analysis. The following quote illustrates this attitude: "We have no evidence that Ottoman scholars qua scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries actually did any scholarship beyond repeating a well-worn canon of elementary textbooks"⁴⁸. The problem with this approach is that no single work examines the content of the materials of scholarly learning that are dismissed here as "elementary textbooks". Such an examination is necessary to recover the cognitive habits and scholarly selves that the Ottoman ulema cultivated.

1.4. Intellectual Virtues: Aims of Education & Cultivation of Scholarly Selves

I draw on several theoretical considerations in this thesis. The idea of intellectual virtue is a primary one. While the concept has had multiple formulations, which I will discuss in some detail, its core meaning aligns perfectly with my project's objectives. As a construct referring to qualities that enhance an individual's abilities to acquire, develop, and apply epistemic goods (making one a better knower), intellectual virtue serves as an ideal framework for exploring questions of education and scholarly competences within the context of the Ottoman ulema.

Intellectual virtue constitutes the central concept of virtue epistemology, a burgeoning perspective in contemporary epistemology. Its introduction into epistemology is often

⁴⁸ Küçük, "Early Modern Ottoman Science," 411.

associated with Sosa's 1980 essay, where he draws parallels between ethics and epistemology and suggests that borrowing the concept of virtue could be fruitful for the latter⁴⁹. Over the past few decades, this idea has garnered significant attention and helped propel virtue epistemology into one of the major subfields of epistemology. The field itself is diverse, encompassing numerous perspectives. However, a unifying point for virtue epistemologists is their departure from the traditional definition of knowledge and the primary role they assign to epistemic analysis under this new framework.

Prior to the emergence of virtue epistemology, the dominant perspective defined knowledge as "justified true belief," and epistemic evaluation focused on analysing the properties of belief, particularly the concept of justification. Virtue epistemology radically shifted away from this perspective by contending that the agents of knowledge, i.e. knowers, are the primary focus of epistemological analysis. This, of course, necessitated a redefinition of knowledge as a success or achievement resulting from epistemic virtues. For instance, two prominent voices in the field offer the following virtue-based definitions: Sosa defines knowledge as "true belief out of intellectual virtue, belief that turns out right by reason of the virtue and not just by coincidence,"⁵⁰ while Zagzebski defines it as "a state of cognitive contact with reality arising out of acts of intellectual virtue."⁵¹

Here, I should highlight that, like their contemporary counterparts, Muslim philosophers grappled with defining knowledge, leading them to propose various nuanced conceptions and to consider multiple ways of defining it. Although a conception of knowledge similar to "justified true belief" existed in Muslim philosophical discourses, these discussions went beyond reducing knowledge to this singular definition. Muslim writers, while not rejecting the idea of knowledge as "justified true belief," embraced a multi-layered understanding. Typically, discussions on the conception of knowledge encompassed several definitions, with authors

⁴⁹ Ernst Sosa, "The Raft and the Pyramid: Coherence versus Foundations in the Theory of Knowledge," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 5, no.1 (1980), 23.

⁵⁰ Ernst Sosa, *A Virtue Epistemology Apt belief, Volume 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23-24.

⁵¹ Linda Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 270.

examining the focus of each thoroughly. Notably, post-classical thought favoured defining knowledge as a quality of the knower. A prime example of this can be found in al-Ījī's *Mawāqif*, where he discusses seven major definitions of knowledge, among which the most preferred one defines it as a quality: "The seventh [definition] is the preferred one: Knowledge is a quality that necessitates its location [knower] to discern meanings [in a way that] does not permit contradiction."⁵² The term *malaka* represents the presence of knowledge in a knower (*alim*) in a more perfected form as a rooted and enduring quality. I treat the conception of knowledge as *malaka* in detail in chapter 3.

While the efficacy of virtue epistemology in addressing central epistemological questions is largely agreed upon, disagreements over the nature of intellectual virtues have led to two main streams within the field⁵³. The reliabilist⁵⁴ camp views intellectual virtues as reliable qualities, "bound to help maximise one's surplus of truth over error," encompassing cognitive skills, abilities, faculties and competences. These qualities could be "innate faculties or acquired habits that enable a person to arrive at truth and avoid error in some relevant field"⁵⁵ such as *accurate perception, reliable memory, introspection, and inference*.

On the other hand, responsibilists define intellectual virtues as "a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end." From this standpoint, intellectual virtues amount to character traits encompassing qualities like *open-mindedness, intellectual humility, curiosity, adaptability of intellect and diligence*.

Despite their internal differences, proponents of virtue epistemology argue that their virtue-centric perspective on knowledge successfully addresses key epistemological

⁵² "Al-Sāb'ī wa huwa mukhtār annahu šifāt tuġib limahaliha tamyizan bayn al-ma'ānī la yaḥtamil al-naqīd," al-Jurġānī Sharḥ, al-Mawāqif. ed. Ibrahim Hali Üçer. Istanbul: Yazma Eserler Kurumu, 2015. Vol 1. 170.

⁵³ Sosa, Ernest. "Chapter nine. Two Forms of Virtue Epistemology". Epistemology, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, pp. 140-156. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400883059-011>, Greco, John. Review of *Two Kinds of Intellectual Virtue*, by Linda Zagzebski. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60, no. 1 (2000): 179–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2653438>.

⁵⁴ Sosa a major reliabilist in his later works characterizes his perspective also as "competence" virtue epistemology. See Ernst Sosa, *Judgement and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 36.

⁵⁵ Greco, *Virtues in Epistemology*, 287.

issues. These include challenges like the Gettier challenge, the value of knowledge, the dichotomies of foundationalism vs. coherentism, and internalism vs. externalism tensions. Further, by reframing central epistemological questions, this approach has sustained vibrant discussions and spurred the development of new and refined accounts of intellectual virtues.

My interest here is to refrain from taking a stance among the competing forms of virtue epistemology or proposing a new model based on Ottoman sources, although this is certainly a possibility and could be explored independently. I am rather interested in the conceptual utility of intellectual virtue as a notion to talk about goals of education or scholarly ideals within the Ottoman discourse.

Concerning this, we already find that intellectual virtues, apart from their efficacy in addressing mainstream, so-called purely epistemological inquiries, have proven valuable in two interconnected discourses that are central to this study. One such domain emanates from the philosophy of education and educational theory concerning the major debate on “What are the proper aims of education?” and “How can these aims be best realised?”. Aims of education can encompass various dimensions, including epistemic, moral, political, and more. Now, concerning the epistemic aims of education, the theoreticians almost unanimously argue that the epistemic aim of education should go beyond the aim of mere transmission of propositional knowledge. There has been a growing interest in the proposition that intellectual virtues are well-suited to serve as the epistemic objectives of education. Notably, Baehr advocates that education should aspire to nurture the development of intellectual virtues such as open-mindedness, intellectual humility, carefulness, and intellectual tenacity. This proposal has ignited ongoing discussions among philosophers of education, virtue epistemologists, and educational practitioners, prompting inquiries into the significance of particular virtues in education, the precise conceptualisation and interpretation of these virtues, the most effective pedagogical approaches for fostering intellectual virtues, and the relationship between intellectual virtues and other epistemic and non-epistemic educational objectives.

Moreover, objections have been raised regarding the overall viability of this idea, particularly within the current landscape of virtue theory⁵⁶. I am interested in the use of intellectual virtues in relation to the questions of education, as it is a helpful category for analysing the intellectual discourses on the education of alim. What intellectual virtues were emphasised? Was the epistemic aim of education, in this sense, a concern for the Ottoman intellectuals at all?

The second category of scholarship that has embraced intellectual virtues as a valuable analytical framework pertains to intellectual and science historians. Although some applications of epistemic virtues have been argued to be overly specific to impinge on historical scholarship⁵⁷, this has not stopped historians of knowledge from drawing on the work of virtue epistemologists. Realising the centrality of the virtue language to the past discussions on scholarship, a recent trend in the history of knowledge is the study of historical discourses on scholarly practices and ideals through the lens of epistemic virtues to investigate what good scholarship meant in particular situations. By examining specific intellectual virtues such as objectivity, impartiality, thoroughness and creativity, they have explored how these key characteristics of scholarly personae emerged and acquired particular meanings and why they were often contested in different contexts. The field has thus far tended to focus on early modern European thought and the responsibilist stream of virtue epistemology and sometimes lacks intellectual depth. Still, despite these limitations, the field has kept growing over the past two decades, resulting in a body of literature which can be broadly identified as the history of epistemic virtues.

Within the context of various research programs, including historical epistemology, historiography, the history of scientific self, and scholarly personae, historians of science and humanities have delved into the exploration of epistemic virtues, examining how they operated within specific contexts in the past. While providing an exhaustive discussion of the existing literature would lie beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth highlighting several research directions within this burgeoning field.

⁵⁶ See Ben Kotzee, J. Adam Carter, and Harvey Siegel, "Educating for Intellectual Virtue: A Critique from Action Guidance," for a critique of the project, which poses a 'pedagogical challenge' to this notion by arguing that the approach lacks effective pedagogy, and the only available method, "exemplarist thinking," is not suitable for the task.

⁵⁷ Mulsow, "History of Knowledge", 161.

One approach has been to focus on specific epistemic virtues, such as *objectivity*, *self-distanciation*, and *impartiality* to historicise them by investigating how and why specific virtues emerged, how they were realised and reinforced, and what the implications of making choices among them were.⁵⁸

Another line of inquiry has involved examining historical discussions on what it meant to be a scholar in specific disciplines. Epistemic virtues have proven relevant in such inquiries, not only by serving as a conceptual tool for historians to understand the relationship between scholarly ideals and practices, but virtue language has been found to be central to the historical sources themselves, as scholarly selfhood was often explicitly discussed in terms of epistemic virtues⁵⁹. Although the discipline of history has received primary attention in this approach⁶⁰, there are also studies exploring other disciplines, including physics, astronomy, orientalism, and legal studies⁶¹.

Furthermore, certain historians have concentrated on individual scholars by analysing their writings that express their views on scholarly excellence or document their practices. Others have delved into academic memory documents, such as obituaries of specific individuals, to trace the presence of epistemic virtues and vices⁶². Additionally, some studies are centred around specific historical periods rather than focusing on individual figures, a framework that aligns with the approach I am taking in this research.⁶³

Several key findings and arguments have emerged in the existing literature on the history of epistemic virtues. Firstly, the contextual nature of virtue language and its

⁵⁸ See, e.g., Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*; Daston, "Objectivity and Impartiality: Epistemic Virtues in the Humanities."; Paul, "Distance and Self-Distanciation"; Murphy and Traninger, *The Emergence of Impartiality*.

⁵⁹ Saarloos, "Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory," 341.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Paul, "Performing History." Paul, "Virtues of a Good Historian in Early Imperial Germany,"; Paul, "Scholarly Self"; Paul, *Historians' Virtues*; Eskildsen, "Virtues of History,"; Ohara, "Epistemic Virtues and the Historian's Practices".

⁶¹ See, Saarloos, "Virtues of courage and virtues of restraint,"; Tai and van Dongen, "Anton Pannekoek's Epistemic Virtues," Engberts and Paul, "Scholarly Vices", Paul, "Virtue Language in Nineteenth-century Orientalism,"; Costa, "What is a good book?"

⁶² van Dongen, "Epistemic Virtues of the Virtuous Theorist,"; Stump, "Pierre Duhem's virtue epistemology,"; Kidd, "Was Sir William Crookes epistemically virtuous?"; Paul, "Virtues and Vices of Albert Naudé".

⁶³ Kidd, "Confidence, Humility, and Hubris in Victorian Scientific Naturalism,"; Bellon, "Sacrifice in Service to Truth,"; Kivistö, *Vices of Learning*.

cruciality for accurately understanding these virtues has been recognized, as their meanings can be shaped, adapted, exaggerated, and transformed within specific historical contexts⁶⁴. Secondly, there were significant disagreements and competing visions among scholars regarding the virtues that defined a good scholar, revealing diverse perspectives on scholarly excellence. Thirdly, the study of virtues should consider them as constellations rather than isolated traits, as scholarly practices were seen as dependent on a specific scholarly persona composed of a particular combination of virtues⁶⁵. Historical sources usually feature discussions centred around identifying and defining these goal-oriented constellations of virtues.

Lastly, differentiating epistemic virtues from moral and aesthetic virtues has presented challenges to historians, as epistemic virtues often carry moral, social, religious, and political implications. For instance, in historical scholarship around 1900, there was an observable overlap or entanglement of epistemic, moral, and political connotations within virtue language and virtues such as impartiality and loyalty “cannot neatly be classified as ‘epistemic’ ones”⁶⁶.

Another notion of intellectual virtues that has informed my perspective in this thesis has been formulated by science historians Daston and Galison. In their influential work, the authors pursue what they call history of scientific self to which epistemic virtue is very central.

Although their focus is on the emergence of objectivity in the 19th century as a novel epistemic virtue, representing "a new way of studying nature, and of being a scientist," they develop an interesting perspective through the notion of scientific self. Drawing inspiration from historical studies on "technologies of the self," which examine bodily and mental practices and exercises shaping particular kinds of selves, the authors argue that the scientific self is no exception—it also requires specialised techniques for its formation and reinforcement. Since knowledge is inherently dependent on the inquirer, always involving a knower, the knower can potentially

⁶⁴ Saarloos, *Virtues of Courage and Virtues of Restraint*; Kidd, *Confidence, Humility, and Hubris in Victorian Scientific Naturalism*.

⁶⁵ Saarloos, *Virtue and Vice in Academic Memory*.

⁶⁶ Creighton et al., "Virtue language in historical scholarship", 924.

influence the acquisition of knowledge—either facilitating or hindering it. Thus, the self of the knower becomes a matter not only of ethical concern but also of epistemological significance. The pursuit of knowledge necessitates the internalisation and enforcement of specific ideals and values. Epistemic virtues then are defined as "norms that are internalised and enforced by appeal to ethical values, as well as to pragmatic efficacy in securing knowledge."⁶⁷

The growing interest in virtue epistemology has led to propositions that not only can virtue epistemology provide normative guidance, but it should also redefine the primary epistemic aim of education as the cultivation of intellectual virtues. Some argue that education should strive to nurture the growth of intellectual character virtues such as curiosity, open-mindedness, attentiveness, intellectual carefulness, courage, rigour, and honesty⁶⁸.

1.5. Methodology

This thesis deals with the question of “who was an Ottoman alim” as a historical study of the scholarly self. I use the term “scholarly self” similar to its earlier formulations by historians of science and knowledge, such as “the role-specific identity of scientists as typically described in terms of skills, competencies, qualities, or dispositions”⁶⁹, “set...of the epistemic virtues cherished and cultivated within a specific scholarly community⁷⁰” or as a form of subjectivity which manifests through epistemic virtues. Scholars have used the concept (and similar other terms such as scholarly self/selfhood, academic self and scholarly persona) to inquire about the question of what it takes to be an expert in various fields, i.e. what it means to be a good philosopher, historian, natural scientist and so on. What unites them is the centrality

⁶⁷ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 40-41.

⁶⁸ On this debate see Baehr’s proposal in “Educating for Intellectual Virtues” as well as objections raised against it in Kotzee, Ben, J. Adam Carter, and Harvey Siegel. “Educating for Intellectual Virtue: A Critique from Action Guidance.”

⁶⁹ Herman Paul, "The Scientific Self: Reclaiming Its Place in the History of Research Ethics," *Sci Eng Ethics* 24 (2018), 1381(2018).

⁷⁰ Gadi Algazi, “Exemplum and Wundertier: Three Concepts of the Scholarly Persona,” *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 131 no 4 (2016):11.

of the idea of epistemic virtues to their frameworks: Scientific selves are built through the cultivation of epistemic virtues.

The main challenge with such a framework is that any type of self or selfhood, whether moral or intellectual, is notoriously inaccessible to third-person observers. This is true specifically for the scientific self, too, as skills, competencies, dispositions, and intellectual virtues are not easily observable; they are embedded into scholarly practice.

The other aspect of selfhood is that they have a history. Unless pinned down to particular periods, places, and persons, inquiry into scientific selfhood is slippery. Therefore, it would only be useful to talk about the Ottoman scientific self by limiting it to a particular period. For that, I have narrowed my focus down to the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. My choice of period is partially informed by the rich materials available on knowledge in the period and the rise of pedagogical thought, which I make a case for in the first chapter.

Past scholarship exploring the concept of the "scientific self" has primarily focused on analysing various sources, including personal reflections documented in diaries or autobiographies, condensed biographical accounts and "ego-documents", and practical guides or manuals associated with specific scientific disciplines. Additionally, scholars have examined influential texts that shaped discourse within various fields alongside practical training methodologies like sensory observation exercises, the meticulous upkeep of lab notebooks, and the creation of detailed scientific illustrations.

I, on the other hand, concentrate on educational materials, which I understand as a process of a person's cognitive habituation to a particular kind of thinking and acquisition of intellectual virtue, leading to the formation of a particular intellectual character or scholarly self.

What conception of education allows its association with the formation of scholarly selfhood as a set of epistemic virtues? Intellectual virtues are increasingly becoming common in educational discussions. In the previous section, I discussed how scholars proposed the idea that education should aim to foster epistemic virtues.

For an intentional building of scholarly selfhood through education and training, there should be some sort of formal education. Unorganised informal as “the lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment⁷¹” would not serve the framework I am developing here. We are interested in the form of education that is organised with stated intellectual goals.

Was there such a notion of education in Ottoman Istanbul's late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Chapter 1 embarks on an exploration of educational themes prevalent in the latter half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a focus on delineating key pedagogical questions and concerns of the era. How did the Ottoman thinkers understand the learning process of an alim? What were some of the goals they highlighted as the learning aims? What were other goals that they disqualified? How did they think that these goals could be achieved? Were there any attempts to design a course of study to achieve these aims? The chapter showcases numerous innovative works authored by Ottoman scholars, asserting the existence of a discernible pedagogical turn within Ottoman thought during this period. Additionally, it delves into the concept of "*tartīb*" that Ottoman educators sought to develop, constituting a program for learning as part of the broader agenda of the ulama aimed at standardisation.

In Chapter 2, I further examine the notion of malaka, particularly *malaka ilmiyya*. How was it understood? What were the competing notions? What was the origin of the concept? What were the contexts in which this concept was utilised? How was it theorised?

The chapter immerses itself in an attempt to craft a history of the Ottoman scholarly self through the lens of epistemic virtues, with particular emphasis on the term "malaka." This section of the thesis entails a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted uses of this term across various sources. It expounds Müneccimbāşī's approach to this concept and investigates the possibility of interpreting "malaka" as a manifestation of virtue reliabilism.

⁷¹ The definition is cited in Johnson, M., and Majewska, D. (2022). Formal, non-formal, and informal learning: What are they, and how can we research them?

Chapter 3 looks at the stages of the educational life of an alim who was not conventionally considered to be part of the madrasa learning. The main question is to understand what these side stages tell us about the intellectual character of an ‘ālim. What did a student study before beginning their madrasa education? What were the intellectual activities a young ‘ālim would take part in after graduating from madrasas? In this chapter, I adopt a more narrative style of exposition, drawing upon examination records, diaries, and other educational materials to elucidate key episodes of the educational journey of an alim. These episodes serve to illuminate the various stages and experiences that constitute the educational trajectory of a scholar.

The final chapter is interested in the commonplace scholarly practice that the Ottoman ulema undertook. I looked at the practice of scholarly reading *muṭāla‘a* and investigated whether there were any discussions on developing particular scientific selfhood to pursue this practice, i.e., to become a *muṭāli‘*. I will conduct a comprehensive examination of core texts employed in the intellectual training of Ottoman scholars during the historical period under consideration in this thesis. This chapter serves as an endeavour to further elucidate the intellectual virtues and scholarly self that were presented as the goals of scholarly learning.

This study has utilised a wide variety of primary sources representing Ottoman thought during the period, as well as the historical context of the time. This consisted of independent treatises on knowledge acquisition and practical philosophy written by Ottoman authors of the time, educational materials (primers and commentaries written on particular subjects used in learning), institutional documents (endowment deeds), an ego-document (diary), and a biographical encyclopaedia. In addition to these sources, I have also examined texts that were written earlier but were recorded for use in learning. Below, I provide a list of major texts for each of these categories.

I have drawn on the close reading of three major independent treatises on education and the relevant sections of a commentary on classical practical philosophy, as well as two shorter works on education written in verse, which are:

- *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram* and *Sharḥ Akhlāq al-‘Aḍudiyya*, both by Mūneccimbāṣī Ahmed Dede (d.1702),

- *Tartīb al-‘Ulūm* authored in 1715-16 by Sājaqlīzādah Muhammad al-Mar‘ashī (d. 1732/3),
- *Kevākib-i seb‘a* (authored in 1741),
- *Qaṣīda fī al-kutub al-mashūra fī al-‘ulūm* by ‘Alī b. ‘Abdullāh al-‘Uṣṣākī, known as Nebī Efendi-zāde (d. 1785-86),
- *Tertīb-i ‘ulūm’* by Erzurumlu Ibrahim Haḳḳı (d.1780).

The second set of materials that I have delved into consists of primers and also commentaries on the primers on the subjects that were part of madrasa education. In this category, I have mainly concentrated on the writings of the 18th-century Ottoman mudarris-alim Dāwūd al-Qārisī (d.1756). An additional interesting category of material that I have examined is al-Qārisī’s account of his own professorship examination.

- *Sharḥ al-Īsāghūjī*
- *Sharḥ Amsilat al-mukhtalifa fī al-ṣarf* (both in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish)
- *el-Velediyyetü’l-Cedīde*
- *al-Īsāgūjī al-Jadīd wa al-Dur al-Farīd*
- *Risāla fī tafṣīl mā ḥaṣala min al-su’āl wa-l-jawāb fī al-imtiḥān*

I have also closely read other primers of madrasa education which were not authored in the period that this thesis is looking at; however, they were widely cited in the text I have examined as reference books of learning in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the fourth chapter, my analysis of the madrasa textbooks delved into several texts from various periods. These include, but are not limited to, the following titles:

- *Amthīla*
- *Binā’*
- *al-‘Awāmil* by Jurjānī (d.1081)
- *Awāmil-i jadīd* by Birgivī (d.1573)
- *Mutawwal* by al-Taftāzānī (d.1390)
- *Isagoge* by Abharī (d.1265)

I have also used the following materials for the more contextual reconstruction of the period, including a biographical encyclopaedia, endowment deeds, a diary, a chronicle, and a general history text:

- *Veķāy i'ül Fuzela*, Şeyhī Mehmed Efend's (d.1731) addendum to Nev'izade Atai's (d.1635) *Hadāik-al-hakaik fi Tekmile-t-al-Şakaik* completed in 1718.
- *Endowment deeds of*
 - *Beşir Agha (d. 1746) complex*
 - *Çorlulu Ali Paşa (d. 1711) madrasa,*
 - *Şaykh al-Islām Feyzullah (d.1701) Efendi's waqfiye*
- *Al-Faṭḥ al-Raḥmānī fi Tarz al-Dawla al-'Uthmāni*, authored in 1689 by Abū-Bakr Al-Dimashqī (d.1691),
- *Tarīḥ-i Lebībā*, a historical diary or rather a chronicle by Taylesanizāde Hafiz Abdullah Efendi (d.1794), covering the years from 1785 to 1789,
- Sıdkī Mustafa's (d.1790) diary covering the last years of his candidacy period and the early years of his career as an ilmiyye member between 1749 and 1756.

I should also mention that I have examined various passages from two 19th-century materials: Ali Suavi's (d.1878) 1869-dated article "Türk" and an 1827-dated section from Eckermann's "Conversations with Goethe."

CHAPTER II

OTTOMAN PEDAGOGICAL TURN AND THE ACCOUNTS OF TARTĪB

Praise be to Allah, who has made the path of understanding and teaching easy for me and has guided me in educating the students and perfecting them in the most complete and correct way.

Dāwūd al-Qārsī (d.1756), *Sharḥ al-Īsāghūjī*.

“Overall, a student's purpose is twofold: learning the principles of disciplines, and honing the mind.”

Sājaqlīzādah (d.1732), *Tartīb al-‘Ulūm*

2.1. Introduction

In our pursuit of recovering historical scholarly selfhood, our starting point is the formal education of an Ottoman ‘ālim. As outlined in the preceding section on the sociology of knowledge, the transfer of advanced forms of role-specific knowledge is not viable through informal learning in the context of primary socialisation and enculturation. In fulfilling the communal obligation, namely *farḍ al-kifāya*, transmitting such knowledge necessitates the involvement of specialised agencies or full-time educators.

Furthermore, we established from the sources that the minimum requirement for an ‘ālim to fulfil their communal obligation was to possess knowledge at the *iqṭisād* level. This level of knowing goes beyond merely possessing a true belief and requires the transmission of certain critical thoughts along with propositional knowledge. In other words, the mere transmission of bodies of knowledge without any systematic attempt to explain and justify them would not be sufficient to educate scholars.

I am similarly uninterested in moral or religious learning at this juncture, with their conventional definitions. A standard definition of religious education is the transmission of propositions about divinity, prophethood and other beliefs or codes of conduct about religious life: “learning aiming to encourage participation by engendering belief in the tenets of the religion or through full-hearted participation in religious practices or both.”⁷²

Ottoman ulema did indeed engage in religious education; however, this was not part of their formal madrasa education. Nor was it religious learning in its standard sense that qualified them to be an ‘ālim: an ‘ālim was not a person of profound piety. Neither was it moral education in the sense of reinforcing “the agreed moral norms of the particular society” or inculcation of certain moral virtues.⁷³

I must also briefly touch upon how education scholars today understand formal learning. While the concept of formal education is often associated with government involvement in the modern world, this has not always been the defining characteristic throughout history, as evidenced by the Ottoman experience. When referring to formal education, I mean the concept of education that is somewhat structured and deliberate, aiming at cognitive advancement and the attainment of particular knowledge, abilities, and intellectual virtues. This type of education is conducted in institutional environments where both students and teachers play active roles. It usually follows a structured curriculum and concludes with certifications or acknowledgements.⁷⁴ I acknowledge the potential criticism that applying a contemporary notion of formal education to historical contexts can be viewed as anachronistic.

However, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the education of an Ottoman alim exhibited many of the elements of formal education. Furthermore, beyond the practice of such learning, we find that the Ottomans engaged in rich intellectual discussions surrounding these practices.

⁷² Christopher Winch and John Gingell, *Philosophy of Education: The Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. (London : Routledge, 2008), 182-84.

⁷³ Winch and Gingell, *Philosophy of Education*, 133-34.

⁷⁴ Johnson, M., and Majewska, D. (2022). Formal, non-formal, and informal learning: What are they, and how can we research them?

This chapter is interested in some of these elements constituting the formal education of an 'ālim: What was the education of an 'ālim like? What did it entail? What were its stated aims? Was there a curriculum? What kind of discourses were there conceptualising education, systematising, and critiquing? Who were the prominent voices and themes in the discussion on the education of an alim? Were they invoking any epistemic virtues or cognitive dispositions? How was the desired output of learning understood?

2.2. Ottoman Pedagogical Turn

The late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman thought witnessed what could be aptly termed a 'pedagogical turn'. During this period, a diverse array of educational texts emerged, ranging from general books on knowledge acquisition that outlined curricula, learning objectives, and pedagogical strategies to more specialised discipline-based works, including pedagogical commentaries on existing texts or entirely new primers in various subjects.

These texts pertained to the education of a scholarly community known as "*ulema-i zāhir*" (exoteric scholars or scholars of the apparent) or "*ulema-i tarikat-i naẓar*" (scholars of the method of theoretical reasoning). They are insightful materials, not only from the perspective of the history of education but also fertile ground for more epistemologically and sociologically informed analyses. They contain discussions on themes related to intellectual virtues, the value of knowledge, epistemic responsibility, and the social distribution of knowledge.

In this chapter, I will initiate my discussion with a general overview, introducing the works and ideas that I consider to be part of the Ottoman pedagogical turn and explaining what it entails. I will then outline the distinction between the scholars of the apparent (*zāhir*) and the scholars of the inner (*bāṭin*) since the pedagogical turn primarily concerned the former group. Following this, I will present a selection of these educational writings to elucidate their underlying themes and motivations for authorship. In particular, I will examine the works of two Ottoman müderris scholars: Sājaqlīzādah and Dāwūd al-Qārisī. A common feature shared among some of these texts is their delineation of a curriculum referred to as *tartīb*, which constitutes the

focus of the next section of this chapter, where I explore accounts of *tartīb* and also address the debate in the literature about the so-called "sultan's syllabus".

The final section of the chapter will delve into el-Rouayheb's argument on the 'pedagogical shift' and its underlying rationales, which he developed by examining similar sources. I will attempt to re-evaluate el-Rouayheb's position in light of the analyses conducted in this chapter.

2.3. The Rise of Ottoman Educational Thought

By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, educational matters had become central to the Ottoman intellectual agenda. Ottoman scholarly discussions delved into inquiries about the fundamental components of a scholar's formative learning. They pondered over the educational objectives that should define the goal of learning, the common obstacles and potential challenges impeding students from reaching these aims, and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of teaching.

One common idea that emerged from these discussions was that to be a learned individual in the Ottoman context (referred to as 'ālim'), students needed a solid grounding in what was called "conventional sciences". This grounding was expected to happen through acquiring intellectual virtues conceptualised with the term *malaka*. This foundation would equip them with intellectual abilities and critical learning tools, facilitating their journey to becoming autonomous learners, another primary educational aim cited in the discussions. Those who succeeded in this educational journey were given titles like "*Kāmil*" (meaning complete or perfect) or "*Takmil al-Mawād*" (referring to the completion of subjects), indicating that they had fulfilled the essential educational requirements.

The leading representatives of this intellectual trend were Ottoman scholars who had extensive experience as *müderris*, i.e. professors of Ottoman higher learning (referred to in the discussions as *al- 'ālīm al-mudarris*) who placed educational concerns at the heart of their scholarly writings. Many scholars had become known primarily for their role as *müderris*, and their intellectual endeavours revolved around tackling educational issues.

Within the pedagogical discussions of the 18th century, various types of educational works emerged. These encompassed texts addressing learning difficulties, erroneous educational practices, and misconceptions of the era, all while reaffirming overarching learning goals. Notable examples of such works are *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, *Tartīb al-‘ulūm* and *Kevakibi-i seb’a*. These materials also delineated versions of "tartīb," which was the term used by Ottoman educators to refer to the curriculum or canon of learning.

Another approach taken by educational scholars like Sājaqlīzādah and Dāwūd al-Qārisī involved the creation of new textbooks for madrasa students. As we will explore later, they penned new textbooks, namely *Taqrir al-Qawanin al-munāẓara*, *Waladiyya*, *New Waladiyya* and *Īsāgūjī al-Jadīd wa al-Dur al-Farīd* for classical subjects of logic and ādāb al-baḥṭh wa al-munāẓarah with the rationale of authorship based on pedagogical concerns. Both authors' works have already been recognised for involving innovative elements in the secondary literature.

Exam treatises were another innovative educational genre of this period, in which müderris scholars such as Dāwūd al-Qārsī and Isma‘il Gelenbevi (d. 1791) compiled treatises detailing the exams they themselves took, intended to aid students in their exam preparation.

The final category includes materials offering pedagogical commentaries. Notably, al-Qārisī authored two texts aimed at setting instructional standards for teaching morphology, something similar to what we today call a “teacher’s book”.

What prompted this surge of interest in educational matters? This development could be intertwined with the emergence, or more precisely, the rise of *müderris* scholars as a distinct stratum within the classes of ulema. Supporting this, we find that around this period, in biographies, some scholars were chiefly recognised through the title of *müderris*, signifying their primary role as educators. These müderris-scholars engaged with each other intellectually, composing commentaries on their contemporaries' works on education. The proliferation of works on curricula also suggests a broadening of similar educational activities, contributing to the emergence of educational questions around this curriculum.

Moreover, the growing interest in educational inquiries might also be attributed to the expanding social capital of higher education. The appeal of madrasa education had expanded socioeconomically, attracting more students eager to embark on the *ilmiya* career path. As the number of students swelled, it naturally led to heightened concerns about quality, offering another plausible reason for the proliferation of educational texts aimed at establishing standardisation.

This sentiment is encapsulated in an educational poem by *müderris-poet* of the age ‘Alî b. ‘Abdullâh al-‘Uşşâkî known as Nebî Efendi-zâde (d. 1785-86), who is documented in the sources as the *müderris* of the madrasa of the Cami-i Kebir in the town of Uşâk and also as the author of educational texts written for madrasa students⁷⁵.

*Ķāzi ya müfti, müderris olmak için okuma,
Hem dahi hasma ĝalebe çalmak için okuma.*

*Don't study to become a qadi, mufti, or müderris,
Nor should you study to outwit your foes.*

Furthermore, evidence exists indicating that the preceding century witnessed a significant rise in employment and promotion opportunities. During what Atçıl terms "the period of consolidation of the hierarchy", the number of scholarly positions within the hierarchy experienced a noteworthy increase. "new madrasas were constructed; many madrasas that might have remained outside the hierarchy owing to the restrictive conditions in their endowment deeds became part of the hierarchy; and judgeships in many outlying regions were also integrated into the hierarchy." These developments opened the door to employing and promoting a greater number of scholar-bureaucrats.⁷⁶

This trend seems to have continued into the seventeenth century. In *Vekāyiu'l-fuzalâ*, we have plenty of scholar entries with a note about the appointment indicating that

⁷⁵ Fazlıoĝu, *Nebî Efendi-zâde'nin Kaide fi el-kutub el-meşhûre fi el-'ulum*.

⁷⁶ Atçıl, Abdurrahman. *Scholars and Sultans*, 168.

they were the first müderris (“evvelü müderrisin bi-medreseti” or “awwal mudarris darrasa biha”) to be appointed to the respective madarasa.

Alternatively, endnotes can also be used. Endnotes may follow each chapter or may be placed at the end of the thesis before the bibliography. If an endnote follows a chapter, it should begin on a separate page following the chapter that it belongs to. Authors should consult with their academic advisors since footnoting practices differ widely among publications across different disciplines (Kelton, Sadowski, & Zupick, 2014).

2.4. Two Communities of Knowledge

In the Ottoman discourses of the period studied in this chapter, a distinction was established between two knowledge communities: one representing intellectual authority and the other moral and spiritual. While the aspiration to couple intellectual growth with moral and spiritual cultivation was upheld as a higher ideal, and many individuals were noted in the sources for excelling in both, the prevailing view maintained that these two domains constituted separate spheres of knowledge, each possessing its distinct institutions and parameters. In his work, *al-Fath al-Rahmānī fī Tarz al-Dawla al-‘Uthmāni*, Abū Bakr al-Dimashqī, the Geographer (d.1691) elucidated this distinction through a methodological lens:

Among the pillars of the order, this venerable class [ulama] is the most honourable pillar and is superior to the others [pillars] in ranking. This class is of two groups. One is the ulama of the external, that is, the adherents of the method of *nazar*. The other is the ulama of the internal, which are the masters of the method of *taşfiye*.⁷⁷

The term *nazar* indicates an intellectual activity, as opposed to *taşfiye*, which denotes a more practical and ethical human capacity. An 18th-century prominent Ottoman scholar, Gelenbevī (d.1791), defines *nazar* as the mental act of “contemplating the intelligible to reach an unknown” (*mulāḥazat al-ma‘qūl li-taḥṣīli’l-majhūl*). Al-

⁷⁷ Abubakir bin Bahrān al-Dimashqī, *Feth ar-rahmānī (al-Fath al-Rahmānī fī Tarz al-Dawla al-‘Uthmāni)* (digitalized manuscript), Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001583900000000>, 16V.

Dimashqī then proceeds to describe the various roles each group occupied in Ottoman society:

The people of the method of *nazar* become either a mufti, a teacher of the sultan, a kadi, or a leader of a community, a müderris or a sahib-i fen, or become none of these and opt for mülazamet. Then, müfti might or might not be a Sheikh al-Islam. Those who do not become a sheikh al-Islam are remote muftis. Then, similarly, a kadi becomes a kadiasker or a provincial kadi. The kadi of a province becomes either a mawali or remote kadi or their vicegerent. The leader of a community is a naqīb al-ashrāf. Ashab-i funun are either physicians or, astrologers or scribes of the diwan, functioning as council secretaries. They are experts in the Indian numeral system and siyaqat [Ottoman shorthand]... People of the method of *taşfiye* are either Naqshibandi or Khalwati preachers. Or just a sufi or a murīd. The imams also belong to these two classes. Or they are either sermonisers or imams or müezzins of - district mosques or a primary teacher. With this, they [ulema] became sixteen groups. Each group has different rules.”⁷⁸

This disquisition of ulema is common in the Ottoman sources from the period. We find it with some minor variations in two other texts as well. These are *Telhîsü'l-beyân fî Kavânîn-i Âl-i Osmân* by al-Dimashqī's contemporary, Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi (d.1691) and the anonymous *Kavânîn-i Osmânî ve Rabîta-i Asitâne*.

The division between the ulama of *nazar* and *taşfiye* also informed the way the Ottoman scholar biographies were compiled. In *Vekayî'ül-fudala*, an addendum to Nev'izade Atai's (d.1635) *Hadâik-al-hakaik fî Tekmile-t-al-Şakaik*, Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi (d.1731) gathered the representatives of the two knowledge communities in separate sections. The text also contains references attesting to the distinctiveness of these two traditions. For example, the biographical entry on Kadizade Mehmed Efendi includes the following statement, directly referencing the matter: “*Although he desired to be initiated into a Sufi path with the encouragement of the sheikh of Terceman lodge, he did not leave the tarîk-ı nazar to go to the direction of tasawwuf, as it was at variance with his frame of mind.*”

Şeyhi's biographical data show that many individuals indeed coupled and had mastery in both realms, yet the entries clearly distinguish these two capacities. For instance, the entry on Müneccimbâşî Ahmed Dede, mentioned in the section on Sufi scholars,

⁷⁸ al-Dimashqī, *Feth ar-rahmānī*, 17r.

states that after completing the spiritual path (*ba'de tekmīli't-tarīk*), he showed interest in the exoteric sciences (*'ulūm-ı zāhireye dahı ragbet idüp*)⁷⁹.

There were even those who, at a much later stage of their lives, switched their roles. An example of this is Meknī Şeyh Ahmed Efendi (d. 1716), who, after a successful career as a *müderris* and the attainment of positions in high-ranked madrasas, obtained a "licence" in the spiritual path of Khalwatiya and gave up teaching activities [*tarīka-i Halvetiyye'den mücāz olmağla tarīk-ı tadrīsdan ferāgat idüp*]."

The distinction between the ulema of *nazar* and *tasfiye* can be traced back to Taşköprüzade Ahmed Efendi's (d. 1561) *Miftāh al-sa'āda wa mişbāh al-siyyāda*. The fourth introduction of the book is entitled "*The Explanation of the Relation between the Method of Nazar and the Method of Tasfiye*". The headings named *taraf* that split the book into two parts are also based on this very distinction.

This division also determined the arrangement of institutions in the eighteenth century. In the endowment deeds of the two large complexes, Bashir Agha (1745) and Corlu Ali Pasha (1749), built in Istanbul in the 18th century, both including a madrasa and sufi lodge (*zawiye*), each having separate premises and different positions, roles and appointment criteria.

What I am referring to as a pedagogical turn primarily pertains to the ulama of *zāhir*. This distinction is significant because educational texts typically contained instructions for the intellectual training of uelma while often excluding discussions about a knowledge seeker's moral and spiritual standing. This does not imply that there were no references or recommendations regarding how students of knowledge should structure their ethical and religious lives. However, the knowledge discussed in these materials was exclusively confined to the intellectual sciences, as we will soon explore.

2.5. "Too Much to Learn": Knowledge Organization and Dealing with the Abundance of Scholarly Texts

⁷⁹ Vol 3. 2229

There has been intriguing scholarly research into how societies have historically coped with the problem of an abundance of scholarly knowledge and information, often involving the development of diverse strategies, including distinctive reading methodologies. This body of scholarship reveals that in various contexts, scholars sometimes complained about the “multitude of books” or “confusing and harmful abundance of books”⁸⁰. In the Ottoman context, we encounter a distinct articulation of a similar issue by müderris-scholars.

An eighteenth-century Ottoman müderris scholar, Muhammad al-Mar‘ashī, known as Sājaqlizāda (d. 1732/3), initiated his educational treatise *Tartīb al-‘ulūm* (Organization of Knowledge)⁸¹ by raising a pedagogical concern. Over time, he observed that scholars had made incremental contributions to the existing fields of knowledge in each generation. They had compiled commentaries on existing texts, thereby integrating novel insights and perspectives into the textual tradition. Furthermore, some had authored lengthier texts, spawning their own commentaries and super commentaries. These more advanced and secondary texts had become central to many learning circles. In Sājaqlizādah's view, such situation engendered the following problem:

The burden grows heavier and the distance lengthens as provisions dwindle and the mount weakens. Some students entirely forsake the reputable subjects, while others abandon a third or half of them. And those that remain opt to approach these sciences firstly through their commentaries and glosses. Their minds become preoccupied with envisioning multifaceted issues, bewildering possibilities, and unsettled positions, thereby hindering their grasp of prominent matters and their preservation in the repository.⁸²

Later in the text, he further comments on this problem. In his opinion, students of his time committed two mistakes: one in the order of the subjects and the second in the

⁸⁰ See Blair, *Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload*. and Blair. *Too Much to Know*.

