Becoming the Perfected Man (*Insān Kāmil*) through Spiritual Journey and Practice (*al-Sayr wa al-Sulūk*): A Study of İbrâhîm Ḥaḳḳı Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme*[*]

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1. Introduction

1-1. Classification of Knowledge (*taṣnīf al-'ūlūm*) during the Ottoman Period

Scholars have reported on various studies developed throughout the history of the Islamic world and have categorized them into appropriate genres. Some of these studies are Fārābī (d. 339/950), Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), whose works inspired many Islamic scholars during the Ottoman period. These Ottoman scholars' works discussed literature on the classification of knowledge. Some of the best known of these discussions are *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda wa Miṣbāḥ al-Siyāda fī Mawḍū'āt al-'Ulūm (A Key to Happiness and Lamp of Supremacy on Subjects of Knowledge)* by Aḥmed Taşköprîzâde (d. 969/1561), *Kashf al-Ẓunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn (Disclosure of Views on the Names of Books and Arts)* by Kâtip Çelebî (d. 1067/1657), and *Ma'rifetnâme (Book of Gnosis)* by İbrâhîm Ḥaḳḳı Erzurumî (d. 1194/1780).[1]

This paper focuses on İbrâhîm Ḥaḳḳı Erzurumî, one of the most prominent Sufi intellectuals of the Ottoman period, and his *Ma'rifetnâme*, to study how an Ottoman Sufi scholar classified sciences and knowledge according to his understanding of Taṣawwuf. Furthermore, this paper studies on how he explained his concept of perfected man (*insān kāmil*) in *Ma'rifetnâme*.

1-2. Erzurumî's Life and Works[2]

Erzurumî was born in 1703 in Hasankale, Eastern Anatolia Region of the Ottoman Empire. His father, Osman Hasanî Efendi, was known as Dervish. Erzurumî received his early Islamic education from his father. Osman Hasanî Efendi was a disciple of Şeyh İsmail Fakirullah Efendi. Later, Erzurumî himself also became his disciple and eventually succeeded him in his positon as shaykh.[3] Erzurumî worked as Imam at Yukarı Habib Efendi Camii in Hasankale and

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1 *Ma'rifetnâme* is also considered a key source to comprehend the popular understanding (*halk anayışı*) of Islam in Anatolia. Hatice Kelpetin Arpaguş, *Osmanlı Halkının Geleneksel İslam Anlayışı ve Kaynakları*, 2001, pp. 44–45.

2 For general information on Erzurumî, see Selami Şimşek, *Osmanlı'nın Bilgeleri 6: Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı*, İstanbul: İlke Yayıncılık, 2016.

3 However, it is not apparent to which *tariqa* Erzurumî belonged. Some scholars say he was a

left more than 30 books. He himself claimed that, among those books, *Dîvân*, *Ma'rifetnâme*, *'İrfânîye*, *İnsânîye*, and *Mecmûʿatüʾl-Meʿânî* were his five main works (*uṣûlü beş*).[4]

1-3. Is *Ma'rifetnâme* an Encyclopedia or Sufi Literature?

This paper focuses on *Ma'rifetnâme* because its evaluation and its comparative study in relation to his other main books (*ana eserleri*) are still unclear. For example, Tekmen insists that *'İrfânîye* is more a "Sufi" work than *Ma'rifetnâme* because *'İrfânîye* focuses on spiritual journey and practice (*al-sayr wa al-sulūk*), perfected man, and oneness of being (*waḥda al-wujūd*).[5] She further states that *Ma'rifetnâme* discusses different topics (other than Taṣawwuf), such as astronomy, and is thus more suitable to be called an encyclopedia.[6]

For the purpose of clarification, it is important to study and evaluate Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme* and its relation to his understanding of Taṣawwuf. In addition to *Ma'rifetnâme*, this paper uses another Ottoman encyclopedia, Taşköprîzâde's *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda*, and compares its structure with that of *Ma'rifetnâme* to understand the features of *Ma'rifetnâme* more clearly.

