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Does Being Rafidi Mean Shi'ite?: The Representation of the Kızılbaş Belief in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Records
Râfîzîlik - Şîa ilişkisi: On Altıncı Yüzyıl Osmanlı Belgelerinde Tanımlanan Kızılbaş İnanıcının Sorgulanması

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Does Being Rafidi Mean Shi`ite?: The Representation of the Kızılbaş Belief in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Records*

Abstract

The Kızılbaş, especially by the sixteenth century, played a central role in the Ottoman-Safavid struggle due to its close alliance with the Safavid. By using period archival records of the Ottoman administration along with historical and religious documents composed by the Ottoman elite scholars, this article aims to reflect the Kızılbaş's religious orientation as perceived by the Ottoman policy makers. The documents examined include the *fermans* of the Muhimme registers, *Selim Şah-name* of İdrîs-i Bitlisî, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman* of İbn Kemal and the *fatwas* issued on the persecution of the Kızılbaş by İbn Kemal and as afterwards reutilized by Ebüssuud. In doing so, this article intends to uncover the Ottoman perspective of the Kızılbaş religiosity as if it had ever been linked to Shi`ism. Further the notion *rafidi* to define Kızılbaş belief will be explored in detail to reveal if it is used as equivalent to the term *shi`a*.

Key Words: *Shi`ite, Rafidi, Kızılbaş, Ottoman, Fatwas.*

Râfizilik - Şia ilişkisi: On Altıncı Yüzyıl Osmanlı Belgelerinde Tanımlanan Kızılbaş İnançının Sorgulanması*

Öz

Kızılbaşlar, Safeviler ile yakın ittifakı nedeniyle özellikle on altıncı yüzyılda Osmanlı – Safevi mücadelesinde merkezi bir rol oynamışlardır. Bu çalışma, dönemin Osmanlı arşiv kaynaklarını ve Osmanlı Devleti'nin seçkin âlimlerinin hazırlamış olduğu tarihî ve dinî kayıtları kullanarak Kızılbaşların dinî eğilimlerinin Osmanlı nezdinde nasıl algılandığını yansıtmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda Mühimme defterlerindeki fermanlar başta olmak üzere, İdrîs-i Bitlisî'nin *Selim Şah-name*'si, İbn Kemâl'in *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*'ı ve Kızılbaşlar hakkında ilk olarak İbn Kemâl tarafından verilen ve sonrasında Ebüssuud Efendi tarafından düzenlenen fetvaların karşılaştırmalı analizi yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada amaçlanan temel hedef Osmanlı nazarında Kızılbaşların Şia ile ilişkilendirilip ilişkilendirilmediğini sorgulamaktır. Bu bağlamda Kızılbaşların râfizî olarak nitelendirilmeleri hususu detaylı bir şekilde incelenmiş ve bu kullanımın şia kavramının kullanımı ile eşdeğer olup olmadığı irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Şiilik, Râfizilik, Kızılbaş, Osmanlı, Fetvalar*

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the Ottomans' practice of Sunnism and the Safavid's adaptation of Shi`ite Islam as the official religion of Iran, current researches have often been tempted to view the Ottoman-Safavid struggle as the beginning of constant struggle of Sunnism with Shi`ism. The Kızılbaş in the course of its alliance with the Safavid became so closely associated with Shi`ism that the tendency has been to classify them in fact as a branch of Shi`ism.¹ It is of great interest in the context of the present article to note that although the Kızılbaş religion is mostly part of or connected in one way or another to the Shi`ite tradition, there is no confession of the Kızılbaş group's adoption of Shi`ism. Rather than discussing the Kızılbaş religion as Sunni or Shi`ite, in this paper that follows, I will explore in more detail the Ottoman State's perception of the Kızılbaş belief. What was the Ottoman perception of the Kızılbaş belief? Did the Ottoman administration classify the Kızılbaş as Shi`ite? Were the Kızılbaş different from the other non-Sunni minority religious groups in the eyes of the Ottoman authority?

This paper aims to analyze different types of archival documents including Ottoman administrative records, historical and religious narrative chronicles to provide solid information on the Ottoman view of the Kızılbaş faith. In this regard, the *fermans* (rescript)² attributed to the Kızılbaş issued in the Muhimme registers³ will be cross-checked and compared with the historical records⁴ written by the official historians to

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- 1 For more information, see Reyhan Erdoğan Başaran, "Comparing Scholarship: The Assessment of the Contemporary Works that Links Alevi with either Shi`ism or Sunnism, *Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5/9 (Aralık 2018): 315-338.
 - 2 To establish an analytical framework of the *fermans*, I will research into the following works: Ahmet Refik, *On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik* (İstanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kütüphanesi, 1932); Saim Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013). Savaş provided the original facsimile of the *fermans*; Cemal Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler* (İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2002). Şener also provided the original facsimile of the seventy-eight documents.
 - 3 For further information on the Muhimme registers, see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi (BOA) (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2000), 7.
 - 4 For the historical records, the following works will be referred: Necdet Öztürk, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi: Osmanlı Tarihi, 1285-1502* (İstanbul: Bilgi Kültür Sanat, 2013); Kemâl Paşazade, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*. VIII. Defter, ed. Ahmet Uğur (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997). In this work, the transcription of the original document has been



illustrate the Kızılbaş religiosity in the eyes of the Ottoman Empire. Additionally the *fatwas* (Islamic religious law) issued by Ibn Kemal (873/1469 – 940/1534) and afterwards reutilized by Ebussuud (895/1490 – 981/1574) will be referred to show the role of the religious discourse on supporting the Ottoman policy towards the Kızılbaş group.⁵

This research will then examine the usage of the term *rafidi* (rejectionists) for the Kızılbaş community as how it was referred, and what it meant in the religious sphere. Since the historical and theological development of Rafidism and Shi`ism have coincided, any group that had been defined as Rafidi were also labeled as Shi`ite. Rafidism and Shi`ism have been discussed as if they exactly reflect the same type of religious understanding. The Ottoman chronicles that have come to describe the Kızılbaş as Rafidi but not Shi`ite. Regardless of that the Kızılbaş has come to be labeled as Shi`ite.⁶ In this regard, it is of great interest in the context of this paper to uncover the connection of Rafidism with Shi`ism and find out if the sixteenth century Ottoman records imply Shi`ism in describing the Kızılbaş creed as Rafidi.