⁸¹ Saçaqlizāde's work, *tartīb al-‘ulūm*, immediately initiated scholarly discussion, as seen in the critical review by Saçaqlizāde's contemporary, ‘Alamī Ahmed Efendi, titled *al-Ifhām fī al-ilhām*. Saçaqlizāde himself responded with the treatise *Risālat al-jawāb*, which has been published and analysed in Gel, Mehmet. “Debating Sufi Knowledge”. Subsequent generations also engaged with the work, evident in its translation into Ottoman Turkish by Ali Suavi and its abridgement by Ahmed Feyzi Çorumî in *al-Muntakhab min tartīb al-‘ulūm*, which is made available in İlhan, S Abdullah. “Tahqiq and Translation of Ahmed Feyzî Çorumî's Tertibi'l-‘ulūm”.

⁸² “*lā tafraqh adhhānihim min takhayyul al-mabāhith al-mutasha‘iba wa al-ihtimālāt al-mutashatita wa al-aqwāl al-muḍṭariba li-fahm al-masā‘il al-mashūra*”

amount of effort that needed to be given to each subject. “They began some subjects before acquiring what their understanding depends on,” writes Sājaqlīzādah, and also adds that “they do not give due attention to the understanding of subjects that are highly required, and instead pursue long investigations on the subjects that are not that needed”. This sort of mismanagement [*al-tadbīrāt al-radiyya*] of knowledge causes their demotion (*tanazzul*) and failure in arriving at their goals.

In another section of the text, he provides specific examples of such pedagogically unsound practices. He mentions that students study *Sharḥ al-Jāmi*, a commentary written on *al-Kāfiya* by Ibn al-Ḥājjib (d. 1249), for two years and sometimes more, before acquiring the tools of logic and argumentation theory. This practice does nothing other than “wasting their time and increasing their apathy”. At this junction, he suggests that students should go for much easier commentaries such as *al-Mutawasit* and *al-Mufassal*, authored by al-Zamakhsharī and used to be preferred by the students in the previous generations.

Sājaqlīzādah's contemporary, al-Qārisī, also made a similar observation concerning the study of logic in his commentary on *Isagoge*. He notes that students mistakenly believe they cannot understand *Isagoge* except with lengthy explanations and extensive investigations. As a result, they waste their time for a year without being able to understand it, even though it can be mastered in just one month.⁸³

The mismanagement [*al-tadbīrāt al-radiyya*] of the learning process, referring to the erroneous practices and ineffective approaches of both the students and instructors, mainly in relation to the distribution of the workload and prioritisation, is one of the central themes of the book. There is a separate section on this topic with the title The Exposition of the Mismanagements [*al-Faṣl al-Thānī fī Bayān al-Tadbīrāt al-Radiyya*]. Here, we find more details of Sājaqlīzādah's pedagogical concerns. Perhaps this is one of the longest subsections of the book, and it contains a detailed discussion of more than ten ineffective pedagogical and other related practices that were widespread in his time. Among those, I will limit my examination to two issues.

⁸³، ويُضيقون أعمارَهم مدة سنة ولا يفهمون مع أنها تُنقَضُ مدة شهر

As mentioned, one of Sājaqlīzādah's main concerns was that the multitude of commentaries and other secondary texts had proven to be pedagogically harmful. Whoever “begins a subject with texts - such as glosses and commentaries- that contain the subtleties (*daqā'iq*) of that subject,” Sājaqlīzāde argues that “would fail to grasp the purpose of that subject”. Sājaqlīzāde then gives an analogy [*numatthil dhalik biman*] to explain his intention:

[Imagine] a person who wants to build a house. He places a single stone then paints and ornaments it, then puts another stone and repeats [the process]. People advise: Begin by establishing the house in a simple form first. Then if your resources permit ornamentation and then do it, ensuring that resources won't leave it midway through.

For Sājaqlīzāde, the counsel offered in this analogy reflects how previous generations managed the organisation of learning, a practice that has been forsaken by many in his time. This comparison aptly encapsulates the preceding issues Sājaqlīzādah discusses in the text. The reference to "resources" pertains to one's intellectual capacity, as it stands as one of the problems Sājaqlīzādah addresses in the text. Among the *al-Tadbīrāt al-Radiyya*, one issue concerned the evaluation of students' intelligence. When students possess the ability to comprehend more foundational subjects but instead delve into challenging and intricate texts [*al-nusukh al-mughalaqah*] and subtle subjects [*al-funūn al-daqīqa*], they squander their time. Here, Sājaqlīzādah quotes al-Ghazālī, who states, "Everybody thinks that they are eligible for the subtle knowledge [*ilm daqīq*] and there is no one who is not content with God for the perfection of their intellect."

Sājaqlīzādah also underlines the role of teachers (mūderris) in this problem. “Al-Alim al-Mudarris” should assess student's talent/potential (*isti dād*) and direct them to what their potential allows. They should forbid them from things that are beyond their reach. However, Sājaqlīzāda was of the opinion that the many teacher-scholars of his time failed to advise students on this, fearing that those students with limited capacity would not attend their circles of knowledge. This is because the intention of these scholars was to show off, and they took pride in the number of people attending their classes, argued Sājaqlīzādah.

Turning back to the analogy, the stones represent introductory methodological subjects, whereas the ornamentation refers to the subtleties and intricacies of knowledge.

In Sājaqlīzādah discourse, understanding the subtleties of knowledge is possible only after one master has mastered what he calls the principles of subjects (“*qawaid al-funūn*”). The former can be found in secondary texts like commentaries and glosses, whereas the latter, i.e. *qawaid al-funun*, is acquired through studying primary texts (*matn*).

Here, I will switch to another pedagogical discussion in the text on how to understand the subtleties of knowledge. For a student to be capable of attaining these subtleties, he should acquire the intellectual virtue of “*mutala'a*”, which I tentatively translate as hermeneutical reading. This virtue is linked to the mastery of the primary texts. Consider the following remarks by Sājaqlīzādah. In the section where he discusses the students' mistake of getting stuck on a point similar to the way “a turtle stares at its egg”. Towards the end of that chapter, Sājaqlīzādah quotes a line from a book titled “*al-Wasaya al-Qudsiyya*”:

A student should pursue a *mutala'a* on the primary text several times before turning to the commentary, as understanding two words from the text is better than understanding two lines from a commentary.

Here, he introduces two interesting points in the book. First, he argues that one cannot acquire the epistemic virtue of *mutala'a*, or hermeneutical reading, by studying language sciences, such as lexicography, morphology, and syntax. He says that students must also study the disciplines of logic, argumentation theory, *kalam*, *ma'ānī*, and *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

This observation is related to his other argument in the text, in which he addresses the issue of what constitutes the instrumental sciences. In addition to the subjects mentioned above, he adds *uṣūl al-ḥadīth* (hadith studies), *tajwid* and the subjects discussed in *Mughni al-Labīb* for syntax, as well as the issues addressed in *al-Shāfiya* for morphology.

He explains that when he refers to kalam, he is not talking about the books on creedal matters but rather the principles of kalam, which contain ontological discussions. After being prepared to acquire the malaka of *mutala'a* by completing the instrumental sciences, students should then start reading more advanced books that contain subtle discussions.

Along with the epistemic virtue of hermeneutic reading, Sājaqlīzādah cites the sharpening of the mind (*tashiz al-khatr*, or *tashiz al-dhihn*) as another objective of erudition. He adds that “striving to sharpen the mind and acquire the epistemic virtue of *mutala'a* should be considered a communal obligation [*farḍ al-kifaya*]”.

In the context of another discussion, he states, “Overall, students have two goals: one is to learn the principles of subjects, and the second is the honing of the mind”. These two are attained with different reading strategies.

Sājaqlīzādah's concerns that students had diverted from previous practices or complaints about the confusing abundance of commentaries and glosses should not be understood as if he opposed the advancements introduced by new scholars in various disciplines or innovations in canonical texts. In fact, Sājaqlīzādah acknowledges that such developments are instrumental in the progression of knowledge and in distinguishing scholars from one another by addressing minor, delicate matters.

His concern lay in the situation where a profusion of advanced, specialised, and intricate materials superseded or overshadowed the fundamental subjects essential for students to cultivate their core skills and comprehension. Sājaqlīzādah himself composed a completely new textbook for *adab al-baḥth wal-munāzara*. His authorship rationale was related to his concern, as *Tartīb al-Ulum* reveals that he believed that a single comprehensive book encompassing the essential aspects of this discipline was lacking. As a result, students were compelled to refer to numerous advanced commentaries.

The students of our age study commentaries and glosses on this subject for a long time, yet they do not get anything from it. This arises from the lack of a specialised textbook dedicated solely to it. And I have not encountered a comprehensive and comprehensible text. Hence, I, a humble servant, compiled

the common issues of this discipline in a treatise called “Taqrīr al-Qawānīn al-munāẓara”. I then abridged and limited it to the most important ones in the treatise called *Waladiyyah*.

Sājaqlīzādah's innovative work immediately attracted the attention of his contemporaries and was cited as a primary source in the books on learning. As we will see later, his contemporary, Dāwūd al-Qārsī, followed Sājaqlīzādah's lead and authored an alternative textbook, which he named New *Waladiyyah*. The novelties of Sajaqlizade's new argumentation theory textbook are acknowledged by Karabela, who describes the book's structure as “completely new as this kind of organisation had not been present in adab al-bahth literature until this point...Saçaklızâde's method ...is, from beginning to the end, a highly creative approach to argumentation theory.”⁸⁴

2.6. An Ottoman Educational Novelty: al-Qārsī's Pedagogical Commentary

Another prominent figure among the müderris scholars of this era was Dāwūd al-Qārsī. Although historical sources provide limited insight into his life, it is known that he was born in the Qars region and received his early education there. Notably, Çolak Abdullah Efendi (d.1785) was counted among his teachers. Later, al-Qārsī relocated to Istanbul to further pursue his studies and candidacy. His work "*Risâletü'l-ımtihân*" contains an account of his interaction with his examiners during his ru'ūs exam⁸⁵, among whom was the renowned scholar Akkirmani (d.1760). His success in the exam presumably led to an official appointment, although there is no information available about his subsequent ilmiyye career. However, it is documented that he ventured to regions such as Egypt, Cyprus, Karaman, and Birgi, where he took up the role of a müderris towards the end of his life. He passed away in Birgi and was interred next to one of his revered scholarly figures, Birgivi (d.1573).

My interest in al-Qārsī is closely connected to his occupation with educational activities. He seamlessly aligns with the archetype of the müderris-‘ālim, individuals

⁸⁴ Karabela, Mehmet Kadri, *The Development of Dialectic and Argumentation theory*. 172.

⁸⁵ The term "ru'ūs exam" in this context refers to the examination undertaken by individuals upon successfully completing their education and subsequently concluding their candidacy period (mulāzemet), which typically spans approximately seven years. A more detailed discussion concerning this examination is presented in a subsequent chapter.

primarily focused on addressing educational matters, the rise of who I have argued to be one of the reasons for the Ottoman pedagogical turn. It is unsurprising that in the *hamdala* of his commentary on *Isagoge* of al-Abharī (d.1262), he expresses gratitude in a manner that underlines his identity as an educator:

Praise be to Allah, Who has made the path of understanding and teaching easy for me and has guided me in educating the students and perfecting them in the most complete and correct way.⁸⁶

Al-Qārsī's intellectual engagement as an educator extended to the composition of commentaries on various classical madrasa texts, including *Amthila*, *Izhār*, *Isagoge*, and *Shamsiya*. Beyond commentary, his contributions were also marked by innovation. Notably, he authored two original primers aimed at madrasa students. The first of these works was his work on logic titled "The New *Isagoge* and The Unique Pearl" (*al-Īsāgūjī al-Jadīd wa al-Dur al-Farīd*), written in 1749 during his time in Cyprus. This text has been recognised as a representative example of a novel genre of scholarly writing.

In contrast to al-Abharī, who offers concise and summarised content, al-Qārsī's "New *Isagoge*" delves into comprehensive explanations and frequently employs examples to elaborate on logical topics⁸⁷. Given the quantity of copies found in libraries, the text appears to have enjoyed a notable reception. In 1752, while stationed in Birgi, al-Qārsī himself composed a commentary on the same text.

The second madrasa sourcebook he crafted was designed for the subject of *adab al-bahth wa al-munazara*, titled "el-Velediyyetü'l-Cedfide" or the "New *Waladiyya*." The term "new" in this context alludes to an earlier work known as "*Waladiyya*," composed by his contemporary Sajaqlizade. In his own commentary on the text, al-Qārsī explicates that he also used the term "*Waladiyya*" because it shared a similar purpose with Sajaqlizade's treatise.

⁸⁶ الحمد لله الذي وفقتي لتسهيل طريقة التفهيم والتعليم و أرشدني لتربية الطلبة وتكلمهم بأكمل طريق مستقيم

⁸⁷ The complete text of the work has been published in Çapak and Özpilavcı's "A Cypriot Scholar Davud-i Karsî's Treatise," which includes the author's assessment and a summary of the text.

Al-Qārsī indicates that his "New Waladiyya" was also intended for beginners (*mubtadi*) and aimed to consolidate numerous foundational principles of this field.

Al-Qārisī also engaged with the text "Taqrir al-Qawanin al-Munazara," which Sajaqlizade referenced in the earlier quotation, in a separate work titled "Tezkire fi'l-dâb" in 1730 while he was in Egypt. Another contemporary of al-Qārisī was al-Khādīmī (d. 1762), whose work he analysed by composing a commentary. To be specific, al-Qārisī wrote a commentary on Khadimi's work on logic, titled "Risālah fi'l-qaḍiya wa ajzā'iha."

We can observe the pedagogical dimension of al-Qārisī in two other works (*Sharḥ Amsilat al-mukhtalifa fi al-ṣarf*), which are pedagogical commentaries, one in Turkish and the other in Arabic, on the text of the fundamental morphological paradigm table known as *Amthila*. This represents another innovative contribution by al-Qārisī, as these commentaries were formulated to establish teaching standards for this text. They addressed the pedagogical concerns stemming from the fact that instructors tasked with teaching these relatively basic texts often lacked the appropriate approach.

In the introduction of the Arabic commentary, al-Qārisī states his concern that senior scholars tend to abstain from instructing foundational texts, leaving this role to those who may not aptly convey the essence of the texts. This led to the failure of the students to acquire crucial skills necessary for pursuing other fields of knowledge:

Observing that *ṣarf* is one of the noblest of the sciences of Arabic and the finest among the literary disciplines and the accomplished scholars of our time have turned away from teaching it to the students, and its teaching is left to a group who are the captives of mere imitation; and this group embarked upon this endeavour without proper authentication or validation, distorting its sound aspects and diverting them from the correct path. I was preoccupied with teaching different texts and the instructions of conventional; I endeavoured to instruct the discipline of *ṣarf* and wanted to expound *Amthila* and other related matters in an exquisite manner after teaching four texts every day in a meticulous manner.⁸⁸

We see a similar complaint by al-Qārsī in his commentary on *Isagoge*, where he criticises deficient teachers “سوء المعلمين” for not understanding the problems and

⁸⁸ Dāwūd al-Qārsī, *Sharḥ Amsilat al-mukhtalifa fi al-ṣarf*, Dersaadet: Arif Efendi Matbaası, 1311/1894, 2.

principles of logic (مسائله وقواعده) multiply these issues that they do not understand by discussing them at length and fragmenting the minds of students (”يُشتتون أذهان الطلبة“) and presenting themselves as competent scholars (البحاثين الكلمة).

The Amthila commentary, written in Turkish, was organised as a 24-day instructional program. Below, I provide a passage from the commentary, exemplifying al-Qārisī’s pedagogical approach. The passage is the description of the third day of the instruction. After laying down the foundational concepts during the initial two days, the commentary proceeds as follows:

This much should be taught on the second day and should be explained through several revisions. On the third day, it should be expounded: Know that *nasara* has six designations: verb, past, active, single, masculine, and absent/third person. Reference to it as a verb [serves to] distinguish it from nouns and prepositions. By past, we isolate it from present, imperative, negative and exclamatory verbs. The designation active demarcates it from the passive, [while] singular from the dual and plural forms. Masculine is for differentiation from the feminine, and absent sets it apart from both the speaker and the addressee.

Verb lexically means occurrence (*hadise*), whereas, in terminology, it is a word that inherently conveys meaning and is associated with one of the three tenses. [then he provides the same definitions in Arabic] In this context, 'lexical' pertains to the linguistic domain of the Arab people and their lexicon, while 'terminology' refers to the use in the context of morphology. This concludes the topics for the third day. Suffices this much for the third day.⁸⁹

The pedagogical commentary concludes on the 24th day, with the teachers engaging students in discussions about disputes concerning the actual count of paradigms, thereby ushering them into more advanced considerations on the subject.

Conversely, the Arabic commentary does not adhere to a daily program structure. Instead, it is designed as a dialogue comprising questions and answers for each paradigm, sequentially presented for students' assimilation. Below is the commentary on the first paradigm, "*nasara*", where the first question concerns the order of the paradigms in *Amthila*. Answering the question of why *nasara* in its verb form preceded other paradigms, al-Qārisī offers five types of precedence and uses them to explain the order throughout the commentary:

⁸⁹ al-Qārisī, *Sharḥ Amsilat*, 3.

Know that at this juncture, there are mainly ten questions and corresponding ten answers as well:

The first question: Why did the past tense form precede the two [referring to the infinitive and present tense forms], considering that the infinitive form is the default form in the derivation (ishtiqaq)?⁹⁰

To explain, we say: Firstly, precedence is of five types: time, rank, honour (these are overt), natural [ṭabī'ī], which is the precedence of non-causal needed [muḥtāj ilahy] over the needy [muḥtāj], just as a condition/requirement [shart] takes precedence over what is conditioned/required [mashrūt]. And (the fifth) is ontological [dhātī] which is the precedence of the effective needed over the needy as in the precedence of an active cause [‘illa], which is free of influence, over the effect [*ma lūl*]...

Know that as the "past" form precedes the “present” in terms of time, rank and, honour and nature, its order has preceded in the text accordingly. And over the infinitive, in terms of time, rank and honour and that's why it also has been placed before it.⁹¹

Subsequently, the questions delve into the meanings of specific terms, seeking elucidation of their lexical (referred to as '*lughatan*' referring to the usage of the words according to the conventions in the language of the Arabs [*fi ‘urf al-‘arab wa waḍ‘ihi*]) and terminological (*iṣṭilāhan* or its usage in the terminology of morphologists [*fi ‘urf ahl al-ṣarf wa waḍ‘ihi*]) connotations. For instance, the section inquires about the meaning of the term 'single' (*mufrad*):

Question 8. What does the term 'single' mean both lexically and terminologically?

We say: The lexical sense of 'single' refers to being mentioned independently. Terminologically, there are four meanings: firstly, 'single' implies not being compound; secondly, it denotes not being part of a sentence. Thirdly, it signifies not being part of a possessive phrase; and fourthly, it indicates not being dual or plural, and this is the meaning in this context.

⁹⁰ The question ends with the phrase “in al-Mukhtar”, which I was uncertain of its reference. It could be a reference to the book of *Mukhtār al-Ṣihāh* by al-Rāzī, or it could simply mean the choice.

⁹¹ Critical edition of al-Qārsī's Arabic commentary is presented in Tayfur Göl, “Dâvût b. Muhammed el-Karsî'nin ‘Şerhu'l-Emsileti'l-muhtelifi fi's-sarf” (MA Thesis, 9 Eylül Üniversitesi of, 2016), 60-135.

Following the general explanations for every paradigm, al-Qārsī furnishes numerous questions and subsequently provides answers, with the number of questions not invariably set at ten. In the text, he also addresses prevalent misunderstandings. At one juncture, he rectifies a widespread Turkish mistranslation by referring to those responsible as the "slaves of imitation," a term he also employs in the introduction. The commentary culminates with a prayer, beseeching the book to prove beneficial for the students: "اللهم اجعله نافعا للطلبة الكرام."

2.7. Syllabus Debate and the Ottoman Notion of *Tarīb*

The so-called Ottoman syllabus debate traces its origins to an article by Ahmed and Filipovic published in 2004. The article centres around a one-page document titled "The Declaration of the Books Needed for the Imperial Madrasas and Given to the Müderris Efendis upon the Sultan's Edict," which includes a list of thirty-nine book titles. The authors interpret this document as establishing a "clearly-stated curriculum" and a "clear and detailed syllabus" for imperial madrasas, indicating direct state intervention in determining the content of a specific level of madrasas education. They argue that this document "constitutes the first known documentation in Islamic history of a move by the state to establish a canon of religious learning." Furthermore, the authors speculate that due to the Ottoman state's concern with regulating and certifying the *ilmiyye* class, "it is only logical to assume that curricula must have been prescribed for the lower and intermediate levels of the medrese system."⁹²

Let me provide further context to highlight the significance of this argument within the realm of Islamic intellectual history. This significance is derived from the fact that, historically, many scholars viewed madrasa education as a form of informal learning that didn't entail a specific type of education with a predetermined curriculum or method of knowledge transmission. Madrasas were essentially centres of learning devoid of standardised, unified programs. Students engaged in reading and were taught

⁹² Shahab Ahmed and Nenad Filipovic, "The Sultan's Syllabus: A Curriculum for the Ottoman Imperial Medreses Prescribed in a Fermān of Qānūnī I Süleymān, Dated 973 (1565)," *Studia Islamica*, no. 98/99 (2004): 195.

various texts, with scholars exercising the discretion to determine what subjects should be studied, resulting in a certain degree of flexibility.

Earlier viewpoints posited the involvement of the governing elite in education, particularly characterising the emergence of madrasas as a fundamental aspect of what came to be known as the "Sunni Renaissance." This perspective suggested that madrasas furnished newly assertive Sunni governments of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries with a cohort of officials, bureaucrats, and advocates to support their struggles against various Shi'i regimes that had emerged on the scene during the tenth century. However, these views were subsequently dismissed as no longer tenable. The prevailing stance had become that the ruling elite left educational institutions largely untouched and demonstrated little interest in any systematic endeavours to shape the purpose of educational establishments.⁹³ Therefore, the significance attributed to Ahmed and Filipovic's argument is notably profound, as they themselves emphasise it as the "first known documentation in Islamic history" of state involvement in the standardisation of learning.

The involvement of the state and governing elites constitutes one facet of the syllabus debate. The other aspect pertained to the inquiry of whether madrasas adhered to any form of curriculum or structured program of study, independently of the questions of the state's involvement or imposition. Ahmed and Filipovic's study postulated that the existence of a syllabus was not limited to the imperial madrasas and other madrasas must have been similar programs. This dimension of the argument also introduced a significant departure in the context of historical scholarship concerning premodern Islamic education. The subsequent excerpt from Berkey's work (2007) essentially epitomised the prevailing stance before "the sultan's syllabus":

For all that the transmission of knowledge might take place within an institution labelled a madrasa, and be supported by the endowments attached to that institution, the principles which guided the activities of teachers and students, and the standards by which they were judged, remained personal and informal, as they had been in earlier centuries before the appearance of the madrasa. No mediaeval madrasa had anything approaching a set curriculum, and no system of degrees was ever established... No institutional structure, no curriculum, no regular examinations, nothing approaching a formal hierarchy of degrees: the system of transmitting knowledge, such as it was, remained

⁹³ For a discussion on this see Berkey, *Madrasas Medieval and Modern*, 44-45

throughout the mediaeval period fundamentally personal and informal, and consequently, in many ways, flexible and inclusive.⁹⁴

Similar positions can be found regarding whether madrasas shared a common set of courses. Atçıl's (2016) comment on the earlier period reads, “madrasas, as it is well known, were not uniform in their curriculum or aims.”⁹⁵ This viewpoint is also echoed in Makdisi's work. His analysis of madrasa endowments in "The Rise of Colleges" has shown that speaking about a unified program of education in madrasas is not feasible at least based on endowment deeds, is not possible:

The lack of a unified program of studies should be a cause for surprise. It was in part due to the fact that the founder of an institution of learning had freedom of choice in the organisation of his foundation, including the choice of courses taught.⁹⁶

The 'sultan's syllabus' argument was widely endorsed, cited, and reiterated in Anglophone academia for a while. Şen (2021) reopened the syllabus debate in a more recent scholarly intervention, arguing that Ahmed and Filipovic's argument 'was based on a misinterpretation of a single document.' What Ahmed and Filipovic construed as clear evidence of a centrally-prescribed madrasa curriculum being imposed was, in reality, an archival register drafted solely to document and cataloguing items dispatched from the royal library to the Süleymaniye madrasas. This single-page registry held less ambitious implications than what Ahmed and Filipovic had assumed, and there were other extant documents and registers from the same period that mention or list books endowed by the sultans to the royal madrasas they established or dispatched on a case-by-case basis from the palace to various locations, including newly-constructed imperial madrasas, the chief physician's office, or even the observatory. In none of these instances did any implication necessarily suggest a dynastic, or specifically sultanic, control over the educational curriculum.

⁹⁴ Berkey, “*Madrasas*”, 43.

⁹⁵ Abdurrahman Atçıl, “Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System in the Lands of Rüm during the Fifteenth Century,” in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yildiz Istanbul Texts and Studies, Band 34 (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2016), 315–32.

⁹⁶ George Makdisi, *The rise of colleges : institutions of learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 80.

By drawing on an array of primary sources such as endowment deeds, autobiographical writings, book lists, madrasa library catalogues and private correspondences, Şen effectively refutes the idea that the content of madrasa education was centrally mandated or directed from the top and shows the flexibility and hybridity involved in the educational process of madrasas students. He even scrutinises a document that could be considered more apt as evidence of the state's imposition of curriculum and demonstrates that even within that document, individual instructors retained the agency to decide what subjects to teach.

In his response, Şen effectively challenges the argument put forth by Ahmed and Filipovic regarding the presence of a sultanic educational curriculum. He does so by demonstrating the inherent flexibility and hybridity of the educational process, as well as the agency granted to teachers in choosing texts, as evidenced in official documents. He encourages contemporary scholars to adopt a more comprehensive narrative of the early modern Ottoman world's scholarship history, emphasising the social, cultural, and personal dimensions of learning and teaching and de-emphasising the institutional and intellectual aspects. While the motivation behind Şen's intention to downplay the intellectual element is not entirely clear, it could be linked to his aspiration that alternative perspectives on madrasas, which focus on social, cultural, and personal aspects, might challenge their contemporary negative reputation as symbols of religious obscurantism and intellectual decline.

It seems that the ulama, the absent voice in this Ottoman curriculum debate, might not be in favour of what Şen defines as "flexibility" and "hybridity" during the period under analysis. Earlier, I have demonstrated that müderris scholars were concerned about the abundance of texts that hindered learning. Their solution involved establishing standards through the creation of study programs known as "tartīb". In the following sections, I will initially examine a selection of endowment deeds to demonstrate their lack of interference with the content of madrasa education. However, I will subsequently highlight the ulama's contrasting interest in standardisation.

Eighteenth-century madrasa endowment deeds seem to represent the flexibility that Şen and others have referred to. None of the *waqfiye* documents that I have examined

specified book titles or disciplines, nor did they place any restrictions on the learning that would take place in madrasas.

For example, the endowment deed of Beshir Agha (d.1746) complex provides only administrative instructions concerning the madrasa. These include the amount of salaries to be given to the instructor, students and other personnel as well as some directives on room arrangements. The document does not specify any technical qualification for *mudarris*; he is just asked to teach the students on the customary days (“*medrese-i celîlede müderris olan efendi eyyâm-ı mu’tâdede talebe-i ulûma tadrîs idüüb yevmî yüz yetmiş akçe müderris vazîfesine mutasarrıf ola*”)⁹⁷.

Interestingly, the statements concerning the *takkah* and *maktab* within the same complex are more specifying in the same document. Zawiye of the complex was restricted to Naqshbandî order. In contrast, the section on *maktab* clearly specified that the children should be taught writing and the Qu’ran along with other “beneficial knowledge”.

An earlier *waqfiya* document concerning Shaykh al-Islâm Feyzullah Efendi’s (d.1703) endowments did specify disciplines, but the list was not confining and was left flexible:

Darü’s-saltanatı aliyye-i Kostantiniyye’de kendi atyeb-i malından bina vakfeylediği medrese-i celilesinde ilm-i usul ve furu’da mahir ve ulum-ı akliyye ve nakliyyede tadrise kadir kimesne müderris nasb olunup tefsir ve hadis ve kütüb-i fikhiyye-i hanefiyyeden vesair ulum-ı nafiadan eyyam-ı mu’tadede tadrîs edüp kendüye sahih ve rayiç yüz yirmi akça vazife ita oluna.⁹⁸

In the grand madrasa within the Exalted Abode of the Sultanate, Kostantiniyye’, for which he has endowed construction from the finest of his possessions, a person skilled in the knowledge of furu’ and usul,, and capable of teaching both transmitted and intellectual sciences, shall be appointed as a müderris to teach tafsîr, hadîth, and the books of Hanafi fiqh, alongside

⁹⁷ Full transliterated version of the waqfiye is available in Günal, Munise. "İstanbul’da bir XVIII. yüzyıl Osmanlı mimarlık eseri: Beşir Ağa Külliyesi." (2003). (Unpublished MA Thesis)

⁹⁸ Full text is available “Pious Endowments and Land in the Seventeenth Century Ottoman Empire: The Vakf of Şeyhülislam Feyzullah Efendi” İhsan Doğramacı, Bilkent Üniversitesi, MA, Department of History. Ankara, January 2013. (MA Thesis)

other beneficial knowledge on the customary days, [and] shall be given the allowance at the value 120 akçe.

In this document, too, the passage on *maktab* specified practice-oriented writing instruction as a requirement for pre-madrasa learning:

mekteb-i mezbûrede bir husn-i hatla maruf kimesne meşk hocası olup haftada iki gün mektebe gelip mektebde olan sibyanaya meşk verüp talim-i hüsn-i hat edüp kendüye yevmiye on akça vazife verile.

A person renowned for their elegant penmanship shall become writing master at the aforesaid school to attend twice weekly to conduct lessons and teach good handwriting to the students at school, [and] shall be given a daily allowance of ten akçe.⁹⁹

One would expect the endowment documents of *dar-al ḥadīth* madrasas to be more restrictive as their name suggests they are purpose-built institutions, but this is not the case for them either, at least in the document I have analysed. The only difference is the appointment of a *muḥaddith* in addition to a usual instructor.

[U]lum-ı nafi'a-ı şer'iyye ve funun-u mütedavile-i mer'iyye tedaris ve ta'limine kudret-i kâmile ve ihata-ı şamilesi olan iki nefer âlim ve fadıl kimesne biri müderris biri muhaddis olup eyyam-ı ma'rufada ve evan-ı me'lufede medrese-i mezkurede tedaris ve ta'lime müdavim ve mülazım olup müderris olan yevmi yirmibeş akçe ve muhaddis olan yevmi yirmi akçeye mutasarrıf ola" (the paragraph concerns Beshir Agha *dar-al ḥadīth*)¹⁰⁰

In the aforementioned madrasa, two learned and erudite individuals, possessing the perfect ability and encompassing comprehensiveness to teach beneficial knowledge of the sharia and current conventional subjects, assiduous and committed to teaching and education on the established days and customary times, shall be appointed one as müderris and the other as muḥaddith, a daily allowance of 25 akçe for müderris and 20 akçe for muḥaddith shall be allocated.

The *waqfiya* of Çorlulu Ali Paşa (d.1711) madrasa differs from other documents with its specification of days of classes according to each subject. According to the deed, tafsir and hadith were to be taught on Saturdays and Mondays, whereas Wednesdays

⁹⁹ From Feyzullah Efendi's endowment deed, See Özcan, Pious Endowments, 111.

¹⁰⁰ Mumcu, Nesrin, and Hale Tokay. "Hacı Beşir Ağa Darülhadisi'nin Koruma Uygulaması Sorunları Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme." *Unpublished MA thesis. Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı* (2006).

and Thursdays were for Fiqh and other subjects. These details, however, are absent in a later version of the document:

mar-ül-beyan dershanede bir fasıl yegane ve 'alim bi-behane usul ve furu'da mahir ve her fenden ifadeye kadir edib ve lebib kimesne haftada dört gün tedris idüb yevmi sebt ve yevm isneyn tefsir-i şerif ve hadis-i şerif ve erba' ve hamis fikh-ı şeriif ve sair mevad takrir ta'lim ve tefhim ve her dersin 'akabinde vakıf celil-ül-kadri hayır du'a ile yad eyliye [here we find specification of the number of days].

medrese-i mezburede usul ve furudan tedrise kadir ve ifade ve istifadede mahir fazıl ve edib ve kamil ve lebib bir kimesne müderris olub hidmeti tedrisi edadan sonra yevmi seksen akçe virile.¹⁰¹

A person capable of teaching both in uşul and furu', possessing eloquence and pedagogic excellence, virtuous and respectful, perfected and intelligent shall become a müderris in the aforementioned madrasa and upon fulfilling their teaching duties, they shall be given 80 akçe per day.

Although the endowments I have examined so far do not specify any particular curriculum, we find detailed specifications in *tartīb* accounts authored by Ottoman scholars such as Sājaqlīzāda, Hüseyin al-Mīmī al-Basrī, Nebi Efendizade and Erzurumlu Ibrahim Hakki outline subjects and books from an early stage of student's learning till their attainment of the status of *mülazım*.

Similar to other *tartīb* accounts, Sājaqlīzāda's version¹⁰² commences with instructions regarding a child's early learning. It typically emphasises instilling basic matters of faith (*yullaqin awwalan 'īmān 'alā qadr fahmihi*) into the novice child. Subsequently, the student progresses to lessons on accurate Qur'an recitation. Similar to *Kevakib-i Seba*, this phase is followed by an exploration of faith and creedal knowledge in detail (*tafşil al-'īmān wa al-'aqā'id*), along with the essential grasp of ethics (*akhlāq*) and the rulings of prayer (*'ilm al-şalāh*). Sājaqlīzādah suggests that the ideal book for these aspects is Birgivi's *Turkish Epistle*, which *Kevakib-i Seba* references almost in the same manner.

¹⁰¹ Abuşoğlu, M. M. "Sadr-ı A'zam Çorlulu Ali Paşa'nın Vakıfnamesi" *Unpublished MA thesis (1995)*

¹⁰² An English translation of the relevant portion of *tartīb al-'ulūm* has recently been made available in Burak, Guy. *On the Order of the Sciences.*, with some minor inaccuracies.

The student then advances to *Luğat-i Ferišteoğlu*, an Arabic-Turkish dictionary written in verse by Ibn Malak (d.1418), which offers Turkish equivalents for over 1500 words cited in the Qur'an. The sequence might vary based on the biological age of the student. For those who are already adolescents (*bāligh*), memorising a few short Qur'anic verses must be prioritised. *Kevakib-i Seba* includes a similar note suggesting that if the student is an adolescent (*bāligh*) rather than a child (*ṣibyān, ṣab'i*), the memorisation of verses should take precedence before delving into other texts. This priority is attributed to ensuring the student's ability to perform prayers, as reaching adolescence marks the point of becoming legally responsible (*mukallāf*) for prayer obligations.

Kevakib-i Seba provides more comprehensive details for this initial stage of *tartīb*. It particularly outlines the process of learning and memorising the Qur'an in stages. The student begins with the study of the Arabic alphabet (*Alif-Ba*) and progressively advances to reading the Qur'an. Subsequently, they study a concise treatise in their language (*Arabi ise Arapça, Türki ise Türkçe*), guiding them on the correct Qur'an reading.

Furthermore, *Kevakib-i Seba* introduces the study of *Tuhfe-i Şāhidī*, a rhymed Persian dictionary written by 16th-century poet Ibrāhim Shāhidī (d.1550), to the *tartīb* curriculum.

The remaining part of Sajaqlizade's *tartīb* follows this order: The student advances to the study of morphology (*ṣarf*), then grammar (*naḥw*), the knowledge of rulings ('ilm al-aḥkām)¹⁰³, logic, argumentation theory (*munāzara*), theology (*kalām*), rhetoric (*ma'ānī*), fundamentals of jurisprudence ('uṣūl al-fiqh), and jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Afterwards, they delve into the methodology of hadith ('uṣūl al-ḥadīth), issues related to transmission and content of ḥadīth (*riwāya* and *dirāya*), and then Qur'anic exegesis. The *tartīb* concludes with the study of exegesis. *Kevakib-i Seba*'s version of *tartīb*, although the order of the sciences and general principles are the same it differs from Sājaqlizāda's account by giving book titles and indicating their difficulty level according to the nine levels (it divides each of the

¹⁰³ He later explains what he means by that by contrasting it with *fiqh*.

common *iktisar*, *iktisad* and *istiksa* levels further three into *adna*, *awsaṭ* and *ala*). It also integrates more pedagogical details and nuances into it. For example, in Sājaqlīzāda’s version, between *nahw* and logic, students are expected to study *‘ilm al-aḥkām*, referring to the simplified version of fiqh containing only rulings. *Kevakib-i seba* also records that students should read some fiqh while completing the study of *nahw*, referring to two books, *Halebi* and *Qudūrī*, which was the same book cited by Sājaqlīzāda: “Meanwhile, the student does not abandon the legal rulings (*aḥkām-i ṣeriyye*) and studies a beginner-level book from the noble science of fiqh one or two days a week.”

Here, the texts say students should not neglect the *tartīb* and get back to the order again (“lakin yine tertibden ayrılmayıp”) moves to the study of logic. There is also a nuance here stating that although one would expect *‘ilm al-ma‘āni* to be the next discipline (indeed we find that Nebi Efendi-zade mentions *‘ilm al-ma‘āni* after *nahw* and before logic¹⁰⁴). *Kevakib-i Seba* does not endorse this practice as *‘ilm al-ma‘āni* is thought to rely on the technical knowledge of propositions or syllogism from logic.

The other difference between the order of sciences is the place of the *kalam*. As mentioned above, *kalam* is studied after the argumentation theory according to Sājaqlīzāda. However, in *Kevakib-i Seba*, it is recorded that after the argumentation theory, there are two practices among the educators.¹⁰⁵ Some proceed to *al-ma‘ānī*, which is the case for instance for Erzurumlu Ibrahim Hakki, who mentions *al-ma‘ānī* after the study of argumentation theory. The other practice brings the *hikmah* and its subdisciplines forward before *al-ma‘ānī*. In both scenarios, *kalam* comes later, as is the case for Erzurumlu’s *tartīb* too, whereas in Sājaqlīzāda’s *tartīb* it precedes *al-ma‘ānī*. Interestingly enough *kalam* comes at the very end of Nebi Efendi-zade’s list, although it is not that evident if that was meant to be its study order, too.

Hikma is not mentioned separately by Sājaqlīzāda. This is mainly because Sājaqlīzāda thought that *kalam* books contained the relevant philosophical training students needed

¹⁰⁴ Nefi Efendi-Zade has the following lines between *nahw* and logic: Oku hem ‘ilm-i meani’den Hevadi, Muhtasar Ger Mutavvel okur isen cümleinin başın keser.

¹⁰⁵ Bundan sonra haceler için iki tark var.

in much more critical treatment than what is found in the books of *ḥikma*. This idea is not that alien to from Kevakib-i Seba, as the *tartīb* mentions *kalam* right after the *ḥikma* with the note that after engaging in some advanced texts of *ḥikma*, students should turn to *kalam* to understand the methodological differences between the *ḥukama* and *mutakallimin* as well as to correct and critically evaluate their metaphysical views on divinity and divine attributes: “Hükema' ile mütekellimin mezahibinin farkı ve zat-ı Bari ve evsafı hakkında olan i'tikadat-i diniyyeyi tashih ve takik için 'ilm-i kelama şuru' ider.”

Both accounts also deal with the fields of knowledge that are not viewed as the core element of the *tartīb*, yet either expected to be studied independently or were rather the sciences that students studied widely as matters of interest. Among such sciences were for example, Qur'an-related disciplines, such as rules of correct reading (*tajwīd*), referring to a more technical study of the subject, authentic recitation forms (*qirā'āt*), and Qur'ānic orthography (*marṣūm al-maṣāḥif*). *Sājaqlīzādah* notes that students study these sciences when time permits (*mata qidr*) after completing exegesis. Additionally, subjects like arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and the science of meters and rhymes (*'arūd*) are pursued when available. *Sajaqlizade* emphasises prioritising arithmetic before learning rules, especially those of inheritance (*farā'id*), which would mean that it is expected to be studied after the study of grammar.

In *Kevakib-i Seba* as well, these sciences were mentioned as extracurricular to the *tartīb*, with the expectation that the student will complete them concurrently with other subjects. For instance, geometry and arithmetic are recommended to be studied in tandem with references made to them in *kalam* texts. They are not intended to be studied as standalone subjects; rather, their exploration is interwoven with the study of other disciplines. The author of *Kevakib-i Seba* rationalises this arrangement by highlighting their relative ease of comprehension, likening them to the sensibles (*maḥsūsāt*) that do not necessitate excessive contemplative reasoning (*fikr*). This view may be attributed to the prevalent belief among scholars that these sciences, particularly geometry, possessed the most robust and self-evident proofs (*aqwa al-ulum burhaniya*).

The introductory text for the study of geometry is "Eşkalu't-tesîs" by Samarqandî (d.1303). For more advanced study, Euclid's name is cited without specific reference to a title, presumably indicating his "Elements," known as "Usul al-Handasa," or one of its commentaries. The guidance regarding this book underscores the importance of studying it alongside its proofs, a common stipulation found in both accounts of tartîb for post-introductory works.

Concerning arithmetic, Kevakib-i Seba recommends the book "Bahâ'iyye," a relatively recent work authored by the 17th-century scholar Bahâeddin Milî (d.1662). Additionally, if students completed the commentaries of el-Çulli (d. 1613) and Ramazan Efendi (d.1665), they advance closer to the upper intermediate level (*iktisadın ala rütbesine karib olur*). As for ilm al-hay'a, or astronomy, due to its greater complexity involving imagery and postulates, its study is deferred to a later stage when it can be pursued as an independent subject.