2. Taşköprîzâde's Classification of Knowledge in the Ottoman Period
2-1. Classification of Knowledge and Ontology: Four Levels of Existence

Aḥmed Taşköprîzâde was a prominent Ottoman intellectual in the 15th century.[7] He left numerous books, especially on the classification of knowledge. One of his most prominent works, *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda*, is the first encyclopedia written in the Ottoman Empire, in which he listed more than 300 sciences in *Miftāḥ*.

Taşköprîzâde's classification of knowledge is based on four categories of existence: ① written words (*kitāba*), ② spoken speech (*'ibāra*), ③ images in the heart (*adhhān*), and ④ actual beings in the outer world (*a'yān*). He orders all sciences according to these four levels of being. The first category, written existence, comprises things that exist only as written words, such as characters (*khaṭṭ*). Taşköprîzâde posits the art of calligraphy as a science through which to know this level of existence. The second category, spoken existence, comprises those things that exist by being pronounced as sound. He posits knowledge of pronunciation method (*makhārij al-ḥurūf*), rules of writing (*qawānīn al-kitāba*), and ordering of characters (*tartīb al-ḥurūf*) as sciences to know this level of existence. The third level, intellectual existence, comprises assumptions, or things that only exist in the human mind.

Naqshbandī, others say he was both Naqshbandī and Qādirī.

    4 Selami Şimşek, *Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı*, p. 82.

    5 Dürdane Zeynep Tekmen, *İrfan Hazinesi*, p. 321.

    6 *Ibid.*, p. 320.

    7 For general information on Taşköprîzâde, see Mehdin Çiftçi, *Osmanlı'nın Bilgeleri 1: Taşköprizade Aḥmed Efendi*, İstanbul: İlke Yayıncılık, 2016.

He names logic (*manṭiq*), *naẓar*, and the arts of study (*ādāb al-dars*) as sciences to know this level of existence. The fourth level, actual existence, comprises things that exist in the world (including the hereafter). Taşköprîzâde affirms that there are three kinds of knowledge to analyze existence of this level. The first is divine knowledge (*ḥikma al-ilāhīya*), including divine sciences dealing with the hereafter, natural science, and mathematical sciences such as engineering. The second kind is practical knowledge such as ethics or politics. The last is legal knowledge (*ḥikma al-shar'īya*). As described above, Taşköprîzâde's classification of knowledge is strongly based on his understanding of multiplexed ontology.

2-2. Method of Reasoning and Method of Purifying the Self

Taşköprîzâde firmly believes in the importance of balancing reasoning-based knowledge and practice-based knowledge to purify oneself. Simply put, he tries to harmonize the long-lasting conflict between rationalism and spiritualism. First, Taşköprîzâde says "Knowledge without practice is evil, and practice without knowledge is misguiding" ("*al-'ilm bi-dūn al-'amal wabāl, al-'amal bi-lā 'ilm ḍalāl*").[8] Then he says, "Know that everyone is agreed that eternal happiness and everlasting supremacy will not be completed except by both knowledge and practice."[9] He classifies methods of learning into two perspectives; the method of reasoning (*ṭarīq naẓar*) and the method of purifying the self (*ṭarīq tazkiya*):

> These are the two ways (*ṭarīqatān*): the first is the way of proof (*tarīqa al-istidlāl*), and the second is the way of [spiritual] witnessing (*tarīqa al-mushāhada*). The first is a level of established scholars (*daraja al-'ulamā' al-rāsikhīn*), and the second is a level of those who are honest to Allah (*daraja al-ṣiddīqīn*). Every one of two is completed by another, and those who possess it will be an integrator of two oceans that have proof and witnessing, knowledge and gnosis, the seen and the invisible.[10]