1. The Persecution of the Kızılbaş

According to the perspective of the Ottoman officials, historians and the prestigious *ulama* (scholars who trained in Islam and Islamic law), two factors made the Kızılbaş undesirable: Firstly and most importantly, the Kızılbaş provided military support for the Shah of Persia within the Ottoman subject.⁷ Secondly, they performed a non-Sunni religious rite

provided between the pages of 231-279; İdrîs-i Bitlisî, *Selim Şah-name*, ed. Hicabi Kırancı (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001).

5 Ibn Kemâl, *Fetâva-i Kemâlpaşazade der Hakk-ı Kızılbaş*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi Bölümü, nr. 3548, 45a-46b. For the Turkish version of this pamphlet, see Ahmet İnanır, "Tokatlı Şeyhülislam İbn Kemâl'in Osmanlı Hukukuna Katkıları ve Şia'ya Dair Fetvası," *Tokat Sempozyumu* 1/3 (2012), 301-302; For the *fatwas* of Ebussuud see, M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1983).

6 Erdoğan Başaran, "Comparing Scholarship: The Assessment of the Contemporary Works that Links Alevis with either Shi`ism or Sunnism," 315-338.

7 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, 39-43; Ömer Faruk Teber, "Osmanlı Belgelerinde Alevilik için", *Dini Kullanılan Dini - Siyasi Tanımlamalar Araştırmalar* 10/28 (2007): 19-38, 22-23; Walter Posch proposes completely opposite view according to which although the Anatolian Kızılbaş, acknowledged the Shahs of Iran as spiritual guides, they did not provide military support for the Safavids. He actually differentia-

that was considered as a threat to the Sunni Islam. That is primarily why religious dissociation of the Kızılbaş from Sunni Islam cannot be claimed to be the only or foremost concern of the Ottoman in targeting them. One particular *fatwa* states that “the Ottomans remains firm in its combat with the Kızılbaş as a result of their revolts against the sultan of Islam and they are nonbeliever.”⁸ The *fatwa* shows that the persecution of the Kızılbaş had its root directly or inherently in the liaison of the Kızılbaş with the Safavid, and then them being nonbeliever.

The *fermans* of the Muhimme registers also emphasize the problem of the Kızılbaş as they had given their alliance to the Safavid Iran. According to a *ferman*, a Kızılbaş who asked to join the Ottoman army so as to go to Iran, said that whoever draws a sword to Shah is not a Muslim.⁹ Another one notes that “the Kızılbaş collect money along with their wives’ jewelry, and send them to Iran.”¹⁰ The Kızılbaş are not only accused of being partisans of Iran, but they were also alleged as ‘being hostile to the Ottoman State.’¹¹ In this regard, İdrîs-i Bitlisî, a sixteenth century Ottoman historian, states that:

“It is for the best to sweep evilness away. For the safety of the Ottoman State, the smart step is initially to see the enemy at home. The army of Kızılbaş is huge and settled in Anatolia. The Kızılbaş army was consisted of the sons and members of some mystic groups. Numerous clerks are assigned by the Ottoman Sultan to record the members of the Kızılbaş army. The registry of the members of the group has exceeded over forty thousand people. Whoever turns his face away from the *haqq* (the divine truth), he will be killed with the political sword. It is indispensable for the Sultan to cut down the wicked herbs from the garden of religion to restore the social system.”¹²

tes the Kızılbaş of Iran from the Kızılbaş of Anatolia. See Walter Posch, *Osmanisch-safavidische Beziehungen 1545-1550: Der Fall Alkâs Mîrzâ* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2013). <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.rice.edu/stable/j.ctt1vw0pgd>

8 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no 479), 109.

9 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*, 216.

10 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*, 25.

11 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*, 28-43.

12 Bitlisî, *Selim Şah-name*, 131-136.



The aforementioned phrases show that the Kızılbaş were not merely persecuted over doctrinal differences as claimed. Winter, in his work *The Shi'ites of Lebanon*, alleges, "the Kızılbaş and other heterodox groups began to be persecuted on the sole basis of their religious beliefs."¹³ In order to make such a claim that the Kızılbaş were persecuted over religious disputes, it is essential to reveal the position of other non-Sunni or non-Muslims living within the Ottoman surroundings. Was the Ottoman administration hostile or tolerant to the other non-Sunni minority religious groups or non-Muslims?

Islam was the dominant religion. The coexistence of people of different ethnicities - Turks, Kurds, Laz, Greeks, Arabs, Albanians, and the Bedouin; languages - Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic, Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, Albanian, and Serbian; and the religions - Islam, Orthodox, Catholics, Armenians, and Jewish, - nevertheless all show how diverse was the Ottoman Empire in terms of ethnicity, language, and religion.¹⁴ The religious differences of the Christian and Jewish communities were recognized in that they were allowed to follow their own respective laws and codes in settling intercommunal matters.¹⁵ Muslims, however, were of the Sunni denomination of Islam. The Ottoman sultans had even been given the title "Caliph of Islam" after their conquest of the Mamluks in the 1500s and thus, they were the supreme authority of Sunni Islam. Different dervish orders that perform non-Sunni religious rite have existed within the Ottoman surroundings in different places and times. As long as these non-Sunni minority groups did not cause problems that targeted the Ottoman unity, they were generally tolerated. Similarly, the Ottoman policy towards the neighboring Muslim beylics (*beylik*) was to live in peace as long as they neither attempted to attack nor conspire with the Christians against the Ottomans.¹⁶ If a person or a group of people became a political or social threat to the realm, then the Ottomans did whatever neces-

13 Stefan Winter, *The Shiites of Lebanon under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1788* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 14.

14 Şerif Mardin, "Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969): 258-281; Colin Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 5.

15 Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 216.