Kevakib-i Seba indicates that in practice, these extracurricular sciences were often studied during two specific periods. Students would engage with them either on Tuesdays or Fridays, designated as off days, to prevent monotony and maintain their enthusiasm for knowledge acquisition¹⁰⁶. While students typically indulged in leisure activities during summer, these designated days provided opportunities for discussions related to these fields of knowledge not directly covered in the tartîb¹⁰⁷. The alternative time for such pursuits was winter nights.

Sājaqlizādah provides two additional clarifications in the section on tartîb. He points out that by the study of fiqh, he is not referring to mere memorisation of lists of action rulings (*al-aḥkam al-'amalīya*) devoid of juristic justification, as exemplified in al-Qudūrî's (d.1037) *al-Mukhtaşar*. Instead, he emphasises that the study of jurisprudence in this context entails delving into juristic evidence akin to what is presented in *al-Hidāya* by al-Mirginani (d.1197). Furthermore, after completing the study of morphology and syntax as indicated in the tartîb, the study of fiqh in the former sense should be undertaken by reading *Mukhtaşar* al-Qudūrî or an equivalent

¹⁰⁶ ('ulema tullabin tabayi'ine melal gelmeyib daima 'ilmle müteşevvik olmak için Yevm-i Sülesa ve Yevm-i Cuma'a'i, ... haftada iki günü ta'til i'tibar itmişledir)

¹⁰⁷ Mustakilen derse muhtaç olmayan ilm

text. This distinction elucidates his differentiation between *‘ilm al-aḥkam* and fiqh within the tartīb above.

The other clarification pertains to the study of kalam. Sajaqlīzādah asserts that the study of kalam should encompass more than a basic acquisition of confessional propositions (*al-masā’il al-i’tiqādiyya*). Instead, students should engage with the philosophical aspects found in kalam literature. This involves exploring discussions on ontological categories such as substances (*jawāhir*) and accidents (*a’rāḍ*), as well as theological stances with their supporting proofs and responses to objections, akin to the content found in *al-Maqāṣid* of al-Taftazānī (d.1390).

Considering the accounts of tartīb, we identify a number of shared features. These features show that these accounts were devised not simply as a reading list but more as an educational program corresponding to what we call curriculum today.

Firstly, all three accounts clearly have a beginning and an end. In Hakki’s work there is even an interesting metaphor about it. The student enters into his cell then in the end of the education process he is asked to leave his cell:

Göç karyeden giç evden dükkândan
Gel hücreye kaç havf u ziyândan
Hücre güzeldür medrese hoşdur
Ol pür ‘ilimdür taşrası boşdur
Bulmak dilersen emn ü selâmet
Gir hücreye kıl sabr u kanâat

Move from the town, leave the house and shop
Come to the cell and escape the Fear of loss
Cell is nice, medrese is pleasant
It is full of knowledge its outside is empty
If you wish to find assurance and safety
Enter the cell and exercise patience and contentment

The program comes to an end with the study of tafsir and then the student is asked to leave his cell and spread knowledge by teaching it:

Me’zûn olursan okut ‘ulûmı
Neşr eyle halka nef’-i ‘umûmı
‘Âmil olursan kâmil olursun

Hikmetleri hep sende bulursun
Çık hücreden gel eyle tenezzül
Hem it tehhül kesb it tevekkül.

If you get to graduate, teach the knowledge
Spread the general benefit to the public
If you are exertive, you will be perfected
You would find the wisdom within you
Leave the cell, come and do deign
Get married and earn living hood have confidence.

In Kevakib-i Seba, tafsir is the last subject of the curriculum, too. After which, the student was assumed to gain skills to study independently new sciences and teach what he had learnt:

Ve zikr-olunan tertibden sonra her ‘ilmi istihraca kendüye isti’dad gelir. Ama yine aralıkda bilmediği ‘ilmin ehlini buldukça ahz-ider.

Upon the completion of the outlined “tertib”, an ability to extract any knowledge arises in the self. However, they still occasionally learn from the experts of unfamiliar knowledge when they find them.

The accounts contain instructions regarding the subjects and titles in an inflexible order. The sequence of learning is justified according to the relationship between the sciences and as well as the difficulty of the questions discussed in each science.

The third feature from the above is the idea of the exclusion of particular sciences. We see that, for example, none of the three *tartīb* include tasawwuf, practical philosophy, and applied sciences. In contrast, other subjects, such as history, are defined as extracurricular and left to the student himself to study.

The fourth shared component of the *tartīb* accounts is their involvement in the pedagogical gradation of each discipline. *Kevakib-i Seba* and Sājaqlīzāda’s *Tartīb al-‘Ulūm* use the same model for the internal stratification of sciences and refer to it as “marātīb”.

2.8. Ottoman Educational Texts and Pedagogical Shift

Some of the texts discussed within the context of my argument on the Ottoman pedagogical turn in this chapter have previously captured the attention of El-Rouayheb. By examining Müneccimbāṣī's "Fayḍ al-Ḥaram" and Sājaqlīzāda's "Tartīb al-'Ulūm," which he identifies as Ottoman educational texts, El-Rouayheb has posited that these works stand out as distinct from the classical Arabic-Islamic pedagogic literature. His argument asserts a significant shift in emphasis, moving away from the conventional student-teacher relationship and the auditory-based method of knowledge transmission and focusing more on thorough textual analysis.

As a plausible explanation, he suggests that this shift could be attributed to the growing prominence of rational sciences. The conventional auditory-based model of knowledge transmission originated during the early Islamic period when "knowledge" (ilm) was predominantly communicated through accounts detailing the words and actions of revered figures alongside Qur'anic readings and interpretations. The acceptance of these accounts largely relied on the credibility of the transmitters.

El-Rouayheb finds it unsurprising that the effectiveness of this model declined as students progressively allocated a significant part of their education to the study of complex scholarly manuals covering areas like syntax, semantics, rhetoric, logic, dialectic, rational theology, and jurisprudence. Consequently, the classical educational guides' emphasis on knowledge transmission through oral discourse and recitation became inadequate by the seventeenth century in adequately recognising the role of thorough reading in the knowledge acquisition process.

Another potential rationale behind this transformation, el-Rouayheb suggests, lies in the distinctive context of Ottoman students in the aftermath of the sixteenth century. Reforms instigated by the Ottoman Sheikh al-Islam brought about substantial changes in Ottoman education, most notably mandating a formal certificate (mülazemet) for entry into higher teaching or judicial roles. Issuing these certificates was the prerogative of a limited group of scholars, leading to a situation where the supply of certificates fell short of student demand. This shift resulted in a separation between educators and certifying authorities. Prominent certificates were granted by esteemed scholars who were no longer actively engaged in teaching. Students sought positions within the circles of these scholars, which often involved networking and forging

connections. While these connections encompassed more than just academic prowess, assessments of scholarly competence gained prominence in the heightened competition for certificates. Instances of examinations (*imtiḥan*) administered by the issuers of *mülazemet*s are documented, and these examinations eventually became standard practice.

This transformation in the educational framework markedly diverged from earlier conventions. It implied that aspiring students were appraised by scholars who were not their primary instructors. The reforms introduced a scenario where the academic abilities of determined students were assessed at pivotal junctures by scholars who were not their direct mentors, sometimes even through the use of the "modern" and impersonal mechanism of centrally administered examinations. In such circumstances, the previous educational literature outlining the norms of student-teacher relationships might have seemed less applicable and timely, particularly for more advanced Ottoman students. Instead, works that focused on navigating intricate texts and offered guidance on selecting texts to study and their sequence became more pertinent.

I will engage with el-Rouayheb's perspective on two levels: firstly, by examining his portrayal of the pedagogical shift, and secondly, by delving into the reasons he provides for this shift. In this chapter, I have demonstrated that what el-Rouayheb identifies as an emphasis on thorough textual analysis or a keen interest in in-depth reading constitutes just one facet of a broader pedagogical movement within the Ottoman scholarly tradition during this period. While it is true that skills in *mutala'a* (critical reading) and various modes of textual interpretation hold a central place in Ottoman educational texts, this shift has more dimensions.

I have highlighted the significance of pedagogical commentaries, the creation of new educational primers, the development of curriculum programs, and the emergence of more purpose-driven discourses on learning. Furthermore, there are also more theoretical formulations of learning theory, as I discuss separately in a distinct chapter in the case of Müneccimbāṣī. All these educational endeavours and discussions either aim to rectify common instructional shortcomings or can be perceived as efforts to document and conceptualise already existing practices.

I also contend that el-Rouayheb's depiction of a shift warrants reevaluation. While he does posit a shift, definitively categorising it as such is a challenging endeavour. He applies this label primarily due to the misrepresentation of the earlier periods within academic discourse. El-Rouayheb designates this transformation as a shift based on such accounts of so-called premodern Islamic education. Consequently, a more fitting interpretation of el-Rouayheb's argument emerges as a critique aimed at rectifying the inadequacies in historical scholarship in this field.

Earlier historical depictions of Islamic education, characterised by its perceived impersonality and reliance on an auditory-based model, often either failed to distinguish between spiritual and intellectual training or tended to concentrate on less advanced educational stages. In these stages, the conventional student-teacher relationship and auditory-based methods of knowledge transmission retained relevance. This was particularly pronounced within the context of *maktabs* and *takkas*, even during the period scrutinised by el-Rouayheb.

El-Rouayheb's second explanation, which connects the pedagogical shift to Ottoman institutional developments, is a promising avenue for further investigation. The requirement for students to demonstrate their competencies to the committee of *mumayyiz* i.e. the examiners who were unfamiliar with them demanded additional effort, prompting the acquisition of more advanced skills. This circumstance likely led to the emergence of texts focusing on how to navigate complex works. Without delving into the argument's logical structure in detail, it is worth noting that the "exam literature" I have discussed provides more pertinent evidence than the texts examined by el-Rouayheb in support of the claim in question.

I propose a similar argument based on discussions regarding the sources. It appears that during the late 17th and 18th centuries, an *ilmiye* career and the title of *alim* held significant socioeconomic value. The rise of madrasas¹⁰⁸ created the necessity for establishing educational benchmarks by accurately defining the scope of a scholar's learning and the intellectual abilities they should acquire.

¹⁰⁸ For evidence of the rise of madrasas in Ottoman Damascus in the eighteenth century, see Steve Tamari, "Ottoman Madrasas: The Multiple Lives of Educational Institutions in Eighteenth-Century Syria 1," *Journal of Early Modern History* 5, no. 2 (2001): 99–127.

2.9. Conclusion

In this chapter, I sought to argue for the presence of a pedagogical turn within Ottoman thought during the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I have endeavoured to establish this assertion by highlighting the emergence of diverse educational texts authored by Ottoman müderris-scholars. As my exploration has tried to reveal, these texts identified prevalent pedagogical errors on the part of both students and instructors and aimed to rectify them through recommendations for the betterment of the learning process.

Among the themes I have delved into was the concern expressed by Ottoman pedagogues regarding the abundance of advanced secondary scholarly texts, leading students away from fundamental themes into prolonged engagement with advanced (*daqīq*) topics without acquiring the requisite foundational skills. Furthermore, the chapter has showcased how Ottoman scholars delineated specific epistemic goals in terms of epistemic goods and virtues, including mastery of principles of formal disciplines and the cultivation of intellectual virtues to guide the learning journey.

I have also discussed notable intellectual outputs as part of the proposed pedagogical turn. These include novelties such as the authorship of new primers for students on the subject of logic and argumentation theory. Additionally, I have presented a new category of educational material, which I have referred to as pedagogical commentaries. These commentaries aim to establish teaching standards for core texts. The findings of the chapter not only enrich our understanding of Ottoman scholarly selfhood, but they also hold significance for the history of higher education, which has recently shown interest in more comparative perspectives by demonstrating greater awareness and reflexivity of its limiting bias towards the European university.¹⁰⁹

Moreover, this chapter has engaged with two ongoing scholarly conversations. Through its exploration of *tartīb* accounts as an integral component of the pedagogical turn, it contributes to the ongoing debate on the "Sultan's syllabus," a subject recently

¹⁰⁹ On this, see Peters, Michael. *Ancient Centers of Higher Learning*. 2019; also Ellis, *Beyond the University*. 2019

revisited by Şen. Additionally, it reevaluates el-Rouayheb's perspective on the "pedagogical shift" through a fresh lens made available by the chapter's findings.



CHAPTER III

MALAKA AS THE EPISTEMIC VIRTUE OF AN OTTOMAN SCHOLAR

*Indeed, meleke is the essence of knowledge.*¹¹⁰

-Kevakib-i Seb'a

3.1. Introduction

A recent trend in the history of knowledge is the study of historical discourses on scholarly practices and ideals through the lens of epistemic virtues. Realising the centrality of the virtue language to the past discussions on scholarship, historians of science and humanities have increasingly drawn on the work of virtue epistemologists to investigate what good scholarship meant in particular situations. By examining specific intellectual virtues such as objectivity, impartiality, thoroughness and creativity, they have explored how these key characteristics of the scholarly personae emerged and acquired particular meanings, as well as the reasons why they were often contested in different contexts. However, the field has thus far tended to focus on early modern European thought and the responsibilist stream of virtue epistemology.

As an endeavour to contribute to this expanding field, the article aims to highlight some aspects of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman intellectual debates on being a scholar by drawing primarily on four major educational texts of the period, namely *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram* and *Sharḥ Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* by Mūneccimbāṣī (d.1702), *Tartīb al-ʿulūm* by Sājaqlīzādah (d.1732) and the anonymous *Kevakib-i Seb'a* (Seven Stars). I will argue that *malaka*, the Ottoman term for virtue, was central to the discussions on scholarly ideals and will explore the possibility of interpreting it as a form of virtue reliabilism.

¹¹⁰ *Zira meleke ʿilmin ayndır.*

This chapter presents an attempt to write a history of the Ottoman scholarly self through the prism of epistemic virtues. I delve into relevant historical sources to uncover insights into what it meant to be an *‘ālim* in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman discourses. I explore the common scholarly ideals and practices that Ottoman authors referred to when discussing the *‘ulama*’, as well as the intellectual "marks" attributed to an *‘ālim*. I argue that virtue language was central to the discussion on being an *‘ālim*. The primary concept of these discussions was the term *malaka*, which has its roots in ethical thought and practical philosophy within the Islamic tradition. Furthermore, I demonstrate how the Ottoman scholar Mūneccimbāṣī drew on the practical philosophy literature to develop the concept of *malaka* to elucidate the educational ideals associated with the formation of an *‘ālim*. I will also discuss how *malaka* contrasts with the contending notions of epistemic virtues in historical scholarship.

After briefly reviewing the literature on the history of epistemic virtues, I aim to establish the relevance of epistemic virtues as a helpful framework for constructing a historical account of an Ottoman scholarly self. I then provide two passages from the 19th century illuminating how Ottoman scholars were perceived in the debates on scholarly personae. After discussing these passages, I delve into earlier sources documenting the use of virtue language in describing Ottoman scholarly character. This will include exploring Ottoman biographical encyclopaedias and texts on learning.

In the subsequent part, I will concentrate on two specific texts by Mūneccimbāṣī (d. 1702): first, his book on the methodology of hermeneutic reading (*ādāb al-muṭāla‘a*), which features a conceptualisation of *malaka* as an intellectual virtue; and second, his commentary on a major classical work on virtue ethics by Aḥud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d.1355). Concluding this chapter, I outline the rationale underlying my interpretation of *malaka* as an intellectual virtue, addressing potential objections that may arise.

3.2. Towards a History of Ottoman Scholarly Self

How did one become an Ottoman *‘ālim*? What were the criteria that a scholar had to meet in order to be recognised as a competent *‘ālim*? Drawing on relevant sources

from the 17th and 18th centuries, this chapter argues that the notion of epistemic virtue was central to the Ottoman scholarly discussions on what it meant to be an *‘ālim*. In an effort to advance our understanding of Ottoman intellectual tradition and contribute to the recent historical scholarship on epistemic virtues, which has almost exclusively focused on the European tradition, I will offer an analysis of how the Ottoman intellectuals re-conceptualized the term *malaka*, a concept rooted in Islamic ethical thought, to articulate their educational and scholarly ideals.

3.3. Nineteenth-century Images of an ‘Ālim: Mohammedan Adroitness and Intellectual Virtues of an Ottoman Scholar

In nineteenth-century European discourses, the categories of nation and race served as legitimate prisms to discuss a wide variety of issues. While their stereotypical character presents a challenge for historians, such discourses may open up novel avenues of research. In a recent article, Paul underscores this potential through his methodological contribution to the emerging field of the history of epistemic virtues. He urges historians not to "shrink away" from nationalist stereotypes and advocates for a closer examination of stereotypical images. Through the example of "German thoroughness," Paul demonstrates how nationalised epistemic virtues enable comparative and transdisciplinary conversations about the visions of good scholarship and educational aspirations across the academic spectrum.¹¹¹

Within the context of this paper, a pertinent query emerges: What sorts of images or stereotypes were Muslim scholars subjected to? I will discuss two illustrative examples here.

The first is from Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*. One of the conversations, dated 1827, captures Goethe articulating his educational ideas using *Mohammedans'* educational practices as a reference point. In the course of a discussion on a variety of topics, including religious teachings in England, Goethe transitions to the education of Mohammedans, remarking: "It is of considerable interest to see what *Mohammedans*

¹¹¹ Herman Paul, "German Thoroughness in Baltimore: Epistemic Virtues and National Stereotypes," *History of Humanities* 3, no. 2 (September 1, 2018): 327–50..

are taught at the start of their education.” Thereafter, Goethe proceeds to share his observations¹¹².

In Goethe's words, the early education of a young Muslim begins with the imparting of a fundamental conviction: that nothing can befall an individual except that which has long been preordained by an omnipotent deity. This instruction, Goethe contends, instills a distinct equanimity in students that pervades their entire lives, and “they hardly need anything else.”

Then, the education of *Mohammedan* continues with philosophical instruction, starting with the teaching (Lehre) that "nothing exists for which the contrary cannot be asserted". For Goethe, this trains the minds (Geist) of young learners, compelling them to undertake the intellectual endeavour of "finding and articulating the opposite of every stated proposition", an exercise which fosters "great" mental and communicative adroitness ("eine große Gewandtheit im Denken und Reden").

A further implication of such training is that doubt is instilled in the mind after establishing the contrary of every proposition as to which of the two propositions is true. Goethe views this doubt as productive as “it drives the mind to closer investigation and examination”, which leads to certainty when correctly done. As Goethe asserts, an elevated educational ideal is encapsulated here: "...this teaching lacks nothing and... we, with all our systems, are no further ahead and that no one can get any further at all."

Goethe's admiration for Mohammedan education culminates intriguingly when he introduces the term 'intellectual virtue' (geistiger Tugend): He characterises “the philosophical system of the Mohammedans” as a benchmark by which individuals can gauge their own and others' intellectual standings, thus assessing the level of their 'intellectual virtue': “This philosophical system of the Mohammedans is a good yardstick to apply to oneself and others in order to find out on which level of intellectual virtue one actually stands.”

¹¹² Eckermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, 370-72. In the English translation by Oxenford see the pages 241-42

Goethe's observations concerning the 'philosophical system of the Mohammedans' exhibit parallels with the characterisation of Ottoman scholars by a later Ottoman intellectual counterpart. Responding to less favourable nineteenth-century national stereotypes about *Mohammedans* in his article titled "Türk", authored in 1869, Ottoman intellectual Ali Suavi (d. 1878) makes similar remarks on what it meant to be a scholar and the role of education in its making.

The article commences by introducing the concept of race to Ottoman readers: "In Europe, there is the notion of *rās*, that is, ... the conviction to look at the affiliated ethnic group of a nation in order to judge its capacity and potential," writes Suavi. After establishing this notion, he proceeds to note that "some prominent adherents" of this notion (he provides the specific example of Marie Nicolas Bouillet (1798-1864)) regarded Turks as mere rough warriors "unintelligent in intellectual endeavours". Suavi, however, dissents from this perspective with this notion and pens this article. "I would like to show the inaccuracy of their deliberation," states Suavi, expressing his aim to challenge the portrayal of Turks in European discussions coloured by nationalised images.

Having addressed the question of who the Turks are in a few paragraphs, Suavi then proceeds to illustrate the historical role Turks had taken in various intellectual fields before and during the Ottoman period. While his historical exposition is rich and deserving of a closer analysis, its comprehensive examination is beyond the scope of this study due to spatial limitations.

Suavi's portrayal of the Ottoman learned of his era holds particular relevance to the focus of this paper. As his discourse nears its conclusion, he draws attention to the educational endeavours of the Ottomans. Alluding to the spaces of learning in nineteenth-century Istanbul, Suavi offers the following observations:

In conclusion, I would like to note that in Istanbul, as Ottoman institutions, there are around 900 mosques, which are not designated for sermons on the Divine Son but open for teaching and studying knowledge without charge. Also, approximately 280 madrasas exist wherein the study and instruction of morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, rhetoric, mathematics, logic, physics, theoretical and practical philosophy, and religious disciplines are undertaken.

Following the enumeration of diverse disciplines studied within the madrasas, Suavi links them with an epistemic goal of acquiring an intellectual virtue, a *malaka*, that can be transferred into the study of any field of knowledge. He articulates,

*While it is undeniable that some aspects of these madrasas need rectification, as the learned who have studied and emerged from their midst would be equipped with the tools to instil semantic fluency as a virtue for every [sphere] of knowledge and art, by investing time for in the study of any discipline they become matchless in that.*¹¹³

I acknowledge that my choice of translating *istiḥdār* as "semantic fluency" might initially appear objectionable. However, I elucidate and substantiate this translation in subsequent sections, offering a detailed rationale and historical evidence to support this choice. Building upon these assertions, Suavi proceeds to provide further insights into the intellectual character of Ottoman scholars, drawing partial comparisons with their French counterparts. The intellectual virtues he highlights encompass intellectual autonomy, open-mindedness, and cognitive flexibility, extending beyond binary modes of thought. The benefits derived from madrasa education extend beyond mere familiarity; as Suavi states:

The least of the gains accrued by madrasa scholars is their immunity to astonishment, akin to that of the French upon encountering discussions on the issues of hyle and matter in German philosophy. And the most substantial gain lies in their liberation from the dichotomy of affirmation and negation. Within the infinite space of investigation and scrutiny, the virtue of being independent and free is instilled in them.¹¹⁴

These two examples illustrate how, during the nineteenth century, Muslim educational practices and the intellectual character of Ottoman scholars were comprehended through the lens of intellectual virtues. While there is currently no evidence to suggest that Goethe's perspective on Muslim education was influenced by Ottoman sources (a topic beyond the scope of this paper), intriguing parallels emerge between his expressions and the Ottoman deliberations on education and scholarship.

¹¹³ Suavi, *Türk*, 14.

¹¹⁴ Suavi, *Türk*, 14

However, in Suavi's case, his portrayal of Ottoman scholars is not uncommon and is rooted in the conceptualization of "malaka" in earlier centuries' Ottoman intellectual discourses on learning and intellectual disposition. The subsequent section will delve into how "malaka" assumes a central role in sources concerning the Ottoman ulama from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

3.4. Virtue Language in the Eighteenth-century Ottoman Biographical Sources

We encounter the term "malaka" in various sources and contexts. One of the ways in which it was used was in biographical sources to indicate the completion of education or the transition from being a student to becoming a scholar: one would become an 'ālim by cultivating relevant virtues through education. In such instances, it is employed in a general sense without any technical conceptualisation, referring to the attainment of basic scholarly competencies. Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi's (d.1731) contains numerous such references to the term malaka.

Şeyhi authored this work as an addendum to an earlier prosopography, "Hada'iku'l-Haka'ik" [The Gardens of Peonies] by Nevizade Atayi (d.1598). The text provides biographies of over two thousand scholars, Sufis, and poets. The entries on scholars typically mention their place of birth, educational background, and career details. The term *malaka* appears in several variations, primarily as "tahsīl-i malaka," "tekmīl-i malaka," "i'māl-i malaka," and "kesb-i malaka," which can be rendered as cultivation, perfection, yielding, and acquisition, respectively. In the majority of cases, the term "isti'dad" is used in conjunction with "malaka," resulting in the phrase "malaka-i isti'dad." This can be translated as the *virtue of aptness*, which denotes general intellectual attainment. However, there are also instances where it is used in reference to more specific competencies, such as "malaka-i terkīb ve i'rāb" (cultivation of the malaka of grammatical composition and inflection), as well as in a more general manner, such as "malaka-i ders ü taḥkīk" (virtue of studying and verification), "malaka-i 'ilmiyya" (epistemic virtue), and "malaka-i iz'ān" (virtue of acuity).

For example, the entry on a scholar named Mustafa Efendi (d. H 1104) recounts that he was born in Sinop and did his early studies under the *town's mufti*. He then moved to Istanbul with the intention of "perfecting the virtue of aptness"¹¹⁵.

In another example, the journey of a scholar with the name Ismā'īl Efendi (d. H 1125) to a teaching position reads as "after yielding epistemic virtue (*malaka-i 'ilmiyya*), according to the way of the people of aptness, [he] attained the honour of *mulāzemet* from Şeyhü'l-Islām 'Alī Efendi"¹¹⁶.

What is shared in almost all cases of reference to the acquisition of *malaka* in *Vekāyiu'l-fuzalā* is the connotation of the end of formal learning and marks the beginning of the initiation of an alim to an *ilmiyye* career. The subsequent information details who elevated the candidate *'ālim* to the status of *mulāzim*, that is, being a candidate eligible for becoming a professor.

Vekāyiu'l-fuzalā is not the sole biographical source that describes a scholar's learning regarding the acquisition of *malaka*. For instance, in Esrār Dede's (d.1797) *Tezkire-i Şu'arā-yı Mevleviyye*, an entry on the renowned 18th-century Ottoman poet Şeyh Gālib (d.1799) refers to his education using the term *malaka-i isti'dad*. Another biographical record of him also mentions *malaka*, describing his education as attaining the status of *malaka-i istidad*, which was regarded as highly important by the perfected individuals [*erbab-ı kemal*]¹¹⁷.

Although these biographical accounts do not provide a technical explanation of the term *malaka*, they indicate that it was commonly used to depict scholarly character and the purpose of learning.

¹¹⁵ Şeyhi, *Vakāiü'l-Fuzalā*, V. III, 1940.

¹¹⁶ Şeyhi, 2502.

¹¹⁷ Both are quoted in Gürer, "Şeyh Galib Hakkında Yeni Bilgiler." 209, 221.

3.5. Malaka in the Ottoman Discussions on Knowledge and the Goals of Higher Learning

Ottoman educational texts expectedly appear to be more elucidating than intellectual biographies when it comes to the notion of malaka. Here, I will specifically examine two notable educational texts from the period: *Kevakib-i Seb'a* (*Seven Stars*) and *Tartīb al- 'Ulūm* (*Organization of Knowledge*), both authored in the eighteenth century by 'ālim-müderris figures. *Kevakib-i Seba*, written in classical Turkish, was composed by an anonymous Ottoman müderris (college professor)¹¹⁸ in response to a request from Charles de Peyssonnel¹¹⁹, the secretary of the French ambassador in Istanbul at the time. The author articulates the book's purpose in the introduction as "to shatter the negative opinion about the *ulema* by exhibiting their capabilities." *Tartīb al- 'Ulūm*, on the other hand, was written by Sāçaklīzāde (d.1732) as a guidance book for learners and instructors. Central to our analysis are the two distinct applications of the term 'malaka' in these texts. The first is its use in general and epistemic discussions about the nature of knowledge and its various terminological and conventional uses. The second is its role in educational discourse, particularly in defining learning objectives within specific disciplines. This includes its discussion in relation to disciplines such as logic or generative morphology (e.g., malaka of logic, malaka of morphology), as well as its application to interdisciplinary competencies and virtues like 'malaka' of istiḥdār (cognitive fluency), istinbāt (inductive reasoning), and muṭāla'a (hermeneutic reading).¹²⁰

3.5.1. Malaka and the Meanings of Knowledge

The first use is relatively straightforward and is found in the introductory chapters of both texts. As previously suggested, the term *ilm* had broad connotations in the Ottoman discourses (as well as in Islamic scholarship in general), and the Ottoman authors often dedicated parts of their writings to clarifying those meanings. In the

¹¹⁸ In the latest edition of the book, İhsanoğlu identifies the author as Hüseyin bin Muhammed el-Mîmî el-Basrî.

¹¹⁹ For the background of the authorship of the book, see the introduction of Karaagacloğlu, "Whose Science? A Preliminary Study on *Kevâkib-i Seb'a* and the Scholar's Rhetoric".

¹²⁰ It is worth acknowledging that these translations are provisional and subject to further refinement. I have provided them as working interpretations to be revised in future research.

section on the "essence of knowledge", *Seven Stars'* author explores various meanings and definitions attributed to the term *‘ilm* as well as its different usages. He considers definitions such as knowledge being "knowing and believing a thing as it is"; "knowing the known as it is", or the "emergence of mental representation of a thing". Following a brief analysis of these positions, the discussion delves into the multiple applications of the term *‘ilm*, whether in everyday, metaphorical, or terminological sense.

One such versatile application, resembling our contemporary use of the term "science," pertains to the names of disciplines, such as *‘ilm-i sarf* (discipline of morphology) or *‘ilm-i nahw* (discipline of syntax). The term *‘ilm* could also denote the comprehension or knowledge of specific disciplinary issues (as exemplified by the statement, "That person **knows** syntax") or, more specifically, the knowledge of justifications for assertions about those issues.

Furthermore, the term *‘ilm* could be used to refer to "malaka", a concept that arises from the repetition of assertions in a discipline. It could also allude to a higher-order malaka in the sense of a generic ability enabling one to interpret and evaluate any desired issue. The author then concludes the discussion with the following statement: "In a word, the genuine meaning of the term *‘ilm* is apprehension [*‘idrāk*]. And this apprehension pertains to a thing known [*ma ‘lūm*]. The attainment of this apprehension relies on means, and that is virtue [*malaka*]."¹²¹

Similarly, Sāçaklîzâde draws a conclusion that regardless of the domain in which it is used, the term *‘ilm* ultimately encompasses the following three things:

Know that the names of the sciences (*‘ulūm*) of syntax, morphology, semantics, fiqh and others are commensurable in three meanings: the issues (*masā’il*), their apprehension (*‘idrākat*), and the virtue (*malaka*) acquired through repetition of those apprehensions.¹²²

Both authors identify the acquired virtue resulting from repeated apprehension as cognitive or semantic fluency (*malakat al-istiḥḍār / meleke-i istiḥḍār*). However, they also acknowledge the existence of additional generic virtues alongside cognitive

¹²¹ Kevakib-i Seb'a

¹²² Sāçaklîzâde, *Tartīb al-‘ulūm*, p.

fluency. Sāçaklîzâde introduces two other virtues, namely *malakat al-istinbâṭ* (inductive reasoning), which is also mentioned in Seven Stars, and *malakat al-muṭâla‘a* (hermeneutic reading).

In Sāçaklîzâde’s account, these two virtues are regarded as higher-order intellectual achievements that follow the cultivation of cognitive fluency. Cognitive fluency enables a person to easily retrieve conceptual knowledge, i.e., knowledge of general principles and concepts.

Sāçaklîzâde provides an illustrative example of how, upon encountering the word "Zayd" in the sentence "Zayd hit" (*Daraba Zaydun*), one retrieves the principle that “Every agent is nominative”¹²³. From this, one infers that Zayd is an agent and, given that every agent is nominative, deduces that Zayd is nominative.

Through repeated exercises of this kind of inference, one acquires the virtue of deduction (*malakat al-istinbâṭ*), which Sāçaklîzâde defines as the capacity to conceive particular propositions from universal principles.

In *Seven Stars*, this virtue is referred to as a *malaka* that manifests complete epistemic competence,¹²⁴ allowing one to draw inferences on any desired matter. Additionally, Sāçaklîzâde introduces another higher-order virtue, the virtue of hermeneutic reading (*malakat al-muṭâla‘a*), which is cultivated through the repeated practice of deduction. In the later part of the text, he notes that this virtue is cultivated by engaging with more advanced and profound (*daqīq*) texts subsequent to mastering the instrumental sciences.

3.5.2. Disciplinary Competences as *Malaka*

The concept of *malaka* was also employed in Ottoman materials to discuss disciplinary goals. The second chapter of *Seven Stars* provides detailed information about approximately 360 disciplines and subdisciplines of knowledge, encompassing

¹²³ *Fatastakhduru kulla fā‘ilin marfū‘in*

¹²⁴ “teheyü’-i tam üzere olan meleke”

properly codified disciplines as well as non-codified domains of inquiry. These entries cover each discipline's definitions, subject matter, benefits, and purposes. Particularly for the disciplines that constituted the core of madrasa education, the aims (*gharad*) are formulated in terms of *malaka*. For instance, the discipline of morphology (*sarf*) is explicated as "the science by which we know about the general categories of the vocables designated by different forms of positing and the meanings they signify, lexical root and grammatical pattern morphemes by way of universal analogies, and general principles of changes in the lexical root morphemes." And the purpose of this discipline, i.e. morphology, is the *acquisition of the virtue that leads to knowledge of what is mentioned in the definition*¹²⁵.

The entry on *ilm al-bayān*, the science of eloquence, states that its purpose is to acquire the *virtue of communication or expression through intellected signification*. The section on logic specifies the virtues of verification (*tahqīq*) and investigation (*tadqīq*)¹²⁶.

In another section of *Seven Stars*, towards the end of the book, the author embarks upon a comparison between Muslim scholars and those from other traditions in terms of their shared knowledge and differences. He highlights Qur'anic recitation, *tafsīr*, *hadīth* and *fiqh* as unique sciences exclusive to Muslim scholars. Regarding the discipline of *tafsīr*, he argues that the words of the *Qur'an* have infinite meanings (*ma'anisi gayri mütenahiyedir*), further asserting that the ability and virtue of deducing meanings from the *Qur'an* is what we call *'ilm al-tafsīr*. Through interpretive engagement with the Qur'an, Muslim scholars cultivate the virtue of deducing multiple meanings from a scripture. The author contends that scholars from other intellectual traditions did not engage in the interpretive endeavours necessary for cultivating this virtue, primarily due to the absence of an analogous text, and as a result, they were unable to develop a science equivalent to *tafsīr*. He concludes by stating, "This virtue

¹²⁵ zikir olunan ahval anınla bilunur melekeyi tahsildir

¹²⁶ The difference between *tahqīq* and *tadqīq* seems to be in that *tadqīq* is a more nuanced or fine-grained analysis of a knowledge claim. al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) in Book of Definitions (Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt) *tadqīq* as "the establishment of an issue with a proof the method of which is subtle for a beholder (*'ithbāt al-mas'ala bi-dalīl diq tariqīhi li-nāzirīhi*) (p.56) whereas *tahqīq* is simply defined as the establishment of an issue with a proof (*'ithbāt al-mas'ala bi-dalīl*) (p.55).

constitutes the science of tafsir. The extinction of the malaka is the extinction of the science of tafsir. Indeed, virtue is the essence of knowledge."¹²⁷

3.6. Malaka: A Brief Genealogy

As we have seen, the term "malaka" played a central role in 17th and 18th-century Ottoman intellectual discourse, functioning both as a general term for intellectual achievement and as a specific concept within theoretical epistemological and educational discussions. However, where did it originate? Was it a uniquely Ottoman coinage of the 17th century?

The answer is no. The term "malaka" is deeply rooted in the broader history of Islamic intellectual discourse, with its origins traceable to earlier ethical and ontological discussions. To demonstrate this pre-Ottoman lineage, I will showcase its usage in the writings of three prominent Muslim scholars: Al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), and al-Ījī (d. 1355).

My selection of these figures, amidst the vast pool of possibilities, is primarily driven by their undeniable influence on Ottoman thought. Al-Ghazali is directly referenced in some of the texts analysed in this thesis¹²⁸. I will be examining his use of the term malaka in *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*. Concerning al-Ījī, his "Mawāqif" was not only part of the madrasa program but also enjoyed considerable popularity among Ottoman scholars, attracting numerous commentaries. Notably, Mūneccimbāşī's commentary on al-Ījī's *al-Akhlaq al-Adudiyya* is central to this study. For Sajaqlizada's *Tartib al-Ulum*, too, *al-Mawāqif* is a primary source, and we see multiple references to it throughout *Tartib al-Ulum*. I will engage *Mawāqif* together with al-Jurjānī's (d.1414) commentary.

Finally, Ibn Khaldun stands as another primary source of influence. The translation of *Muqaddimah* into Ottoman Turkish is an essential indicator of influence, and

¹²⁷ "Meleke intifası 'ilm-i tefsirin intifasıdır. Zira meleke 'ilmin aynıdır". Kevakib-i Seb'a

¹²⁸ Discussions on al-Ghazali's influence on Ottoman thought can be found in Sait M. Özervanlı, "Ottoman Perceptions of al-Ghazālī's Works and Discussions on His Historical Role in Its Late Period". In *Islam and Rationality*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016) and van Lit, L.W.C. "An Ottoman Commentary Tradition on Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. Preliminary Observations", *Oriens* 43, no.3-4 (2015): 368-413.

intellectual historians have explored how Ottomans viewed *Muqaddimah* as a source of inspiration for their own thinking. There have also been discussions on Ottoman Khaldunism in the secondary literature, further attesting to his influence.

These three authors are significant not only because they employ the term in moral discussions but also within the realms of intellectual and educational discourse, which forms the core of this thesis. This breadth of application underscores the term's versatility and importance.

Sharḥ al-Mawāqif is a helpful reference for understanding the philosophical background of the concept of malaka and locating its place in classical thought. As a foundational term, it is primarily treated and used in the earlier chapters of the book, which explore fundamental epistemic and ontological questions. I should highlight that these are the same sections that Sajaqlizada emphasised as crucial for students to study from kalam books, as discussed in the preceding chapter.

The definition of malaka is found within the book's ontological discussions, which commence with a section on general entities or generalities known as *al-umūr al-āmma*, encompassing discussions on basic matters related to existents, irrespective of their type. Topics include being and non-being, quiddity, necessity, contingency, impossibility, unity, multiplicity, cause, and effect. The systematic explanation of malaka appears later in the subsequent section, which is framed around the core ontological division between substances (*jawāhīr*) and accidents (*a'rāḍ*). The text brings the discussion of the latter, also referred to as attributes (*ṣifāt*), to the forefront and elaborates on its various types through the conventional way of classifying them into *quantities*, *qualities*, and *relations*.

Malaka is related to the second type of accidents, i.e. to the *qualities* which are dealt with in four subcategories: sensible qualities, qualities specific to quantity, qualities specific to the self (*al-kayfiyyāt al-nafsāniyya*) and dispositional qualities. The qualities of self include qualities such as life, knowledge, will and ability. Before examining each of these qualities individually, the author introduces the term malaka to the discussion to add another dimension, further classifying qualities in terms of their modes of existence in a subject:

When a quality of self is firmly established in its subject — meaning it is entrenched in such a manner that either it does not depart from it at all, or its cessation is difficult — it is termed *malaka*. However, if it is not firmly established, it is termed *hal* because it is subject to change and cessation easily... Every *malaka*, before its entrenchment, is initially a *hal*, but not every *hal* evolves into a *malaka*.

To illustrate the relation between *hal* and *malaka*, Jurjānī gives the quality of writing as an example, as writing exists as a *hal* in the beginning and then can later develop into a *malaka* over time if it gets firmly established and entrenched. A few other examples in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* further clarify the concept of *malaka*. For instance, in the context of a discussion on whether human acts are due to the will or knowledge, the author presents one of the positions that associate acts with the latter, i.e., with knowledge, through the following example:

Meticulous and precise actions emanate from someone pursuing a craft for an extended period through a *malaka* without him intending them, that is, without intending the details of the parts of [the action]. They would not emerge with such beauty and precision if they were intended. A skilled writer unintentionally observes numerous intricacies in a single letter. He would have omitted many of them if he had paid attention and intended these intricacies.

Although this example was not given as a favourable position in the debate on accounting for human action, it serves well the purpose of grasping how *malaka* was understood. In this particular example, *malaka* is used to refer to the knowledge of a particular craft allowing the agent to produce acts in this craft without much deliberation. Such examples demonstrating the role of a *malaka* in various crafts are actually quite common to explain *malaka* not only in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* but also in many other classical texts. On another occasion, al-Ījī uses the playing of musical instruments as an example of the application of a *malaka*. Just as a scribe is able to write without planning each letter, thanks to a *malaka*, a tambourine player performs without consciously thinking about each note or beat.

A possible misunderstanding these examples may generate would be to think that the application of the term *malaka* was limited to explaining skills in particular crafts, such as writing or playing musical instruments. But as I will soon show, the scope of

malaka's application extends well beyond the crafts and practical skills and encompasses the moral and intellectual domains, too.

According to the well-known ethical model, the human self has three major powers, namely reason or intellect (*nutq*), appetite (*shawha*) and anger (*ghadab*), which are capable of attaining various qualities. If these qualities develop into a malaka and by which various, whether virtuous or vicious acts emerge from the self, they are called character (*khulq*). The standard definition of the character is as follows: *Character trait is a malaka from which, or rather by which from the self, actions emerge effortlessly, akin to someone writing without planning each letter or striking the tambourine without consciously thinking about each note or beat.*¹²⁹

Some of these qualities are praiseworthy, and they include three major traits that are wisdom (*hikma*), courage (*shujā'a*) and temperance (*'iffa*), as well as their subcategories such as forbearance (*hilm*), undauntedness (*najda*), integrity (*nazāha*) and contentment (*qanā'a*) which altogether represent moderation of the faculties of the self. There are also six other qualities which are blameworthy, such as cowardice (*al-jubn*), apathy (*al-jumd*) and deceitfulness (*al-jarbaza*) and represent either the excess or deficiency of the three faculties of the self. According to the ethical model, all these character traits, whether virtues or vices, are malaka. In other words, for one to be identified with a certain character trait, one has to possess a specific malaka. In *Mi'yār al-'Ilm*, there is a section where al-Ghazali gives types of common mistakes made with the definition, and one of them concerns the notion of malaka in the context of moral discussions. So, he provides a faulty definition of a temperate person (*'afīf*): *“Temperate is the one with a capacity to avoid lustful pleasures”*.