The method of reasoning is a way of observing the world using human reason (*'aql*). According to Taşköprîzâde, 'ulamā' who address outer knowledge (*'ilm al-ẓāhir*) will apply this method. The method of purifying the self, on the other hand, is often practiced by spiritual leaders (*shuyūkh*). This method covers teachings related to inner knowledge (*'ilm al-bāṭin*), Muslim self-control, beautiful characters (*akhlāq ḥamīda*), courtesy (*ādāb*), etc. Taşköprîzâde does not clarify which method is better, but he believes the balance of these two methods is essential for every Muslim. His popular quotation regarding this issue is: "Knowledge without practice is evil, and practice without knowledge is misguiding" ("*al-'ilm bi-dūn al-'amal*

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8 Aḥmed Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda wa Miṣbāḥ al-Siyāda fī Mawḍū'āt al-'Ulūm*, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya, vol. 1, 1985, p. 67.

9 Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, vol. 1, p. 67.

10 Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, vol. 1, p. 67.

wabāl, al-'amal bi-lā 'ilm ḍalāl").[11] Taşköprîzâde also wrote: "Know that everyone is agreed that eternal happiness and everlasting supremacy will not be completed except by both knowledge and practice."[12]

As mentioned above, Taşköprîzâde's classification of knowledge is based on four categories of existence based on his ontology; ① the written (*kitāba*), ② the spoken (*'ibāra*), ③ images (*adhhān*), and ④ actual beings (*a'yān*). He emphasizes the importance of respecting two methods of knowledge: the method of reasoning (*ṭarīqa al-istidlāl*) and the method of spiritual practice (*ṭarīqa al-taṣfiya*). He reckons those who master those two methods as being in "the place where two oceans meet" (*majma' li-l-baḥarayn*).[13]

In response to Taşköprîzâde's advocacy of self-purification, Kâtip Çelebî, a distinguished Ottoman intellectual of the 17th century, states that when Taşköprîzâde explains the method of purifying the self, he merely summarizes *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and "does not mention the science of Taṣawwuf (*'ilm al-taṣawwuf*) in his book."[14] Çelebî criticizes Taşköprîzâde for thinking that summarizing the contents of *Iḥyā'* is sufficient to explain the method of purifying the self (*taṣfiya*). Even though Taşköprîzâde summarizes the contents in regard to courtesy or good behavior (*ādāb*), which is appreciated by Sufi scholars, Çelebî still does not consider that a discussion of *ādāb* alone would constitute "the science of Taṣawwuf."

3. Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme*
3-1. Erzurumî's Classification of Knowledge

This chapter analyzes Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme*. As mentioned earlier, *Ma'rifetnâme* is considered one of the most important encyclopedias in Ottoman history. This section explores his method of classification and its ideological background.

Erzurumî explains the purpose of *Ma'rifetnâme* and the method of its classification in the introduction, as follows:

> Know that Allah created two worlds for human beings, so they can know themselves, because He says with softness and generosity, "I was hidden treasure, I wanted to be known and created existences so that they know me." In that sense, the ultimate purpose of the creation of the world and human beings is to understand the Lord [Allah].[15]

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11 Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, vol. 1, p. 67.

12 Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, vol. 1, p. 67.

13 Taşköprîzâde, *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, vol. 1, p. 67.

14 Kâtip Çelebî, *Kashf al-Ẓunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn*, Beirut: Dār al-Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1941, p. 17.

15 İbrâhîm Ḥaḳḳı Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, İstanbul: Erkam Yayınevi, 2011, p. 17.

Unlike Taşköprîzâde, Erzurumî does not undertake to cover all knowledge and science of his time, nor does he explain knowledge using the dichotomy of reasoning (*istidlāl*) and spirituality (*mushāhada*). Erzurumî explains the relation between the process of understanding Allah and the order of the chapters of *Ma'rifetnâme* in its introduction.