16 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler 15.-17. Yüzyıllar* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2013), 117.

sary to get the situation under control. The revolt of Shaykh Bedreddin, a Muslim Sufi theologian, can be given as an example. He had influenced many Muslims and non-Muslims lived in the Ottoman Empire. He became a threat when he led an important rebellion against the Ottomans. He was hanged immediately after he was captured.¹⁷ The example of Molla Lutfi, a prominent religious scholar in the *sahn-ı seman madrasah*, displays a different angle of the persecution. He was hanged, claimed Ocak, not due to his theological views, but because of a jealousy arising out of the strong rivalry between religious scholars. The decision about his execution was made by his grudging opponent.¹⁸ The different instances of persecution/execution show that varied reasons including political, social, institutional, geopolitical and religious all played a particular role in shaping Ottoman policy. Therefore, this paper argues that the Kızılbaş's political alliance with Iran was actually the foremost reason behind the persecution. The Kızılbaş religiosity became the secondary cause. Hence the Ottoman fight with the Kızılbaş (actually with the Safavids) cannot simply be discussed as a struggle between Sunni and Shi'ite. Here the Ottoman as like the Safavid played the religious card to inflame the partisans.

2. The Role of Religion

Even though the Ottoman-Safavid struggle played a central role in the persecution of the Kızılbaş, the *fatwas* issued by Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud had shaped the religious aspect of this fight. During the Battle of *Chaldiran* happened in 919/1514, many people were hesitant in fighting with the Kızılbaş. This was because of the fact that their religious identity as Muslims - they worship Allah and praise Muhammad - was a subject of concern. That is how the *ulama* had begun issuing *fatwas* that legitimized the Ottoman fight with the Kızılbaş community.¹⁹ According to those *fatwas*, which sharpened the religious angle of the fight, the Kızılbaş had clearly displayed the marks of heresy. They are accused of insulting the *sharia* and the people of *sharia* by ignoring the daily prayers²⁰

17 Refik, *On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik*, 3.

18 Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 239-267-384.

19 Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı*, (*fatwa* no. 481), 110-111; M. C. Şehabeddin Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların Işığı Altında Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi", *Tarih Dergisi* 17 (2011): 49-78, 53-55.

20 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, 32.



and by drinking wine, even though it was not permissible in Islam.²¹ They were also denounced because of their practice of cursing the first three caliphs,²² and non-recognition of *ijtihad* (judicial opinion) of the *mujtahid* imams (a qualified person to evaluate the Islamic law). Rather than following the law of *sharia* as stated by Ibn Kemal, they follow the sayings of Shah Ismail and thus for them, whatever the shah allows is *halal* and what he forbids is *haram*.²³

The Kızılbaş for all of these aforementioned reasons are represented as heretic, infidel and apostate. The country they live in is *darulharb* to the Muslims and what they slaughter is carrion. They will be punished as like they are *murtadd* (apostate). The fight with the Kızılbaş is therefore portrayed as a fight with a true enemy of Islam.²⁴ A famous *fatwa* states that “fighting with the Kızılbaş is regarded to be the greatest *ghaza* and the people who join this fight are considered to be both *ghazis* and martyrs.”²⁵

The Safavids also propagated the notion of *ghaza* to justify warfare against their powerful opponent. According to this propaganda, “killing Sunni Muslim is as the same as killing infidels.”²⁶ The Kızılbaş were deeply influenced by the Safavid policy that opposed the Sunni Ottoman Empire. As a result, they were involved in a number of civic uprisings that caused the death of many Sunni Muslims. With regard to Shah Ismail’s doings, İdrîs-i Bitlisî notes that:

“Shah Ismail and his adherents kill a believer for no reason. They dispose him of his property. The property and women of a killed man is *halal* according to the religion of Shah. In his judgment, adultery, and sodomy is *mubah* (permissible). He claims to be from the lineage of Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad and claimed to be the Imam. He is neither in the religion of Muhammad nor Isa (Jesus); he murders the *ulama* as if it was an obligation for him; he allowed alcoholic drink and wine in his land; he legitimized what was forbidden by God; he established his own *sharia*

21 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*, 37-39.

22 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu’da Alevilik*, 25.

23 Ibn Kemâl, *Fetâva-i Kemâlpaşazade der Hakk-ı Kızılbaş*, 45a-46b.

24 Ibn Kemâl, *Fetâva-i Kemâlpaşazade der Hakk-ı Kızılbaş*, 45a-46b.

25 Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı*, 109.

26 Refik, *On Altıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik*, 5.

while ignoring the religion of Islam; and he attempted to be God like Namrud.²⁷ A group of tyrants ignorantly glorified him. Shah Ismail says that I will take the world by force. Who would dare to fight with me? There is no one as brave and smart as I am. I would take the world from south to the west. I would conquer the land and the seas by way of peace and war. I already conquered the entire of Iran with my sword. I had threatened the Sultan of the Turks... I have followers and disciples from Anatolia and Syria, and they pay homage to me because of my ancestors. They all plume themselves on their profanity and wrong doings, all of which caused them to oppose to the divine judgment."²⁸

As I will further analyze in the following part, the *fatwas* composed by the sixteenth century salaried Ottoman *ulama* while convincing the common people on the heresy and profanity of the Kızılbaş, parallels the historical document in describing the Kızılbaş community (their political, social and religious status) and in supporting the state policy to ferment the adherents.

3. An Analysis of the *Fatwas* of the Sixteenth Century Ottoman *Ulama*

In this part, I particularly aim to survey and highlight of the expression of the Kızılbaş belief in the Ottoman religious treatises, with special attention paid to two prominent scholars: Ibn Kemal (873/1469 – 940/1534) and Ebussuud (895/1490 – 981/1574). The Ottoman *ulama* of the sixteenth century played an important role together with the sultans themselves in the administration of the Islamic law. Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud appear to have been the most outstanding religious leaders of the sixteenth century. Both well-trained scholars have been accorded enormous prestige as the Mufti of Istanbul, which by the end of the sixteenth century had been accounted as the highest office in the learned

27 The King Namrud, as pointed out in the Qur'an, not only denied the existence of God but himself claimed to be God. "Have you not thought about the man who disputed with Abraham about this Lord, because God had given him power to rule? When Abraham said, 'It is my Lord who gives life and death,' he said, 'I too give life and death.' So Abraham said, 'God brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west.' The disbeliever was dumbfounded: God does not guide who do evil." (al Baqarah 2/258).