For al-Ghazali, this represents a common mistake of confusing capacity (*quwwa*) with malaka. One does not become temperate (*'afīf*) simply by having the capacity to resist or avoid desires of lust. Because a debaucher (*fājir*), too, has the same capacity to resist lustful desires. He argues that the difference is due to an entrenched malaka that a temperate person possesses, allowing them to abandon their pleasures. As a contrary example of misdefinition, al-Ghazali cites the following: *“The capable of oppression*

¹²⁹ *al-khalq malaka tuṣḍiru 'anha ay 'an al-nafs bisababiha al-afal bi-lā rawīya*

(*qādir ‘alā zulm*) is someone whose character and disposition is the tendency to confiscate what is not his from the possession of others.” For al-Ghazali, this definition is also flawed because not all capable of oppression develop the disposition to seize someone else’s possessions. On the contrary, someone with such a capacity can develop relevant malaka to become a just person.

Without going into further details, in this model, we find that malaka is already used beyond the practical skills. As I have already hinted, the use of malaka is not also limited to moral discussions and further includes the intellectual dimension of human beings. Two important theoretical constructs about the human mind are important for the function of malaka in intellectual activities. The first one is related to the exclusive power that the human self has, which differentiates it from the animal self. This power is called rational power (*al-quwwa al-aqliya*). This unique power of the human self has two aspects. The one is called theoretical power (*al-quwwah al-nazariyya*) or theoretical reason (*al-aql al-nazari*), by which the reason comprehends the universals and is able to make a judgement whether affirmative or negative, that is to decide whether they are true or false. The other aspect of the rational power is called practical faculty (*al-quwwa al-amaliya*) or practical reason (*al-aql al-amali*) for being used for intellectual crafts and engaging views on particular issues and having consultation on them in terms of deciding whether to take that action or leave it. Unlike the theoretical aspect of reason, the practical aspect passes judgment on particular acts in terms of them being good or bad as moral judgment or being beautiful or ugly as a form of aesthetic judgement.¹³⁰

Rational power is also discussed in the moral model, as one of the three powers of the self is *nuṭq*, which corresponds to rational power, which becomes effective through malakas. However, another theoretical model of reason in the text makes it clear how malaka relates to reason or intellect, particularly in relation to theoretical power.

According to a widely accepted model of theoretical reason, there are four distinct levels: material intellect, dispositional intellect, actual intellect, and active intellect. At the material level (*al-‘aql al-hayūlānī*), intellect is a power that exists as a mere capacity (*isti‘dād*) to comprehend intelligibles (*ma‘qūlāt*) without any active

¹³⁰ These two aspects of the rational faculty are interrelated and the Jurjani does discuss it. However because of lack of relevance I'm not engaging it here.

engagement. An example of this level of intellect is seen in children at an early stage, who possess the capacity to comprehend but have not yet begun to do so. This level is referred to as material intellect due to its similarity to the first matter in the prime matter (hyle). It's important to note that non-human animals do not possess this capacity. As al-Ghazali explains:

The definition of the material intellect is the power of the self to perceive the reality of things abstracted of matter. With this power, a child differs from a horse and other animals, which know only through the knowledge of what is present.

When the self attains the necessary self-evident premises (*darūriyyāt*), it evolves into the dispositional intellect (*‘aql bi-l-malaka*). This process occurs when a child develops into the stage of discernment (*tamyīz*). At this stage, a child becomes different from a "child in a cradle" because the child finds himself affirming the self-evident premises when they are presented to him. The evolution of the material intellect to dispositional intellect turns the intellect from a remote potential (*quwwa ba‘īda*) to a proximate power (*quwwa qarība*).

The transition from the dispositional intellect (*‘aql bi-l-malaka*) to the actual intellect (*‘aql bi-l-fi‘l*) is where malaka comes into the picture. In fact, al-Ījī's account defines actual intellect as a malaka:

“Actual intellect is the malaka of deducing theoretical knowledge (*naẓariyyāt*) from the necessary premises (*badīhiyyāt*) that is a person's development in terms of conjuring up [*istiḥḍār*] necessary premisses to reflect on them and inferring theoretical knowledge from them”.¹³¹

Al-Jurjānī's commentary restates that this state is attained only when the deduction method becomes an established malaka in the self. Al-Jurjānī also includes an alternative, more famous, understanding of the actual intellect as malaka by which one can conjure theoretical knowledge after it is deduced from the necessary premises without any deliberation or burden of re-acquisition (*kasb jadīd*). This is attained through repeated consideration of theoretical knowledge until the self acquires a malaka, enabling him to conjure the theoretical knowledge whenever he wishes

¹³¹ *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* (vol 2), 433, 435.

without the need for thinking¹³². The acquired intellect is the last level of the theoretical intellect (*al-‘aql al-mustafād*). Al-Ījī defines it as the level of intellect in which theoretical truths become always present to the self without disappearing from it. Al-Ījī expresses his doubt about the possibility of such a state by raising the following question: Is this possible when the human is in the garment of his body?

Here, al-Jurjānī makes an interjection to explain al-Ījī’s hesitation. He suggests that in theory (*yajūz ‘ind al-‘aql*), it is plausible that some perfected selves can free themselves entirely from bodily ties and observe all the intelligible at once like a flash of lightning. Then they ascend from this state, by observation after observation, until observation becomes an established *malaka* within the self. Nonetheless, he added that the establishment of the continuation of such direct vision (*mushāhada*) within the souls as *malaka* is considered less likely than the likelihood of the occurrences of “flashes of lightning”.

Al-Jurjānī also added that al-Ījī’s way of explaining acquired intellect was uncommon, and conventional books understood these four levels of theoretical intellect in relation to a single piece of theoretical knowledge. When viewed this way in reference to a single theoretical truth, the acquired intellect then becomes the state of a theoretical concept being directly observed by the intellect, which is more feasible. Al-Ghazali also provides this understanding of acquired intellect, which is a state in which intellect has the theoretical truth in question ready in mind in such a way that it can conjugate them and delve into more profound reflections on them.

Al-Ghazali’s understanding of *malaka* seems to correspond to what I have discussed from al-Jurjānī. He also introduces the term *malaka* in the discussion on qualities. He divides non-sensible qualities into capacities (*isti‘dād*), which are receptivity for something else, and perfections (*kamāl*), which do not serve as the capacity for other things. Knowledge belongs to the second category, to the category of perfection, that does not serve as the capacity for other perfections (*kamālat*) and is essentially non-sensible.

¹³² ملكة نفسانية يقوى بها على استحضارها متى أراد من غير حاجة إلى فكر.

Among them, there are those which disappear quickly and are called “ḥālāt” such as the anger of a mild person and sickness of the healthy. And if they are rooted, they are called “malaka” such as knowledge and health. By knowledge, I refer to rooted knowledge through practice, not the knowledge of beginners which is susceptible to cessation. Indeed, knowledge is a quality of the self that is non-sensible. [*al-‘ilm kayfiyya li-l-nafs ghayr maḥsūsa*]”¹³³

Al-Ghazali explanation of malaka through knowledge is particularly significant, and it does not stop as a general example. Elsewhere, where al-Ghazali discusses the definitive (*yaqīnī*) knowledge, he uses the term malaka in relation to the subject of metaphysics. He argues that in the field of metaphysics, definitive propositions are very rare, and they can be attained only through prolonged engagement in intellectual pursuits and weaning the mind from estimative faculty and sensory perceptions, accustoming it to the rational intelligibles.

The more one delves into these matters and earnestly seeks them, the closer the knowledge in them approaches complete certainty. Furthermore, as one's practice in these matters extends, and malaka is achieved in those areas of knowledge. However, someone with such malaka in metaphysics is incapable of overpowering opponents and elevating the one who wants to find the truth to his level merely by mentioning what he possesses. He can only do this by advising that person to go through the same process of studying and pondering on these sciences as he has, and finally reaching the point he has reached¹³⁴.

The last point in the quote above hints at an important aspect of malaka. Al-Ghazali emphasises that malaka cannot be transferred directly but requires personal effort for cultivation.

In *Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun assigns a central explanatory role to the concept of "malaka." Specifically, he employs "malaka" to discuss crafts, education—which he also considers a craft—and language learning. The concept of "malaka" is introduced from the fifth section onward, focusing on various livelihood means, with crafts being one of them. Ibn Khaldun defines craft with malaka. A craft is a malaka in an intellectual and practical matter [*al-ṣinā‘a hiya malaka fī amr amalī fikrī wa bikawnihī ‘amaliyyan huwa jismanī maḥsūs*]. He then provides the definition of malaka as an established quality (*ṣifā rāsikha*) acquired through the practice of an act and its

¹³³ *Mi‘yār al-‘Ilm* 479.

¹³⁴ ثم من طالت ممارسته وحصلت له ملكة بتلك المعارف لا يقدر على إفحام الخصم فيه، ولا يقدر على تنزيل المسترشد منزلة نفسه، بمجرد ذكر ما عنده إلا بأن يرشده إلى أن يسلك مسلكه في ممارسة العلوم وطول التأمل حتى يصل إلى ما وصل إليه. *Mi‘yār al-‘Ilm*, 361.

repetition over and over again until its form becomes firm¹³⁵. An interesting nuance Ibn Khaldun adds is that he says malakas vary according to their foundation (*'alā nisbat al-uṣūl*). The transmission of visible (mu'āyyin) is more complete than the malaka that is based on reports and information (*khābar* and *'ilm*).

One of the principal characteristics of malaka, as described by Ibn Khaldun, is that once a person has acquired a malaka in a particular craft, it becomes challenging for them to have malaka in another field. He argues that malaka transforms the self in a way that its potential for other things is somewhat diminished. Interestingly, Ibn Khaldun likens the impact of malaka acquisition on self to that of colouring. Once a person has acquired a particular colour (for colour, he uses both *sibgha* and *lawn* in Arabic), it becomes challenging for them to attain another colour. To illustrate this point, Ibn Khaldun cites the example of a tailor who has attained the malaka of the craft of tailoring. Such a person cannot attain the malaka of, for example, carpentry or construction unless the malaka of tailoring is not yet established. The same situation applies to intellectual virtues, as Ibn Khaldun explicitly states, "This extends even to people of knowledge whose malaka is cognitive (*fikrī*)." Except for rare exceptions, people of knowledge never acquire the same level of expertise, i.e. malaka, in multiple knowledge domains.¹³⁶

Further details regarding Ibn Khaldun's understanding of malaka can be found in Chapter 2 of Section 6 of the study of sciences. The opening sentence asserts that the mastery of any knowledge is contingent upon attaining a malaka in understanding its principles (*mabadi* and *qawaid*), comprehending its issues, and deriving corollaries from the foundational principles¹³⁷. It is important to note that malaka should not be confused with comprehension (*fahm*) and rote memorisation (*wa'ī*). Ibn Khaldun posits that in the context of understanding and rote memorisation of a single issue within a discipline, there is no discernible difference between those who have mastered

¹³⁵ صفة راسخة تحصل عن استعمال ذلك الفعل و تكرره مرة بعد أخرى حتى ترسخ صورته.

¹³⁶ حتى أن أهل العلم الذين ملكتهم فكرية فهم بهذه المثابة. و من حصل منهم على ملكة علم من العلوم و أجادها في الغاية فقل أن يجيد ملكة علم آخر على نسبه بل يكون مقصراً فيه إن طلبه إلا في الأقل النادر من الأحوال. و مبني سببه على ما ذكرناه من الاستعداد و تلويحه بلون الملكة الحاصلة في النفس.

¹³⁷ الحدق في العلم و التقنن فيه و الاستيلاء عليه إنما هو بحصول ملكة في الإحاطة بمبادئه و قواعده و الوقوف على مسائله و استنباط فروعه من أصوله

the discipline and those who are novices or between a non-scholar layman and an adept scholar.

A comparable discourse is found in *Kasf al-Zunūn* of Kātib Chalabi (d. 1658). A section of the text is entitled "Memorization is not intellectual malaka" [*Fī in al-ḥifẓ ḡhayr al-malaka al-ilmīya*], which includes the following passage on malaka:

Know that whoever prioritises memorisation over acquiring malaka will attain nothing from the malaka for mastery in knowledge. Thus, you find someone who has memorised much but lacks malaka in the subject, and you notice the limitation in their malaka of knowledge when they engage in discussion or debate. Therefore, you see that someone who has memorised it does not master any of the art, and you find his ability to be deficient in his knowledge if he negotiates or debates, like most Moroccan jurists and students of knowledge from among the people of Bukhara, Baghdad, Kabul, and Kandahar. Whoever thinks that the intended meaning of intellectual virtues is something other than what has been mentioned is mistaken: it is the virtue of inference and deduction, the fluency in transitioning from indicant to the indicated and from implicatum to implicans, and vice versa. If the virtue of *istiḥḍār* is added to them, it becomes such a desirable quality. This is not achieved merely through memorisation, although memory is one of the causes or elements of *istiḥḍār*. It is related to the strength or weakness of the retentive faculty, which, in turn, is related to temperamental conditions, although this is something that can be improved.¹³⁸

Kātib Chalabi's discussion of malaka shares similarities with Ibn Khaldun. However, the reference to the concept of *istiḥḍār* that is central to Chalabi's account is absent in Ibn Khaldun's account. Let us now consider a late seventeenth-century Ottoman formulation of *al-malaka ilmīya*.

3.7. Mūneccimbāṣī's Three Intellectual Virtues

A more comprehensive exploration of the concept of malaka is available in the writings of Mūneccimbāṣī Ahmed Dede (d.1702). Mūneccimbāṣī's intellectual trajectory is intriguing, as he exemplified the coupling of moral and intellectual

¹³⁸ اعلم: أن من كان عنايته بالحفظ أكثر من عنايته إلى تحصيل الملكة لا يحصل على طائل من ملكة التصرف في العلم ولذلك ترى من حصل الحفظ لا يحسن شيئاً من الفن وتجد ملكته قاصرة في علمه إن فاوض أو ناظر كأكثر فقهاء المغرب وطلبة علمه من أهل بخارى وبغداد وكابل وقندهار ومن إليها من المدن والأمصار ومن ظن أنه المقصود من الملكة العلمية فقد أخطأ وإنما المقصود هو: ملكة الاستخراج والاستنباط وسرعة الانتقال من الدوال إلى المدلولات ومن اللازم إلى الملزوم وبالعكس فإن انضم إليها ملكة الاستحضار فنعم المطلوب وهذا لا يتم بمجرد الحفظ بل الحفظ من أسباب الاستحضار وهو راجع إلى جودة قوة الحافظة وضعفها وذلك من أحوال الأمزجة الخلقية وإن كان مما يقبل العلاج.

education¹³⁹. Being born as a son of a weaver father from Karaman province who later moved to Salonic, Müneccimbāṣī initially pursued spiritual training. In *Veḳāyi ü l-fuzalā*, he is mentioned in the section dedicated to Sufi masters rather than scholars. However, the entry on him notes that due to his interest in "external sciences", he turned towards intellectual training. He first completed the foundational sciences in Salonica and continued his intellectual education in Istanbul. During this time, he apprenticed a Sufi sheikh named Seyyid Halil Efendi and continuously studied Rumi's *Mathnawi* for 15 years. Concurrently, he continued learning "external sciences", specifically mathematical and astrological sciences, under the tutelage of Mehmed Çelebi, the chief astrologer, whom he succeeded after his death and held that position for several years¹⁴⁰. In what follows, I will provide a brief introduction to Müneccimbāṣī's methodological work on hermeneutic reading and examine his discussions on malaka. Then, I will reference his other work to substantiate my reading of malaka as a virtue, addressing possible objections.

The utility of reading practices in providing insights into the formation of the scholarly self has been previously acknowledged¹⁴¹. One exemplary text evincing this is Müneccimbāṣī's "The Emanation of the Sanctuary in the Manners of Perusal" (*Fayḍ al-Haram fi ādāb al-muṭāla'a*). In the preface of the text, the author underlines that he is undertaking the first-ever attempt in Islamic intellectual history to formulate¹⁴² the methodology of hermeneutic reading (*ādāb al-muṭāla'a*)¹⁴³ as an independent and fully developed discipline¹⁴⁴. Müneccimbāṣī presents two definitions of *muṭāla'ah* to

¹³⁹ By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in the Ottoman discourses, a clear distinction had emerged within Ottoman discourses between two distinct communities or cultures of knowledge. One community represented intellectual authority called scholars of *naẓar* (intellection/reasoning), while the other emphasized moral and spiritual training and were referred to as the scholars of *taṣfiye* (purification). While it was maintained as an ideal to integrate intellectual growth with moral and spiritual cultivation, and some individuals were recognized for excelling in both realms, the prevailing understanding acknowledged their distinctiveness and regarded these as separate domains of knowledge, each with its own institutions and boundaries.

¹⁴⁰ Şeyhi, *Vakāiü'l-Fuzalā*, V. III, 2229-30.

¹⁴¹ Daston, "Taking Note(s)."

¹⁴² In classical Islamic jargon, this is called *tadwīn* referring to the written codification postulates, definition, subject matter, scientific questions, purpose and benefit of discipline.

¹⁴³ Other possible translations for *muṭāla'a* would be perusal or reading/deep reading, as preferred by Rouayheb.

¹⁴⁴ Müneccimbaşı disqualifies a number of possible reasons why the earlier scholar had not shown interest in the codification of *ādāb al-muṭāla'a* and establishes the necessity of such an undertaking. He does refer to a one-pager that he had encountered, containing issues falling under *adab al-muṭāla'a*. However, the text had borrowed the terms heavily from the discipline of the manners of inquiry and argumentation (*ādāb al-baḥth wa al-munāzara*) and was not sufficiently comprehensive, and thus Müneccimbaşı decided to author an independent work on the subject. Örs (2020) has verified el-

clarify its technical meaning employed by the scholars, which constitutes the subject matter (*mawḍūʿ*) of this new discipline. According to the shorter definition, *muṭālaʿah* is described as "pondering a text to obtain an implicated meaning¹⁴⁵."

In comparison, the more extended definition characterises it as "pondering written utterances, whose lexical meanings are known, to arrive at what is intended in their use in terms of articulating a truth or demonstration of the sought conclusion in a valid manner according to the critical scholars". The *muṭālaʿah* as a discipline (*ʿilm*) deals with the methods and requirements of *muṭālaʿah* in its technical sense and aim to "protect the mind from being confined to the apparent and from being deprived of the truths and subtleties".

Fayḍ al-Ḥaram has already been examined by el-Rouayheb in the context of his argument about "the emergence of a more impersonal and textual model of the transmission of knowledge in the central Ottoman lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."¹⁴⁶ He highlights that *muṭālaʿah*, which he refers to as "deep reading," represented a new ideal of acquiring knowledge through direct interaction with texts, in contrast to the previous emphasis on knowledge transmission through the student-teacher relationship and oral-aural methods. El-Rouayheb attributes this development to the increasing significance of the instrumental and rational sciences, as well as the reforms undergone by the Ottoman learned hierarchy in the sixteenth century.

Although El-Rouayheb offers a comprehensive analysis of *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, the term *malaka*, which is a central concept in the text, does not receive significant attention in his work. The concept of *malaka* first emerges when Mūneccimbāṣī discusses the objectives of engaging in *muṭālaʿah*, which are categorised into four distinct purposes based on the individual's state of pursuit. A pursuer either:

Rouayheb's suggestion that Mūneccimbāṣī was referring to *Risala fī ādāb al-muṭālaʿah* by fifteenth-century scholar Ḥāmid b. Burhān al-Dīn al-Ghaffārī. Örs also presents another work on *muṭālaʿah* written by Abdullah al-Bosnawī (d.1053/1643) that predated Mūneccimbāṣī's treatise (p. 54-55).

¹⁴⁵ I have rendered the term *mafhūm* as an implicated meaning, which is one of the two main forms of textual implication or signification according to a common classification in Islamic interpretive theory which are *dalalah al-manṭuq* (pronounced or stated meaning) and *dalalah al-maḥmūm* (implied meaning).

¹⁴⁶ El-Rouayheb, "The Rise of "Deep Reading" in Early Modern Ottoman Scholarly Culture", 201.

1. has the potential for the knowledge of the subject matter but lacks the actual knowledge (*'ilm bi-l-fi'l*) of it. In this case, the purpose of engaging in *muṭāla'a* is to acquire knowledge.
2. or possesses actual knowledge, but it is based on "imitation" (*taqlīdī*), lacking evidence or justification. By pursuing *muṭāla'a*, this individual can verify their knowledge and reach the level of *tahqīqī* knowledge. *Muṭāla'a*, in this case, aims to establish justified or verified knowledge (*tahqīqī*).
3. or possesses actual knowledge that is already justified and verified (*tahqīqī*). It is at this point that Mūneccimbāṣī introduces the concept of *malaka* for the first time in the text. Engaging in *muṭāla'a* at this stage aims to reach the level of the virtue of recollection (*martabat malakat al-istiḥḍār*), where knowledge becomes part of the person's semantic memory and can be easily retrieved.
4. has achieved the virtue of *istiḥḍār*. At this stage, engaging in *muṭāla'a* will further enhance and strengthen their knowledge.

These stages of *muṭāla'a* serve one of the four objectives: *taḥṣīl* (i.e. learning concepts and knowledge propositions), *tahqīq* (verification and refers to the development of a more critical attitude with particular knowledge), *istiḥḍār* (knowledge becoming part of semantic memory and easily retrievable) and finally *tanmiyya* and *taqwīyya* (the development and consolidation of knowledge).

Following this discussion, Mūneccimbāṣī dedicates a whole subsection to the definition and classification of *malaka*: "... *al-malaka*, in general, is an enduring quality in the soul by which voluntary acts emanates from it [soul] in an effortless manner without a deliberation. It is called *hal* before it is established [in the soul]."¹⁴⁷ He further adds that *malakas* are numerous, "but for the perfection of knowledge, three *malaka* are sought after". These are *malakat al-istiḥṣāl*, *malakat al-istikhrāj* and

¹⁴⁷ "al-malaka muṭlaqan 'ibāra 'an kayfiyyat rāsikha fī al-nafs yaṣḍuru biha 'an al-nafs naw' min al-āthār al-ikhtiyāriyya bi-suhūla min ghayr rawīya." Mūneccimbāṣī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, 75.

malakat al-istiḥdār. Mūneccimbāṣī proceeds to provide detailed explanations of each of these three virtues:

Malakat al-istiḥṣāl: This is the basic intellectual virtue, a rooted quality in the mind by which the mind becomes ready for the ability of extraction that is *istikhrāj*. It is cultivated by acquiring the basics of knowledge and the primary axiomatic premises from the "mouths of people" (*taḥaṣṣala hadhihi al-malaka bi-'akhz 'awa'il al-'ulūm wa mabād'iha al-'awwaliyya min afwāh al-rijāl*). This is almost like "primary socialisation" to the knowledge community. One has to comprehend the primary concepts, apriori propositions, self-evident axioms and principles (*badīhiyyāt and awwaliyyāt*) to attain the virtue of *istiḥṣāl*, which enables the acquisition of *naẓariyyāt*. Mūneccimbāṣī notes that the virtue of *istiḥṣāl* is also the most common virtue among the three.¹⁴⁸

In *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiyya*, which I will soon discuss in detail, Mūneccimbāṣī explains this virtue in relation to the theory of four intellects. In the first stage, the mind possesses the distant potential to perceive things but does not possess actual knowledge. This stage of the intellect is referred to as hylic intellect (*al-'aql al-hayūlāni*), resembling formless prime matter (hyle). When the mind reaches the stage of actual perception of the *awwaliyyāt* and *badīhiyyāt*, it attains the virtue of *istiḥṣāl*, which also allows for the acquisition of *naẓariyyāt*. This constitutes the second stage of the four intellects theory and is called *'aql bi-l-malaka*. At the third stage of the intellect, known as *'aql bi-l-fi'l*, the *naẓariyyat* emerges in the mind, and through the malaka of *istiḥdār*, the mind is capable of using and retrieving them at will.¹⁴⁹

Malakat al-istikhrāj is a virtue by which the mind extracts "the meaning of any given expression easily without undertaking a deliberation"¹⁵⁰. This virtue is cultivated by mastering the principles from the instrumental sciences and by retrieving what is important from them. The perfection of this virtue is achieved in two ways. First, the mind must become proficient and comfortable in extracting meanings with this virtue,

¹⁴⁸ Mūneccimbāṣī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, 75.

¹⁴⁹ Mūneccimbāṣī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiyya*, 291.

¹⁵⁰ "ḥiya malaka bihā tastakhrij al-nafs al-ma'ānī min al-'ibārāt al-warida 'alayhā bi-suhūla min ghayr tajashshum rawīya"

ensuring that the extracted meanings correspond to reality (*al-tatmīm*). Second, this proficiency and ease of mind should be general, applying to oneself in all or most of the common sciences (*al-t'amīm*).

Müneccimbāṣī provides further details on how to attain these two aspects. He emphasises the necessity of persisting in *muṭāla'a* by adhering to its rules and requirements. One should practice the meanings they extract with those of the “perfected”, preferably engaging in oral discussions and seeking their company if they are available in their time and region. If such individuals are not accessible, one should embark on a journey to them, following the traditions of the predecessors. In cases where the perfected individuals cannot be found, whether within one's own country or elsewhere, one should rely on their texts and carefully observe how they extract meanings, initiate and conclude discussions, accept or reject positions and explore tangential topics without deviating from the primary intent. Through this method, knowledge is extended from one discipline to another, building upon the initial extraction.

He then proceeds to discuss how scholars had recognised that the acquisition and perfection of this virtue varied according to the diversity of intellectual capabilities. It is acquired and perfected more quickly by the intelligent, while it takes longer and requires more effort for those who were less intellectually gifted. Consequently, they considered the time required for its acquisition and perfection for those of average intelligence based on the time spent reading books from various prevalent sciences under the guidance of a competent teacher or teachers. They have categorised these sciences into foundational subjects (*mabād*) and thematic subjects (*mawād*) and referred to the highest level of proficiency as 'the completer of subjects (*mukammil al mawād*) who is someone who has cultivated the virtue of extraction in these sciences in a complete and generalised way and reaching a stage where they no longer require the guidance of a teacher. Instead, they focus on strengthening and expanding their knowledge through further engagement in *muṭāla'a*, repetition, and application.¹⁵¹

The third virtue is *malakat al-istiḥdār*. It is defined as the virtue by which the mind effortlessly retrieves meanings and knowledge that are not present to it, whenever

¹⁵¹ Müneccimbāṣī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, 76.

willed, without the need for additional deliberation or the effort to revisit their sources from books or individuals.¹⁵²

This virtue is cultivated by repeatedly engaging with the meanings and sciences from their sources until they are firmly established in the mind with profound proficiency for the desired goal. *Malakat al-istiḥdār* is perfected in its true sense by extending it to encompass all prevalent sciences. It is considered the "most distinctive virtue", "ranking the highest in importance", "dearest in existence", and "most coveted". Müneccimbāṣī urges aspiring ulama candidates not to be satisfied with the attainment of *istikhrāj* alone, even if it is completed and universalised. Instead, they should strive to obtain the *malakat al-istiḥdār*. The term "Perfected" is used to refer to someone who possesses this virtue in all the sciences, and "such a person today is scarcer than red sulphur," adds Müneccimbāṣī.

After discussing these three virtues, Müneccimbāṣī adds that similar to the notion of four intellects, these three virtues can be applied either to a specific issue (*mas'ala*), where a person attains the virtue of *istiḥsal* first, then *istikhrāj*, and finally *istiḥdār*, or to the mind in general (*muṭlaq al-'aql*) or in relation to some of the sciences. However, he clarifies that his usage of these virtues pertains to the systematised sciences prevalent among scholars (*al-'ulūm al-mudawwana al-mutadāwila bayn al-'ulamā*).

In addition to the subsection dedicated to these three virtues, references to them can be found throughout the texts. Furthermore, there is a separate chapter specifically addressing *malakat al-istiḥdār*, as it corresponds to one of the four goals for pursuing hermeneutic reading mentioned earlier. This chapter is titled "Exposition of Methods Specific for Those Whose Aim in Hermeneutic Reading is the Cultivation of the Malaka of *Istiḥdār* Through Repetition."

One of the main discussions in that chapter revolves around the two ways of attaining the malaka of *istiḥdār*. If the malaka is related to an instrumental discipline that is not sought after for itself, then it is acquired through repeated *mutala'a* and reflection (*mulāḥaza*) and their application. Müneccimbāṣī provides examples such as attaining

¹⁵² "ḥiya malaka biha tastaḥdir al-nafs al-ma'ānī wa al-'ulūm al-ghā'iba 'anha matā shā'at bi-suhūla min ghayr takalluf rawīya jadīda wa la tajashshum muraja'atha ila maḥalliha min kutub wa rijāl"

proficiency in the fields of lexicography, derivation and morphology, which require reading related books repeatedly and practising them with every encountered word. This includes remembering the etymology of every vocable and their posited meanings and considering how some of them derive from each other and what their original and additional units are. However, in the case of non-instrumental sciences, the malaka of *istiḥdār* is attained simply by engaging in *mutala'a* and *mulāḥaza*.¹⁵³

The chapter also explores other aspects of the malaka of *istiḥdār*, such as the notion that virtue in a discipline (*malakat al-fan*) is either the sum of virtues pertaining to the issues (*malakat al-mas'ala*) within that discipline or a distinct virtue on its own. Additionally, Müneccimbāṣī delves into the question of the benefit of pursuing *mutala'a* if one has already attained the virtue of al-*istiḥdār*.

There are also more specific instructions on how to obtain the virtue of *istiḥdār*. Toward the end of the first chapter, Müneccimbāṣī states that after considering the words and meanings of the topic, one should summarise the issue from beginning to end. He then proceeds to provide a detailed explanation of what a successful summary should encompass and identifies potential challenges in constructing a concise summary, as well as strategies to overcome them. He emphasises that a clear indicator of having achieved a comprehensive understanding of the topic is the ability to express and discuss it using different expressions. One should be capable of answering questions about the essence of the discourse, its ultimate point, and so on. Müneccimbāṣī even offers a template for a responsive summary that deconstructs the argument. He suggests that to cultivate the virtue of *istiḥdār*, one should critically examine their summary through a process of "back and forth" (*al-wārid and al-ṣādir*) and engage in a dialogue with imagined objectors, considering possible objections to the argument presented in the discourse.

Although the *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram* is not a text on intellectual virtues, the underlying malaka-centric notion of the scholarly self is unique and original. As we have seen in the previous examples, it became a conventional way of talking about educational ideals and scholarly character. In what follows, I will discuss how this approach is

¹⁵³ Müneccimbāṣī, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, 98.

related to the broader Muslim virtue theory of the period. I will endeavour to substantiate my reading of the term *malaka* as an epistemic virtue.

3.8. Why Consider Malaka as an Intellectual Virtue?

How is my reading of *malaka* as virtue justified? As I have demonstrated, *malaka* emerges as a recurring term in Ottoman sources, frequently featuring in discussions pertaining to what it meant to be a scholar, either as a goal of learning or as an integral aspect of a scholarly character. However, given the diverse contexts in which *malaka* is referenced, a careful justification is necessary to support my interpretation of it as an epistemic virtue, considering the potential alternative understandings that can arise. For instance, *malaka of istihdār* could be perceived simply as a function of memory, while *malaka of istikhrāj* and *istinbāt* may be seen as skills related to textual interpretation. Additionally, the use of *malaka* in relation to specific disciplines (such as *malakat al-fann* and *malakat al-şarf*) could be construed as disciplinary competencies.

Moreover, it becomes essential to clarify and defend my conceptualisation of *malaka* as an epistemic virtue, particularly when juxtaposed with the virtues commonly examined in historical scholarship on epistemic virtues. The virtues explored by historians, such as thoroughness, self-distanciation, and objectivity, diverge from various types of *malakas* employed by Ottoman scholars.

As a response to these potential objections, I provide two justifications. First, I demonstrate that Müneccimbāşī's conception of intellectual *malaka* is rooted in classical ethics within practical philosophy. This alignment is analogous to the contemporary notions of virtue epistemology, which also draw inspiration from an ethical theory, specifically virtue ethics. Müneccimbāşī not only appropriates the concept of *malaka* from ethics to construct his framework of intellectual perfection but also situates his intellectual virtues as integral components of a broader array of virtues essential for attaining human excellence.

My second justification is predicated on the exposition that while historians have predominantly engaged with a specific interpretation of epistemic virtues, namely

responsibilist virtues, alternative conceptions of epistemic virtues exist that can aptly accommodate Müneccimbāṣī's notion of malakas needed for intellectual perfection.

3.9. Malaka in the Ethical Literature and Müneccimbāṣī's Commentary

It is important to recognise that today, what unites the main research programs centred on epistemic or intellectual virtues is their inspiration derived from virtue theories in ethics. This commonality holds true for both major schools in contemporary virtue epistemology, namely reliabilists and responsibilists, which openly acknowledge borrowing their strategies from virtue theories in ethics. It is worth noting that the primary disagreement between these two streams of virtue epistemology often revolves around differing interpretations of the notion of virtue in Greek thought.¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, most historical works on intellectual virtues explicitly mention that they draw upon the concept of epistemic virtue from virtue epistemology. Even Daston and Galison's seminal work on objectivity, which does not reference virtue epistemology and appears to construct its own version of epistemic virtue, does so in conversation with the discussions on moral self.¹⁵⁵

As we have seen, Müneccimbāṣī's adoption of the term malaka in *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram* is far from being accidental. He not only provides the standard definition of malaka in classical ethical thought but also acknowledges that the malakas he discusses in relation to intellectual perfection are part of a broader set of malakas associated with other aspects of human development. Further nuances become apparent upon closer analysis of his other work, showing that Müneccimbāṣī was well aware of the ethical thought of the time. Müneccimbāṣī authored a commentary on the renowned ethical treatise *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* written by ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355)¹⁵⁶. Al-Ījī's treatise holds a prominent position in the field of practical philosophy within the Islamic

¹⁵⁴ Zagzebski critiques the reliabilist version of intellectual virtue, contending that Sosa's understanding of virtue in classical thought is flawed. According to Zagzebski, the qualities identified by Sosa as virtues, such as eyesight and memory, do not align with the classical conception of virtue but rather correspond to faculties. For a more detailed discussion on this topic and a reliabilist response to Zagzebski's critique, refer to Greco, *Two Kinds of Intellectual Virtue*.

¹⁵⁵ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 39-42.

¹⁵⁶ The Arabic text of *Akhlāq al-ʿAḍudiyya* is available in Arici, *Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's Treatise on Ethics*. Recently, Salem (2022) translated it into English in *Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's Ethics*, which also briefly discusses the commentaries on the text.

intellectual tradition, and it has received extensive commentary from various scholars.¹⁵⁷ While there has been a passing discussion on the originality of the text¹⁵⁸, its significance has been greatly amplified through the rich tradition of commentaries it generated. Each commentary not only adds a distinct historical dimension to the text but also reflects the intellectual inclinations of the respective commentator¹⁵⁹, which included Ottoman figures such as Taşköprüzāde (d.1561) before Müneccimbāşī and Ismail Mufid al-Istanbūli (d.1802) after him. Among the known commentaries on al-Ījī's treatise, Müneccimbāşī's work stands out as the most comprehensive and detailed.¹⁶⁰

Akhlāq al-‘Aḍudiyya is a typical text on practical philosophy, structured into four primary chapters. The first chapters delve into theoretical considerations, exploring individual ethics by examining the definition of character and its potential for transformation. It further discusses the three fundamental faculties of the human soul, i.e. reason (*nuṭq*), appetite (*shahwa*) and anger (*ghaḍab*), their respective virtues, the vices of excess and deficiency associated with each of them, and the subcategories within these virtues. The second chapter focuses on the attainment and preservation of character, as well as addressing the primary ailments that afflict the three powers of the soul. The last two chapters are on the issues pertaining to household management (*siyāsāt al-manzīl*) and city administration (*tadbīr al-mudun*).

So, turning back to the term *malaka*, it is perhaps the central concept in *Akhlāq al-‘Aḍudiyya* when considered within the context of Müneccimbāşī's commentary. Al-Ījī's text is very brief and refers to the term *malaka* only a few times; Müneccimbāşī assigns a broad explanatory role to it in his explanation of the text. The very first reference to the term *malaka* in Al-Ījī's text appears in the definition of the term

¹⁵⁷ The popularity of al-Ījī's treatise has been attributed to two main factors. Firstly, it was written in Arabic, whereas the previous major ethical works were written in Persian. This shift in language allowed for wider accessibility and circulation of the texts among the learning circles. Secondly, the concise nature of the text contributed to its appeal and made it conducive for commentaries. For further discussions on this, see Salem, *Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's Ethics* and also Arici, *Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's Treatise on Ethics* (in Turkish).

¹⁵⁸ Arici, *Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's Treatise on Ethics*, 141

¹⁵⁹ For instance, for an interpretation of Müneccimbāşī's commentary as an attempt to synthesize Peripatetic philosophy and Illuminationist thought, see Kömbe, *Müneccimbāşī Ahmed Dede's Thoughts on Ethics*.

¹⁶⁰ The full text of Müneccimbāşī's detailed commentary is available in Aykıt, *Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin Şerhu Ahlak-ı Adud Adlı Eseri*.

character (*khulq*): “character is a *malaka* from which conscious actions emanate easily without deliberation.”¹⁶¹

Commenting on this definition, Müneccimbāṣī defines *malaka* as an “enduring quality”, as he did in *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*. However, in this instance, he provides a more detailed explanation by offering a classification of qualities to situate *malaka* within a broader ontology of accidents (*‘araḍ*). Qualities, which are accidents, are of four types. (1) Some qualities are perceivable with external senses and they are further divided into five based on five external senses; (2) Then there are qualities that are not perceivable by external senses and are specific to the rational soul (*mukhtaṣ bi-al-naḥs al-nāḥiqā*). Such qualities, referred to as *naḥsāni*, are plenty and encompass all character types as well as qualities like joy, sadness, pain, pleasure and others. (3) There are qualities that are not specific to the rational soul and are related to the quantity (*kayf mukhtaṣ bi-l-kam*), such as angle, oddness, and evenness of numbers, among others. (4) the last category includes qualities that are not perceivable by external senses, not specific to the rational soul, nor related to quantity. These qualities, known as qualities of capacity (*kayf al-istidad*), include qualities like strength and weakness.

Within this wider ontological classification, *malaka* is associated with the second category of qualities, namely those that are specific to the rational soul. In terms of their emergence and endurance, the qualities specific to the rational soul are divided into enduring or rooted qualities, *malaka*, and non-enduring ones, ḥāl.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ al-khulq *malaka taṣḍuru ‘anha al-af’ al al-naḥsāniyya bi-suhūla min ghayr rawīya*

¹⁶² Müneccimbāṣī, “Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-‘Aḍudiyya.” In *Müneccimbaṣī Ahmed Dede’nin Şerhu Ahlāk-ı Adud Adlı Eseri, Metin Tahkiki ve Değerlendirme*, Aykıt, PhD diss., Marmara University, 2013. Ulusal Tez Merkezi (336185), 251.

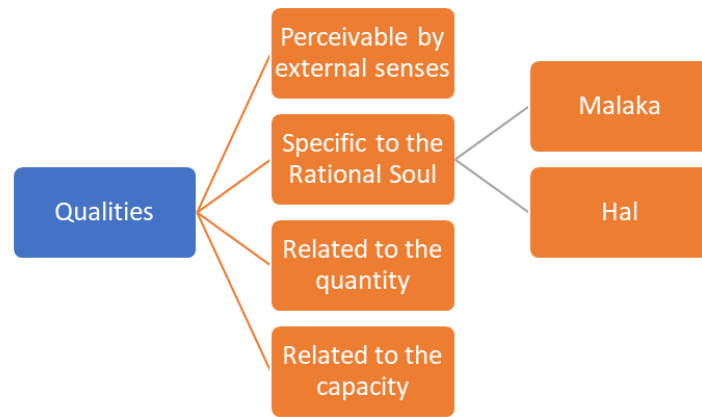


Figure 1 Classification of Qualities.

Al-Ījī's ethical model is rooted in the classical concept of managing three faculties of the human soul, i.e. reason, appetite and anger. Here, I will restrict my attention to the virtues of the reason, in relation to which intellectual virtues are mainly discussed¹⁶³.

Al-Ījī identifies wisdom (*ḥikma*) as the equilibrium of reason, representing a form of meta-intellectual virtue, though the text does not include a definition for it. He also enumerates seven "subcategories" of wisdom, which encompass:

1. mental clarity (*ṣafā' dhihn*),
2. the soundness of understanding (*jawdat al-fahm*),
3. mental agility (*dhakā'*),
4. clear conceptualization (*ḥusn al-taṣawwur*),
5. facileness in learning (*suhūlat al-ta'allum*),
6. memorisation (*ḥifẓ*)
7. and evocation (*dhikr*).

For Müneccimbāṣī, both *ḥikma* and its subcategories are *malaka*. Commenting on the term *ḥikma*, Müneccimbāṣī states that when the body's temperaments achieve

¹⁶³ Note that I am not claiming that Müneccimbāṣī's commentary assumes the irrelevance of virtues related to the other two faculties (i.e., anger and appetite) to intellectual work. Rather, the text presents the three powers of the soul (i.e., reason, anger, and appetite) as interrelated faculties, with their virtues being interconnected. In fact, the text includes explicit references that demonstrate how these qualities contribute to the pursuit of knowledge as a form of "auxiliary" intellectual virtue, using Sosa's concept (2015: 42). However, an in-depth examination of this text from a broader epistemological perspective falls beyond the scope of this article.

equilibrium, the faculty of reason becomes obedient and submissive to the human self, remaining protected from deceptive influences that may control it.

