

the passage analysed by Hassan. He writes: “if the cause of the originated things (*ḥawādith*) were a cause by essence and nature, then...” (‘Alī b. Abī ‘Alī al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. A.M. al-Mahdī, 5 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 2010, vol. 1, p. 243). Admittedly, here it is not explicitly the origination of the *whole* world; but in the following sections, which are dedicated to proving God’s power and volition, al-Āmidī explicitly invokes the origination of the *whole* world, opening both sections with “if the origination of the world has been established...” (Al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār*, vol. 1, p. 280 (power) and p. 305 (volition)).

However, this should not take away from the fact that Hassan’s book is a valuable and certainly very insightful contribution to furthering our understanding not only of al-Āmidī’s thought on creation in particular, but the intricate ways in which different intellectual traditions in classical Islam reacted to each other.

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CARL SHARIF EL-TOBGUI:

*Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of Dar’ ta’ āruḍ al-‘aql wa-l-naql.*

(Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 111.) xiii, 444 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2020. €119. ISBN 978 90 04 41285 9 (hardback); ISBN 978 90 04 41286 6 (e-book, open access).

doi:10.1017/S0041977X22000222

Approximately in the year 1311 – shortly after the controversial Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) returned to Damascus from his seven-year exile and imprisonment in Egypt – he composed *Dar’ ta’ āruḍ al-‘aql wa-l-naql* (Averting the Incongruity between Reason and Revelation; henceforth the *Dar’*). This work was his most ambitious endeavour to create an overall reform of Arabic language and Islamic theology. The *Dar’* presented 38 reasoned arguments that Ibn Taymiyya developed to refute Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 1210) “universal law” (*al-qānūn al-kullī*). Al-Rāzī, one of the most influential proponents of rationalism in Islam, determined that whenever a contradiction exists between reason (*al-‘aql*) and the divine revelation (*al-naql*, a term which applies to both the Quran and the *ḥadīth*), the revelation should be interpreted so that its content reconciles with the dictates of reason.

Al-Rāzī’s universal law expressed the position held by rationalists throughout the ages. This law was considered the centrepiece of Ash‘arism, the theological trend which prevailed among the intellectual elite in Mamluk Damascus and Cairo. Ibn Taymiyya identified the logical flaws in the main arguments of the universal law and proposed an alternative doctrine that gave precedence to the scriptures over human reason. The *Dar’* presented Ibn Taymiyya’s attempts to resolve the conflict between reason and revelation, in light of similar attempts made by his predecessors Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), and al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). A unique blend of traditionalism and rationalism, the *Dar’* reflected Ibn Taymiyya’s remarkable mastery of all areas of the Islamic sciences as well as his astonishing command of Greek philosophy. One may assume that the *Dar’* which became Ibn Taymiyya’s tour de

force against Ash'arism, added to the growing animosity of the Ash'arīs towards Ibn Taymiyya, an animosity which finally led to his tragic death.

Western scholarship was not oblivious to the eminent place of the *Dar'* in Taymiyyan thought, especially after the illustrious Egyptian scholar Muḥammad Rashād Sālim (d. 1986) published his excellent critical edition of this work (Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' ta'ārūḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql*, Riyadh, first ed. 1979–1983, second ed. 1991). Yet, apart from occasional mentions in relevant studies (e.g. Farid Suleiman, *Ibn Taymiyya und die Attribute Gottes*, Berlin and Boston, 2019), small-scale analyses, or translations of specific passages, the *Dar'* has remained understudied. Now, with the publication of Carl Sharif El-Tobgui's *Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of Dar' ta'ārūḍ al-'aql wa-l-naql* we have an authoritative guide which makes a significant contribution to the thriving field of Taymiyyan studies.

*Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation* comprises six chapters which are divided into two parts. Part 1, "Reason vs. revelation" (chapters 1–3, pp. 23–176), provides three introductory surveys which enable lay readers to acquire the theological and historical background of the *Dar'*. Chapter 1 surveys the transformation that the concept of supremacy of human reason over the written scriptures underwent since the inception of Islamic rationalism at the end of the eighth century until the times of Ibn Taymiyya. Chapter 2 surveys Ibn Taymiyya's biography and contextualizes the *Dar'* as part of Ibn Taymiyya's intrepid attacks on his Ash'arī contemporaries. Chapter 3 analyses Ibn Taymiyya's 38 arguments against the universal rule. Here El-Tobgui excels in distilling Ibn Taymiyya's precepts from the cumbersome prose of the *Dar'*. Ibn Taymiyya's complex theories are intertwined with deliberations on the Quran and *ḥadīth*, Arabic grammar and lexicography, classical poetry, and history. El-Tobgui compartmentalizes, regroups, and reconstructs Ibn Taymiyya's arguments into a readable and coherent text.