28 Bitlisî, *Selim Şah-name*, 131-136.

profession.²⁹ The Mufti of Istanbul also came to be known with the title of the *shaykh al-Islam*.

The *fatwas* and pamphlets of Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud were extremely important on the justification of the persecution of the Kızılbaş. Therefore, each of their particular writings attributed to Shi'ism and Kızılbaşism,³⁰ if pursued in depth, would help us to clarify the true religious identity of Kızılbaşism in the eyes of the Ottoman. I have come to believe that the statements of Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud are the most essential materials to investigate the extent to which, if it ever was, Kızılbaşism considered as a form of Shi'ism. Are the views of forenamed religious scholars subject to sectarian concern in terms of Sunnism and Shi'ism?

3.1. The View of Ibn Kemal on the Kızılbaş Faith

The treatises of Ibn Kemal are quite popular on the condemnation of non-Sunni religious groups. Ibn Kemal issued *fatwas* and wrote a number of pamphlets with the intention of protecting the Sunni Islam from the external Sufistic tendencies. According to him, the sects of Islam are divided into two main groups, which are the *ahli Sunnah*, and *ahli bid'ah* (invention of a new thing outside of Islamic rules/innovator).³¹ In his *risāles* (pamphlets), he aims to distinguish the teaching of the *ahli Sunnah* from the influence of the rest of the sects.³²

29 The *Mufti* of Istanbul did not share a parallel role with the judge in the Imperial Council, as their thoughts can only be regarded as authoritarian if the sultan certifies them. Hence, the sultan was the only person whom they needed to consult and get approval. For the office of the Mufti of Istanbul about its role in politics of the sixteenth century Ottoman realm, see, Nikki R. Keddie, *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1972).

30 Ibn Kemâl, *Risâle fi ikfâri Şia*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Pertev Paşa Bölümü, nr. 621, 31a-b; Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no. 481), 110-111.

31 He refers to a well-known hadith according to which the people of Islam will be divided into seventy-three sects. For the *hadith*, see Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo: Matba'a al-Maymaniyya, 1313/1869), 2:332. Ibn Kemâl divides the *ahli bid'ah* into six major groups as Khawarij, Rafidi, Qadarite, Jabarite (Cebriyye), and Mürchie. Each of those six groups are, according to Ibn Kemâl, consisted of twelve factions. Ibn Kemâl, *Risâle fi beyâni fıraki-İslâmiyyin*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli Bölümü, nr. 3711, 115a-.

32 Ibn Kemâl, *Risâle fi beyâni fıraki-İslâmiyyin*, 115a-b.

Ibn Kemal wrote two treatises on the matter of deviant sects; one of them is titled as *Risāle fi beyāni firakı'd-dālle* (a pamphlet on the description of the heretical sects)³³ and the other one is named *Risāle fi tasnif-i firakı'd-dālle* (a pamphlet on the list of the heretical sects).³⁴ He also wrote a treatise on the condemnation of Rafidism, *Risāle fi tekfiri'r-Ravāfiz*.³⁵ His treatise titled *Risāle fi ikfāri Şia* (declaration of the Shi`is as unbeliever)³⁶ that was actually dedicated to denouncing Shah Ismail and his followers, appears to have been the only work on the anti-Shi`ite discourse (in terms of followers of Shah Ismail) of the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire. In the *risāle*, Ibn Kemal states that:

"There appears a number of signs of the presence of a Shi`ite group in the regions of Muslims. According to a rumor, they have captured so many Sunni cities and have disclosed their superstitious dogmas on them. They do not recognize the caliphate of Imam Ebu Bakr, Imam Umar, and Imam Uthman. They instead curse them. They prefer to follow the path of their leader whom they call Shah Ismail instead of complying with the sects of the *mujtahid* imams - an individual who is qualified to exercise judicial opinion in the evaluation of Islamic law. Thus and so, they insult the *sharia* and the people of *sharia*. They claim that following the path of Shah is easy and infinitely beneficial."³⁷

This is the only statement that the term '*shia*' has been used to define religiosity of the followers of Shah Ismail. However, Ibn Kemal neither criticized any particular theological element of Shi`ism. Nor does he regard Shah Ismail's religious leaning as an Islamic sect, but he judges it to be apostate. While the usage of the notion '*shia*' differentiates this document from the rest of the Ottoman records, is this enough to link the Kızılbaş belief with Shi`ism.

33 Ibn Kemâl, *Risāle fi beyāni firakı'd-dālle*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Kılıç Ali Paşa Bölümü, nr. 1028, 297a-298b.

34 Ibn Kemâl, *Risāle fi tasnif-i firakı'd-dālle*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli Bölümü, nr. 3711, 114b-116a.

35 Ibn Kemâl, *Risāle fi tekfiri'r-Ravāfiz*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ayasofya Bölümü, nr. 4794, 42b-43a.

36 Ibn Kemâl. *Risāle fi ikfāri Şia* Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Pertev Paşa Bölümü, nr. 621, 31a-b; For the original script of this pamphlet see, Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların Işığında Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi," 77-78. For the Turkish translation see, Halil İbrahim Bulut, "Osmanlı-Safevi Mücadelesinde Ulemanın Rolü: Kemâl Paşazâde Örneği", *Dini Araştırmalar* 7/21 (2005): 179-195, 188-190.

37 Ibn Kemâl. *Risāle fi ikfāri Şia*, 31a-b.

3.2. The *Fatwas* of Ebussuud

In 951/1545, during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, Ebussuud ascended to the office of Mufti of Istanbul. It was the time when the conflict with the Safavids had reached its peak. He issued a number of *fatwas* in support of the Ottoman policy. Those *fatwas* have been regarded as the most important resources that provided theological reasoning on the necessity of punishment of the Kızılbaş. A famous *fatwa* states that “the killing of the Kızılbaş group is permissible (*halal*) in compliance with our religion. People who kill them become *ghazis* and the killed ones become martyrs.”³⁸ The *fatwas* were primarily provided with the motives of dissolving public hesitation concerning the persecution of the Kızılbaş. According to the records, some people were concerned in terms of religious status of the Kızılbaş as “they believe in Allah and recognize Muhammad as the last prophet.” The *fatwas* therefore justified the killing of the Kızılbaş in support of the Ottoman policy.