Then, the human self utilises reason unhindered and without opposition in acquiring the discursive sciences related to the tools of learning, abstract concepts, and "all the higher and lower truths, which we have no access to except through its knowledge and actions".

This leads to the cultivation of wisdom (*ḥikma*) in the soul, which is a malaka "by which the mind effortlessly differentiates distinguishes the truth and falsehood that is good and evil without an additional deliberation, and follows the truth and avoids falsehood, does good, and refrains from evil."¹⁶⁴

Regarding al-Ījī's seven subcategories of wisdom, it is noteworthy that Mūneccimbāṣī considers these subcategories too as virtues. This is not immediately evident from Al-Ījī's original text. It is important to emphasise that, according to Mūneccimbāṣī, these virtues are adjutant to wisdom, and there could exist more intellectual virtues beyond the enumerated seven. As we have seen in *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, Mūneccimbāṣī does not rigidly adhere to the precise virtues outlined by Al-Ījī, although he does make reference to certain among them. For instance, mental clarity (*ṣafā' dhihn*), defined as "the readiness of the mind to extract what is desired without confusion" and soundness of understanding (*jawdat al-fahm*), which is related to "the soundness of transition from evidence to the conclusion," are both explicitly mentioned in *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*. Conversely, in *Sharḥ al-'Aḍud*, Mūneccimbāṣī provides a succinct conceptualisation of his primary three intellectual virtues as discussed in *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, to which I have referred in the previous section.

Of equal significance is Mūneccimbāṣī's insistence that these subcategories are virtues, not faculties. This is particularly evident in his analysis of memorisation (*ḥifẓ*) and evocation (*dhikr*), which may initially appear as faculties of the mind. Anticipating such possible understandings, Mūneccimbāṣī cautions the readers not to confuse the virtue of memorisation (*ḥifẓ*) with the faculty of memory (*ḥafīza*), which is one of the

¹⁶⁴ Mūneccimbāṣī, *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-'Aḍudiyya*, 269

five internal human senses (*hawāss*), capturing and storing particular meanings (*al-ma'ānī al-juz'iyya*). Memorization (*ḥifẓ*) in this context is “the name of malaka (*ism al-malaka*), one of the malakas of the soul adjutant to the malaka of wisdom”. Through this virtue, the soul *effortlessly retains perceived images or meanings* (*al-ṣuwar/al-ma'ānī al-mudrika*), which are the images arrived in the mind from the truths of things (*ḥaqā'iq al-'ashya'*)¹⁶⁵.

A similar discussion emerges in relation to evocation (*dhikr*). Müneccimbāṣī follows a parallel line of argument here, contending that evocation is not a faculty of the mind (*al-quwwa al-dimāghiyya*) responsible for retrieving stored specific meanings (*al-ma'ānī al-juz'iyya*) from sensible particulars (*al-juz'iyyāt al-maḥsūsa*). Instead, evocation (*dhakā'*) is an adjunct virtue to wisdom, enabling the soul/mind, enabling soul/mind to effortlessly retrieve from what it has stored without the need for further deliberation. He elaborates on this definition by specifying that he is referring to the retrieval of concepts/universal meanings (*al-ma'ānī al-kulliyā*).

So far, we have seen that Müneccimbāṣī recognised the utility of the ethical concept of *malaka* to formulate his conception of intellectual perfection and how the discussions in the ethical literature informed his image of an ideal scholar. He not only reworked three different categories of intellectual virtues but also applied them to specific scholarly fields. I will now turn to the contesting understanding of epistemic virtues to situate Müneccimbāṣī's intellectual malakas.

3.10. Malaka: An Ottoman Virtue Reliabilism?

Whether considering Müneccimbāṣī's three primary intellectual virtues in Fayḍ al-Ḥaram or other intellectual virtues found in his commentary on Al-Ījī's ethical treatise—such as clarity of mind, mental agility, or memorisation—the malakas explored thus far do not seem to align with the concepts traditionally investigated in the history of epistemic virtues. Addressing this apparent disparity, in this section, I explore the compatibility of malaka with the spectrum of contemporary understandings of epistemic virtues, presenting three contrasting perspectives: two

¹⁶⁵ Müneccimbāṣī, *Sharḥ*, 297.

from virtue epistemology and a third from the history of science. My purpose here is to showcase the diversity of interpretations of epistemic virtues today and argue that malaka when viewed through this broader lens, can indeed be recognised as an intellectual virtue and potentially enrich philosophical and historical discussions on epistemic virtues.

The first perspective comes from virtue theorists who regard intellectual virtues as character traits. Notably, Zagzebski, a major responsibilist, defines virtues —both moral and intellectual— as "a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a certain desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end."¹⁶⁶ According to her, the most convincing way to distinguish intellectual virtues from moral virtues is through the motivational aspect of virtue. Epistemic or intellectual virtues can then be differentiated from other virtues by being defined "in terms of motivations arising from the general motivation for knowledge and reliability in attaining the aims of these motives." From this standpoint, intellectual virtues amount to character traits encompassing qualities like *open-mindedness*, *intellectual humility*, *curiosity*, *adaptability of intellect* and *diligence*. And knowledge is "a state of true belief" or "cognitive contact with reality" arising out of acts of such virtues.

Virtue reliabilists present a contrasting view, positing that knowledge explained solely through responsibilist intellectual virtues, such as open-mindedness or intellectual courage, is insufficient and unnecessary¹⁶⁷. While not negating the role of character traits in the attainment of knowledge, virtue reliabilists assign them only an auxiliary role, in contrast to "constitutive" virtues¹⁶⁸. Hence, character traits as auxiliary virtues transcend the realm of pure epistemology. They hold broader significance within epistemology, yet their epistemic role remains tangential and should be explored as applied intellectual ethics. Within the reliabilist framework, intellectual virtues are construed as cognitive skills, abilities, or competencies. These qualities are defined as

¹⁶⁶ Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind*, 137.

¹⁶⁷ For a reliabilist critique of responsibilist version of virtue epistemology, see Greco, *Two kinds of Intellectual Virtue* (pages 181-183) as well as the chapter "Virtue Epistemology: Character versus Competence" in Sosa, *Judgment and Agency*.

¹⁶⁸ Sosa literally classifies them as "auxiliary" intellectual virtues, by contrast with the "constitutive" intellectual virtues of virtue reliabilism, Sosa, *Judgment and Agency*, 42.

“innate faculties or acquired habits that enable a person to arrive at truth and avoid error in some relevant field”.¹⁶⁹ and encompass cognitive qualities and faculties such as accurate *perception*, *reliable memory*, *introspection*, and *inference*.

Historians' interest in virtue epistemology has not centred on endorsing it among other contemporary epistemological perspectives. Nor have they sought to align themselves with either the responsibilists or reliabilists camps. Their primary focus has been on responsibilist intellectual virtues, as these virtues serve as valuable conceptual tools to analyse historical accounts of knowledge practices, discussions on scholarly character and the notions of scholarly self¹⁷⁰.

Historians have demonstrated a more substantial interest in responsibilist intellectual virtues, owing to their higher contextual dependency and perceived higher potential to evolve over time. These factors make them more amenable to historical analysis compared to reliabilist virtues, often associated with cognitive functions and abilities that are considered more universal or transcendental. In other words, responsibilist virtues are more conducive to historicisation. For example, a history of open-mindedness is a more viable endeavour than delving into a history of memory. Another reason for this preference is the dominance of historians from humanities backgrounds in the history of epistemic virtues. They tend to perceive reliabilist virtues as less pertinent than responsibilist virtues, which are useful in projects exploring the historical evolution of standards of good scholarship across various fields within the humanities. Perhaps linked to this, historians have also shunned virtue reliabilism due to its stronger connection with epistemology, psychology, or cognitive science, requiring a distinct set of scholarly expertise to deal with.

There is a third notion of epistemic virtues in historical studies that diverges from the framework of virtue epistemology. Daston and Galison, in their influential work, delve into the emergence of objectivity in the 19th century as a novel epistemic virtue, representing "a new way of studying nature, and of being a scientist." Drawing inspiration from historical studies on "technologies of the self," which examine bodily

¹⁶⁹ Greco, *Virtues in Epistemology*, 287.

¹⁷⁰For an example of how historians engage with virtue epistemology and the significance they attribute to intellectual virtues in their scholarly work, see Paul, *Performing History*, p. 7-9.

and mental practices and exercises shaping particular kinds of selves, the authors argue that the scientific self is no exception—it also requires specialised techniques for its formation and reinforcement.

Since knowledge is inherently dependent on the inquirer, always involving a knower, the knower can potentially influence the acquisition of knowledge—either facilitating or hindering it. Thus, the self of the knower becomes a matter not only of ethical concern but also of epistemological significance. The pursuit of knowledge necessitates the internalisation and enforcement of specific ideals and values. Epistemic virtues then are defined as "norms that are internalised and enforced by appeal to ethical values, as well as to pragmatic efficacy in securing knowledge."¹⁷¹

When considering various malakas discussed by Müneccimbāṣī, it becomes apparent that they do not fit squarely within the paradigms of virtue responsibilism or Daston and Galison's understanding of epistemic virtues. However, this should not be understood to mean that qualities like open-mindedness, intellectual humility, creativity or epistemic standards like objectivity or truth-to-nature are alien to Müneccimbāṣī's discourse. In fact, one can even find references to such qualities in Müneccimbāṣī's texts and develop a broader epistemological account of Müneccimbāṣī. Yet, while such qualities can be found, they are not constructed as malakas. Consider the following definition of open-mindedness, the responsibilist intellectual virtue par excellence:

*An open-minded person is characteristically (a) willing and (within limits) able (b) to transcend a default cognitive standpoint (c) in order to take up or take seriously the merits of (d) a distinct cognitive standpoint.*¹⁷²

Baehr's concept of open-mindedness, defined as the willingness and ability to transcend one's initial cognitive perspective in order to consider the value of an alternative cognitive viewpoint, significantly differs from, for instance, al-Ījī's notion of "facileness in learning." This quality, akin to cognitive efficiency, is defined by Müneccimbāṣī as a malaka of the mind by which it "grasps the unknown with little or minimal effort."

¹⁷¹ Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 40-41.

¹⁷² Baehr, "Structure of Open-Mindedness," 202.

Among the three interpretations of epistemic virtues, the reliabilist account resonates most closely with Müneccimbāṣī's perspective. All seven intellectual virtues expounded in Müneccimbāṣī's *Sharḥ al-Akhlāq al-‘Aḍudiyya* align well with Sosa's and other reliabilists' conceptualisations, which encompass virtues like acute perception, memory, and sound reasoning. Whether they are malakas tied to belief formation or knowledge acquisition, such as mental clarity, soundness of understanding, mental agility, clear conceptualisation, cognitive efficiency, or inference (*istikhrāj*), or retention attributes like memorisation (*ḥifẓ*) and cognitive utilisation ability of semantic fluency (*istiḥdār*), they all fit within the framework of intellectual virtues according to reliabilist theory.

However, Müneccimbāṣī significantly diverges from reliabilist perspectives, particularly by constraining the notion of malaka to qualities rather than innate faculties. Unlike reliabilists, for Müneccimbāṣī, cognitive faculties themselves are not virtues. Additionally, another disparity lies in the significance placed on *istiḥdār*, or semantic fluency, within Müneccimbāṣī's framework. Müneccimbāṣī's focus was on shaping a notion of virtue that not only elucidates the nature of knowledge but also serves as a tool for educational and scholarly discussions of the time. As the apex quality, *istiḥdār*, or semantic fluency, could be linked to specific domains of knowledge. For instance, one might possess *istiḥdār* in the realm of morphology but not in the domain of argumentation theory. Similarly, an individual could exhibit semantic fluency in a particular subdomain of inquiry or a specific theme while lacking it in other subdomains or issues within that field. These aspects of intellectual virtues seem to hold less appeal for reliabilist virtue theorists, as their primary focus revolves around more fundamental, purely epistemic inquiries aimed at providing an essential account of knowledge.

3.11. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to take the initial stride towards writing a history of Ottoman scholarly selfhood through the lens of epistemic virtues. By drawing on the relevant sources from the era, I have endeavoured to highlight some aspects of late seventeenth—and eighteenth-century Ottoman intellectual discourses surrounding

scholarly learning and the making of an *‘ālim*. Demonstrating the centrality of virtue language in these discussions, I have exhibited how Ottoman intellectuals reconceptualised the concept of *malaka* to articulate their educational and scholarly ideals.

Malaka, a concept rooted in Islamic ethical thought, provided Ottoman scholars with a vocabulary to discuss and reference intellectual qualities and scholar competencies that were deemed essential for individuals aspiring to scholarly stature during that era.

I began my analysis by showing how the term "malaka" was used by historians of the period—exemplified by Şeyhi Mehmed Efendi's biographical encyclopedia, "Vekāyiu'l-fuzalā" [The Events of the Virtuous]—to denote scholarly achievement. Moreover, I have explored the educational texts from the same period to understand what those scholarly achievements were by analysing the various meanings attributed to the term "malaka". My analysis has revealed various attributions, including a range of higher-order intellectual excellences, such as hermeneutic reading and inference, as well as specific disciplinary goals of various madrasa subjects that formed the core of an Ottoman *‘ālim*'s education.

To gain a more nuanced understanding of the term malaka, I conducted a thorough examination of Müneccimbāşī's work, "Fayḍ al-Ḥaram," to introduce his notion of intellectual perfection through three primary epistemic virtues. I also traced these virtues by examining another significant work of his, a commentary on the ethical treatise of al-Ījī's.

In the final section of this chapter, I have attempted to justify interpreting malaka as an intellectual virtue by addressing potential objections. Additionally, I have sought to situate Müneccimbāşī's concept of "malaka" within the broader discourse of virtue theorists on epistemic virtues. In doing so, I identified both similarities and distinctions between his ideas and virtue reliabilism.

This chapter also represents an effort to contribute to the broader endeavour of expanding the history of epistemic virtues and the history of the scholarly self beyond the confines of European scholarly traditions. Serving as an initial step toward

unravelling the history of the Ottoman scholarly self, the chapter has unveiled themes and concepts for further exploration in future research.



CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL LIVES OF AN OTTOMAN ALIM

4.1. Episode from an Exam

He inquired, 'What is semantic coherence, and what are its types?'

I responded, 'Semantic coherence refers to a complete relationship between two sentences, with respect to each other, according to Sheikh 'Abd al-Qāhir, and with respect to the purpose for which the speech was intended, for al-Sakkākī and this viewpoint is favoured among the critical scholars. Semantic coherence's three types are rational, estimative, and imaginative. The rational type involves coherence based on unity, identity, or correlation in the formulation of two sentences. The estimative coherence involves specious identity, contrast, or specious contrast in the formulation. The imaginative coherence is based on the association in the imagination [generally] or in the locutor's imagination, which varies according to individuals, natures, places and time.'

He asked, 'Which type is relevant here?'

I answered, 'According to Sheikh, the relevant type would be imaginary, and al-Sakkākī's view would be the rational type based on unity.'

He was pleased with the detailed explanation and remarked, 'This level of examination is sufficient, indicating a thorough understanding.'¹⁷³

[Excerpted from Dāwūd al-Qarsī's (d.1756) account of his dialogue with his examiner al-Aqkirmānī (d.1760)¹⁷⁴.]

فقال ما الجامع وما نوعه. فقلت الجامع هو المناسبة التامة بين الجملتين باعتبار الطرفين عند الشيخ عبد القاهر وباعتبار¹⁷³ الفرض المسوق له الكلام عند السكاكي وهذا هو المختار عند المحققين. وأنواع ثلاثة عقلي و وهمي وخيالي . فالعقلي اتحادهما في متصور أو تماتلهما فيه أو تضائفهما فيه. والوهمي شبه تماتلهما في متصور أو تضادهما أو شبه تضادهما فيه. والخيالي تقارنها في الخيال أي خيال المتكلم وهو مختلف بحسب الأشخاص والطبائع والامكنة والازمنة. فقال فما الجامع هنا فقلت الظاهر الخيالي عند الشيخ والعقلي الاتحادي في بيان فائدة حال المسند إليه عند السكاكي. فحسن هذا التفصيل ثم قال يكفي هذا القدر من الإمتحان والدلالة على كمال العرفان.

¹⁷⁴ A Treatise on the Details of Examination Questions and Answers *Risāla fī tafṣīl mā ḥaṣala min al-su'āl wa-l-jawāb fī al-imtiḥān*.

On Monday, the 6th of Rajab, in the year 1167 (1754), Mustafa Sidqi, *mülazım*, an Ottoman candidate aspiring for a teaching position, made his way to the bureau of the Shaykh al-Islam early in the morning. It had been exactly ten days since the announcement for the qualifying exam was issued on Saturday, the 27th of Jumādā al-ʿĀkhir under the order of the Shaykh al-Islam Murtażā Efendi (d.1758). Without hesitation, Mustafa Sidqi promptly secured his place for the exam, registering his name just two days after the announcement on the 29th. To do so, he had to journey to the office of *Fetvā Emini*, the authority entrusted with the registration of applicants, authentication of their *mülazemet* status, and the preparation of the final list of exam attendants. The following day after registration, it was proclaimed that the exam would be conducted on the upcoming Monday.

Despite his early arrival at 9:30 in the morning on the exam day, Mustafa had to wait until evening, around 6 o'clock, for his turn to come. The exam venue was bustling with anticipation as he was one among the 99 *müderris* candidates vying for success. As had been declared three days before the exam, the main book to be tested was *al-Muṭawwal*¹⁷⁵, al-Taftāzānī's (d. 1390) comprehensive commentary on *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ*, a manual on semantics and rhetoric by al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338). At noon, the precise chapters of *al-Muṭawwal* from which the candidates would be questioned were also determined. This was *el-fennü'l-evvel*, the first art, which is the section of the book dedicated to the discussion of the issues pertaining to semantics (*ʿilm al-maʿānī*).

Mustafa recounts that his examiner was Münir Efendi, who, through Taftāzānī's text, would likely have posed questions exploring various aspects of sentence structures in conveying meaning, which is central to *ʿilm al-maʿānī*, thus testing his knowledge in this field. Moreover, Münir Efendi would likely have assessed Mustafa's adeptness in employing other critical tools of learning and intellectual skills that he was expected to have acquired and honed through his madrasa training to effectively engage with scholarly texts. The choice of *al-Muṭawwal* as the primary exam material was perhaps

¹⁷⁵ Al-Qazwīnī authored *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* as a systematic abridgement (*talkhīṣ* literally means summary) of the third chapter of al-Sakkākī's (d. 1229) *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* [Key to the Sciences], which was on rhetoric; Taftāzānī's *Muṭawwal* was a comprehensive commentary of al-Qazwīnī's abridgement, and the name was likely chosen to contrast it with *talkhīṣ*, as *muṭawwal* means elaborate.

related to its potential to lend itself to various methods of textual and argumentative analysis.

Mustafa refers to the examiners as *mümeyyiz*, a term commonly used for scholars participating in examination committees. This could be the exam taken by madrasa graduates to attain the status of *mülazemet*, a candidate scholar, or the exams for those who are already a *mülazım* and aspire to become professors, known as *medrese imtihanı*. Dictionaries render *mümeyyiz* as an examiner, inspector, scrutiniser, examining clerk, or investigating magistrate¹⁷⁶. The term originates from the root word *mayyaza*, which literally means to separate, keep apart, and distinguish. In its form, 'mümeyyiz', it can be rendered as a 'discerner', which is appropriate for the examiner's role of identifying standout students.

Indeed, Mustafa Sidqi appears to have stood out among his peers. After a few days, the news reached Mustafa Sidqi that his efforts had borne fruit, and he was among the seven students who had outperformed everyone else in the exam. Grateful and humbled, he shares in the diary, "Praises upon praises, in one of the following days, Izmiri Efendi conveyed the word from Suleyman Efendi, who was present at the exam gathering, that seven individuals had shown extraordinary proficiency in the exam, the humble servant being one of the seven." The exact phrase he uses is "*a 'lā' okumak*", which translates to "to read excellently". This was not an ordinary description of his performance because *a 'lā'* appears to be one of the conventional terms the Ottoman *mümeyyiz* used to evaluate the candidates' performance, and such terms also signified the type of appointments a candidate would receive. Abdullah Efendi, an Ottoman historian and *qāḍī* who lived during the latter half of the eighteenth century, in his *Târîh-i Lebîbâ*, mentions four evaluative categories: *a 'lā* (*excellent*), *qarîb-i a 'lā* (*close to excellent*), *wasat-i qawî* (*above average*) and *wasat* (*average*) used in the exams.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ See for instance *Redhouse Turkish Dictionary*, 813.

¹⁷⁷ Emecen, *İstanbul'un Uzun Dört Yılı*, 113-114/28a-b. Emecen provides a transliteration and facsimile edition of Taylesanizâde Hafız Abdullah Efendi's historical diary known as *Târîh-i Lebîbâ*, which covers the years from 1785 to 1789. The diary contains details of the exams that were conducted in these four years, including the names of those who passed the exams and the appointments they received, the exam committee members, and the topics of the exams.

4.2. Intellectual Life of an Ottoman Alim Candidate

On the 12th of Sha‘bān, nearly a week later, the official edicts were distributed, and Mustafa eagerly received his edict for Kılıç Ali Paşa medrese from the esteemed hands of Sheikh al-Islam. In his diary, Mustafa recorded his contentment with the duration of the candidacy period, expressing gratitude for achieving his goal through exceptional performance in the examination "just after a candidacy period of seven years and three months." The emphasis on the seven years was not a mere coincidence. According to *Kevakib-i Seba*, scholars aspiring to obtain the revered status of *mülazim* typically endured a waiting period of precisely seven years. Following this period, they would undergo an exam, gradually ascending the ladder of the "*ilmiye*" career. As noted, "Those who attain *mülazemet* tarry for seven years, and at the end of seven years with exams, they achieve a position at the lower level of the madrasa, which was organised to have ten progression levels, known as *Ibtida-i haric*." Therefore, Mustafa's emphasis on the completion of his seven years holds significance, as he only had to wait an additional three months to secure his long-anticipated teaching position.

The attainment of the rank of *müderris*, as Mustafa achieved, represented the pinnacle of an Ottoman scholar's educational journey in terms of active learning. Mustafa's subsequent career flourished as he was appointed to Yanya (Ioannina in Greece today) six months later, and subsequently held positions in the cities of Izmir, Ankara, and Ordu. He also served as a judge in Cairo and later obtained an honorary title (*Mekke payesi*)¹⁷⁸.

Mustafa's diary is a valuable historical resource that provides insights into the socio-intellectual context of an 18th-century scholar candidate. The text was initially introduced and studied by Zilfi¹⁷⁹ in an article. Although, as pointed out by Aslan¹⁸⁰, the title of the article is somewhat misleading, Zilfi nevertheless outlines the main

¹⁷⁸ Ali Aslan, "18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İlim Hayatından Bir Kesit: Sıdkı Mustafa Efendi'nin Günlüğü ve Mülazemet Yılları" (PhD diss., Istanbul University, 2015), 38.

¹⁷⁹ Zilfi, Madeline C.: "The Diary of a Muderris: A New Source for Ottoman Biography", *Journal of Turkish Studies*, Volume I (1977), s. 157-174

¹⁸⁰ Aslan, "18. Yüzyıl Osmanlı İlim Hayatından Bir Kesit," 4.

themes present in Mustafa's diary. The complete diary has been made available through an MA dissertation by Aslan, who has also examined it in a separate article¹⁸¹.

The diary contains a wealth of information about the career developments and high-ranking appointments of the Ottoman ulama in Istanbul during the period from 1749 to 1754. It provides valuable insights into the lives of prominent figures, documenting major changes in positions and the dynamics of the scholarly community. Additionally, the diary also records natural disasters such as storms, prolonged snowfall, rain, and drought, as well as various incidents that occurred in the city, like a fight at the marketplace or fires that broke out.

Among the valuable details shared, Mustafa also provides glimpses into his personal life. He candidly talks about the illnesses he faced, the items he purchased for special occasions, the joyous occasion of his marriage and the birth of his son. Furthermore, he writes about his brother's arrival from Manisa and his support for him, even recording the pregnancy of his pet cat and the purchase of a new house. Moreover, the diary offers fascinating accounts of various events and gatherings that Mustafa took part in as he socialised and interacted within the scholarly community.

In *Kevakib-i Seba*'s account of the *mülazemet* period, a junior scholar, or rather a scholar candidate, is expected to form their own group for teaching: "Ba'dehu kendi dahi meclis tarh-idub okutmaga bed-eder." At this juncture, a young alim is considered to be intellectually independent capable of engaging with any discipline of knowledge without needing a teacher. Nevertheless, *Kevakib-i Seba* also emphasises that this should not deter a junior alim from benefiting from the expertise of experts in unfamiliar disciplines of knowledge. As *Kevakib-i Seba* states, "After finishing the mentioned *tartīb*, they obtain the ability to extract knowledge independently. Nevertheless, if they come across experts in certain fields whose knowledge is

¹⁸¹Ali Aslan, "Kariyerinin Başında Bir Osmanlı Kadısı'nın Hatıraları: Sıdkî Mustafa Efendi Günlüğü," in *Sahn-ı Semân'dan Dârülfünûn'a Osmanlı'da İlim ve Fikir Dünyası*, ed. Ahmet H. Furat, Nilüfer K. Yorulmaz and Osman S. Arı (Istanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2018), 273–93.

unfamiliar to them, they eagerly seek to learn from them. For they liken the student to a bee, taking from every flower it finds¹⁸²”.

The author then proceeds to quote the following poem in Arabic and its translation into Ottoman Turkish:

Strive for every knowledge that leads to aspirations,
And never pursue a single knowledge with laziness.
When bees gather nectar from various fruits,
They produce for us two precious gems: wax and honey.
Wax becomes a luminous light in the night,
While honey heals with the permission of the Creator.¹⁸³

Mustafa's diary, being a firsthand account of the final episode of his educational journey, echoes these aspects of intellectual independence and his eagerness to learn from various experts who were accessible to him.

From the diary, the *mülazemet* period emerges as a phase during which the candidate *mudarris* gains teaching experience and consolidates some of the materials studied during *madrassa* education. The diary reveals that Mustafa was engaged in various teaching activities, including assisting, aiding, and substituting for senior *ulama* in the delivery of lessons. He also established his own reading and discussion circles. In some instances, Mustafa's exact role in certain classes is not explicitly delineated. For example, he mentions that Molla began and finished certain books on a few occasions. The following quote evidences this: "Molla Efendi began *Talkhīṣ*, may God facilitate its completion with correct understanding, and its study in the way of *tahqīq* and *tadqīq*." However, he likely served as Molla's assistant or deputy instructor.

¹⁸² “ve zikr olunan tertibden sonra her ilmi istihraca kendiye istidad gelir. Amma yine aralıkda bilmediği ilmin ehlini buldukca ahz eder...Zira talibi arıya teşbih etdiler, her bulduğu çiçekden alır.”

¹⁸³ اخْرَصْ عَلَى كُلِّ عِلْمٍ تَبْلُغِ الْأَمَلَا
وَلَا تُوَاصِلْ لِعِلْمٍ وَاحِدٍ كَسَلَا
النَّحْلُ لِمَا رَعَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهِةِ
أَبَدَتْ لَنَا الْجَوْهَرَيْنِ: الشَّمْعَ وَالْعَسَلَا
الشَّمْعُ بِاللَّيْلِ نُورٌ يُسْتَنْضَاءُ بِهِ
وَالشَّهْدُ يُبْرِئُ بِإِذْنِ الْبَارِي الْعَلَا

Another type of teaching experience Mustafa gained was through private tutorship. He mentions that he was appointed as the tutor for two sons of the judge of Istanbul. In his diary, he records that on the 2nd of the month of Muharram in 1166, he commenced teaching them Birgivī's (d. 1573) *Risāla*, also known as *Vaṣīyet-nāme*. This *Risāla* was among several texts that beginner students would typically study before delving into the instrumental sciences.

The remarks on the classes that he himself led or initiated usually provide the beginning and sometimes end dates of the circles, giving us a rough idea of the time taken to complete these books. Books on syntax appeared to have required more time to finish. For instance, the discussion he initiated on Birgivī's *Izhār* in the mosque took approximately eight months to complete the book. Similarly, his teaching of Ibn al-Ḥājjib's (d.1249) *Kāfiya* which was also held in the mosque, spanned nine months. In comparison, logic primers took a shorter time for Mustafa to complete. For example, he mentions that he began teaching *Isagoge* on Shawwāl 17 and completed it in just two months, on the 20th of Dhu al-Hijja. Similarly, his discussion of Ḥusām al-Kātī's (d.1359) commentary on *Isagoge* took around three months to complete. Najm al-Dīn al-Kātībī's (d.1277) *Shamsiyya*, another logic manual, required a discussion of approximately three months to conclude.

Another relevant piece of information provided in the diary is that Mustafa tutored his brother in Shahidi's rhyming vocabulary of Persian (*Tuhfe-i Shāhidī*), as well as introduced him to the basics of morphology through the book of *Amthīla*. Furthermore, he served as a deputy instructor (*ders vekili*) at Edirnekapi medrese, where, according to his notes, he led an exegetical discussion on the *Juz' of An-Naba'*.

The diary solely covers the last five years of Mustafa's life as a *mülazım*, providing a limited scope of his educational journey. Unfortunately, it does not offer detailed insights into the earlier stages of his educational pursuits. We do not even know where he attained his early education. However, based on a remark about his brother coming from Manisa, it is assumed that Mustafa might have hailed from the same region. The *mülazemet* phase marked the final episode of an Ottoman student's path towards becoming a recognised scholar. While the specifics of the preceding phases remain

obscure, other sources of that period shed light on the intellectual stages that a knowledge-seeking talib (student) would undergo.

Book Related Activity	Began	Ended
A class on 'Aqā'id Jalālī of Jalāl Al-Dīn Al-Dawwānī (D. 1501) with Maṣṣūrī Efendi	25.01.1162	
A class on Ḥusām al-Kātī (d.1359) (Commentary on <i>Isagoge</i>) with Molla Efendi		25.06.1162
A class on al-Ījī's (d.1355) <i>al-Risāla al-Waḍ'īya</i> with Molla Efendi	02.03.1163	
A class on Jāmī's (d.1492) <i>al-Fawā'id al-diyā'iyya</i> with Molla Efendi	09.03.1163	
A discussion on Birgivi's (d.1573) <i>Izhār</i>	15.10.1163	02.06.1164
A discussion on Ibn al-Ḥājjib's (d.1249) <i>Shāfiya</i>	28.10.1163	
Teaching Amthīla and Şāhidī's (d.1550) <i>Tuhfe-i Şāhidī</i> to his brother	16.01.1164	
A class on Khatīb al-Qazwīni's (d.1338) <i>Talkhīs</i> with Molla Efendi	11.05.1164	
Teaching Ibn al-Ḥājjib's (d.1249) <i>Kāfiya</i> in the mosque	22.09.1164	08.07.1165
Discussion on the exegesis of the Juz' An-Naba' in Edirnekapi medrese as the deputy instructor	16.11.1164	
Teaching <i>Isagoge</i> to the students	17.10.1165	01.12.1165
Ḥusām al-Kātī (d.1359) discussion with students	20.12.1165	01.03.1166
Teaching Birgivi's (d.1573) <i>Risāla</i> (also known as <i>Vaşiyyet-nāme</i>) as the personal preceptor for the sons of the qādi of Istanbul	02.01.1166	
Teaching al-Kātībī's (d.1277) <i>Shamsiya</i> to a student	05.03.1166	24.06.1166

Discussion of Taşköprüzâde (d.1561) <i>Risāla</i> with a student	20.04.1166	
<i>Shamsiyya</i> discussion with Üsküdarlı Monla Emīn	04.06.1166	
Discussion on Taftāzānī's (d.1390) <i>Tasawwurāt (Sharḥ al-shamsiyya)</i>	16.10.1166	
Taftāzānī's <i>al-Muṭawwal</i> (teaching)	06.07.1166	

Table 1 Books Referenced in the Diary of an Ottoman Candidate Scholar 1162-1167 / 1749-1754

4.3. Conclusion

This chapter began by offering a glimpse into the examination of a *mülazım* through an excerpt from a dialogue between a candidate alim and his examiner. During this period, there was a growing interest among ulama in documenting their examination processes. The purpose was to illustrate the value of such materials in shedding light on the intellectual virtues and skills expected from an Ottoman alim. Additionally, I employed the diary of an 18th-century Ottoman alim to depict intellectual scenes from the life of a *mülazım*. I also discussed the early stages of Ottoman scholarly education, particularly the initial phases of a student's journey, which often involved private learning or attending maktabas or kuttabs. This early period will be subject to in-depth examination in the subsequent sections, with a focus on the texts and materials typically engaged with by students. The treatment of the second main educational phase for an alim, madrasa education, has been deferred to the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

CRAFTING OTTOMAN MINDS: EXAMINING THE CORE TEXTS OF SCHOLARLY EDUCATION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate Müneccimbāṣī Ahmed Dede's (d.1702) concept of *muṭāli* as a distinctive form of scientific self. Paul's¹⁸⁴ work suggests that any examination of a model of scientific self must involve the consideration of two key issues. The first is the aim of the scientific selfhood in question. This entails defining the desired goods for which scientific selfhood is cultivated: what is this particular scientific selfhood formed for?

Secondly, it requires an analysis of the characteristics of this selfhood in terms of the intellectual virtues that are essential for achieving this desired end: what does this selfhood entail? Which particular set of intellectual virtues does it comprise?

Similar inquiries in various contexts have employed terms such as *scientific self*, *academic self*, *scholarly self*, *wissenschaftliche Persönlichkeit*, and *scholarly personae*. For the sake of convenience and given the contextual appropriateness, I will adhere to the term "scientific self." Regardless of the specific term used in scholarly discussions, there is general agreement in the literature that intellectual virtues constitute the key characteristics of a scientific self. Every scientific self can be conceived as a constellation of particular intellectual virtues or a set of regulative ideals considered essential for engaging in scholarly practice within a particular community of knowledge¹⁸⁵. Variations of scientific selves, therefore, result from different models of scholarly selfhood, each embodying distinct sets of cognitive virtues. Scholarly selves are intentionally built through technologies of self to cultivate

¹⁸⁴ Herman Paul, "What Is A Scholarly Persona? Ten Theses On Virtues, Skills, And Desires," *History And Theory* 53, no. 3 (2014): 348–71.

¹⁸⁵ Gadi Algazi, "Exemplum and Wundertier: Three Concepts of the Scholarly Persona," *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 131 no 4 (2016): 8-32.

virtues that are necessary for the pursuit of scientific activities to become a member of a specific community.

It is worth noting that one possibility is to adopt a broader understanding of being a scholar, conceptualising the scientific self to include traits beyond purely intellectual virtues. When scholarly activity encompasses not only the epistemic pursuit of knowledge and understanding but also activities such as securing research funding, cultivating moral virtues, achieving social goods (e.g., social status, public visibility), and even political goods (e.g., freedom, justice, security), a more expansive notion of the scientific self becomes necessary¹⁸⁶. However, given that Müneccimbāşī's model of *muṭāli* ' is primarily concerned with the pursuit of epistemic goods, that is, the scholar qua scholar, a broader conceptualisation is not essential in this context¹⁸⁷.

If we apply this perspective to the concept of *muṭāli* ', the following questions arise: Which specific epistemic goods was a *muṭāli* ' committed to pursuing? What abilities, attitudes and dispositions did Müneccimbāşī identify as being conducive to the pursuit of these epistemic goods?

I should underline that Müneccimbāşī's frame of *muṭāli* ' facilitates the reconstruction of it as a model of scientific selfhood in my work. In his account, an individual must cultivate numerous *malaka* 'ilmīya (intellectual virtues) in order to become a *muṭāli* '. In this sense, the pursuit of *muṭāla* 'a as a scholarly practice is the exercise of these intellectual virtues that are necessary for being a *muṭāli* '.

This chapter will first offer a detailed account of *muṭāla* 'a. For that, I will primarily draw on the first section of *Fayḍ al-Ḥarām*, titled "On the Exposition of the General Manners for Muṭāli' of All Types". However, my analysis will not be limited to Müneccimbāşī's text. While outlining his framework, I will endeavour to complement and expand upon some of his explanations based on my analysis of core texts of Ottoman scholarly erudition. To identify those core texts, I will refer back to the accounts of *tartīb* that I have discussed in Chapter One.

¹⁸⁶ Paul, "What Is A Scholarly Persona?," 362-64.

¹⁸⁷ My discussion also includes non-epistemic elements in Müneccimbāşī's account.

This endeavour will serve as an exemplar of how an Ottoman scholar translated a theoretical ideal into a methodology of a specific scholarly practice. By theoretical ideal, I am referring to the notion of malaka of *istiḥḍar* being the goal of scholarly learning, as discussed in Chapter Two. I have interpreted malaka of *istiḥḍar* as the epistemic virtue of semantic fluency, which could be viewed as competence in various scholarly domains. However, the question remains as to how these competencies were acquired and utilised in practice. Did Ottoman scholars develop a methodology for acquiring and utilising these competences? In this chapter, I will pursue these questions through Müneccimbāṣī's account, which deals with them in the context of a particular scholarly endeavour, namely the *muṭāla'a*.

Methodologically, I will present Müneccimbāṣī's discussion of each intellectual virtue within this framework and then delve into the textbooks of relevant disciplines referenced in his sources for further elaboration and detail. Through a close reading of these additional sources, I will seek to identify potential opportunities for conceptual learning they offered, providing valuable insights into the intellectual training of Ottoman scholars during this period.

This approach aligns with a central thesis of my research: that any serious attempt to reconstruct Ottoman scholarly selfhood must necessarily engage with the core texts constituting an alim's education alongside the various pedagogical works produced around them. Ignoring these primary sources would result in an incomplete picture of the formation of an Ottoman scholar's intellectual identity.

This has been the case thus far. Historians have shown limited interest in conducting a detailed analysis of the texts that constituted the core of Ottoman scholars' education. While some scholars compiled lists of these books across different periods, they often provided only basic descriptions without delving into their substantive content and with almost no attempt to explore their potential role in shaping particular scholarly selfhood. This lack of interest can be attributed, in part, to research projects adopting narrow definitions of "science," which have excluded many subjects taught in Ottoman

madrastas from the realm of historical inquiry in science¹⁸⁸. Similarly, historians of the humanities have been predominantly Eurocentric in their research agenda.

For example, Küçük's recent work portrays madrasas as institutions solely training bureaucrats versed in "sharia, or canon law, which counterbalanced common law (kanun)."¹⁸⁹ However, my previous chapters demonstrate that, at least within my specific context, this characterisation with the notion of "knowledge of sharia" inadequately captures the essence of madrasa-level education. If his notion of "knowledge of sharia" refers to the learning of legal rulings, then this aspect clearly wasn't centrally emphasised in madrasa training, and we have seen Sajaqlizade's consideration of them as irrelevant.

While Küçük later in the text acknowledges that "medrese training was not just about teaching sharia" and highlights that some professors, particularly "those coming from Iran", also instructed students in astronomy and philosophical theology. However, my primary critique lies in his casual use of terms like "knowledge of sharia," "legal subjects," "law and its allied disciplines," and "sharia and its allied disciplines" lacking nuance.

This approach is problematic as it remains unclear what he means by "beyond legal subjects" or "beyond sharia" when asserting that "Scholars who deliberately took their expertise beyond sharia and its allied disciplines were always a minority among Istanbul's scholars, but they were enough to provide for others concrete ideas and ideals about what a good scholar should look like."¹⁹⁰

Furthermore, while Küçük does touch upon three madrasa subjects—namely, kalam (philosophical theology), theoretical medicine, and theoretical astronomy—no effort is made to understand these texts as educational material and his discussions often veer

¹⁸⁸ On the intertwined nature of science and philology in the early modern period, as well as an argument for the expanding the scope of historical research to include non-Western philological traditions, see Lorraine Daston and Most W. Glenn, "History of Science and History of Philologies." *Isis* 106, no. 2 (2015): 378–90

¹⁸⁹ Küçük, *Science without Lesiure*, 58.

¹⁹⁰ Küçük, *Science without Lesiure*, 58.

towards the history of theological viewpoints rather than a comprehensive examination of any of kalam books.

Before delving into the specifics of *muṭālaʿa* and its practices, it's crucial to clarify that Müneccimbāşī's account represents the norm rather than the exception. His framing of various disciplinary competencies as intellectual virtues wasn't particularly innovative for his historical context. As we've previously discussed, similar perspectives are readily found in works like "Kevakib-i Seba" and "Tartib al-Ulum," and earlier madrasa books also reflected this viewpoint. Moreover, subsequent figures like Goethe and Suavi demonstrate how the notion of learning as the acquisition of intellectual virtues resonated beyond Müneccimbāşī's immediate context.

Now in this chapter, I will explore how *muṭālaʿa* as a scholarly practice was understood and what were some of the norms for its successful practice. In the second part, I will examine if the Ottoman discourses had any interest in the extension of the paradigm of *muṭālaʿa* to other domains of reality beyond the realm of text.

5.2. What's *muṭālaʿa*?

To secure knowledge in our contact with different domains of reality, we need to build ourselves as knowers in particular ways. This is because our encounter with reality does not always take place in epistemically friendly environments and is usually accompanied by potential dangers and obstacles to knowledge, which need to be combatted through the exercise of intellectual virtues.