> However, this [knowing Allah] is connected with knowing self (*ma'rifet-i nefse*). Knowing self is also related to knowing body (*ma'rifet-i bedene*), and knowing body is related to knowing the world (*ma'rifet-i 'âlem*). And since knowing the world is related to true [divine] knowledge (*'ulûm-ı ḥaḳîḳîye*), to some extent I took and collected [knowledge] from the science of nature and philosophy (*'ilm-i hey'et ve ḥikmet*), to some extent I took and chose [knowledge] from the science of explaining bodies and souls (*'ilm-i teşrîḫ-i ebdân ve enfüs*), and to some extent I extracted [knowledge] from the science of the heart and gnosis (*'ilm-i ḳulûb ve 'irfân*). Then I translated them into Turkish and organized this fine book into one introduction, three arts (*üç fen*), and a conclusion.[16]

Ma'rifetnâme consists of an introduction, three chapters he calls "arts (*fen*)," and a conclusion. In the introduction, Erzurumî explains that the order of the three chapters, which is his concept of the classes of knowledge, is based on the spiritual path to attain the presence of Allah.

The first art (*fen-i evvel*) is about the sciences relating to general knowledge of the two worlds (*iki cihân*). Sciences of nature and philosophy (*'ilm-i hey'et ve ḥikmet*) such as astronomy, geography, mathematics, and the four major elements are cited as paths to understanding the existences of this world. With reference to the classification of Taşköprîzâde, the sciences listed here can be considered part of the method of reasoning. The second art (*fen-i sânî*) deals with sciences related to observation of the human body and soul.

In explaining the outer (*ẓāhir*) characteristics of humanity, Erzurumî says that Allah created two worlds (this world and the hereafter) just for human beings, and a human being is a mirror of all existences (*mawjūdāt*) in the world.[17] The third art (*fen-i sâlis*) covers the sciences of gnostic knowledge (*'irfān*) and practice to attain Allah's presence. Erzurumî introduces various practices of Sufis, such as remembering Allah (*dhikr*), or ideological keywords such as love (*maḥabba*) or dependence on Allah (*tawakkul*). Especially, regarding Sufi practices, he introduces the Naqshbandī method for attaining Allah's presence. Furthermore, Erzurumî explains the seven stages of a soul; ① the soul that commands bad deeds (*nefs-i ammâre*), ② the soul that blames itself (*nefs-i levvâme*), ③ the soul that gets

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16 Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, p. 19.

17 Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, p. 264.

inspiration from Allah (*nefs-i mulḥime*), ④ the calmed soul (*nefs-i muṭmainne*), ⑤ the satisfying soul (*nefs-i râẓîye*), ⑥ the soul that is satisfied by Allah (*nefs-i marẓîye*), and finally ⑦ the perfected soul (*nefs-i kâmile*). If one develops his soul to the stage of perfected soul, he witnesses Allah's oneness (*vaḥdet*) in the world of plurality (*kesret*), and at the same time sees plurality in the world of oneness. Allah shows him both Allah's beauty and Allah's majesty at the same time and shows satisfaction in His anger, His anger in His satisfaction. A person who reaches this level no longer stands in the world of dichotomy, but lives in the oneness that includes it.

3-2. *Al-Sayr wa al-Sulūk* and *Insān Kāmil*

The previous chapter mentions that Erzurumî classifies knowledge according to the process of understanding Allah. Through this process, a human being will first start to observe Allah's creation in this world; secondly, he will study the outer body and the inner heart; then eventually he may come to begin Sufi practices to reach the ultimate reality of Allah. Erzurumî's classification of knowledge is based on this "route map" of journey and practice for reaching Allah (*al-sayr wa al-sulūk*), whereas Taşköprîzâde classifies all knowledge based on a view of the world like a "design drawing." In Sufi literature, usually this kind of spiritual journey (*al-sayr wa al-sulūk*) is explained by using the term "seven stages of souls" as introduced by Erzurumî in the third art of *Ma'rifetnâme*.[18] However, he approaches this spiritual journey by explaining that the outer world, and the sciences to study existences in the world, such as astronomy, geometry, and mathematics, are in fact tools to advance the adventure toward Allah's presence. To explain the reality of human existence, Erzurumî includes a poem in *Ma'rifetnâme*. The poem also explains the process of understanding Allah:

> O human being! You are an integrated figure of existences [*majmū'a al-akwān*].You contain the Existence [Allah] within you. And you never see the existences beside you. And The Unseen [Allah] from you becomes The Seen with inner eye and gnosis.[19]

Erzurumî asserts that the reality of human existence is "the integrated figure of existences" (*majmū'a al-akwān*) which means the perfected man. His aim is to understand the reality of the macro cosmos (*'ālam kabīr*) and the micro cosmos(*'ālam ṣaghīr*) as he said in the introduction of *Ma'rifetnâme* "you will see the wonders of the power of Creator in your body and heart generally, and whatever you find in the macro cosmos, you will find all of its examples in your existence, and you will know that you are micro cosmos."[20]

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18 For a discussion of *al-sayr wa al-sulūk*, see Osman Nuri Küçük, *Mevlânâ'ya göre Manevî Gelişim: Benliğin Dönüşümü ve Mi'râcı*, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2015 (2009).

19 Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, p. 265.

20 Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, p. 17.

However, Erzurumî does not finish *Ma'rifetnâme* by discussing the reality of the perfected human (*insān kāmil*). What is important for Erzurumî is not discussing what the perfected man is, but what the perfected man should practice. The last chapter is dedicated to revealing the concept of being together (*ṣuḥba*) with people and how to maintain good manners (*ādāb*). After one understands all the sciences to know this world and the hereafter, and a human being's outer biological future and inner heart, and methods to develop his spiritual stages by using the Naqshbandī method, and becomes a perfected human, what is required for this *insān kāmil* is an act that advances ethics with other human beings. Thus, the concept of the perfected man according to Erzurumî is not limited within cosmology, but it has ethical aspect as well. The perfected man is also explained as the ideal friend of Allah (*walī*) who shows the beautiful courtesies of macro cosmos.

> Friend of Allāh is the one who is gentle to people and stands firmly with the True One [Allāh]. Friend of Allāh is generous like an ocean, firm like a mountain, obedient like a wind. He can hide any shame like a night, has a high ambition like a sky.[21]

Conclusion: *Ma'rifetnâme* as a Guidebook to become *Insān Kāmil*

Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme* was one of the most famous books of encyclopedic knowledge in Ottoman history. Yet there have been varying evaluations of this book, with some people calling it merely an encyclopedia, and others saying it is something more — a major piece of "Taṣawwuf" literature. This paper has looked at the two major encyclopedias of the Ottoman period; Taşköprîzâde's *Miftāḥ* and Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme*, and compared the structures of their classifications of knowledge. Taşköprîzâde classifies sciences according to his ontology based on four levels of existence. Furthermore, he insists on the balance of two methods; the method of reasoning and the method of purifying the self, so that Muslims do not fall into a conflict between rationalism and spiritualism. However, later Islamic intellectual Kâtip Çelebî did not think Taşköprîzâde's *Miftāḥ* discussed the science of Taṣawwuf (*'ilm al-Taṣawwuf*) even though it records the abridged *Iḥyā* of al-Ghazālī. On the other hand, Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme* classifies sciences by using the three stages to reach Allah's presence: the world, the human body/soul, and Sufi practice. This structure is based on the spiritual journey and practice (*al-sayr wa al-sulūk*) of the science of Taṣawwuf. Erzurumî's intent is not to list all the sciences for organizing knowledge in his time, but to show which sciences are useful to complete each stage to become *Insān Kāmil*. In that sense, Erzurumî's *Ma'rifetnâme* is not appropriate to be called merely an encyclopedia covering the science of Taṣawwuf, but instead is a work of Sufi literature on *al-sayr wa al-sulūk* that uses the format of an encyclopedia.

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21 Erzurumî, *Ma'rifetnâme*, p.526.

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