The following *fatwa* also shows that the *fatwas* of Ebussuud were dedicated to dissipate the public concern of the killing of the Kızılbaş. Ebussuud states that:

"No one needs to be concerned about the legitimacy of the killing of the Kızılbaş. The wicked act of Kızılbaş is itself enough to prove that they are not related to the lineage of the pure prophet Muhammad. Besides when Junaid, grandfather of Shah Ismail, appeared, he forced the *sayyids* that live around the tomb of Imam Ali ar-Ridha ibn Musa al-Kadhim and other *sayyids* to show that his bloodline is coming from them. He killed the ones who did not accept his will. Some *sayyids* resigned themselves to his will to protect their lives. However, they attributed his lineage to an infertile *sayyid*. Therefore, some scholars would find out this fact. Moreover, even if it is true that he is a *sayyid*, when he is an infidel so he is no different from the rest of the heretics. Only the ones who follow the rite of *sharia* and protect its certain rules can be from the prophet's descendants. For example, Kanan was the son of Noah, but he deviated. When the prophet Noah prays for his escape from the flood, God said that, 'he could not be counted from your family...' Kanan was like any other unbelievers punished and suffocated. If coming from the descendant of a prophet was

38 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no. 479), 109.

sufficient to be saved, then the whole infidels could be saved only because they all come from the lineage of the prophet Adam."³⁹

The above-mentioned *fatwa* shows how religion had been used as a channel to justify the persecution of the Kızılbaş, and how the elite *ulama* served as an upholder of the political stability of the Ottoman Empire. In terms of religious concern, it assures people that there is no need to concern about killing of the Kızılbaş. As it is understood, common people were worried to fight against a group who claimed to be *sayyid*. In response to this assertion, Ebussuud states that they are not of the Prophet Muhammad bloodline. Junaid, unlike his ancestor, defrauded about his lineage, and by force, procured a document showing a genealogy of his *sayyid*-hood. Ebussuud then proceed saying that even if it is true that 'he is a *sayyid*,' why does it matter since he is an unbeliever (*dinsiz*). According to the *fatwa*, the blood tie is irrelevant when the person is not a true Muslim, a firm supporter of Islamic rule. Through giving an example concerning Noah's son, Ebussuud emphasizes a fact that no one would be saved only because of the blood-tie. The Qur`an mentions of Kanan, the son of Noah, as the only family member of Noah who could not be saved due to his disbelief of Noah's message.⁴⁰ Ebussuud further states that if descent from a prophetic lineage is enough to be saved, then we all nothing to worry about since Adam is the first human being and the first prophet.

Unlike majority of recent works on Kızılbaşism/Alevisim as they label Alevisim as Shi`ite, the sixteenth century Ottoman scholars of religion do not associate Kızılbaş religiosity with Shi`ism. Rather a well-known *fatwa* of Ebussuud categorically separates the Kızılbaş belief system from Shi`ism due to theological and doctrinal reasons.⁴¹ The statement of Ebussuud might actually be not sufficient to situate the Kızılbaş as either Shi`ite or non-Shi`ite. However, it definitely demonstrates that the Kızılbaş were not considered to be Shi`ite in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities. To the question of that "Kızılbaş group claim that they are Shi`ite, and they declare the statement of faith '*Lailaha illa Allah* - there is

39 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no. 480), 109-110.

40 (Hud 11/42-43).

41 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no. 481), 110-111.

no God but God. Then, what is the reason of approaching them in a harsh way." Ebussuud responds that:

"The Kızılbaş are not of the Shi`ite denomination of Islam. They also do not belong to the any sect of the 73 sects described in the prophetic tradition according to which, the *ummah* of Muhammad will be divided into 73 paths, and all with the exception of *ahli sunnah* will go hell.⁴² However, they generated a heretical and irreligious new *madhhab* (sect/belief/creed) by adopting a piece of misdoing and defeatism from each of those *madhhab*. Their poor behavior has increased day by day. Through looking at their persistent wrongdoings, in terms of *sharia*, our judgment would be: Those ill-natured underestimate the noble Quran, holy *sharia*, and the religion of Islam. They swear upon religious books and burn them. They offend the true religious scholars because of their poor knowledge of religion and prostrate to their deviant and traitor leader, Shah Ismail, through replacing him with God. They regard the entire forbidden by the strong verses as lawful. Besides, they are infidel in that they curse Abu Bakr and Umar. Even though there appear to be a number of almighty verses about the virtue of Aisha, the beloved wife of Muhammad, they malign her. They therefore refute the Qur'an and thus they are infidel. With their accusation to Aisha, they dishonor Muhammad and with this way they revile him. That is why the entire Kızılbaş with their old and young, their places and works must be exterminated. Whoever suspects of their fidelity, also becomes an infidel. According to Imam Adham Abu Hanifa⁴³ and Imam Sufyan Thawri,⁴⁴ Kızılbaş would be free from persecution (death) if they completely repent and return to Islam. However, according to Imam Malik, Imam Shafi'i, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Imam Layth ibn Saad, Imam Ishak bin Rahuya, and other religious scholars, their repentance cannot be accepted. They must be beheaded under any circumstances. According to Imam Abu Hanifa, they will support the group of which they share belief with. Such judgment is known. With regard to the Kızılbaş troops, there is only one judgment according to which they must be killed in any

42 Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, 2:332.

43 Imam Adham Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767) is the founder of the Hanafi School of mainstream Sunni jurisprudence.