Text as a domain of reality, thus a source of knowledge, has peculiar challenges. A reader, to extract various epistemic goods from this particular kind of source, has to form selfhood through the acquisition of various dispositions, habits and competencies to be fit for the task. In this sense, Müneccimbāşī's attempt to systematise a theory of *muṭālaʿa* is also a project of devising a mode of particular selfhood.

Our primary mode of interaction with the text is reading. Reading is clearly a different form of contact with reality from both attending testimony and perception.

Undoubtedly, reading stands as a cornerstone, if not the foremost practice, within the realm of scholarship. It has held and continues to maintain a pivotal role in scholarly activities, spanning across natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities alike. One way to analyse reading is to regard it as an epistemic endeavour, primarily serving as a means to acquire new knowledge and cultivate critical understanding.

Surprisingly, the field of epistemology has not accorded due attention to reading as a source of knowledge and other epistemic achievements. In a recent work on the epistemology of reading and interpretation, van Woudenberg expresses astonishment at the minimal consideration given to reading by epistemologists as a source of knowledge¹⁹¹ by demonstrating that the paradigm of reading is different enough from attending a testimony or immediate perception, therefore needs to be viewed as an autonomous source of knowledge. He enumerates several epistemic benefits linked to reading, extending beyond mere knowledge acquisition. Firstly, reading can rekindle awareness of previously known concepts that may have faded into the background of our consciousness. Secondly, it allows us to gather supplementary evidence, bolstering existing beliefs or potentially challenging them. Reading also serves as a significant means to obtain both supporting and opposing evidence for our convictions, directly impacting the ideas we entertain, as well as the theories and hypotheses we entertain. Thirdly, reading has the potential to facilitate understanding and provide insights. It can help us perceive the interconnectedness of ideas, an epistemic state that many believe transcends mere propositional knowledge¹⁹².

How can we ensure that we intellectually benefit from a textual encounter according to Müneccimbāṣī? The need for hermeneutical engagement with the text arises from the fact that the text contains and conveys much more than what is immediately apparent to our senses and mind. Our ability to successfully extract (*istikhrāj al-ma'ānī*) implicated meanings depends on the exercise of various intellectual virtues as well as adherence to specific manners and standards. Müneccimbāṣī's primary concern is about this matter.

¹⁹¹ van Woudenberg, René. *The Epistemology of Reading and Interpretation*, 4.

¹⁹² van Woudenberg, 3, 55.

He offers two definitions of *muṭāla‘a* to clarify its technical meaning employed by the scholars, which constitutes the subject matter (*mawḍū‘*) of this new discipline. According to the shorter definition, *muṭāla‘a* is described as "pondering a text to obtain an implicated meaning¹⁹³," [*mulāḥaḥāṣat al-marsūm li-taḥṣīli'l-mafhūm*] while the longer definition characterises it as "pondering written utterances, whose lexical meanings are known, to arrive at what is intended in their use in terms of articulating a truth or asserting a problem in a valid manner according to the critical scholars" [*mulāḥaḥāṣat al-alfāz al-marsūma al-ma‘lūma al-waḍ‘ li-ma‘ānīha, li-tawaṣṣul bihā ilā ma quṣida bi-irādiha min bayān ḥaqīqa aw ithbāt matlab ‘alā wajhi mu‘tabara ‘inda aṣḥāb al-tahqīq*].

The condition of "in a valid manner according to the critical scholars" is an interesting one referring to certain academic standards which indicates or assumes a scholarly community.

The aim of *muṭāla‘a* is to "protect the mind from being confined to the apparent and from being deprived of the truths and subtleties" [*ṣawn al-dhihn ‘an al-iqtīṣār ‘alā al-ḥawāhir wa al-harman min al-ḥaqā‘iq wa al-daqā‘iq*].

According to these definitions, the epistemic goods that are pursued through *muṭāla‘a* are "truths and subtleties" [*al-ḥaqā‘iq wa al-daqā‘iq*] as well as the "intended meanings" [*ma quṣida bi-irādiha*] in the text. The primary challenge is the apparent aspect of the text. If the reader is overly occupied with the apparent, then this will prevent the extraction of various subtleties in the text. The person's ability to extract these meanings becomes improved (*taraqqī fī istikhrāj*) by following the conditions and rules of *muṭāla‘a*.

However, attaining these epistemic benefits of truths, subtleties, and intended meanings depends on the level of *muṭāli‘*. A framework that runs through Müneccimbāṣī entire account is a four-layered notion of epistemic status which

¹⁹³ I have rendered the term *mafḥūm* as an implicated meaning, which is one of the two main forms of textual implication or signification according to a common classification in Islamic interpretive theory which are *dalālah al-manṭuq* (pronounced or stated meaning) and *dalālah al-mafhūm* (implied meaning).

explains how the epistemic benefit of a *muṭālī* differs according to the status they hold (*bi-i'tibār marātib al-muṭālīn*). He states that in relation to a particular item of knowledge, one is either (a) a *potential knower* or (b) an *imitative or uncritical knower* with propositional knowledge without a justification or (c) a *critical knower*, possessing justification for his knowledge or (d) *competent knower* who does not only possessive of knowledge with respective justifications but also has obtained semantic fluency over this knowledge. Now, each of these categories of knowers benefits from textual encounters differently, elevating them to a higher state of knowing. A *potential knower*, through an understanding of the text, can acquire the propositional knowledge (*'ilm bi-l-fi'l*) of the subject matter, upgrading them to the position of the knower. However, this level of knowing is without a true justification and evidence; therefore, a possessor of such knowledge is referred to as an "imitative" (*taqlīdī*) knower.

The practice of *muṭāla'a* can help an *imitative knower* to extract meanings from the text, elevating them to the status of a critical knower whose knowledge is *tahqīqī*, meaning it is verified through true justification (*dalīl*) and verification. The term *dalīl* carries diverse meanings and has various conceptualisations across different disciplines. Mūneccimbāṣī dedicates an entire section to what counts as *dalīl* in various areas. To give an example, in the sciences of *ishtiḳāq*¹⁹⁴ and *tasrīf*, which would correspond to the domains of morphology and morphonology, he mentions that verification is through the concepts of *shawāhid/ istishhād* (*attestable citation / linguistic referencing*), *nazā'ir* and *wujūh*, which stand for inquiry into homonyms. In contrast, verification in the domain of syntax (*nahw*) involves considering justifications based on either *samā'* (*transmission*) *ijma'* (*consensus*), *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), *istiḥsān* (preferential reasoning), and *istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl* (the presumption of continuity of the state).

A *critical (tahqīqī) knower* too can improve their epistemic standing through textual interpretation. This time the improvement through *muṭāla'a* won't be in terms of the

¹⁹⁴ *Ishtiḳāq* sometimes is rendered as an etymological theory or derivation, both of which are imprecise according to Larcher. He argues that *ishtiḳāq* is an original concept with its panchronic nature differentiating it from etymology and derivation, which are diachronic and synchronic respectively. See Larcher, Pierre. "Arabic *Ishtiḳāq*: Derivation and/or Etymology or Neither?", *Al-Karmil* 42, 1 (2021): 218-222.

quality of the knowledge that was possessed, rather it will be about the quality of the way of possession. Through an epistemically fruitful engagement with a written source, a critical knower can turn their knowledge into a stable intellectual quality (*martabat malakat al-istiḥdār*) turning them into more effective epistemic subjects, which I render as a competent knower who has truly justified knowledge at the level of semantic fluency (*yakūn lahu ilm taḥqīqī fī martabat malakat al-istiḥdār*). One way to understand this level of knowing is to think of conceptual knowledge that has become a part of a person's semantic memory and scientific self, and can be easily retrieved.

What would a competent knower gain from a textual interpretation on the subject that he has critical knowledge with semantic fluency? At this stage, *muṭāla‘a* will further grow (*tanmīyya*) and consolidate (*taqwīyya*) their knowledge. This can also be understood as a stage where new knowledge becomes potentially available to the subject which was not available before and makes this model ever relevant.

To sum up, through *muṭāla‘a* of a text, one would fulfil one of the following objectives depending on their epistemic status: *taḥṣīl*, *taḥqīq*, *istiḥdār* and finally *tanmiyya* and *taqwiyya*.

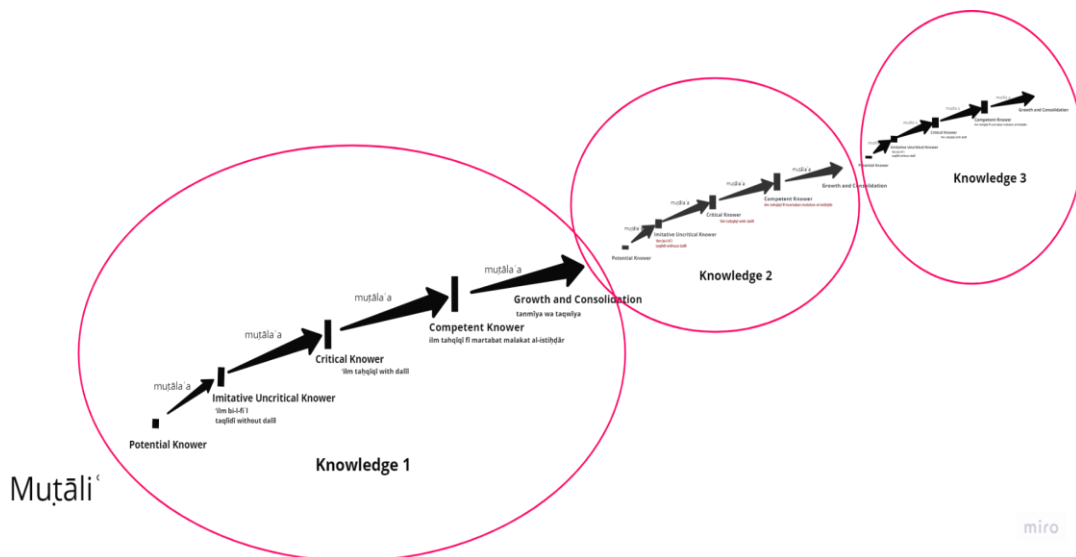


Figure 2 Muṭāla‘ and the Levels of Knowing

Müneccimbāṣī’s also refers to various notions of meaning, encompassing word meaning, sentence meaning, extratextual meaning, and propositional meaning, all of

which are attained through the process of *muṭāla‘a*, by the exercise of intellectual virtues across diverse disciplines. It is worth noting that the relationship between *malaka* and *muṭāla‘a* may appear somewhat confusing, as the relationship appears to be circular. *Muṭāla‘a* makes the acquisition of *malaka* possible, but at the same time, established *malaka* enhances the practice of *muṭāla‘a*.

5.3. How to Pursue *Muṭāla‘a*: a Scholarly Practice and its Virtues

How is *muṭāla‘a* practised? The section titled "On the Exposition of the General Manners for *Muṭāli‘* of All Types" commences with some non-epistemic instructions. The *muṭāli‘* should begin by invoking the remembrance of God and sending salutations, peace, and blessings upon the Prophet. Then, they are instructed to recite the verse: "Glory be to Thee! We have no knowledge save what Thou hast taught us. Truly Thou art the Knower, the Wise."¹⁹⁵. Additionally, *Müneccimbāṣī* advises that the *muṭāli‘* should recite the verses and prayers they have memorised to seek inspiration and facilitate their intellectual endeavours.

Towards the end of the chapter, there are other non-epistemic guidelines, for instance, on how one should postpone *muṭāla‘a* to another time when mental clarity is lacking or when one should approach it with a sense of humility and gratitude towards the authors of the text. The remaining part of the text delves into instructions concerning the actual process of *muṭāla‘a*.

Müneccimbāṣī suggests that one should commence with a generic (*ijmālī*) consideration of the subject, situating the issue they are studying within the broader context of the specific domain of knowledge to which it pertains. Subsequently, the *muṭāli‘* should transition to the detailed (*tafsilī*) engagement with the text, occurring at multiple levels. I will analyse these levels closely in the following sections.

¹⁹⁵ I have used the translation from Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, et al. "The Study Quran." A new translation and commentary 19 (2015).

5.3.1. Word Meaning: “Opening the Door of Truths and Subtleties” through Malaka in the Sciences of al-Lugha and al-Şarf

At the word meaning level, Müneccimbāşī refers to the intellectual virtues in three domains of knowledge. The first is *ilm al-lugha*, competence in which ensures that muṭāli‘ locates each word as a lexical entity and makes corrections where he sees errors. Furthermore, through their knowledge of *ilm al-lugha* develops an understanding of technical terms thanks to the mastery of the relationship between technical and lexical meanings. Muṭāli‘ also needs to exercise his competence in the discipline of wad'. Malalaka in wad' would enable a muṭāli‘ to consider the object of interpretation in terms of the meaning categories that he can distinguish based on the positing types of universal versus particular (*kullī wa juz'ī*), general versus specific (*'āmm wa khāṣ*), singular versus common (*mufrad wa mushtarak*), lexical and terminological and figurative (*lugha, istilāh, haqīqa and majāz*). Their conceptual knowledge of categories of positing is instructed to be applied to differentiate the three types of positing: General positing of vocable for general and particular meanings, and particular positing of the vocable for particular meaning. Another primary semantic classification in this subject is generic (*nawī*) and specific (*shakshī*) positing.¹⁹⁶ Through the exercise of this malaka, Müneccimbāşī mentions that the muṭāli‘ unlocks the door of truths and subtleties [*infataha 'alāyhi abwāb al-ḥaqā'iq wa al-daqā'iq*]. Next, a muṭāli‘ should "acquire malaka in the field of morphology by examining individual words with regard to their forms and patterns, following the rules of inflection and derivation [*taşrīf*]." With this mastery, muṭāli‘ can safeguard himself "from errors stemming from the resemblance and ambiguity among word forms, a situation that frequently occurs." This mastery also aids in "discerning the root from other morphemes and distinguishing meanings [*ma'ānī*] from each other analogically [*bi-l-qiyas*]." The reader also becomes adept at recognising the root letters and additional letters. This skill allows for the potential extraction of nuanced meanings suitable for the context¹⁹⁷ from the additional letters, thereby expanding knowledge or

¹⁹⁶ For an introduction to 'ilm al-waḍ' in English language that provides an account of the historical development of this discipline, as well as discussion on its major themes, see Weiss, 'Ilm al-waḍ': An Introductory Account of a Later Muslim Philological Science.

¹⁹⁷ *yastakhrij ma'ānī daqīqa munāsiba li-l-maqām.*

fortifying¹⁹⁸ it if one is prepared for such undertakings. Even without these supplementary benefits, “malaka in morphology remains highly valuable for the *muṭāli‘*, by serving as a safeguard against errors.”

I refer to "şarf" as morphology, although its scope extends beyond the contemporary conception of morphology and encompasses aspects of morphonology, among others. In "Kevakib-i Seba," "malaka" in şarf is defined as the malaka by which we comprehend the "general categories of vocables designated by different forms of positing and the meanings they signify, lexical root and grammatical pattern morphemes through universal analogies, and general principles of changes in the lexical root morphemes." For al-Qārisī, the objective of şarf is to know the states of Arabic word structures [*aḥwāl abniyat al-‘arabya*] in order to avoid mistakes in pursuing their meanings.

To cultivate this morphological "malaka," both "Kevakib-i Seba" and Hakki’s "Tartīb al-‘Ulūm" mention the same book titles, differing only in that "Tartīb al-‘Ulūm" specifies al-Chārpardī’s (d.1346) commentary on al-Shāfiya of Ibn al-Ḥāḥib (d. 1249), whereas in "Kevakib-i Seba," a study of the commentaries on al-Shāfiya is generally recommended without specification. Al-Shāfiya commentaries serve as advanced-level material, freeing students from the necessity of studying al-Zamakhsharī’s "al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan‘at al-i-rāb," a book that combines advanced morphological content with issues of syntax. To prevent students from encountering unfamiliar syntax discussions, this problem is solved in "Tartīb al-‘Ulūm" by postponing the study of advanced issues of morphology until after the student has learned syntax.

	<i>Kevakib-i Seba</i>		<i>Erzurumi's Tartīb al-‘Ulūm</i>
Iqtisār	Lower	<i>Amthila, Binā‘</i>	Amthila, Binā‘, Maqşūd,
	intermediate	<i>Maqşūd</i>	‘Izzī, Marāḥ, Shāfiya,
	advanced	‘Izzī	Chārpardī’s Sharḥ al-Shāfiya

¹⁹⁸ Here the author references the terms *tanmiyya* and *taqwiyya* which he discusses as one of the four objectives of engaging in *muṭāla‘a*.

Iqtiṣād	Lower	<i>Marāḥ</i>	
	intermediate		
	advanced	<i>Shāfiya</i>	
istiṣḥā'	Lower	<i>Shurūh al-Shāfiya,</i> <i>Mufaṣṣal</i>	
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		

Table 2 *Tartīb* for Morphology Education

Student's learning start with the book of Amthila which is a basic morphological table. Amthila is the plural of the word mithāl which literally means paradigm, table or example. It refers to "words that explain general principles" (*ḳava 'id kulliyeleri izah eden kelimelerdir*). The text of Amthila was compiled anonymously and contains two sections. The first part, Al-Amthila al-Mukhtalifa, comprises divergent paradigms and contains 24 examples of morphological derivation patterns. The second part, Al-Amthila al-Muṭṭaridah, regular paradigms, provides the morphological inflection patterns for each of the 24 divergent paradigms in the previous section. In practice, a novice student studying *Amthila* would encounter the derivation of over 200 new word forms from the three-letter root *naṣara*. By memorising the basic table of *amthila*, a student was expected to gradually develop a form of morphological awareness, an understanding of how words can be dissected into smaller units of meaning such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Following Amthila, students would gradually move on to assimilate more morphological knowledge. For example in *Binā'* which is still considered to be a lower beginner-level book (Kevakib-i Seba identifies it to be in "edna", the lower level, of **Iqtiṣār grade**). *Binā'* is another anonymous tract on ṣarf. It contains thirty-five patterns in the form of prosodic templates encompassing most of the widely used possible verb forms. The book is known for its comprehensive coverage of Arabic word forms, verb conjugations, and the intricate rules governing word structure in the Arabic language. It provides students with a systematic approach to understanding the various patterns and changes that Arabic words undergo.

Each of the thirty-five patterns is presented with the prosodic templates based on the fictive root of f-‘l (ف-ع-ل), an example verb, its morphological signs or markers, as well as categories of the semantic meaning, which includes categories like co-participation, transitivity, compliance/reflexivity. Students get to learn how all the verb patterns relate to either the “pure” triconsonantal and quadriconsonantal base patterns or “augmented” patterns generated with modifications in vocalic structure and augmentation to the basic structure with affixation or doubling creating a new verb pattern with new properties. For example, one of the patterns that are dealt with under the triconsonantal patterns augmented with two letters is the pattern of *Afala*. When the verb is in this form with the affixe of “In”, it acquires the meaning of intransitivity and meaning of reflexivity or compliance (*mutawa‘a*). For example, the كسر which is in the root pattern of فَعَلَ and means “to break” and it is a transitive verb. This verb in the augmented pattern of اِنْفَعَلَ as اِنْكَسَرَ becomes intransitive and acquires the meaning of reflexivity, a kind of quasi-passive meaning.

Following is an example of how, in *Binā’* verb patterns are presented.

trilateral roots with an additional letter [al-thulāthī al-mazīd fihi bi-ḥarf]	
Type 2 (باب)	فَعَلَ، يُفَعِّلُ، تَفْعِيلًا
Marker (علامته)	the past form is four-lettered with an addition of a letter between fa and ayn in the pattern
Example (موزونه)	فَرَّحَ، يُفَرِّحُ، تَفْرِيحًا
Semantic Meaning (بناؤه)	mostly numerousness لِلتَّكْثِيرِ غَالِبًا
Examples:	The meaning of numerousness could relate either to the act /verb itself as in:

	<p>طَوَّفَ زَيْدٌ الْكَعْبَةَ (Zayd circumambulated the Kaba)</p> <p>Or to the doer itself as in:</p> <p>مُوتَ الْإِبِلُ (Camels died)</p> <p>Or to the object of the verb as in:</p> <p>عَلَّقَ زَيْدٌ الْبَابَ (Zayd closed doors)</p>
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Table 3 Sample discussion from *Binā'* textbook

Through engaging these books, students were expected to develop semantic fluency in morphology (*malakat al-istiḥdā fī al-ṣarf*), translating into a sort of explicit awareness of morphological processes and becoming proficient in breaking apart words into smaller units of morphemes. This fluency could facilitate the comprehension of the meaning and embedded connotations of unfamiliar lexemes and morphological complexity, such as a multimorphemic word when reading. However, the benefit of malaka in morphology extended beyond enhanced comprehension of morphological complexities in a textual encounter; it would also operate as a generative competence, enhancing one's capacity to create new words and meanings by manipulating various morphemes, resulting in more effective communication in their discourses, whether written or otherwise. A cursory examination of the Arabic writings of Ottoman scholars will demonstrate the effectiveness with which they created new words and meanings, even those that were unfamiliar to a native speaker, which can arguably be attributed to the generative morphology competence they acquired.

Morphological awareness, which is an understanding of how words can be dissected into smaller units of meaning such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes, does not only help with the reading but also creates generative competence in the students to create new meaning by manipulating the parts of the words. When encountering morphological complexity, such as an unknown or multimorphemic word, morphological awareness can be used to deduce the meaning of the word. By acquiring malaka in morphology,

Ottoman scholars expected to enhance their comprehension of morphological complexities and generate new words in their discourses, written or otherwise, thanks to the morphological flexibility they had gained with the acquisition of *malaka* in *ṣarf*.

This fluency could facilitate the comprehension of the meaning and embedded connotations of unfamiliar lexemes and morphological complexity, such as a multimorphemic word, when reading. However, the benefit of *malaka* in morphology extended beyond enhanced comprehension of morphological complexities in a textual encounter; it would also operate as a generative competence enhancing one's capacity to create new words and meanings by manipulating various morphemes, resulting in more effective communication in their discourses, whether written or otherwise. This will allow one to become an active constructor of different novel representations of the world¹⁹⁹. A cursory examination of the Arabic writings of Ottoman scholars will demonstrate the effectiveness with which they created new words and meanings, even those that were unfamiliar to a native speaker, which can arguably be attributed to the generative morphology competence they acquired.

5.3.2. Sentence Meaning: Wandering in the Arena of *Tahqīq*

A *muṭāli‘* had to acquire *malaka* to deal with the syntactic structures too. Müneccimbāṣī mentions that after considering individual words (*mufradāt*) and their various features, the next step is to deal with the constructions (*murakkabāt*) and their elements from the perspective of them being a part of a construction according to grammatical rules and appropriate syntactic conditions. *Malaka* in *nahw* would enable the *muṭāli‘* to resolve the complexities arising from poor composition, and safeguard against errors in terms of structure, a common occurrence mostly with those “who do not possess *malaka* in the field of *nahw*” or neglect it.

This intellectual virtue would unlock another layer of meaning for the *muṭāli‘*. In addition to the meaning of individual words [الزائدة على معاني المفردات], the *muṭāli‘* would discover fine points from the structural meanings [المعاني التركيبية]. After the discovery

¹⁹⁹ On generativity of language, see John Searle, "What is Language? Some Preliminary Remarks," *Etica & Politica / Ethics & Politics*, XI, no.1 (2009): 193-94.

of such meanings, *muṭāli‘* may choose to pursue further more advanced investigations (*al-mabāḥith al-daḳīqa*), and move freely in the arena of verification (*miḍmar al-tahqīq*) if they are amongst those great horsemen of the arena²⁰⁰.

Kevakib-i Seba specifies the intellectual virtue in the discipline of nahw as the skill by which “the speaker articulates the intended meaning with a syntactic structure, posited with generic positing (*al-waḍ‘ al-naw‘ī*)²⁰¹.” Generic positing is one of the primary concepts in the science of *‘ilm al-waḍ‘* and refers to a type of positing that is based on a shared feature or form that multiple vocables have in common. Instead of individually positing each of these vocables, as in specific positing (*al-waḍ‘ al-shakhṣī*), all of them are summarily posited based on the common feature they share. This common feature forms a pattern or form, which essentially categorises this group of vocables into a genre or class. For instance, positing *kātib*, *nāṣir*, *‘ālim*, *shākir* as *fā‘il* is an example of generic positing. Grammatical categories all fall under this type of positing²⁰².

²⁰⁰ ويجول في مضممار التحقيق إن كان من رجاله وفرسانه

²⁰¹ “Mütekellimin murad iylediği ma’nayı vaz‘-ı nev‘iyle vaz‘ olunan terkibi ile irada meleke”.

²⁰² On the types of positing see, Weiss, Bernard. *‘Ilm al-waḍ‘*, 344-350 and also Özdemir, İbrahim. The Science of Waḍ‘. 323-327 (in Turkish).

Table 4 *Tartīb* for Syntax Education

	<i>Kevakib-i Seba</i>		<i>Erzurumi's Tartīb al-'Ulūm</i>
Iqtīṣār	lower	<i>al-'Awāmil</i>	el Avāmil el-cedīd, Unmūzec, Hadāik el-dekāik on Unmuzec, Izhar, Netaic (commentary on Izhar), Kafiye, Molla Cami
	intermediate	<i>Misbah</i>	
	advanced		
Iqtīṣād	lower	<i>Kafiye, Elfiyye</i>	
	intermediate		
	advanced	<i>Molla Jami's Sharḥ of al-Kāfiya</i>	
istiqṣā'	lower	<i>Mughni Labib</i>	
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		

How does one acquire this malaka? The accounts of *tartīb* reveal that the journey into syntax commences with the study of the text '*Awāmil*' by Jurjānī (d.1081) and its later rendition, '*Awāmil-i jadīd*,' authored by Birgivī (d.1573). With these texts, students encounter one of the fundamental grammatical theories of the Arabic language, referred to as the theory of '*amal*' or the theory of government, a theory that seeks to explain and provide a systematic account for the changes in the parsing signs or declension of words (a concept known as '*i'rāb*' in Arabic grammar) within the context of a sentence.

At its core, the theory of '*amal*' operates on the premise that the parsing signs or declensions of words change in adherence to the governing elements within a sentence. In other words, the parsing signs occurring at the end of a word, representing case or mode forms (*i'rāb*), result from relationships between various components within the sentence.

The linguists have proposed various English translations for the Arabic term 'amal, including "government," "effect," "regimen," and "operation." Among these, "the theory of government" appears to be the widely accepted English name for the theory. Building upon the notion of 'amal, the constituents of a sentence are as follows:

1. *ʿAwāmil* (plural of 'amil): These are the governing operators, operating agents, or elements within the sentence that exert influence on the second primary element of the sentence, *maʿmūl*.
2. *Maʿmūl*: the governed elements or operands influenced by the 'awāmil, bearing the effects or marks (ʿalamat or 'athar) of this influence.
3. *ʾI rāb*: denotes marks or pointers that indicate the declension or parsing signs of verbs and nouns. Parsing signs result from the influence of governing words on the governed words, ensuring that these elements collectively form an informative sentence.

The term 'āmil' derives from the active participle of the verb 'amila,' meaning "he affected." In a technical sense, 'āmil' signifies "that which affects something," and it is used to refer to factors that affect and determine the case endings of nouns and the mood endings of imperfect verbs.

Jurjānī's texts furnish a list of 100 *ʿawāmil*, governing operators, along with explanations and example sentences. In contrast, Birgivī's text presents a list of 60 governors and 30 types of governed and ten types of declension, also totalling 100 in all.

These texts, however, do more than provide lists; they also offer a classification of grammatical regimens. Both books categorise the *ʿawāmil* into the following groups:

- I. Lafzī
 - A. Qiyāsī
 - B. Samāʿī
- II. Maʿnawī

Lafzī means expressed (other translations used in the relevant literature are overt, or verbal) and represent relative or dependent regimen. Lafzī governors are parts of

sentences as words. They are further divided into *qiyāsī* (analogical) and *samāʿī* (aural).

Ma`nawi governors, on the other hand, do not consist of words and are characterised by their phonetic absence, “with which the tongue has nothing to do, but it is expressed.”²⁰³ As the name suggests, they are abstract or virtual factors employed by linguists to explain *iʿrāb* when a sentence lacks an explicit or implicit governing element.

Some linguists have linked the theory of government to a particular “philosophy” and “religious thinking” based on a causation-oriented mindset. Al-Liheibi (1999) summaries these views as follows:

The theory of government has its roots in philosophy and religious thinking. Arab linguists believe that for everything existing in this world, there is a creator and a reason for its creation. As a result of such thinking, Arab linguists have questioned the reasons behind the appearance of the short vowels at the end of the words known as parsing signs (*ḥarakāt al-iʿrāb*; i.e. mood and case endings). For early Arab linguists, it was inconceivable that any case ending could have existed without an instigator (*muʿaththir*). The fact that words take the nominative, accusative or genitive cases was considered to be something for which there was a reason.²⁰⁴

While such approaches seeking the “origin” of theory may not be directly relevant to the current discussion, they do allude to something pertinent. The study of *awāmil* not only equipped students with the ability to apply endings to nouns and verbs correctly but also instilled in them a conceptual framework centered around causation, an explanatory model. Students learned how changes in entities were connected to other entities that held governing, causative influence over them. These causes could be either visible or non-visible, with visible causes falling into two categories: conventionally established or authorised singular causes and analogical causes

²⁰³ Alfadly and Atef. "Transformational-Generative Theory," 30.

²⁰⁴ Liheibi, “Aspects of Sentence Analysis,” 1999.

referring to classes of causes. For the latter, by grasping the characteristics of a particular class, students could use analogical reasoning to understand others in the same class.

This explanatory model is also significant for a later discussion in this chapter. In the second part, I will delve into the debate on understanding vs. explanation in the social sciences. Ricoeur, in his unique contribution, offers a solution to this debate with an explanatory model derived from linguistics, distinct from the causal explanation of natural sciences.

5.3.3. Al-Ma‘ānī and Bayān: Chasing Untamed Meanings

Müneccimbāṣī then proceeds to introduce another form of engagement with syntactic structures. The perspective of nahw primarily concerns the functions of the individual words in a sentence and the changes they undergo in relation to each other. In contrast, the discipline of al-ma‘ānī offers a methodology to evaluate sentences as speech or discourse in terms of their overall meaning and their impact on the addressee. For Müneccimbāṣī, this methodology considers a speech in terms of its particularities with which it corresponds to the requirements of the context (*muqtaḍā al-ḥāl*), outwardly and inwardly. These are the contexts to which the aspects of meaning correspond either in terms of word-order, through foregrounding and backgrounding, or in terms of description, utilising definiteness (*ta‘rīf*) or indefiniteness (*tankīr*). Moreover, the signification of the words, this is the meaning they convey, should support this correspondence to the context.

Müneccimbāṣī notes that this sort of engagement with texts leads to the cultivation of the malaka in the field of ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī, which literally means the science of meanings. The discipline of al-ma‘ānī aims to systematically and comprehensively map out the Arabic language and all the possible implications about the context various sentence structures can produce. Given this concern with language and context, this field of study is sometimes compared to pragmatics in modern linguistics as well as to semantics.

Müneccimbāṣī likens some of the elusive nuances that can be derived from a text through malaka in *ma‘ānī* to the hunting of wild animals, through such consideration one learns “the method of chasing untamed meanings” “from domesticated meanings” and such kind of meanings among the experts of al-*ma‘ānī* are known a “chased meanings”²⁰⁵.

Kevakib-i Seba discusses the science of al-*ma‘ānī* through the lens of two key concepts: "havas-ı kalam", which refers to the properties of a speech or discourse, and "makâmât-ı mütefâvite", which concerns situational differences. The need for al-*ma‘ānī* arises from the need to establish the correspondence between the properties of speech and the situational differences. It defines the subject matter of this discipline as “the properties of assertive and performative statements²⁰⁶” in relation to establishing their correspondence with the situation or context. Now, this perspective differs from the perspective of *nahw*.

Table 5 *Tartīb* for Semantics and Pragmatics Education

	<i>Kevakib-i Seba</i>		<i>Erzurumi's Tartīb al-'Ulūm</i>
Iqtiṣār	Lower	<i>Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ</i>	<i>Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ, Mutawwal</i>
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		
Iqtiṣād	Lower	<i>Mukhtaṣar</i>	
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		
istiṣqā'	Lower	<i>Mutawwal, Tādh, Elfiyye-i Halebi</i>	
	Intermediate		
	Advanced		

²⁰⁵ وبهذه الملاحظة أيضًا يعرف طريق صيد المعاني الوحشية العرضية اللازمة من المعاني المأنوسة الوسطية، ويقال لتلك المعاني في عرف أصحاب المعاني المعاني المتصيدة

²⁰⁶ Terakib-i haberiye ve talebiye

Through the texts on *al-ma'ānī*, students acquire new conceptual tools. A central feature of those texts is that they rely on a model different from the government theory based on the notion of 'amal which we have discussed. *Al-ma'ānī* books employ a different model based on the notion of *isnad*. *Isnad* is used for the construction of a relationship between two major parts of the sentence: the subject and the predicate, or the “musnad ilayh” and the “musnad”. *Isnad* is a tool employed in analysing how different individual meanings (*mufradāt*) are linked to each other to produce a new, more complicated (*murakkab*) meaning.

This model is primarily concerned with the question of how solitary meanings variably construct a complex meaning?' It also helps to explain why the same utterances have different meanings on different occasions and settings.

Şentürk posits that 'amal' and 'isnad' represent two distinct paradigms. The former, 'amal', is a causal construct, explaining the changes in the utterance at the end of Arabic words, depending on their position in the sentence. On the other hand, the 'isnad' connection is interpretive or hermeneutic, used to elucidate the changes in the level of meaning, depending on the interrelations between words and the social and discourse context.²⁰⁷

Another primary critical tool offered in *al-ma'ānī* is the division of the statement into two categories: informative (*khavar*) and performative (*insha*) statements. *Khavar* sentences are statements that convey factual information or describe a state of affairs. They make a claim about the world, which can be either true or false, whereas *insha* statements are not like that; they are non-truth-evaluable. In contrast, performative statements are not informed by the real world. Instead, they create or generate an ascriptive linkage which is entirely suppositional. The linkage thus has no basis apart from the speech itself; it is speech which brings it into being. Put differently, performative speech expresses a relationship that stands by itself (*qa'ima bi-nafs al-*

²⁰⁷ Recep Şentürk, “Toward an Open Science and Society: Multiplex Relations in Language, Religion and Society -Revisiting Ottoman Culture-,” *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 6 (July 2001): 108–113.

mutakallim) without claiming any correspondence with the external world. Performative statements include statements such as interrogative, commands, wishes, vocative constructions, oaths, conjectures, contractual declarations, etc. Insha statements are further divided into directive and non-directive statements.

The two classifications, namely *isnad* and *musnad ilayh* (subject) and *musnad* (predicate), on the one hand, and *khavar* versus *insha*, on the other, provide the structure of the primary texts on the science of *al-ma'ānī*, which include the following sections:

- Aspects of Informative Predication

- Aspects of Subject

- Aspects of Predicate

- Restriction

- Performative Statements

- Disjunction and Conjunction (*fasl* and *wasl*): Speech acts that either separate or distinguish something or add or join them. This category typically encompasses the study of types of disjunction and conjunction as well as their pragmatic aims.

- Meaning-Word Economy: succinctness, verbosity and moderation: In classical rhetoric, words are divided into three categories: *ījāz*, *musāwāt* and *ithnāb*. *ījāz* is defined as the use of a small number of words to express a great deal, while its opposite, *ithnāb*, is the use of a great number of words to convey fewer meanings. *Musāwāt* is the equivalence of words and meaning in terms of number. The shortening of the word to the extent that it is insufficient to express the meaning is called violation. The conventions of the people establish the standards of *ījāz* and *ithnāb* in their everyday spoken language. Additionally, the addressee's conditions and the addresser's subject are significant factors in this regard.

"Then, one should examine the text to determine whether it contains any subtleties of the science of eloquence," writes Mūneccimbāṣī. These subtleties elucidate the way speech signifies contained and implied meanings, varying in the degree of clarity. He further elaborates, "By this, I mean whether it includes elements such as similes, metaphors, or metonymy, along with other forms of allegorical language. By diligently adhering to this kind of examination, one attains *malaka* in the science of eloquence,

which is the greatest means to understand the inimitable nature of the Qur'an. Also, through such examination, one grasps the intricacies of the expressions used by the eloquent and the literati, as well as the intricacies of their contained and implied meanings.”

Modern scholars have used terms like the "science of elucidation" or "figures of speech" to refer to 'ilm al-bayān. Linguistically, the term "bayān" is rooted in the verb "bāna," which means 'to make things clearer and more transparent, to clarify something.' Additionally, its morphological derivation "istibāna" signifies 'to surface.' Hence, 'al-bayān' is a noun denoting 'clarity and unveiling,' while the adjective "mubīn" conveys 'clear and manifest.' In a linguistic context, it conveys eloquence and stylistic clarity. Consequently, 'ilm al-bayān represents eloquent discourse that reveals the emotional expressions of the speaker, exposing them to the listener. When we say that someone's discourse is characterised by 'bayān,' it implies that they are proficient communicators in terms of skillfully unearthing their intended meanings and bringing their hidden thoughts and emotions to light.²⁰⁸ The classics of *ilm al-bayān* define it as “knowing how to convey the same meaning in different ways, by increasing the clarity in the way it is signified or decreasing it.”²⁰⁹

In Kevakib-i seba', respective intellectual virtue is defined as malaka of articulation according to intellectual signification (*delalet-i 'akliyye*). Intellectual signification here is essential. Generally, signification is of two kinds: conventional *al-dalāla al-waḍ'īyya*, which is also referred to as linguistic or lexical signification, and *al-dalāla al-'aqliyya*, that is, intellectual signification. At the level of conventional signification of an expression, its clarity cannot vary, given that the listener is familiar with the expression. In the case of intellectual signification, the clarity of significations can vary, depending on the clarity or obscurity of the associations on which the signification is based.

²⁰⁸ Abdul-Raof, Hussein. Arabic Rhetoric, 197.

²⁰⁹ Harb, Lara. "Arabic Literary Theory."

Kevakib-i Seba does not specify books for *ilm al-bayān* as the references on *al-ma'ānī* contain materials for *bayān*, whereas Erzurumlu mentions Samarqandi's (fl. 1488) *al-Risala fi al-Isti'ara* as a source material.

5.3.4. Logic: “Refining the Intellect”

Once the consideration of the text and what can be derived from it in terms of individual, constructional, primary, subsidiary, congruent, contained, and implied meanings is completed, *muṭāli'* should ponder the passage in relation to the second-order intelligibles as well. That is, the cases of second-order intellection, which are scrutinised in the field of logic, and refer to the examination of first-order intelligibles in that they are means to the unknowns.

Muṭāli' starts by considering the definitions to identify what type of explanatory statements they are. Are they *lafzi*, *ismi*, or *haqiqi* and whether they are full or incomplete definitions (*ḥadd*) or full or incomplete descriptions (*rasm*). Then for each definition, *muṭāli'* dissects its constituents and distinguishes genus from differentia, and accident from property and necessary accident from separable accident.

As for classifications, which are related to the definitions for Mūneccimbāṣī, consideration is given to whether it is a classification in terms of the whole and part, which is rare in the sciences, or a classification of universal into particulars. The next step is clarification between them regarding the validity of the dividing element for each part for the latter, not the former. Then, consider if it is restricting or not and, if restrictive, whether it is rational or inductive, contemplating the rationale behind the restriction.

Then, one should consider each structure of linguistic and assertive constructions as a component of parts of propositions. Is it simple or compound, real or mental, extraneous, attributive or conditional, and if it's conditional, is it conjunctive or disjunctive? If conjunctive, is it implicative or coincidental? If disjunctive, is it genuine disjunction, disjunction preventing the joint affirmation, or disjunction preventing the joint negation only? Is it singular or quantified? If quantified, is it determinate or indeterminate, and in case it is determinate is it universal or particular? Is it directed

or absolute? And for each of these categories, is it affirmative or negative? Then, one should consider their contradiction and conversion (both equivalent and contradictory conversion).

Then, he distinguishes the claim from the evidence and begins to observe the evidence: Is it based on demonstrative, rhetorical, or dialectical reasoning (Because, apart from these three of the five arts, they are rarely mentioned in reputable sciences)? Or is it based on induction, analogy, discretion or the presumption of continuity, or other opinion-forming methods on the subject?

After determining the nature of syllogism, *muṭāli‘* first considers if it is a direct or contradictory syllogism or a connective or repetitive syllogism. Is it single or compound, connected with the conclusion or not?

Then, he observes which of the four forms it belongs to and what type within that form. He notes the conditions of the form and type, whether they are present or absent.

The *malaka* in logic includes a conceptual framework for explanatory statements, a definition theory, and a detailed knowledge of syllogisms and their constituents. It also entails the ability to differentiate various types of reasoning, such as deductive, inductive, and analogical.

5.4. “From Text to Action”?

The centrality of reading to scholarly practice is indisputable. As was the case for the Ottoman ulema, contemporary academic life is unthinkable without reading. However, its significance extends beyond simply serving as a source of knowledge. There have been attempts to conceptualise the paradigm of reading as "the model for all forms of understanding and possibly also the template upon which other ways of making the world intelligible were formed,²¹⁰" as Daston puts it. A question naturally arises in the context of this chapter: Were there similar perspectives that regarded reading or text as extendable to other domains beyond their immediate function? Before delving into

²¹⁰ Lorraine Daston, "Taking Notes," 443.

this inquiry, let us consider perhaps the most prominent example of an attempt to "extend the paradigm of reading to the whole sphere of the human sciences."²¹¹

In the philosophy of social sciences, a major unresolved debate concerns the methodology, with its roots in epistemology and ontology. If we oversimplify, the debate is whether we need to differentiate social and natural sciences with thick lines, each requiring a completely different methodology. One camp, sometimes referred to as naturalism, has argued that studying human behaviour is analogous to studying natural objects. Thus, social or human sciences should be treated as continuous and homogeneous with natural sciences; therefore, the same methodology aiming at the "explanation" of the phenomenon should be implemented.