As Part 1 primarily addresses the refutation of the universal rule, Part 2, "Ibn Taymiyya's Reform of Language, Ontology, and Epistemology" (chapters 4–6, pp. 179–299) presents Ibn Taymiyya's positive and reconstructive theories (chapters 4 and 5) which are the building blocks of his original hermeneutical system. His fundamental approach was to bypass the Ash'arī methodology of non-literal reading (*ta'wīl*) of the divine attributes (*ṣifāt Allāh*) and the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in the scriptures (chapter 6). Ibn Taymiyya claimed that because there was no incongruity between reason and revelation, there was no need to apply *ta'wīl* – a "false", "innovative" and "foreign" methodology – to the scriptures. Seeing the scriptures as self-explanatory, Ibn Taymiyya proposed that linguistic evidence for the true meaning of the anthropomorphic descriptions should be found in the scriptures themselves. El-Tobgui also includes a summary and detailed synopsis of the *Dar'* (pp. 301–22). In addition, the author's glossary of Arabic terms provides a guide to Taymiyyan terminology (pp. 323–46).

El-Tobgui's research in providing "a detailed and systematic exposition of the philosophy of Ibn Taymiyya as it emerges from the *Dar'*" (p. 13), is truly admirable. Nonetheless, El-Tobgui could have enhanced his study by consulting the following four works: first, *Al-Sawā'iq al-mursala 'alā l-jahmiyya wa l-mu'atṭila* (The Unleashed Thunderbolts against the Ash'arīs and the Negators of the Divine Attributes, the Mu'tazilīs). This cohesive and systematic rewording of the *Dar'* is the magnum opus of Ibn Taymiyya's foremost disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350). Second, Miriam Ovdia's *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and the Divine Attributes. Rationalized Traditionalistic Theology* (Leiden and Boston, 2018). Ovdia's study of *Al-Sawā'iq* emphasizes the dichotomy between *ḥaqīqa* (the true and essential meaning of a word) and *majāz* (its metaphorical or figurative meaning), a frequent discussion in the *Dar'*. Third, Binyamin Abrahamov's *Islamic Theology*.

*Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh, 1998) – this important monograph would benefit the discussion on reason and revelation in chapter 1. And fourth, Yahya Michot's *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule* (Oxford and London, 2006); Michot provides an excellent chronology of Ibn Taymiyya's life (pp. 149–69).

El-Tobgui's reading of the *Dar'* line-by-line is such an immense project that flaws inevitably occur. One such is El-Tobgui's incoherent treatment of *tafwīd*, a term that the Ash'arīs used to denote the acceptance of the anthropomorphic texts without further interpretation. On p. 103, and based on a passage in the *Dar'* which is irrelevant to *tafwīd* (vol. 4, pp. 23–4), El-Tobgui considers the Ash'arī *tafwīd* equivalent to the Mu'tazilī *nafy*, a straightforward negation of the divine attributes. Yet, *tafwīd* is the Ash'arī equivalent to the traditionalistic formula *bi-lā kayfa* (without asking how). Such minor flaws do not discredit El-Tobgui's excellent work. El-Tobgui produced an erudite and thoughtful analysis of the *Dar'*, while making it accessible to a broad readership.

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JOKHA ALHARTHI:

*The Body in Arabic Love Poetry: The 'Udhri Tradition.*

xvi, 270 pp. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021. £80.

ISBN 978 1 4744 8633 0.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X22000258

Jokha Alharthi's first academic monograph is a stimulating and thought-provoking re-reading of the 'udhrī poetic tradition, which argues that the body, far from being absented from 'udhrī poetry and anecdotes, must instead be understood as central to that tradition, as the space on which 'udhrī love is written.

The book consists of seven chapters, which follow a laudatory foreword by Sabry Hafez, Professor Emeritus of Modern Arabic Literature at SOAS. Alharthi's introduction begins with a brief analysis of contemporary attitudes towards the 'udhrī tradition, noting in particular that modern approaches to 'udhrī poetry tend to portray it as a desexualized genre that exclusively depicts chaste, disembodied love. Opposed to this consensus, Alharthi focuses her analysis of the poetic corpus, and the many varied anecdotes told about the poets who produced it, around the representation of the body, that of both the beloved and of the lover. Delineating the argument, scope and extent of her analysis, Alharthi's introduction briefly sketches the rise, development and sources of the 'udhrī tradition before placing her work's significance within the academic landscape.

In the second chapter, she further historicizes the 'udhrī tradition by describing the rise of the 'udhrī ghazal out of the pre-Islamic *qaṣīdah*, before approaching the question of how the faithful emotional relationships and stark, desert landscapes depicted in 'udhrī poetry compare with the more sensual style of urban contemporaries like 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah. Following the initial emergence of 'udhrī poetry in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, Alharthi notes that it resurfaces as a genre in ninth-century 'Abbāsīd Baghdad, the period in which she notes 'udhrī love became "the exalted ideal of courtly society" (p. 38). In her third chapter, she expands her analysis of the 'udhrī tradition by discussing the key term "'iffah", a