44 Imam Sufyan Thawri (d. 161/777), a *muhaddith* (*hadith* narrator), who even narrated *hadith* from Jafar Sadiq. For further information, see Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Taqrib at-Tahdhib*, ed. Muhammad Avvama (Syria: Dar-ur-Rashid, 1986), 1: 385-386.

case. However, the Kızılbaş in the villages and cities who live an unerring life and who are purified from the Kızılbaş characteristics and acts, as long as they are saying the truth, they must be free from the treatment (massacre) applied to the others. Killing of the Kızılbaş is way more important than killing of other infidels. For example, even though there were a number of heretics around the neighborhood of Madina, and Syria was not captured yet, instead of handling those heretics and going after Syria, Abu Bakr preferred to attack the apostates who bound themselves to the liar, Musaylima. The event of *khawarij* during the caliphate of Ali is the same. Their malignment is wicked. To erase their malignancy from the world, it is necessary to make an effort and do whatever is needed."⁴⁵

Revisiting the famous *fatwa* of Ebussuud about the Kızılbaş religious creed shows that the fight of the Ottomans against the Kızılbaş must not be characterized as struggles between Sunnism and Shi'ism. As highlighted in the aforementioned *fatwa*, the Kızılbaş are not categorized as Shi'ite. The popular *hadith* about the division of the Islamic sects into 73 fractions has been cited here, and claimed that the Kızılbaş is not even one of those sects.⁴⁶ Given that it is likely to say that, according to Ebussuud, the Kızılbaş are not even a sect of Islam. Rather than following a path of Islam, the Kızılbaş formed a different type of belief through embracing a piece of rite from each of the 72 sects (*madhhab*). They followed not the Qur'an, and the Islamic law on practicing religion, but Shah Ismail as if he was the god to them. Due to their ignorance of the Qur'anic rules and condemnation of the first tree caliphs and Aisha, they, stated in the *fatwa*, must be viewed as infidel.

And then the names of Imam Adham Abu Hanifa (d. 150/767), a famous Sunni theologian and jurist, is the first of the four famous imams of the *ahli Sunnah* and the founder of the Hanafi School of mainstream Sunni jurisprudence, and Imam Sufyan Thawri (d. 161/777), a *muhaddith* (*hadith* narrator), theologian, and a jurist, are referred in pertaining Islamic decree on the punishment of the infidels. While to them, if the infidels (in this case, the Kızılbaş) swear off their bad habits and wrongdoings, they will be free of punishment. Contrary to this decree, Imam

45 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (*fatwa* no. 481), 110-111.

46 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2:332.

Malik (d. 179/795), *hadith* traditionist, one of the four great imams, and founder of the Maliki school, Imam Shafi'i (d. 205/820), jurist and theologian, and the founder of the Shafi'i School, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241/ 855), theologian and the founder of Hanbali School, Imam Layth b. Saad (d. 94/791), one of the great imams of jurisprudence, Imam Ishak bin Rahuya (d. 238/853), jurist, *hadith* traditionist and theologian, state that the repentance of infidels cannot be accepted. After giving two opposite views on the persecution of the Kızılbaş in case of their penitence, Ebussuud concludes that the Kızılbaş army must be viewed differently from the common people of the Kızılbaş tribes. There can be no excuse for the persecution of the troops; however, the Kızılbaş who were not involved in any political and military act against the Ottoman State would be free of punishment. This statement is quite important to illustrate the Ottoman policy on the persecution of the Kızılbaş. The *fatwa*, from the beginning until now, was all about the religious nature of the Kızılbaş. But with this particular phrase, the emphasized was turned to the central concern behind the persecution of the Kızılbaş, according to which, the Kızılbaş is considered to be a powerful treat to the Ottoman unity due to their political and military allegiance to the Safavids. At the end of the *fatwa*, the Kızılbaş are considered to be more dangerous than the rest of the infidels. In this juncture, the Kızılbaş was equated with the apostates who followed the path of Musaylimah al-Kadhab (the liar) instead of Muhammad the Prophet,⁴⁷ and the *khawarij*, a group of people who ceased their support for Ali due to the decision of arbitration.⁴⁸

Regardless of the above mentioned *fatwa* that explicitly disassociates the Kızılbaş from Shi'ism, the current scholarship yet still regard the Kızılbaş as the Ottoman Shi'ites.⁴⁹ While this statement is not sufficient

47 Musaylimah al-Kadhab was a man who claimed that he shared prophet hood with Muhammad during the lifetime of Muhammad. Musaylimah was killed during the *Ridda* wars that were directed to apostasy in the Arabian Peninsula during the caliphate of Abu Bakr.

48 When Ali and Mu'awiyah were fighting over the position of the caliphate, a process of arbitration had been suggested to end the hostilities. However, some supporters of Ali believed that arbitration is a sin due to the following verse; 'The judgment is Allah's alone, He relates the truth and He is the best of deciders. (al An'am: 6/57). They therefore left Ali through accusing him of sin and disbelief. They afterwards had been called as *khawarij*. Heinz Halm, *Shi'ism*, trans. Janet Watson and Marian Hill (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 10-11.

49 Erdoğan Başaran, "Comparing Scholarship: The Assessment of the Contemporary

to regard or disregard Alevi as Shi`a, it does show, however, that neither the Ottoman policy makers nor the elite scholars classified the Kızılbaş/Alevi belief as Shi`ite. That being said, if the Alevi were of Shi`ite belief, then the question of how and why the Ottoman administrators did not welcome this reality, but rather introduced their view of Alevism as a distinctly separate entity from Shi`ite Islam, stays unresolved.

4. The Usage of the Term 'Rafidi'

The confusion over Alevi religious identity is not only related to its historical, political, and theological development, but is also connected to its relation with the central government. In the Ottoman records, the notions like *rafidi* (rejectionists), *mulhid* (apostate), *khawarij* (seceders), *zindiq* (profane), *kafir* (unbeliever), non-Sunnis, bandit,⁵⁰ burglars, etc. are used describing the Kızılbaş,⁵¹ and thus played vital role in structuring perceptions about the Kızılbaş faith. Along with these terms, they are also defined as people who drink wine, who do not perform the Friday prayers, and who insult the Sunnis.⁵²

The Ottoman official records defined the Kızılbaş by the aforementioned words, and yet only the term *rafidi* has been seen specifically as a sign of Shi`ism. Due to the historical development of the term *rafidi* and its association of Shi`ism, the notion *rafidi* appears to be very much a ques-

Works that Links Alevi with either Shi`ism or Sunnism," 315-338.

50 The information provided by Simëon of Poland in his Travel Accounts shows the continuing Kızılbaş attack until the early seventeenth century. In one particular passage, he states that he was afraid to visit Surb Karapet Monastery [an Armenian Apostolic monastery in Muş] because of a possible Kızılbaş attack: "The plain of Mush [Muş Province] were destroyed by the [Kızılbaş], [and] its people taken into captivity. That is why I was afraid to go to that region." When he eventually visited the Monastery, he was told by the vardapet [a name given to the archimandrite of the Armenian Apostolic Church] that the church was terrible ruined and destroyed by the Kızılbaş. See Dpir Lehats'i Simëon and George A. Bournoutian, *The Travel Accounts of Simëon of Poland* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda Publishers, 2007), 176-177.