The second camp has argued that due to the specificity of the social realm, the "explanation" has no place here, it is rather an interpretation or understanding that should be considered as the main epistemological paradigm²¹². Viewing the relationship between explanation (*erklären*) and understanding (*verstehen*) as dichotomous, they thought the former to be exclusively about the natural world. Any attempt to study the social sciences through an explanatory model was disapproved as an attempt of borrowing from a different region of knowledge²¹³.

They rather wanted to see what they formulated as *Geisteswissenschaften* to constitute an epistemological break from *Naturwissenschaften* as an autonomous domain study of which had to be pursued as an attempt to *understand* "a foreign psychic life on the basis of the signs in which this life is immediately exteriorised". The irreducibility and specificity of the domain of the human sciences cannot be objectified thus making an explanatory investigation impossible. This dichotomous perspective has been criticised and several solutions have been proposed.

²¹¹ Paul Ricœur, "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," *New Literary History* 5, no. 1 (1973): 105.

²¹² Paul Ricœur, *From Text to Action* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 125.

²¹³ For a recent compelling argument in favour of an anti-naturalist philosophy of social sciences, see Mark Bevir and Jason Blakely, *Interpretive Social Science: An Anti-Naturalist Approach*, First edition. (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2018).

Ricoeur's solution to the methodological paradox of the social sciences is well-known and centres around the paradigm of text and reading. He asks whether the object of the social sciences, that is, meaningful human action, conforms to the paradigm of the text. According to him, reading displays both the character of *erklären* and *verstehen* without seeing these two methodological perspectives as dichotomously opposing and serves as a potential model for action.

The question he poses is to what extent can the notion of text be considered a good paradigm for the object of the social sciences, i.e., human action? Does human action display some of the features of a text such that we can consider text an appropriate paradigm? At the methodological level, he raises the question of to what extent the methodology of text interpretation may be used as a paradigm for interpretation in general in the field of the social sciences.

He demonstrates that four features of objectification that text displays are also found in meaningful human action. These four features of objectification include fixation: the writing fixates the speech event. A speech event is a single instance that takes place in a temporal setting and keeps appearing and disappearing. Writing is capable of fixating a speech. To elucidate what is fixated with writing from speech events, Ricoeur draws upon the theory of speech acts indicating that writing does not merely fixate the propositional content of the speech act but also the other two aspects of the speech act, namely the illocutionary force and the perlocutionary action. Ricoeur then demonstrates that a meaningful action can also be objectified, in a manner analogous to the fixation of the discourse of writing, thus enabling the possibility of explanatory inquiry.

The second feature of the text is that the overlap between the speaker's intention and the meaning of the speech fades away in the written discourse. A detachment occurs between the author's intention and the meaning of the text. Such an autonomization is also present in human action, Ricoeur argues, as an act is also disassociated from the subject/doer and it has its own independent consequences which have to do with the social dimension of the action "our deeds escape us and have effects which we did not intend". This social fixation of action constitutes a type of "objectivity" of meaningful behaviour.

The third trait of the text is related to its capacity to transcend its initial situation and references get freed from its initial situational context and develop its world. Human action resembles the text for its capacity to exceed, overcome, and transcend the “social conditions of its production and may be reenacted in new social contexts. Its importance is its durable relevance and, in some cases, its omnitemporal relevance.”²¹⁴ The last feature of the text that constitutes the objectivity of a text is its universal range of its readers. Human action too has an indefinite range of addresses.

These four features of "objectivity" create the possibility of explaining. This model of explanation is not borrowed from the natural sciences and, therefore, does not constitute a switch from the domains of reality, which was the main concern for the interpretivist school opposing the introduction of any explanatory inquiry into human action.

After establishing the commonality between meaningful action and text, Ricoeur goes on to continue this analogy at the methodological level, demonstrating how in the process of reading, explanation and interpretation coexist.

Overall, Ricoeur argues that just as the structuralist analysis of their contents can facilitate the interpretation of texts, the understanding of action can also be enriched by an explanatory account. Hence, he argues explanation and understanding are not necessarily opposed to one another, as some philosophers of social science have suggested. Instead, the explanation of action can be treated as an integral part of a process of understanding. Furthermore, Ricoeur emphasises that his approach offers a superior account of explanation that is not derived from the natural world.

Did the Ottomans view the text as paradigmatic for other domains of reality? Clearly, we have seen that the process of *muṭāla‘a* can be regarded as a hermeneutical approach in Ricoeur's sense, encompassing both interpretive and explanatory schemes. Müneccimbāṣī introduction to the text has some indicators that the paradigm of

²¹⁴ Ricoeur, "Model of the Text," 103.

muṭāla‘a had an application beyond the text in the Ottoman conception of it. Let us consider that first.

In Ottoman scholarly texts, the ḥamdala (an expression of praise to God) that appears in the very first paragraph, situated between the “basmala” and “taṣliya” (the invocation of God’s name and blessing upon the Prophet Muḥammad respectfully), often goes beyond an eloquent statement of gratitude to the divine. Frequently, it alludes to the central theme, argument, concepts, and sometimes even the affiliated schools of thought of the respective text. At the outset of Fayḍ al-Ḥaram, Müneccimbāṣī compiles a ḥamdala that highlights the notion of intellectual capacities within the human being, enabling various forms of cognitive engagement with reality. One facet of these intellectual capacities portrays human beings primarily as interpretive beings, capable of deriving meanings beyond the apparent.

Müneccimbāṣī’s conception of a human being is the one who is inherently equipped with the ability for hermeneutics of existence [muṭāla‘at al-kā’ināt], with all the evident inscriptions it encompasses, and for the contemplation of creation [mulāḥazat al-maṣnū‘āt] through its radiant signs. Human beings are dignified with the gem of intellect, to deduce intelligible essences from sensible accidents, and to arrive at the unknown from the known²¹⁵.

Apart from this occasion, Müneccimbāṣī primarily confines the use of muṭāla‘a to its role as a form of scholarly engagement with a text throughout Fayḍ al-Ḥaram. However, Müneccimbāṣī’s referencing muṭāla‘at al-kā’ināt is neither coincidental nor merely an exercise of literary style.

I would like to bring out two points here to contextualise Müneccimbāṣī’s use of muṭāla‘a, both as a form of textual engagement and as a wider notion of muṭāla‘at al-kā’ināt, something akin to the interpretation/understanding or hermeneutics of the universe.

الحمد لله الذي جعل الإنسان مستعداً لمطالعة الكائنات مع ما فيها من النقوش الظاهرة، ولملاحظة المصنوعات وما فيها من الآيات الباهرة، وشرفه بجوهر العقل ليستدلّ به من العرض المحسوس على الجوهر المعقول، ويتصل بإعداده من المعلوم إلى المجهول، والصلاة والسلام على أكمل المطالعين وأفضل الملاحظين سيدنا محمد خاتم الأنبياء والمرسلين وآله وصحبه المتشرّفين بمطالعة جماله المتأدبين بأداب كماله، دامت الصلاة عليه وعلى صحبه وآله.

The first point is related to the common ontological classification in Ottoman discourses, which refers to four modes of existence: written, verbal, mental, and external. The roots of this classification reach back as far as al-Ghazali, and in Arabic, it is expressed as *wujūd fī al-dhihn*, *wujūd fī al-lafz*, *wujūd fī al-khat*, and *fī al-‘āyan*. We find a version of it in *Kevakib-i Seba* that reads: "All things have existence at four levels: In writing, in speech, in mind, and the external world. And each of these is a means to the other." After commenting on the nature of existence at each of these levels, i.e., whether they are real (*haqīqī*), relational (*i‘tibārī*), or figurative (*majazī*), *Kevakib-i Seba* classifies sciences for each of these levels of existence. According to this classification of sciences, disciplines that deal with the study of human action, that is *fiqh* and practical philosophy fall in the category of *wujūd fī al-‘āyan*.

Now, this perception of existence as one, with its modes and levels being interrelated, possibly made it easy in Ottoman thought to interrelate their sciences as well. What I am attempting to convey, or rather test, is the notion that the textual domain and physical domains of reality were not necessarily distant from each other in Ottoman ways of thinking. The term '*kā‘ināt*' was often used in Ottoman discourse similarly to '*wujud*', encompassing all the modes and levels of existence. For example, Kinalizade (d.1572) employs it in his *Akhlāq-i ‘Alā‘ī* in such a way: "Pes mertebe-i insan meratibi *kā‘ināta* vasat u miyanede hasıldır." Thus, when Müneccimbāşī referred to the notion of '*kā‘ināt*', it is safe to assume that he too had in mind the meaning of the universe encompassing all types of existence.

Moreover, the second point is that it was not unusual for Ottoman thinkers to use words with textual associations like 'book' and 'nuskha' within wider categories of existence, more precisely, with terms like '*kā‘ināt*,' '*alam*,' '*cihan*,' etc. As an example, we find in Erzurumlu Hakkı's '*Marifetname*,' who lived right after Müneccimbāşī, employing those terms in his thought, combined with words that have textual connotations. '*Kitab- i cihanin her bir harfinden ayet marifetine mutala edenlere arif eyleyib*,'²¹⁶ writes Erzurumlu Hakkı in the hamdala of the book, referencing the term '*mutāla‘a*' as well.

²¹⁶ On this, see Şentürk. *Semiotics of Nature*.

Elsewhere he mentions “kā’ ināt kitabī” [book of universe] that to be read through mind (*‘aql*).

Furthermore, what allowed for such uses was also the fact that, as we will explore in the upcoming discussion, certain conceptual categories used in textual interpretation, such as 'amil' and its various types, had the potential to be transferred to other domains of reality. To use the words of a contemporary historian of science, Ottomans thought that reading was "the model for all forms of understanding and possibly also the template upon which other ways of making the world intelligible were formed."²¹⁷

Müneccimbāşī mentions a few of the morphologically related words of muṭāla‘a to clarify its lexical meaning. Indeed, they are useful for making sense of the multiple connotations the word has. He relates it to the verbal noun form of 'iṭṭīla' and the root verb 'ṭāla‘a,' which have meanings related to study, examination, cognizance, conversance, acquaintance, as well as meanings related to emergence and appearance. Among the scholarly community, the term, he argues, was used to signify the consideration of a written item to attain an understanding. Müneccimbāşī then assigns it a technical meaning, which we have already discussed.

However, in this context, the purpose he attributes to the practice of muṭāla‘a in its terminological sense is very informative for understanding its use in a more general ontological context. The purpose of muṭāla‘a is to ensure the protection of the mind from becoming limited to the external to the extent that it would be deprived of truths and subtleties. On one side are the words 'zawāhir,' which means 'apparent,' and on the other side, ḥaqā’iq and daqā’iq. The apparent ('zawāhir') functions here as an obstacle, but at the same time, the attainment of truth (ḥaqā’iq) and subtleties (daqā’iq) depends on the engagement with the external or apparent.

If we put these two perspectives together, namely Ricœur's concept of hermeneutical social sciences based on the idea of thinking text and, therefore the methodology of text-interpretation as a good paradigm for the study of human action, with the Ottoman conception of the universe as a text, can we not think that the methodological learning

²¹⁷ Daston, Lorraine. “Taking Notes.” 443.

of an alim had significance beyond the text? By acquiring intellectual virtues to become an effective text-reader, an alim also developed ways of thinking to "read" human action. In other words, the cognitive capacities that muṭāli‘ cultivated for the sake of progressing in the extraction of meaning from texts also generated competencies in them for understanding human action.

Given the ulema's role as maintainers of the Ottoman social universe, and that human action constituted their primary area of study, textual models likely informed their conception of the social reality. It is also probable that the intellectual virtues they acquired manifested in the fulfilment of specific roles they held in society.

5.5. Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I demonstrated how Ottoman *mudarris* scholars endeavoured to formalise the learning of an alim through devised curricula and the authoring of pedagogical materials. Additionally, I discussed how they conceptualised learning through the concept of malaka, considering it a process of attaining fluency in various domains. This chapter investigated whether they believed this learning process nurtured a specific scholarly selfhood and, if so, how they articulated it.

I examined the concept of muṭāli‘ as a model of scholarly selfhood that Ottoman ulema were expected to cultivate through their education, aiming to secure epistemic goods during encounters with texts. Müneccimbāṣī's work, *Fayḍ al-Ḥaram*, serves as a nearly instructional manual on becoming a muṭāli‘, offering detailed explanations of the concept and its practice. Building on Müneccimbāṣī's account, I offered a thorough analysis of muṭāla‘a, complementing and expanding on some of his explanations through my analysis of core texts of Ottoman scholarly erudition. This methodological approach, referring back to the accounts of tartīb discussed in Chapter One to locate core texts, constitutes one of the methodological originalities of this chapter.

I demonstrated how Müneccimbāṣī's endeavour exemplifies how an Ottoman scholar translated a theoretical ideal into a methodology for a specific scholarly practice—scholarly reading. Furthermore, I discussed Müneccimbāṣī's integration of the notion

of muṭāla‘ with Ottoman epistemic categories such as *taqlīd*, *taḥqīq*, *tadqīq*, *istihdār*, *tanmīyya*, and *taqwīyya*, as well as his association of muṭāla‘a with different layers of textual meaning.

The second part of the chapter explored the notion of viewing text and reading as paradigmatic for all human forms of understanding and making the world intelligible. I investigated whether the intellectual virtues that constitute Mūneccimbāṣī’s model of muṭāli‘ held significance for scholarly encounters beyond textual domains. Initiating this discussion with Ricœur’s concept of hermeneutical social sciences, based on considering the text as a model for studying meaningful human action. Having established Ricœur’s view of textual interpretation as a model for interpreting any subject, I refocused on Ottoman thought to illustrate the centrality of text in Ottoman ontology as a paradigm for discussing existence as a whole.

This exploration led me to conclude and pose the question of whether acquiring intellectual virtues for effective text-reading enabled ulema to develop thinking forms to “read” human action. In other words, did the cognitive capacities cultivated by muṭāli‘ for progressing in textual meaning extraction also generate competencies for understanding human action? I made this question further relevant by restating the role of ulema as the “maintainers” of the Ottoman social realm and the centrality of human action to their scholarly occupation as fuqaha.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis constitutes an attempt to rewrite the late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman intellectual history with a fresh perspective. It involves a reconsideration of the period by unthinking some of the major historiographical ideas and categories that have dominated the interpretation of this era. To what extent can we think of Ottoman intellectual tradition in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without the overshadowing categories of Europe, modernity, early modernity, reform, Ottoman and Islamic decline, enlightenment, tulip era, printing machine and modern science? While previous approaches utilising these categories have contributed to the improvement of our overall understanding of the period; however, their usefulness has been limited when it comes to intellectual history. This thesis has tested the merit of an alternative account in which all these categories are assigned minimum explanatory roles. However, what other categories did I assign explanatory roles instead?

My research concentrated on the Ottoman ulema. Rather than adopting a perspective that privileges the 'new and controversial', I focused on the mainstream Ottoman ulema, who were the primary scholarly community of the period. They were the dominant class of people whose occupation was the transmission, maintenance and development of high Ottoman academic knowledge. Needless to say, being an Ottoman 'ālim took place in a wider context. An individual who was a scholar concurrently possessed diverse identities and experiences that extended beyond their scholarly pursuits. However I am not interested in Ottoman 'ālim as a member of a social class, nor as a member or founder of a household, nor a bureaucratic or political actor, nor even as the carrier of moral or spiritual charisma and influence. I am concerned with ulema as scholars, *scholars qua scholars*.

Furthermore I narrowed down my focus horizontally. Ottoman geography was vast and included multiple scholarly centres and zones. As the scope of an interpretive or

explanatory account widens, its generalisability decreases. It would have been overambitious and not feasible to attempt to capture the ulema class of the entire Ottoman geography in a single study. Such an account would have lacked explanatory capacity and would have neglected diversity and important nuances. For that purpose, I limited my focus to the ulema of Istanbul, which encompasses not only the ulema who were educated and operating in Istanbul but also other ulema who were connected with the Ottoman-Turkic madrasa tradition. In the literature, similar works have usually described their focus as the central lands of the empire, as opposed to the so-called Arabic provinces of the empire.

One potential approach to exploring the intellectual world of Ottoman ulema involved analysing their scholarly output – writings authored by ulema as recognised authorities in various fields. While valuable and recent scholarship has begun to utilise this method, revealing the intellectual pursuits of Ottoman "academics" and offering a counterpoint to histories neglecting their work, it wasn't the path I chose.

I was rather interested in understanding rigorous training across diverse scholarly disciplines that ulema went through making them capable of producing such works and fulfilling their various knowledge roles within Ottoman society. This research rested on the foundational conviction that any serious attempt to reconstruct the intellectual history of this period necessitates examining its educational practices constituting the intellectual formulation of ulema, as such practices shaped the very minds that produced this scholarly wealth.

I shall acknowledge that my initial foray into the subject found inspiration in the work of a nineteenth-century Istanbulian intellectual²¹⁸. Ottoman ulema with their French counterparts in terms of their scholarly character, Ali Suavi (d.1878) makes a statement on how an Ottoman alim was free from binary modes of intellectual attitude between *affirmation and negation* to everything and had a much wider set of cognitive options in the “infinite space of investigation and inquiry”. An intriguing aspect of his argument was his association of the study of madrasa disciplines with the acquisition

²¹⁸ I am indebted to Professor Görgün for directing my attention to Suavi's insightful passage early in my research.

of what he termed *malaka* of *istihdār*, which enabled one to pursue scholarly reading *muṭālaʿa* in any domain. It was through the exploration of this idea I was able to shape my own perspective on the subject matter, contributing to the framework utilised in this study. More precisely, Suavi's triplet of *madrasa*, *malaka* and *muṭālaʿa* constituted the three building blocks of these theses, this thesis, each of which I treated separately in a dedicated chapter. In that sense, the entire work can be read as a commentary on Suavi's description or, alternatively, as an attempt to reconstruct Ottoman ulema's intellectual character in Suavi's terms.

Drawing on the concept developed by Suavi and reinterpreting it through a contemporary lens, I presented a model of scholarly selfhood in the Ottoman context. This model posits that an *ʿālim* cultivated a distinct scholarly identity through the intellectual and epistemic training received within madrasas. The concept of "scholarly selfhood" itself is derived from the burgeoning field of historical scholarship on science and knowledge, and here it is applied to the notion of *muṭāliʿ* as a case study of a historical selfhood.

Epistemic or intellectual virtues was another term that became central to my work. It had twofold relevance. First being, their genealogical origin; both *malaka* and virtues share the same philosophical genealogy. Secondly, today virtues are used in the discussion of the philosophical aims of education and the concept of scholarly selfhood today is primarily understood as a constellation or manifestation of epistemic virtues. In that sense, I draw on its use in the history of scholarship as well as the philosophy of education. Therefore, rather than framing this work as Islamic studies or Ottoman history, it is framed as a history of intellectual virtues or a history of scholarship in a more mainstream sense.

Before going into the discussion of the 3 Ms of *madrasa*, *malaka* and *muṭālaʿa*, I begin by sketching a sociology of knowledge to locate the ulema in a general account of knowledge. Instead of setting ulema in the context of a society going through major challenges and then ulema taking different positions in relation to the change and major ruptures, I went for a neutral functionalist account of Ottoman society through a social theory of knowledge for which I made use of both contemporary theories

primarily through the account of Berger and Luckman and with the insights from Sājaqlizāda and Ottoman tradition of al-ḥikmah al-‘amaliyya, practical philosophy, in order to come up with a perspective of ulema at social level. This helped me to locate the domain of knowledge that fell under the responsibility of ulema within the broader stock of knowledge that made Ottoman society possible.

Initially, I raised questions about the nature of the education of an ‘ālim in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I examined Ottoman discourses on learning to comprehend how the education of an ‘ālim was conceptualised within these discourses. At its core, my inquiry aimed to establish the nature of education. One approach to understanding so-called pre-modern education in non-Western contexts has been to emphasize its informal, individual, and flexible nature. However, Berkey’s conclusion that the pre-modern ulema formed an “open elite” community, with all its potential positive connotations, conflicted with my research objectives. To discuss the Ottoman scholarly self, there needed to be, at least at the discourse level, some conventional agreement on what constituted the education of an ‘ālim. Late seventeenth and eighteenth-century Ottoman discourses offered more than that. My investigation into the subject led to the conclusion that education and pedagogy were central intellectual themes of the period. Significant works on scholarly learning attempted to establish standards, articulate aims and goals of education, prescribe content and methodologies for achieving these goals, critique improper practices, and so forth.

The extensive discussion on education among Ottoman intellectuals led me to view this period as a "pedagogical turn" in Ottoman thought, which I attribute to the emergence and further establishment of the mudarris-alim profile, the proliferation of works addressing learning and seeking to formalise it, the emergence of a new genre of writing that I term "pedagogical commentary," the authoring of examination treaties, and, most importantly, the development of curriculum. I compared accounts of *tartīb*, the Ottoman term for syllabus, while also noting what was not considered part of the education of an alim, thereby disqualifying concepts of informal learning, religious, or moral education. Additionally, I engaged with existing academic arguments regarding the Ottoman syllabus and pedagogical shift in the same period.

After addressing the question of madrasa education, I shifted my focus to the term "malaka." I documented its usage in various contexts, including intellectual biographies educational materials and epistemic discussions, by providing examples to illustrate how differently Ottoman authors employed it. To explore the background of the concept, I examined the writings of three pre-Ottoman scholars who influenced Ottoman thought: Al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), and al-Ījī (d. 1355). I also discussed Kātib Çelebi's (d.1657) understanding of "al-malaka al-‘ilmīya". I demonstrated the use of "malaka" in classical ontology as well as its application to levels of intellect. In addition to its use in ontological discussions, I analysed the writings of al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun to understand the implications of the term for education. I also attempted to locate the concept of malaka into contemporary discussions of epistemic virtue, hinting at the possibility of viewing the Ottoman concept of "malaka" as virtue reliabilism. My examination of "malaka" culminated in Muneccimbashi's model of three-tiered epistemic virtues—malakat al-istihsāl, malakat al-istikhrāj, and malakat al-istihdār. I also explored his commentary on al-Ijī to gain a better understanding of his conception of intellectual virtue.

I also investigated an Ottoman scholarly practice known as muṭāla‘a. Mūneccimbāṣī's "Fayḍ al-Ḥaram" serves as a near-instructional manual on how to pursue muṭāla‘a, and I was interested in understanding what scientific self was deemed capable of engaging in this practice. Therefore, I considered muṭāli‘ as a specific Ottoman scholarly identity. By analysing both "Fayḍ al-Ḥaram" and core scholarly texts, the chapter provided insights into the intellectual formation of an Ottoman alim. My approach, which synthesised Mūneccimbāṣī's methodology with my own interpretation, notably represents a main methodological originality of this work. The chapter then ventured beyond text-based encounters, investigating whether the intellectual virtues associated with muṭāli‘ applied to broader scholarly realms. Using Ricœur's concept of hermeneutical social sciences (treating text as a model for studying human action), the chapter established the centrality of text in Ottoman ontology as a framework for understanding existence. This raised the question: did competencies in reading texts equip ulema with a paradigm to interpret human action, given their role as societal "maintainers" and their focus on human action as scholars (fuqaha)?

Another aspect of this study I should highlight is that although I do not directly engage with postcolonial theory, and I have not framed my work as such, some aspects of it resonate with postcolonial discussions. I moved away from treating Ottoman ideas solely from the perspective of pure historicism and reducing them to byproducts of socio-political processes. As famously pointed out by Chakrabarty, contemporary studies often argue passionately in dialogue with figures like Marx or Weber, or even with their ancient, medieval, or early-modern predecessors, without feeling the need to historicise them. In my account, I engage in a "dialogical engagement," using Farahat's concept, with Ottoman intellectual tradition, which informs my theoretical thinking in this thesis, and I employ some of their categories as analytical concepts. I draw on Berger and Luckmann's concept, as well as Sājaqlīzāda's sociology of knowledge. Similarly, while I consider Zagzebski and Sosa's notions of epistemic virtues, I am equally interested in the theoretical value of Müneccimbāṣī's understanding of malaka.

In conclusion, I would also like to highlight some questions that this thesis opens up for further research. As the first application of the "history of scholarly self" and "epistemic virtues" to the Ottoman context, this work is, in some respects, programmatic and sets an agenda for future studies.

Firstly, while this study included a content analysis of an alim's educational materials, it remains far from being exhaustive. I focused on the conceptual aspects of core texts in Ottoman higher learning, exploring their potential impact on students. However, fully addressing this undertaking requires a broader scope and deeper expertise in various fields. Therefore, my efforts should be viewed as a model and a starting point for future research in this direction. Further investigation is needed to unveil the learning processes of the ulema and further recover aspects of Ottoman scholarly selfhood. A primary challenge lies in the technical specificities and linguistic nuances of certain texts, often outside the typical expertise of Ottomanists. Perhaps collaborating with scholars of the history of humanities or philology could yield fruitful results in this area.

Another aspect for further investigation is the scholarly output of the ulema. We have a rich corpus of materials from the period, including highly technical works and treatises on various social subjects that potentially reflect the ulema's practice of intellectual virtues and scholarly selfhood.

Additionally, the concept of "malaka" itself merits deeper philosophical exploration. Today's major strands in virtue epistemology often refer back to Aristotle to resolve disagreements. However, the Islamic tradition of practical philosophy, including its Ottoman iteration, offers rich discussions on virtues and could potentially contribute solutions to contemporary epistemological problems. Virtue epistemology has so far largely ignored this tradition, with the exception of a single chapter on Ibn Miskawayh (d.1030) in an edited volume²¹⁹.

Further consideration should also be given to incorporating Ottoman educational practices and theory into the fields of philosophy and history of education. As I have demonstrated, the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed a large interest in educational questions. If the history of education wants to fill its gaps, Ottoman education would be a good starting point.

Finally, Ottoman society represents a valuable case study for an investigation from the perspective of the "sociology of knowledge" in the Berger and Luckmann sense. While the sociology of knowledge took different directions in Western academia, a comprehensive account of Ottoman society encompassing the ulema and their knowledge alongside other knowledge institutions and forms of knowledge would be a valuable contribution to the field and could potentially lead to theoretical advancements.

²¹⁹ Bucar, Elizabeth M., 'Islam and the Cultivation of Character: *Ibn Miskawayh's Synthesis and the Case of the Veil*', in Nancy E. Snow (ed.), *Cultivating Virtue: Perspectives from Philosophy, Theology, and Psychology* (New York, 2014; online edn, Oxford Academic, 18 Dec. 2014),

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Türkçe Genişletilmiş Özet:

Bu tezde, XVII. yüzyıl sonu ve XVIII. yüzyıl Osmanlı İstanbul’unda âlim olmanın ne anlama geldiği, bir *ilmî benlik* tarihi olarak incelenmektedir. Bir âlimin yetişmesini, çeşitli entelektüel erdemlerin geliştirilmesi yoluyla belirli bir ilmî benliğe dönüşme süreci olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Bu amaçla, çalışmanın metodolojik odağı, bir âlimin eğitim süreçlerine yöneltilmiştir. Öncelikle, dönemin önde gelen âlimlerinden Saçaklızâde Muhammed el-Mer’âşî (ö. 1732), Dâvûd el-Kârsî (ö. 1756) ve Muhammed el-Mîmî el-Basrî’nin (d.1749) eserleri üzerinden Osmanlı yükseköğretim tartışmaları ve öğrenime dair teorik söylemler incelenmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, ilmî benlik oluşturma teknolojilerinde kullanılan eğitim materyallerinin içerik analizi de önemli bir yer teşkil etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, dönemin Osmanlı eğitim müfredatı üzerine yazılmış *tertib* eserleri değerlendirilmiştir.

Bir âlim olmaya dair Osmanlı ilmî söylemlerini inceleyen bu çalışma sonuç olarak, bu tartışmalardaki *meleke* kavramının, modern erdem epistemolojisinin merkezî kavramı olan “entelektüel erdemler” bağlamında anlaşılması gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. Bu argümanı temellendirdikten sonra *istihzâr* melesesini Osmanlı ilmî benlik anlayışının anahtar kavramı olarak incelemektedir.

Bu tez, on yedinci yüzyılın sonları ve on sekizinci yüzyıl Osmanlı düşünce tarihini yeni bir bakış açısıyla yeniden yazma girişimidir. Tez, bu dönemin yorumlanmasına hakim olan bazı temel tarihyazımı fikirlerini ve kategorilerini göz ardı ederek dönemin yeniden ele alınmasını içermektedir. On yedinci yüzyılın sonları ve on sekizinci yüzyıldaki Osmanlı düşünce geleneğini, Avrupa, modernite, erken modernite, reform, Osmanlı ve İslami gerileme, aydınlanma, Lale Devri, matbaa ve modern bilim gibi gölgeleyici kategoriler olmaksızın ne ölçüde düşünebiliriz? Bu kategorilerin kullanıldığı önceki yaklaşımlar döneme ilişkin genel kavrayışımızın gelişmesine katkıda bulunmuş olsa da, söz konusu düşünce tarihi olduğunda yararlılıkları sınırlı kalmıştır. Bu tez, tüm bu kategorilere asgari açıklayıcı rollerin verildiği alternatif bir açıklamanın değerini test etmiştir. Ancak, bunların yerine başka hangi kavram ve kategorilere açıklayıcı roller atadım?

Çalışmam Osmanlı uleması üzerinde odaklandı. 'Yeni ve aykırı' olana ayrıcalık tanıyan bir bakış açısını benimsemek yerine, dönemin başlıca ilmî zümresi olan ana akım Osmanlı ulemasına odaklandım. Onlar, meslekleri Osmanlı yüksek akademik bilgisinin aktarılması, sürdürülmesi ve geliştirilmesi olan esas insan sınıfıydı. Elbette Osmanlı âlimi olmak daha geniş bir bağlamda gerçekleşiyordu. Âlim olan bir birey, aynı zamanda ilmî uğraşlarının ötesine uzanan çeşitli kimliklere ve deneyimlere sahipti. Ancak ben Osmanlı ulemasıyla ne bir sosyal sınıfın üyesi, ne bir hanenin mensubu ya da kurucusu, ne bürokratik ya da siyasi bir aktör, hatta ne ahlaki ya da manevi karizma ve nüfuzun taşıyıcısı olarak ilgileniyorum. Ben bu tezde âlim olmaları yönüyle ulemayla ilgilendim.

Bunun yanı sıra odağımı yatay olarak sınırlandırdım. Osmanlı coğrafyası çok genişti ve birden fazla ilmi merkez ve bölgeyi içeriyordu. Yorumlayıcı veya açıklayıcı bir anlatının kapsamı genişledikçe, genelleştirilebilirliği azalır. Tüm Osmanlı coğrafyasındaki ulema sınıfını tek bir çalışmada ele almaya teşebbüs etmek aşırı iddialı olur ve pek mümkün olmazdı. Böyle bir anlatı açıklama kapasitesinden yoksun olacak, çeşitliliği ve önemli nüansları ihmal edecekti. Bu amaçla, odağımı İstanbul uleması ile sınırlandırdım ki bu sadece İstanbul'da eğitim görmüş ve faaliyet göstermiş ulemayı değil, aynı zamanda Osmanlı-Türk medrese geleneği ile bağlantılı olan ulemayı da kapsamaktadır. Literatürde, benzer odaklara sahip çalışmalar genellikle odak noktalarını imparatorluğun Arap vilayetleri olarak adlandırılan bölgeleri ile karşılaştırmalı olarak imparatorluğun merkezi toprakları olarak tanımlamıştır.

Osmanlı ulemasının düşünce dünyasını keşfetmeye yönelik potansiyel yaklaşımlardan biri, ulemanın çeşitli alanlarda tanınmış otoriteler olarak kaleme aldığı yazıları, yani ilmi üretimlerini irdelemektir. Her ne kadar değerli ve yeni çalışmalar bu yöntemi kullanmaya başlamış, Osmanlı “akademisyenlerinin” fikri uğraşlarını ortaya çıkarmış ve onların çalışmalarını ihmal eden tarihlere karşı bir bakış açısı sunmuş olsa da, benim tercih ettiğim yol bu olmadı.

Ben daha ziyade, ulemanın bu tür eserler üretebilmeleri ve Osmanlı toplumundaki çeşitli bilgi rollerini üstlenmeleri için geçtikleri çeşitli ilmi disiplinlerdeki kapsamlı eğitimi anlamakla ilgilendim. Bu araştırma, bu dönemin entelektüel tarihini yeniden inşa etmeye yönelik her ciddi girişimin, ulemanın entelektüel formülasyonunu

oluşturan eğitim uygulamalarını incelemeyi gerektirdiği, çünkü bu uygulamaların bu ilmi birikimi üreten zihinleri şekillendirdiği temel kanaatine dayanmaktadır.

Konuya ilişkin ilk girişiminin, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl İstanbullu bir düşünürün çalışmasından ilham aldığımı kabul etmeliyim. Ali Suavi (ö.1878), Osmanlı ulemasını ilmi vasıfları bakımından Fransız meslektaşlarıyla karşılaştırırken, bir Osmanlı aliminin arasındaki zihni tutum ikileminden nasıl azade olduğunu ve sonsuz araştırma ve sorgulama alanı içinde kendi ifadesiyle “teharri ve tedkik feza-yı nâmütenâhisinde” çok daha geniş bir bilişsel seçenekler kümesine sahip olduğunu ifade eder

Suavi tarafından öne sürülen fikri temel olarak ve çağdaş bir bakış açısıyla yeniden yorumlayarak, Osmanlı bağlamında bir ilmî benlik modeli sundum. Bu model, bir âlimin eğitimini, medreselerde aldığı entelektüel ve epistemik eğitim yoluyla farklı bir ilmî kimlik ve ya benlik oluşturma süreci olarak incelemektedir. “İlmî benlik” kavramının kendisi, bilim ve bilgi üzerine gelişmekte olan tarihsel araştırma alanından türetilmiştir ve bu çalışmada, tarihsel benliğin bir örnek çalışması olarak mütâlî kavramına uygulanmıştır.

“İlmî benlik”, bilim ve bilgi tarihçileri tarafından daha önceki formülasyonlarına benzer şekilde, “bilim insanlarının genellikle beceriler, yetkinlikler, nitelikler veya eğilimler açısından tanımlanan role-özgü kimliği”, “...belirli bir ilmi topluluk içinde önemsenen ve kazanılmaya çalışılan epistemik erdemler kümesi” veya epistemik erdemler aracılığıyla tezahür eden bir öznelik biçimi olarak kullanılmaktadır.

İlmî veya bilimsel benlik kavramıyla bağlantılı olan “entelektüel erdem” (ve ya epistemik erdem), çalışmalarımın merkezinde yer alan bir diğer terim. Bu kavramın iki açıdan önemi var. Birincisi, soybilimsel (genealogy) kökenleri; hem *meleke* hem de erdem (virtue) aynı felsefi felsefi arka planı paylaşıyor. İkincisi, bugün erdemler hem eğitimin felsefi amaçlarına dair tartışmalarda kullanılıyor ve aynı zamanda ilmî benlik kavramı esasen entelektüel erdemlerin bir kümelenmesi veya tezahürü olarak anlaşılıyor. Bu anlamda, kavramın eğitim felsefesinin yanı sıra bilim tarihindeki kullanımından da yararlanıyorum. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmayı İslam çalışmaları veya Osmanlı tarihi olarak çerçevelemek yerine, entelektüel erdem tarihi veya daha ana akım anlamda bir ilim tarihi olarak ele alıyorum.

Medrese, malaka ve mütalaa tartışmasına girmeden önce, ulemayı daha geniş bir bilgi anlatısı içinde konumlandırmak için bir bilgi sosyolojisi çizerek başladım. Ulemayı büyük zorluklardan geçen ve ulemanın değişim ve büyük kırılmalar karşısında farklı pozisyonlar aldığı bir toplum bağlamına yerleştirmek yerine, Osmanlı toplumunu sosyal bilgi teorisi üzerinden tarafsız bir işlevselci bakış açısıyla ele almaya çalıştım. Bunun için hem Berger ve Luckmann'ın anlatıları başta olmak üzere çağdaş teorilerden hem de toplumsal düzeyde bir ulema perspektifi oluşturmak için Saclizade'nin ve Osmanlı geleneğindeki amelî felsefe olan el-hikme el-ameliyye'nin kavrayışlarından yararlandım. Bu, ulemanın sorumluluğunda olan bilgi alanını, Osmanlı toplumunu mümkün kılan daha geniş bilgi stoku içinde konumlandırmama yardımcı oldu.

İlk olarak, on yedinci yüzyılın sonları ve on sekizinci yüzyılda bir âlimin eğitiminin mahiyeti hakkında sorular yönelttim. Bir âlimin eğitiminin Osmanlı eğitim söylemleri içerisinde nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını anlamak için bu söylemleri inceledim. Araştırmam özünde eğitimin mahiyetini ortaya koymayı amaçlıyordu. Batı dışı bağlamlarda sözde modern öncesi eğitimi anlamaya yönelik temel yaklaşımlardan biri, eğitimin enformel, bireysel ve esnek doğasını ön plana çıkarmak olmuştur. Ancak Berkey'in modern öncesi ulemanın, tüm potansiyel olumlu çağrışımlarıyla birlikte “açık seçkin” bir topluluk oluşturduğu yönündeki tespiti, benim araştırma hedeflerimle çelişiyordu. Osmanlı ulemasının benliğini tartışmak için, en azından söylem düzeyinde, bir alimin eğitimini neyin oluşturduğuna dair bazı geleneksel mutabakatların olması gerekiyordu. On yedinci yüzyıl sonu ve on sekizinci yüzyıl Osmanlı söylemleri bundan daha fazlasını sundu. Konuyla ilgili yaptığım inceleme, eğitim ve pedagojinin dönemin ana entelektüel konularından olduğu sonucuna götürdü. İlmî eğitim üzerine yazılan önemli eserler standartlar oluşturmaya, eğitimin amaç ve hedeflerini ifade etmeye, bu hedeflere ulaşmak için içerik ve metodolojiler önermeye, yanlış uygulamaları eleştirmeye ve benzeri şeylere teşebbüs etmiştir.

Osmanlı entelektüelleri arasında eğitim üzerine yapılan kapsamlı tartışmalar, bu dönemi Osmanlı düşüncesinde bir “pedagojik dönüşüm” olarak değerlendirmeme yol açtı; bu dönüşü müderris-alim profilinin daha belirgin hale gelmesine, eğitimi ele alan ve onu formelleştirmeye çalışan eserlerin çoğalmasına, “pedagojik şerh” olarak adlandırdığım yeni bir telif türünün ortaya çıkmasına, imtihan risalelerinin

yazılmasına ve en önemlisi müfredat oluşturulmasına bağlıyorum. Osmanlıca müfredat terimi olan tertîb ile ilgili anlatıları karşılaştırdım ve aynı zamanda bir alimin eğitiminin parçası olarak görülme, dolayısıyla informal öğrenme, dini veya ahlaki eğitim kavramlarını diskalifiye eden hususlara dikkat çektim. Ayrıca, aynı dönemde Osmanlı müfredatı ve pedagojik değişimle ilgili mevcut akademik tartışmalara da değindim.

Medrese eğitimi konusunu ele aldıktan sonra odağımı “malaka” terimine yönelttim. Osmanlı yazarlarının bu kavramı nasıl farklı şekillerde kullandıklarını göstermek için örnekler sunarak, entelektüel biyografiler, eğitim materyalleri ve epistemik tartışmalar da dahil olmak üzere çeşitli bağlamlarda kullanımını belgeledim. Kavramın arka planını irdelemek için Osmanlı düşüncesini etkilemiş üç Osmanlı öncesi İslam âliminin yazılarını inceledim: Gazali (ö. 1111), İbn Haldun (ö. 1406) ve İcî (ö. 1355). Ayrıca Kâtib Çelebi'nin (ö.1657) “el-meleke'l-ilmîye” anlayışını tartıştım. “Meleke”nin klasik ontolojideki kullanımının yanı sıra akıl mertebelerine uygulanışını da gösterdim. Ontolojik tartışmalardaki kullanımına ek olarak, terimin eğitime dair çıkarımlarını anlamak için Gazali ve İbn Haldun'un yazılarını analiz ettim. Ayrıca meleke kavramını çağdaş epistemik erdem tartışmalarının içine yerleştirmeye çalıştım ve Osmanlı meleke kavramını erdem güvenilirliği olarak değerlendirme ihtimaline işaret ettim. “Meleke” üzerine yaptığım inceleme, Müneccimbaşı'nın üç katmanlı epistemik erdemler modeliyle neticelendi: meleketü'l-istihsâl, meleketü'l-istihrâc ve meleketü'l-istihdâr. Ayrıca onun entelektüel erdem anlayışını daha iyi anlamak için el-İcî'nin Ahlâk-ı Adudiyye eserinin üzerine yazdığı şerhi de inceledim.