51 Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler*, 12; Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, 28-44, 105-106; Bitlisi, *Selim Şahname*, 131-136; Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı*, 109-112; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Türk Heterodoksi Tarihinde "Zındık", "Harici", "Râfızî", "Mülhid" ve "Ehl-i Bid'at" Terimlerine Dair Bazı Düşünceler", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1981-1982): 507-520.

52 Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevilik*, 32-39.

tion of definition in the Ottoman archival records of the sixteenth century. The sixteenth century Ottoman records had never used the word *shi'a* in description of the Kızılbaş religion even after Shah Ismail made Shi'ism the official religion of the state.⁵³ Thereby this research tends to question how and why the Ottoman administrators, historians, and religious scholars used the term *rafidi* but not *shi'ite*. Does Rafidism necessarily mean Shi'ism? Could Rafidism be replaced by Shi'ism? Did the Ottoman imply Shi'ism in the usage of the term *rafidi*?

The term *rafida* has been derived from the root of r-f-z (ر - ف - ز) that means to desert or leave. The notion *rawafid* has been used as plural of *rafida*.⁵⁴ The history of the term *rafidi* goes beyond the existence of Kızılbaşism, and it has been used in reference to different groups of people in the history of Islam. The meaning that the term *rafida* carries each time slightly differs from one another. The notion *rafida*, in terms of general meaning, used to refer to the lovers of *ahl al-bayt*.⁵⁵ Aside from this, the earliest resources narrate two different stories with regard to the initial usage of the term. According to first one, the *rafida* was applied to the people who gave their support up for Zayd b. Ali during his revolt against the Umayyad dynasty in 122/740. A debate with regard to caliphate of Abu Bakr and Umar has divided the supporters of Zayd into two groups. When his view of the first two caliphs asked, he said, "I am going to say nothing bad about them and I have heard nothing, but good words about them from my father." Thereupon some of his supporters left him. Zayd said "*rafaztumuni* - you left me." Then the people who left him were called as Rafidi.⁵⁶

On the other side, the Shi'ite resources narrate a different story with regard to the preliminary usage of the term *rafidi*. According to this,

53 With the exception of the saying of Ibn Kemal, the term *shia* had never been used in defining the Kızılbaş belief. But as explored earlier in this paper, Ibn Kemal had not used the term *kızılbaş*, nor he viewed the belief of the followers of Shah Ismail as Islamic.

54 Ibn Manzūr Muhammad ibn Mukarram, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-Kutub, 1990), 4.

55 Abdülkâhir el-Bağdâdî, *Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar*, trans. Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2001), 31; Yusuf Benli, "Rafıza Adlandırmasının İlk Kullanımına İlişkin Değerlendirmeler", *Hikmet Yurdu* 1/1 (2008): 31-69.

56 Abu'l-Hasan 'Alî b. Ismâ'il al-Aş`arî, *Maqâlât al-islâmiyyîn wa ihtilâf al-muşallîn*, ed. Muhyi al-Dîn `Abd al-Hamid (Cairo: 1950), 1:89-137.

after the death of Muhammad Baqir, the fifth imam, people divided into two groups in decision of the next Imam. Even though Mugire b. Saad (d. 50/670) claimed to be the Imam, many people supported the imamate of Jafar Sadiq. Mugire named the people who chose Jafar over Mugire as Rafidi.⁵⁷

Since the classical times, the scholars of Islam attempt to associate Rafidism with Shi`ite Islam, particularly the Imami branch of Shi`ism, as if these two terms can be used for one another due to the shared religious elements on the subject of Alid loyalty.⁵⁸ Sometimes Rafidism has been explained as if it was a sub-branch of Shi`ism and vice versa.⁵⁹ However, not each group labeled as Rafidi can be described as Shi`ite. The case of Zayd b. Ali raises a question about the probability of the classification of Rafidis as Shi`ite. As stated earlier, the people who left Zayd b. Ali are called as Rafidi, however the followers of Zayd b. Ali are named Zaydi that appears to have been the one of the three major Shi`ite groups - Zaydiyya, Ismailiyya and Imamiyya.⁶⁰ On the other side, some scholars disassociated Rafidism from Shi`ism, but linked it with the *ghulat* - extremist group.⁶¹

In short, in the *al-Milal wa al-Nihal* literature of Islam (books on sectarianism), the notion *rafidi* is used to refer to the group of people who were the supporters of Ali and his family over the first three caliphs and who regard them as usurper of Ali's succession.⁶² Since the party of Shi`ism has come to believe that the Prophet has appointed Ali as his successor, the loyalty to Ali and his family and accordingly the doctrine of imamate has become the dominant belief of Shi`a. The books on Sectarianism, therefore, have approached both sects as if each of the two is

57 Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi`a* (İstanbul: 1931), 54.

58 al-Asha`ri, *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*, I:15; Watt claimed that Ashari is the earliest scholar who associated Rafidism with Imami Shi`ism. Montgomery Watt, "The Rāfiḏites: A Preliminary Study", *Oriens* 16 (1963):110 - 121, 118 - 119.

59 Tāj al-Dīn Abū al-Fath Muḥammad ibn `Abd al-Karīm ash-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, ed. Abd al-`Amir Ali Mahna and Hasan Faur (Beirut: 1990), 1:15.

60 al-Bağdadi, *Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar*, 31.

61 al-Bağdadi, *Mezhepler Arasındaki Farklar*, 31; Gölpınarlı, *Tarih Boyunca Islâm Mezhepleri ve Şiilik*, 98-135.

62 Group of people who love Ali along with the first three caliphs have been named as Nasibi. For further information see, Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı, *Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Tercüman, 1987).

a branch of one another. Discussion on the matter of whether Rafidism equally means Shi`ism is not the intention of this work. Instead this research is interested in clarifying the usage of the term *rafidi* in description of the Kızılbaş faith in the sixteenth century Ottoman reports.