Ayrıca muţâla‘a diye adlandırılan bir Osmanlı ilmî pratiğini de tetkik ettim. Müneccimbaşı'nın “Feyzu'l-Haram” adlı eseri, muţâla‘anın nasıl yürütüleceğine dair neredeyse öğretici bir el kitabı niteliğindedir ve ben de bu pratiği yürütmeye ehil görülen ilmî benliğin ne olduğunu anlama çabasındaydım. Bu nedenle, muţâli‘yi belirli bir Osmanlı ilmî kimliği olarak ele aldım. Bu bölüm, hem “Feyzu'l-Haram”ı hem de temel ilmî metinleri analiz ederek bir Osmanlı aliminin entelektüel oluşumuna dair fikir vermektedir. Müneccimbaşı'nın metodolojisini kendi yorumumla sentezleyen yaklaşımım, bu çalışmanın temel metodolojik özgünlüğünü temsil etmektedir. Bu bölüm daha sonra metin temelli karşılaşmaların ötesine geçerek müţâli‘ ile ilişkilendirilen entelektüel erdemlerin daha geniş ilmî alanlara uygulanıp

uygulanmadığını arařtırdı. Ricœur'ün hermenötik sosyal bilimler (“metni insan fiilini incelemek için bir model olarak görme”) kavramını kullanan bölüm, Osmanlı ontolojisinde varlığı anlamak için bir paradigma olarak metnin merkeziliğini ortaya koydu. Bu da řu soruyu gündeme getirmiřtir: Ulemanın toplumsal “ sürdürücüler” olarak aldıkları rol ve fukaha olarak insan fiiline yönelik odakları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, metin okuma yetkinlikleri ulemayı insan fiilini yorumlamak için bir paradigma ile donatıyor muydu?

Bu çalışmanın vurgulamam gereken bir diğeryönü de, postkolonyal teori ile doğrudan ilişki kurmamama ve çalışmamı bu şekilde çerçevelememe rağmen, bazı yönlerinin postkolonyal tartışmalarla yankı bulmasıdır. Osmanlı fikirlerini yalnızca salt tarihselcilik perspektifinden ele almaktan ve sosyo-politik süreçlerin yan ürünlerine indirgemekten kaçındım. Bu çalışmanın vurgulamam gereken bir diğeryönü de, postkolonyal teori ile doğrudan ilişki kurmamama ve çalışmamı bu şekilde çerçevelememe rağmen, bazı yönlerinin postkolonyal tartışmalarla yankı bulmasıdır. Osmanlı fikirlerini yalnızca saf tarihselcilik perspektifinden ele almaktan ve onları sosyo-politik süreçlerin yan ürünlerine indirgemekten uzaklaştım. Chakrabarty'nin de belirttiği gibi, günümüz çalışmaları sıklıkla Marx ya da Weber gibi figürlerle, hatta antik, ortaçağ ya da erken modern selefleriyle, onları tarihselleştirme ihtiyacı hissetmeden, tutkulu bir şekilde diyalog içinde tartışmaktadır. Kendi anlatımında, Farahat'ın kavramını kullanarak, bu tezdeki teorik düşüncemi bilgilendiren Osmanlı entelektüel geleneği ile “diyalojik bir ilişki” kuruyorum ve onların bazı kategorilerini analitik kavramlar olarak kullanıyorum. Berger ve Luckman'ın kavramının yanı sıra Sājaqlīzāda'nın bilgi sosyolojisinden de yararlanıyorum. Benzer şekilde, Zagzebski ve Sosa'nın epistemik erdemler kavramlarını dikkate alırken, Müneccimbaşı'nın meleke anlayışının teorik değeriyle de aynı derecede ilgileniyorum.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezin daha ileri arařtırmalar için ortaya çıkardığı bazı soruların da altını çizmek isterim. “İlmî benlik tarihi” ve “epistemik erdemler ”in Osmanlı bağlamına ilk uygulaması olan bu çalışma, bazı açılardan programatiktir ve gelecek çalışmalar için bir gündem belirlemektedir.

İlk olarak, bu çalışma bir alimin eğitim materyallerinin içerik analizini içermesine rağmen, kapsamlı olmaktan uzaktır. Osmanlı yüksek öğrenimindeki temel metinlerin

kavramsal yönlerine odaklandım ve bunların öğrenciler üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini araştırdım. Ancak bu girişimin tam anlamıyla ele alınması, daha geniş bir kapsam ve çeşitli alanlarda daha derin bir uzmanlık gerektirmektedir. Dolayısıyla benim çabalarım, bu yönde yapılacak araştırmalar için bir model ve başlangıç noktası olarak görülmelidir. Ulemanın öğrenme süreçlerini ortaya çıkarmak ve Osmanlı ilmî benliğinin yönlerini daha da açığa çıkarmak için daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç vardır. Temel zorluklardan biri, genellikle Osmanlı uzmanlarının tipik uzmanlık alanlarının dışında kalan belirli metinlerin teknik özellikleri ve dilsel nüanslarında yatmaktadır. Belki de beşeri bilimler tarihi veya filoloji alanında çalışan akademisyenlerle işbirliği yapmak bu alanda verimli sonuçlar doğurabilir.

Ayrıca, “malaka” kavramının kendisi de daha derin bir felsefi incelemeyi gerektirmektedir. Günümüzün erdem epistemolojisindeki ana akımlar, ihtilafların çözümü için sıklıkla Aristoteles'e başvurmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Osmanlı dönemi de dahil olmak üzere İslami ameli felsefe geleneği, erdemler üzerine zengin tartışmalar sunar ve çağdaş epistemolojik sorunlara çözüm getirme potansiyeline sahiptir. Erdem epistemolojisi şimdiye kadar, bir derleme kitapta İbn Miskeveyh (ö.1030) üzerine yazılmış tek bir bölüm dışında, bu geleneği büyük ölçüde göz ardı etmiş bulunmaktadır.

Ayrıca, Osmanlı eğitim pratiği ve teorisinin eğitim felsefesi ve tarihi alanlarına dahil edilmesine de gereken önem gösterilmeli. Ortaya koyduğum gibi, on yedinci yüzyılın sonları ve on sekizinci yüzyıl Osmanlıda eğitim meselelerine yönelik büyük bir ilgiye tanıklık etmiştir. Eğer eğitim tarihi alanındaki ciddi boşluklar doldurmak isteniyorsa, Osmanlı eğitimi iyi bir başlangıç noktası olacaktır.

Son olarak, Osmanlı toplumu Berger ve Luckmann'ın anladığı anlamda “bilgi sosyolojisi” perspektifinden bir inceleme için uygun bir vaka çalışmasını temsil etmektedir. Batı akademisinde bilgi sosyolojisi farklı yönler almış olsa da, Osmanlı toplumunun ulema ve ulemanın bilgisinin yanı sıra diğer bilgi kurumları ve bilgi biçimlerini de kapsayacak şekilde kapsamlı bir biçimde ele alınması alana değerli bir katkı sağlayacak ve kuramsal ilerlemelerin önünü açabilecektir.

Giriş bölümü, Osmanlı metinlerinde ulemayı toplumsal dünyanın idamesi fikriyle ilişkilendiren yaygın bir yaklaşıma işaret ederek başlıyor. Kaynaklar sıklıkla ulemanın bu rolüne âlemin salâhı, kıyâm ve devâm-ı cemi‘yyet, nizâm-ı alem gibi ifadelerle atıfta bulunur.

Ulemayı daha geniş bir bilgi topluluğu içinde konumlandırmak için, bilgi sosyolojisi üzerine çağdaş ve Osmanlı söylemlerine dayanan bir çerçeve çizerek işe başladım. Bu, Osmanlı yazarları ulemanın bilgisini toplumsal rolleri açısından sıklıkla tartıştığı için, belirli Osmanlı kavramlarını anlamak ve dünya-bakımı kavramını açıklığa kavuşturmak için bir sezgi sağlayacaktır. Okuyucu bu tartışmayı giriş bölümünün başında biraz alışılmadık bulsa da, bu bölümün yerleştirilmesi önemli bir amaca hizmet etmektedir. Burada tanıtılan temel kavramlar, tez boyunca okuyucuyu yönlendirmek için elzemdir. Yazar olarak, bu kavramları kendi düşüncemi çerçevelemede son derece yararlı buldum ve okuyucunun anlayışı için de aynı derecede değerli olacaklar. Daha sonra bunları, ulemayı toplumsal düzeyde tartışan Osmanlı düşüncesinden birkaç temsili örnekle tamamlayacağım. Bu tezin geri kalanı bireysel düzeye odaklandığı ve bir alimin öğrenimini entelektüel erdemlerin geliştirilmesinin bir şekli olarak analiz ettiği için önemlidir. Böyle bireysel düzeydeki bir analiz, sosyal çerçeve arka planda işlediğinde tam anlamını kazanır.

Bu ilk çerçeveyi oluşturduktan sonra, tezin yapısını ve temel araştırma sorularını özetleyen ve ilgili literatürü gözden geçiren daha konvansiyonel bir girişle devam ettim.

Bilgi sosyolojisi için temel olarak Peter L. Berger ve Thomas Luckmann, Alfred Schütz, ve Sâçaklîzâde'nin metinlerini esas aldım.

Literatür incelemesinde şu soruyu yönelttim: Bu dönemin ulema ve entelektüel yaşamı hakkında tarihçiler ne tür çalışmalar yapmışlardır? Beş ana yaklaşım belirledim ve bunları örnek çalışmalar üzerinden ayrı ayrı ele aldım. Çalışmaların ilk kategorisi konuya en eski yaklaşımı temsil etmektedir ve esas olarak ulemayı elit bir sosyal grup olarak görmekle ilgilenmiştir. Bu yaklaşım, ulemanın kariyer paternleri, sosyal hareketlilikleri ve siyasi katılımları hakkında sorular ortaya atmıştır. “Sosyal bir sınıf

olarak ulema ne gibi dönüşümler geçirdi?” ve “Etkilerini sürdürmek için ne gibi stratejiler geliştirdiler?” gibi sorular bu yaklaşımı özetliyor.

İncelediğim ikinci çalışma kümesi, Osmanlı ulemasının ilmi üretimlerini mercek altına alan entelektüel tarihçilerin daha yakın zamanda yaptığı çalışmalardan oluşuyor. Bu yazarlar ulemayı yüksek akademik bilgi üreticileri olarak analiz etmiş ve bu çalışmaları daha geniş entelektüel tarih çerçeveleri içinde bağlamsallaştırmaya çalışmışlardır.

İncelediğim üçüncü literatür türü, “bilim tarihi” olarak çerçevelenen ve bu alandaki metodolojik ilerlemeleri kullanan çalışmaları kapsıyor. Bu çalışmalar, Osmanlı bilimi kavramı üzerinden erken modern dönemde Avrupa dışında üretilen bilim için argüman geliştirmeyi amaçlıyor. Bununla birlikte, araştırma gündemleri ağırlıklı olarak bilimin kültürel ve ekonomik tarihine odaklanırken, Osmanlı akademisyenlerinin nazari yazılarına kayda değer bir ilgi gösterilmiyor. Bu araştırmanın önündeki temel zorluk, bilginin mevcut sınıflandırmasına dayanan kısıtlı anlamıyla “bilim” teriminin Osmanlı bilim kültürüne yansıtılmasıdır. Daston ve Most'un da gözlemlediği gibi, bu mesele sadece Osmanlı bilimi değil, genel olarak bilim tarihindeki daha geniş bir sorunla bağlantılıdır.

Yaptığım inceleme sonucunda ortaya çıkan dördüncü çalışma alanı da entelektüel tarih çerçevesinde şekilleniyor. Bu yaklaşım, ulemanın akademik düşünce ve yazılarına odaklanmak yerine, daha popüler olan siyaset ve tarihle ilgili entelektüel tartışmaları incelemektedir. İncelediğim beşinci ve son literatür, on sekizinci yüzyılda “Osmanlı Aydınlanması ”nı çevreleyen tartışmalara odaklanıyor.

Özetlediğim beş temel tarihsel yaklaşımdan sadece ikisi, Osmanlı döneminin esas ilmî topluluğu olan ulema ile ilgilenmektedir.

Bu iki yaklaşımdan sadece biri ulemanın entelektüel hayatını incelemektedir. Bu iki yaklaşım da ulema geleneğini sadece ilmi pratikleri ve üretimleri açısından değil, aynı zamanda ciddi bir ilmi incelemeye tabi tutulmamış olan ulemanın öğrenme süreçleri açısından da ihmal etmiştir.

Anglofon akademinin aksine, Türk akademisi ulemanın eğitimi konusunda övgüye değer bazı çalışmalar yapmış, konuları ve ders kitaplarını belirlemiştir, ancak eğitim materyallerinin içeriği ilginç bir şekilde incelenmemiştir. Tarihçiler bunun ilgisiz

olduğunu varsayıyor ya da daha derin bir analiz için gereksiz buluyor gibi görünüyor. Aşağıdaki alıntı bu tutumu göstermektedir: “On yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyıllarda Osmanlı ulemasının, temel ders kitaplarının iyi bilinen bir kanonunu tekrarlamamanın ötesinde herhangi bir ilim yaptığına dair hiçbir kanıtımız yok”. Bu yaklaşımla ilgili sorun, burada “temel ders kitapları” olarak reddedilen ilmi öğrenim materyallerinin içeriğini inceleyen tek bir çalışmanın olmamasıdır. Böyle bir inceleme, Osmanlı ulemasının geliştirdiği bilişsel alışkanlıkları ve ilmî benlikleri ortaya çıkarmak için gereklidir.

Bu tezde çeşitli teorik yaklaşımlardan hareket ediyorum. Entelektüel erdem fikri bunların başında geliyor. Kavramın çeşitli formülasyonları olsa da, temel anlam itibariyle çalışmamın hedefleriyle büyük ölçüde örtüşmektedir.

Entelektüel veya epistemik erdem, günümüz epistemolojisinde gelişmekte olan bir perspektif olan erdem epistemolojisinin merkezi kavramını oluşturmaktadır. Epistemolojiye girişi genellikle Sosa'nın ahlak ve epistemoloji arasında paralellikler kurduğu ve erdem kavramını ödünç almanın epistemoloji için verimli olabileceğini öne sürdüğü 1980 tarihli makalesi ile ilişkilendirilir. Geçtiğimiz birkaç on yıl boyunca bu fikir büyük ilgi görmüş ve erdem epistemolojisinin epistemolojinin başlıca alt alanlarından biri haline gelmesine yardımcı olmuştur. Alanın kendisi çok çeşitli olup çok sayıda perspektifi kapsamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, erdem epistemologları için birleştirici nokta, geleneksel bilgi tanımından ayrılmaları ve bu yeni çerçevede altında epistemik analize atfettikleri birincil roldür.

Erdem epistemolojisinin ortaya çıkışından önce, hakim bakış açısı bilgiyi “gerekçelendirilmiş doğru inanç” olarak tanımlıyor ve epistemik analiz inancın özelliklerini, özellikle de gerekçelendirme kavramını incelemeye odaklanıyordu. Erdem epistemolojisi, bilginin faillerinin, yani bilenlerin, epistemolojik analizin öncelikli odağı olduğunu iddia ederek bu perspektiften radikal bir şekilde uzaklaşmıştır. Bu da elbette bilginin epistemik erdemlerden kaynaklanan bir başarı ya da kazanım olarak yeniden tanımlanmasını gerektirmiştir. Örneğin, alanın önde gelen iki ismi aşağıdaki erdem temelli tanımları sunmaktadır: Sosa bilgiyi “entelektüel erdemden kaynaklanan doğru inanç, tesadüfen değil erdem nedeniyle doğru çıkan inanç” olarak tanımlarken, Zagzebski “entelektüel erdem edimlerinden kaynaklanan gerçeklikle kognitif temas hali” olarak tanımlamaktadır.

Günümüzdeki meslektaşları gibi, Müslüman filozoflar da bilgiyi tanımlamakla uğraşmış, bu da onları çeşitli incelikli kavramlar önermeye ve bilgiyi tanımlamanın birden fazla yolunu düşünmeye sevk etmiştir. Müslümanların felsefi söylemlerinde “gerekçelendirilmiş doğru inanç” benzeri bir bilgi anlayışı mevcut olsa da, bu tartışmalar bilgiyi bu tekil tanıma indirgemenin ötesine geçmiştir. Müslüman yazarlar, “gerekçelendirilmiş doğru inanç” olarak bilgi fikrini reddetmemekle birlikte, çok katmanlı bir anlayışı benimsemişlerdir. Tipik olarak, bilgi kavramına ilişkin tartışmalar, yazarların her birinin odağını derinlemesine incelediği çeşitli tanımları kapsıyordu. Özellikle, klasik sonrası düşünce, bilgiyi bilen bir niteliği olarak tanımlamayı tercih etmiştir. Bunun en iyi örneği İcî'nin Mevâkıf'ında bulunabilir; burada İcî bilginin yedi ana tanımını tartışır ve bunlardan en çok tercih edileni onu bir nitelik olarak tanımlar: "Yedinci [tanım] tercih edilen tanımdır: Bilgi, bulunduğu yerin [bilenin] anlamları [çelişkiye izin vermeyecek şekilde] ayırt etmesini gerektiren bir niteliktir."

Erdem epistemolojisinin temel epistemolojik soruları ele almadaki etkinliği büyük ölçüde kabul görse de, entelektüel erdemlerin mahiyeti konusundaki anlaşmazlıklar bu alanda iki ana akımın ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Güvenilirlikçi (reliabilist) kamp, entelektüel erdemleri, bilişsel becerileri, yetenekleri, yetkinlikleri ve yeterlilikleri kapsayan, “kişinin hataya karşı doğruluk oranını en üst düzeye çıkarmaya yardımcı olan” güvenilir nitelikler olarak görmektedir. Bu nitelikler doğru algılama, güvenilir hafıza, iç gözlem ve çıkarım gibi “kişinin ilgili bir alanda doğruya ulaşmasını ve hatadan kaçınmasını sağlayan doğuştan gelen yetenekler veya edinilmiş alışkanlıklar” olabilir.

Öte yandan, sorumlulukçular (responsibilists) entelektüel erdemleri "bir kişinin derin ve kalıcı kazanılmış mükemmelliği, belirli bir arzu edilen sonucu üretmeye yönelik karakteristik bir motivasyon ve bu sonuca ulaşmada güvenilir bir başarı" olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, entelektüel erdemler açık fikirlilik, entelektüel tevazu, merak, aklın uyarlanabilirliği ve çalışkanlık gibi nitelikleri kapsayan karakter özellikleri anlamına gelmektedir.

Son bölümde, Münecimbaşu Ahmed Dede'nin (ö.1702) mutâli' kavramını özgün bir ilmî benlik olarak inceledim. Paul'ün çalışması, ilmî benlik modeline dair herhangi bir incelemenin iki temel meselenin dikkate alınmasını içermesi gerektiğini öne sürer. Bunlardan ilki, söz konusu bilimsel benliğin amacıdır.

Bu, bilimsel benliğin hangi amaçlar için geliştirildiğinin tanımlanmasını gerektirir: bu özel bilimsel benlik ne için inşa edilmiştir?

İkinci olarak, bu arzu edilen amaca ulaşmak için gerekli olan entelektüel erdemler açısından bu benliğin özelliklerinin analizini gerektirir: bu benlik neyi gerektirir?

Hangi özel entelektüel erdemler kümesini içermektedir?

Çeşitli bağlamlardaki benzer araştırmalarda “ scientific self”, “academic self”, “scholarly self”, “scholarly personae” ve Almanca'da “wissenschaftliche persönllichkeit” gibi terimler kullanılmıştır. Kolaylık sağlamak ve bağlamsal uygunluğu göz önünde bulundurmak adına, “ilmi benlik” terimine bağlı kalacağım. Çalışmalarda kullanılan terim ne olursa olsun, literatürde entelektüel erdemlerin bilimsel benliğin temel özelliklerini oluşturduğu konusunda genel bir mutabakat vardır. Her ilmi benlik, belirli entelektüel erdemlerin bir araya gelmesi ya da belirli bir bilgi topluluğu içinde ilmi pratikte bulunmak için gerekli olduğu düşünülen bir dizi düzenleyici ideal olarak tasavvur edilebilir. Dolayısıyla, ilmi benliklerin çeşitliliği, her biri farklı bir takım entelektüel erdemleri bünyesinde barındıran farklı ilmi benlik modellerinden kaynaklanır. İlmî benlikler, belirli bir topluluğun üyesi olmak amacıyla bilimsel faaliyetlerin sürdürülmesi için gerekli olan erdemleri geliştirmek üzere benlik teknolojileri aracılığıyla kasıtlı olarak inşa edilir.

Bu noktada bir olasılığın da, ilmi benliği salt entelektüel erdemlerin ötesinde özellikler içerecek şekilde kavramsallaştırarak daha geniş bir ilim insanı olma anlayışını benimsemek olduğunu belirtmek gerekir. Bilimsel faaliyet sadece epistemik bilgi ve anlayış arayışını değil, aynı zamanda araştırma fonu sağlama, ahlaki erdemleri geliştirme, sosyal kazanımlar (örneğin sosyal statü, kamusal görünürlük) ve hatta siyasi kazanımlar (örneğin özgürlük, adalet, güvenlik) elde etme gibi faaliyetleri de kapsadığında, daha geniş kapsamlı bir ilmî benlik kavramı gerekli hale gelir. Ancak Münecimbâşî'nin mutâli' modelinin birincil olarak epistemik fayda arayışıyla, yani alim olarak alimle ilgili olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu bağlamda daha geniş bir kavramsallaştırma gerekli değildir.

Bu bakış açısını müfâli‘ kavramına uygularsak, aşağıdaki sorular ortaya çıkar: Bir müfâli‘ hangi spesifik epistemik faydaları gözetmeye bağlıydı? Müneccimbaşı bu epistemik faydaların peşinde koşmaya katkı sağlayacak hangi yetenekleri, tutumları ve eğilimleri tanımlamıştır?

Müneccimbāşī'nin müfâli‘ çerçevesinin, çalışmamda onu bilimsel benlik modeli olarak yeniden inşa etmemi kolaylaştırdığının altını çizmeliyim. Onun hesabına göre, bir birey müfâli‘ olabilmek için çok sayıda ilmî malaka (entelektüel erdem) geliştirmelidir. Bu anlamda, ilmî bir pratik olarak müfâla‘a ile uğraşmak, müfâli‘ olmak için gerekli olan bu entelektüel erdemlerin tatbik edilmesidir.

Bu bölüm öncelikle müfâla‘a hakkında ayrıntılı bir açıklama sunacaktır. Bunun için öncelikle Feyzu'l-Ĥarâm'ın “Her Türden Müfâli‘ İçin Genel Adabın Açıklanması Üzerine” başlıklı ilk bölümünden yararlanacağım. Ancak benim analizim Müneccimbaşı'nın metniyle sınırlı kalmayacaktır. Müneccimbaşı'nın çerçevesini çizerken, Osmanlı ilmiyesinin temel metinlerine dair analizlerime dayanarak Müneccimbaşı'nın bazı açıklamalarını tamamlamaya ve genişletmeye çalışacağım. Bu temel metinleri tanımlamak için, Birinci Bölüm'de tartıştığım tartîb anlatılarına geri döneceğim.

Bu çaba, bir Osmanlı âliminin teorik bir ideali belirli bir ilmî pratiğin metodolojisine nasıl aktardığına dair bir örnek teşkil edecektir. Teorik ideal derken, İkinci Bölüm'de tartışıldığı üzere, ilmi öğrenmenin hedefi olan istiḥzar melekesi kavramına atıfta bulunuyorum.

İstiḥzar melekesini, çeşitli ilmi alanlarda yetkinlik olarak görülebilecek epistemik erdem olarak yorumladım. Ancak bu yetkinliklerin nasıl edinildiği ve pratikte nasıl kullanıldığı sorusu hâlâ geçerliliğini korumaktadır. Osmanlı âlimleri bu yetkinlikleri edinmek ve kullanmak için bir metodoloji geliştirmişler midir? Bu bölümde. Bu soruları, Müneccimbaşı'nın belirli bir ilmî çaba, yani müfâla‘a bağlamında ele aldığı anlatısı üzerinden takip edeceğim.

Metodolojik olarak, Müneccimbaşı'nın her bir entelektüel erdemi bu çerçevede tartışmasını takdim edecek ve ardından daha fazla detay ve ayrıntı için kaynaklarında atıfta bulunulan ilgili disiplinlerin ders kitaplarını inceleyeceğim. Bu ek kaynakları yakından okuyarak, sundukları kavramsal öğrenme için potansiyel olanakları belirlemeye çalışacağım ve bu dönemde Osmanlı âlimlerinin entelektüel eğitimine dair değerli çıkarımlar sağlamaya çalışacağım.

Bu yaklaşım, araştırmamın temel teziyle de uyumludur: Osmanlı ilmiyesinin benliğini yeniden inşa etmeye yönelik her ciddi girişim, bir alimin eğitimi oluşturan temel metinlerle ve bu metinler etrafında üretilen çeşitli pedagojik eserlerle mutlaka yakından ilgilenmelidir. Bu birincil kaynakların göz ardı edilmesi, bir Osmanlı aliminin entelektüel kimliğinin oluşumuna dair eksik bir resim ortaya çıkaracaktır.

Şimdiye kadar durum böyleydi: Tarihçiler, Osmanlı ulemasının eğitiminin özünü oluşturan metinlerin detaylı bir analizini yapmaya kısıtlı bir ilgi göstermişlerdir. Bazı akademisyenler farklı dönemlerde bu kitapların listelerini derlemiş olsalar da, genellikle içeriklerine girmeden ve belirli bir ilmî benliğin şekillenmesindeki potansiyel rollerini keşfetmeye yönelik neredeyse hiçbir girişimde bulunmadan yalnızca temel tanımlar sunmuşlardır. Bu ilgisizlik kısmen, Osmanlı medreselerinde öğretilen pek çok konuyu bilim tarihi araştırmaları alanının dışında bırakan dar “bilim” tanımlarını benimseyen araştırma projelerine bağlanabilir. Benzer şekilde, beşeri bilimler tarihçileri de araştırma gündemlerinde ağırlıklı olarak Avrupa merkezci olmuşlardır.

Mutâla'a ve uygulamalarına dair ayrıntılara girmeden önce, Müneccimbaşı'nın anlatısının istisnadan ziyade normu temsil ettiğini açıklığa kavuşturmak çok önemlidir.

Mutâla'a ve uygulamalarının ayrıntılarına girmeden önce, Müneccimbaşı'nın açıklamasının istisnadan ziyade normu temsil ettiğini açıklığa kavuşturmak çok önemlidir. Onun çeşitli disiplinler yetkinlikleri entelektüel erdemler olarak çerçevelemesi, kendi tarihsel bağlamı için özellikle yenilikçi değildi. Daha önce tartıştığımız gibi, benzer bakış açıları “Kevâkib-i seb'a” ve “Tertîbu'l-ulûm” gibi eserlerde kolayca bulunabilir ve daha önceki medrese kitapları da bu bakış açısını

yansıyordu. Dahası, Goethe ve Suavi gibi sonraki isimler, entelektüel erdemlerin kazanılması olarak öğrenme kavramının Münecimbaşı'nın yakın bağlamının ötesinde nasıl yankı bulduğunu göstermektedir.

Muāla'a nedir? Farklı varlık alanlarıyla temasımızda bilgiye erişmek için kendimizi belirli şekilde bilen kişiler olarak inşa etmemiz gerekir. Çünkü realiteyle karşılaşmamız her zaman epistemik açıdan elverişli koşullarda gerçekleşmez ve sıklıkla, entelektüel erdemlerin sergilenmesi yoluyla mücadele edilmesi gereken, bilgiye yönelik muhtemel tehlikeler ve engeller eşlik eder.

Bir varlık alanı ve dolayısıyla bir bilgi kaynağı olarak metin, kendine özgü zorluklara sahiptir. Bir okuyucu, bu belirli bilgi kaynağından çeşitli epistemik faydalar elde etmek için, bu amaca uygun çeşitli eğilimler, alışkanlıklar ve yetkinlikler edinmek suretiyle benliğini oluşturmak zorundadır. Bu anlamda Münecimbaşı'nın bir muāla'a teorisini sistematize etme girişimi, aynı zamanda bir özel benlik modeli tasarlama projesidir.

Metinle birincil etkileşim biçimimiz okumaktır. Okumanın, hem şahitlikten hem de algıdan farklı bir gerçeklikle temas biçimi olduğu açıktır. Hiç şüphesiz okuma, bilimsel çalışmaların en önde gelen pratiklerinden biri, temel taşlarından biridir. Doğa bilimleri, sosyal bilimler ve beşeri bilimleri kapsayan akademik faaliyetlerde çok önemli bir rol oynamıştır ve oynamaya devam etmektedir. Okuma pratiğini analiz etmenin bir yolu, onu temelde yeni bilgi edinme ve eleştirel anlayışı geliştirme aracı olarak işlev gören epistemik bir çaba olarak görmektir.

Şaşırtıcı bir şekilde, epistemoloji alanı bir bilgi ve diğer epistemik kazanımların kaynağı olarak okumaya gereken ilgiyi göstermemiştir. Okuma ve yorumlama epistemolojisi üzerine yakın tarihli bir çalışmada van Woudenberg, okuma paradigmasının bir tanıklığa veya anlık algıya katılmaktan yeterince farklı olduğunu, bu nedenle özerk bir bilgi kaynağı olarak görülmesi gerektiğini göstererek, epistemologlar tarafından bir bilgi kaynağı olarak okumaya verilen asgari önemden duyduğu şaşkınlığı ifade etmektedir. Okumayla bağlantılı, salt bilgi edinmenin ötesine uzanan çeşitli epistemik faydaları sıralamaktadır. İlk olarak, okuma, bilincimizin arka planında kaybolmuş olabilecek önceden bilinen kavramların farkındalığını yeniden

canlandırabilir. İkinci olarak, mevcut inançları güçlendiren ya da potansiyel olarak onlara meydan okuyan tamamlayıcı kanıtlar toplamamızı sağlar. Okuma aynı zamanda kanaatlerimiz için hem destekleyici hem de karşıt kanıtlar elde etmek için önemli bir araç olarak hizmet eder ve sahip olduğumuz fikirlerin yanı sıra sahip olduğumuz teori ve hipotezleri de doğrudan etkiler. Üçüncü olarak, okumanın anlamayı kolaylaştırma ve iç görü sağlama gibi özellikleri vardır. Birçok kişinin salt önermesel bilginin ötesine geçtiğine inandıkları epistemik bir durum olan fikirlerin birbirine bağlılığını algılamamıza yardımcı olabilir.

Peki Müneccimbaşı'na göre metinsel bir karşılaşmadan entelektüel olarak faydalanmayı nasıl sağlayabiliriz? Metinle hermenötik ilişki kurma ihtiyacı, metnin duyularımıza ve zihnimize hemen görünenden çok daha fazlasını içermesi ve aktarması gerçeğinden kaynaklanır. İma edilen anlamları başarılı bir şekilde çıkarma (istihrac) yeteneğimiz, çeşitli entelektüel erdemlerin uygulanmasının yanı sıra belirli edep ve standartlara bağlı kalmaya bağlıdır. Müneccimbaşı'nın öncelikli kaygısı da bu husustur.

Müneccimbaşı'nın muṭāla'anın iki tanımını sunar. Daha kısa olan tanıma göre muṭāla'a, "ima edilen bir anlamı elde etmek için bir metin üzerinde düşünmek" [mulāḥazat al-marsūm li-taḥṣīl-i'l-mafhūm] olarak tanımlanırken. Muhakkik âlimlere atfedilen daha uzun tanım ise "bir hakikati dile getirme veya bir meseleyi sahih bir şekilde ortaya koyma açısından kullanımlarında kastedilen şeye ulaşmak amacıyla sözlük anlamları bilinen yazılı lafızlar üzerinde düşündürmek", "[mulāḥazat al-alfāz al-marsūma al-ma'lūma al-waḍ' li-ma'ānīha, li-tawaṣṣul bihā ilā ma quṣida bi-irādiha min bayān ḥaqīqa aw ithbāt matlab 'alā wajhi mu'tabara 'inda aṣḥāb al-taḥqīq].

Mütālaanın amacı "aklı zâhire takılıp kalmakla, hakikatlerden ve inceliklerden mahrum olmaktan korumaktır" [ṣawn al-dhihn 'an al-iqtisār 'alā al-zawāhir wa al-harman min al-ḥaqā'iq wa al-daqa'iq].

Bu tanımlara göre, muṭāla'a yoluyla hedeflenen epistemik faydalar "hakikatler ve incelikler" [al-ḥaqā'iq wa al-daqa'iq] ile metindeki "kastedilen anlamlar" dır [ma quṣida bi-irādiha]. Öncelikli zorluk metnin görünen yönüdür. Okuyucu zahirle aşırı derecede meşgul olursa, bu durum metindeki çeşitli inceliklerin çıkarılmasını engelleyecektir. Kişinin bu anlamları çıkarma yeteneği, mütāla'in şartlarını ve kurallarını takip ederek gelişir (taraqqī fi istikhrāj).

Ancak hakikatler, incelikler ve kastedilen anlamlar gibi epistemik faydaların elde edilmesi, mü'tâlî'nin seviyesine bağlıdır. Müneccimbaşı, bir mü'tâlî'in epistemik faydasının sahip olduğu statüye göre nasıl farklılaştığını açıklayan dört katmanlı bir epistemik statü kavramı (bi-i'tibâr merâtübü'l-mu'tâl'în) ile tüm anlatısı boyunca devam eden bir çerçeve oluşturur. Belirli bir bilgi ögesiyle ilgili olarak kişinin ya (a) potansiyel bir bilen ya da (b) bir gerekçeye sahip olmaksızın önermesel bilgiye sahip taklitçi veya eleştirel olmayan bir bilen ya da (c) bilgisi için gerekçeye sahip eleştirel bir bilen veya (d) sadece ilgili gerekçelerle bilgiye sahip olmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda bu bilgi üzerinde istihzar melekesi elde etmiş yetkin bir bilen olduğunu belirtir. Şimdi, bu bilen kategorilerinin her biri metinsel karşılaşmalardan farklı şekilde faydalanır ve onları daha yüksek bir bilme durumuna yükseltir.

Potansiyel bir bilen, metnin anlaşılması yoluyla konunun önermesel bilgisini ('ilm bi'l-fi'l) elde edebilir ve bu da onu bilen konumuna yükseltir. Bununla birlikte, bu bilme düzeyi gerçek bir gerekçe ve delilden yoksundur; bu nedenle, bu tür bir bilgiye sahip olan kişi "taklidî" bir bilen olarak adlandırılır.

Mütâlaa pratiği, taklitçi bir bilenin metinden anlamlar çıkarmasına yardımcı olabilir ve onu, bilgisi tahkikî olan, yani doğru temellendirme (delil) ve doğrulama yoluyla doğrulanan eleştirel bir bilen statüsüne yükseltebilir. Delil terimi farklı anlamlar taşır ve farklı disiplinlerde çeşitli kavramsallaştırmalara sahiptir. Müneccimbaşı, çeşitli alanlarda neyin delil sayılacağı konusuna başlı başına bir bölüm ayırmıştır. Bir örnek vermek gerekirse, morfoloji ve morfonoloji alanlarına karşılık gelen iştikâk ve tasrîf ilimlerinde, doğrulamanın eşanlamlıların araştırılması anlamına gelen şevâhid/istişhâd (attestable citation / linguistic referencing), nazâir ve vücûh kavramları aracılığıyla yapıldığından bahseder. Buna karşılık, nahiv alanındaki gerekçelendirme, semâ' (nakil) icmâ' (görüş birliği), kıyâs (analojik akıl yürütme), istihsân (tercihli akıl yürütme) ve istişhâbu'l-hâl'e (durumun sürekliliği varsayımı) dayalı gerekçelendirmelerin dikkate alınmasını içerir.

Eleştirel (tahkikî) bir bilen de metin yorumlama yoluyla epistemik konumunu geliştirebilir. Ancak bu sefer mu'tâla'a yoluyla iyileşme, sahip olunan bilginin niteliği açısından değil, daha ziyade sahip olma biçiminin niteliği açısından olacaktır. Eleştirel

bir bilen, yazılı bir kaynakla epistemik açıdan verimli bir etkileşim yoluyla, bilgisini istikrarlı bir entelektüel niteliğe (martabat malakat al-istiḥdār) dönüştürerek daha etkili epistemik özneler haline getirebilir.

İstihzar melekesine yetkin bir bilen eleştirel bilgiye sahip olduğu bir konuda metin yorumundan ne kazanabilir? Bu aşamada mutâla'a, bilgisini daha da geliştirecek (tanmīyya) ve pekiştirecektir (taqwīyya). Bu aynı zamanda özne için daha önce mevcut olmayan yeni bilgilerin potansiyel olarak mevcut hale geldiği ve bu modeli her zaman geçerli kılan bir aşama olarak da anlaşılabilir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, bir metnin mutâla'ası yoluyla kişi, epistemik statüsüne bağlı olarak şu hedeflerden birini gerçekleştirmiş olur: taḥşīl, taḥqīq, istiḥdār ve son olarak tanmīyya ve taqwīyya.

Bölümün ikinci kısmında, metin ve okumanın tüm insani anlama ve dünyayı anlaşılır kılma biçimleri için paradigma olarak görülmesi fikri incelenmiştir. Ricœur'ün herhangi bir konuyu yorumlamak için bir model olarak metinsel yorumlama görüşünü ortaya koyduktan sonra, bir bütün olarak varlığı tartışmak için bir paradigma olarak metnin Osmanlı ontolojisindeki merkeziliğini göstermek için Osmanlı düşüncesine yeniden odaklandım.

Bir mütâli'in sahip olması gereken entelektüel erdemlerden biri, “çekim ve türetme kurallarını [tasrīf] takip ederek, tek tek kelimeleri biçim ve kalıpları bakımından inceleyerek morfoloji alanında meleke edinmektir.” Bu ustalık sayesinde mütâli', “sıkça karşılaşılan bir durum olan kelime formları arasındaki benzerlik ve belirsizlikten kaynaklanan hatalardan” kendini koruyabilir. Bu ustalık aynı zamanda “kökü diğer morfemlerden ayırt etmede ve anlamları [ma'ânî] analogik olarak [bi'l-kıyas] birbirinden ayırmada” yardımcı olur. Okuyucu aynı zamanda kök harfleri ve ek harfleri tanımada da ustalaşır. Bu beceri, ek harflerden bağlama uygun nüanslı anlamların potansiyel olarak çıkarılmasına izin verir, böylece bilgiyi genişletir veya kişi bu tür girişimlere hazırsa güçlendirir. Bu ek faydalar olmasa bile, “morfolojideki meleke, hatalara karşı bir koruma görevi görerek, mütâli' için oldukça değerli olmaya devam etmektedir.”

Sarf ilminde istihzar melekesi, okuma sırasında aşına olunmayan sözcük birimlerin ve çokbiçimli sözcükler gibi biçimsel karmaşıklıkların anlamlarının ve gömülü yan

anlamalarının kavranmasını kolaylaştırabilir. Bununla birlikte, morfolojide melekenin faydası, metinsel bir karşılaşmada morfolojik karmaşıklıkların daha iyi anlaşılmasının ötesine geçmiştir; aynı zamanda kişinin çeşitli morfemleri manipüle ederek yeni kelimeler ve anlamlar yaratma kapasitesini artıran, yazılı veya başka türlü söylemlerinde daha etkili iletişimle sonuçlanan üretken bir yeterlilik olarak da çalışacaktır. Bu da kişinin dünyanın farklı yeni temsillerinin aktif bir kurucusu olmasını sağlayacaktır. Osmanlı alimlerinin Arapça yazılarının yüzeysel bir incelemesi bile, anadili Arapça olan birinin aşına olmadığı yeni kelimeler ve anlamlar yaratmadaki etkinliklerini gösterecektir ki bu da muhtemelen edindikleri generatif morfolojik yetkinliğe atfedilebilir.

Önceki bölümlerde, Osmanlı müderrislerinin tasarladıkları müfredat ve yazdıkları pedagojik metinler aracılığıyla bir alimin öğrenimini nasıl formel hale getirmeye çalıştıklarını gösterdim. Ayrıca, öğrenmeyi meleke kavramı üzerinden nasıl kavramsallaştırdıklarını ve bunu çeşitli alanlarda istihzâr kazanma süreci olarak gördüklerini tartıştım. Son bölümde, bu öğrenme sürecinin belirli bir ilmi benliği beslediğini düşünüp düşünmediklerini ve eğer öyleyse bunu nasıl ifade ettiklerini araştırdım.

Osmanlı ulemasının eğitimleri boyunca geliştirmeleri beklenen ve metinlerle karşılaşmaları sırasında epistemik faydaları güvence altına almayı amaçlayan bir ilmî benlik modeli olarak mü'tâli' kavramını inceledim. Müneccimbaşı'nın Feyzu'l-Haram adlı eseri, kavramın ve pratiğinin ayrıntılı açıklamalarını sunarak mü'tâli' olma konusunda neredeyse öğretici bir el kitabı işlevi görür. Müneccimbaşı'nın anlatısını temel alarak, Osmanlı ilmî geleneğinin temel metinlerini analiz ederek onun bazı açıklamalarını tamamlayan ve genişleten kapsamlı bir mu'tâla'a analizi sundum

Bölümün ikinci kısmında, metin ve okumanın tüm insani anlama ve dünyayı anlaşılır kılma biçimleri için paradigmatik olarak görülmesi fikri incelenmiştir. Müneccimbaşı'nın mü'tâli' modelini oluşturan entelektüel erdemlerin, metinsel alanların ötesindeki ilmî etkileşimler için önem taşıyıp taşımadığını araştırdım. Bu tartışmayı Ricœur'ün metni anlamlı insan eylemlerini incelemek için bir model olarak görmeye dayanan hermenötik sosyal bilimler kavramıyla başlattım. Ricœur'ün herhangi bir konuyu yorumlamak için bir model olarak metinsel yorumlama görüşünü ortaya koyduktan sonra, Osmanlı ontolojisinde metnin varlığı diğer mertebelerini

kavramaya yönelik bir paradigma olarak merkeziliğini göstermek için Osmanlı düşüncesine yeniden odaklandım.