While the term *rafidi* is hardly mentioned in the Seljuk records,⁶³ particularly the sixteenth century Ottoman chronicles refer to the non-Sunni groups as Rafidi - not only the Kızılbaş are defined as Rafidi. Non-Sunni minority religious groups like the Qalandar, also known as Işık,⁶⁴ are also classified as Rafidi.⁶⁵ In one particular *ferman* related to the Işık group, it states that "if Sari Saltik *zawiya* (a small Islamic monastery) is from the *ahli Sunnah* or not." This *ferman* shows that the Qalandar/Işıks are not necessarily entirely non-Sunni.⁶⁶ Neither the Qalandars⁶⁷ represent the same group of people with the Kızılbaş nor each of which is related to one another. However, because of shared religious values like both factions praise Ali over the rest of the *sahabah* (companions of the Prophet Muhammad), drink alcoholic beverages and neglect daily prayer, each had been labeled as Rafidi in the sixteenth century Ottoman records.

63 The term *rafidi* appears in the *Rihla* of Ibn Battuta. The narrative states that 'the people of Sinop was suspicious about Ibn Battuta as being a Rafidi. To verify his religious leaning, they asked him to eat rabbit meat.' For detailed information see, Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354*, ed. C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti, by H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge, University Press 1962), 2:468; The term *rafidi* is also often referred in the *Saltukname* written in the 15th century. Here it is stated that *ulama* issued a *fatwa* about the infidelity of the Nusayris and Rafidis. Sarı Saltuk, *Saltık-name*, ed. Necati Demir and Mehmet Dursun Erdem (Ankara: Destan Yayınları, 2007), 148; Rafidis had been viewed as infidel by Evliya Çelebi (1611-1682). See Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, ed. Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin with an introduction by Fahir İz (Harvard University, Office of the University Publisher, 1989 - 1993), 1:56.

64 For detailed information on the history of the Qalandar (Işık) in Anatolia, see, the introduction of Hatib-i Farisi, *Menakin-i Cemal al Din-i Savi*, ed. Tahsin Yazıcı (Ankara: 1972).

65 Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: 1993), 3:2.

66 Şener, *Osmanlı Belgeleri'nde Aleviler-Bektaşiler*, 37.

67 A number of mystic groups; however, known with different names like *Haydarîler*, *Rum Abdalları*, *Câmîler*, *Torlaklar*, *Semsîler* and *Nimetullahîler* appeared in different time periods and places are better recognized as Qalandars. Qalandari dervishes are not always connected to a specific *tariqa*. Due to its unorganized structure, they are not like the rest of the ordinary *tariqas*. For further information, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Süflük: Kalenderiler (XIV-XVII Yüzyıllar)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992), 110-119.

The ideological and political tie of the Kızılbaş with Safavid Iran distinguishes them from the rest of the mystic minority groups like the Qalandars. The usage of the term *rafidi* for different religious groups shows that a Kızılbaş can be a Rafidi but not every Rafidi is a Kızılbaş. Therefore, here I argue that the term *rafidi* is not equivalent to the notion *kızılbaş*.

The term *rafidi*, however, had been used to define the religiosity of the Kızılbaş, as far as this paper is concerned, the Kızılbaş, to our knowledge, had never been literally classified as Shi`a in the sixteenth century Ottoman chronicles. On the contrary, the *ulama* issued *fatwa*⁶⁸ that distinguished the Kızılbaş belief from the mainstream Shi`ite Islam due to its distinctiveness in theology and rituals from mainstream Shi`ism. Neither the Ottoman nor the Seljuk records, unlike the Rafidis, talk about the presence of any particular Shi`ite group that live in Anatolia.⁶⁹ And yet it can be claimed that the term *rafidi* is used for the Kızılbaş to demonstrate their non-Sunni religiosity. It being said, the term *rafidi* does not necessarily mean Shi`ite, at least, in the sixteenth century Ottoman perspective.

CONCLUSION

The central theme of this article is to explore the Kızılbaş belief in greater detail as concerned in the Ottoman official documents with a particular interest paid to the sayings of the official religious scholars: Ibn Kemal and Ebussuud. While engaged in discussion of the usage of the term *rafidi* for different groups of people at different time periods, I have come to realize that a particular group that demonstrated a disparity might face to be called as Rafidi. This implies that while defining the religious identity, the term *rafidi* is also used in purpose of denouncing the opponent. That being said, in the Ottoman realm, the notion *rafidi* might be used to refer to any religious group that practice religion outside of the Sunni norms. That is why, this article claims that the Ottoman labeled the Kızılbaş as Rafidi to emphasize their non-Sunni characteristic. This does not,

68 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (fatwa no. 481), 110-111.

69 Ibn Bibi el-Huseyin b. Muhammed b. Ali el-Ca'feri er-Rugadi, *el Evamiru'l-ala'ie fi'l-umuri'l-ala'ie (Selçuk -name)*, ed. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996); Karim al-Aqsarâ'I, *Müsâmeret Ül-Ahbâr: Moğollar Zamanında Türkiye Selçukluları Tarihi*, ed. Osman Turan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1944).

in fact, imply Shi`ism.⁷⁰ The famous *fatwa*⁷¹ of Ebussuud firmly supports my argument as it differentiates the Kızılbaş belief from Shi`ism while describing it as Rafidi. The *fatwa* also raises an earliest critique of the view that associates the Kızılbaş religiosity with Shi`a. This shows that unlike the classical perception, the notion *rafidi* cannot always be regarded as equivalent to the term *shi`a*, at least, in the sixteenth century Ottoman realm. Secondly and more importantly being non-Sunni does not necessarily mean being Shi`ite as it is typically used to be now. However, today the phrase of non-Sunni, as a matter of course, evokes Shi`ism due to the binary classification of Islamic sects [jurisprudential] as Sunni and Shi`ite as it has compelled scholars to classify any religious groups as a branch of either of the two.

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70 The notion *rafidi* has been closely linked to Shi`ism in the classical Islamic perception. Etan, Kohlberg, "al-Rafida", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-rafida-SIM_6185?s.num=50&s.start=40

71 Düzdağ, Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16 Asır Türk Hayatı (fatwa no. 481), 110-111.

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