

## **The Value of Classical Islamic Thought for Muslims Today**

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### **Abstract**

This article challenges the assertion, found in the writings Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani and other Muslim reformers, that Islamic thought declined precipitously in the early centuries of Islam and is of little value to contemporary Muslims. It introduces readers to the sophisticated thought of four diverse Muslim thinkers from the 5th/11th century who each wrote about topics that remain important to Muslims today, such as the nature of the soul, ethics, the purpose of knowledge, and spirituality. These thinkers are the philosopher-historian Miskawayh, the Sunni Mu'tazili al-Ḥākīm al-Jishumī, the Zahiri Ibn Ḥazm, and the Hadith scholar al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. In addition to drawing specific lessons from these classical thinkers' writings, the article encourages contemporary Muslims to emulate their practice of reading widely, including works of Muslim phi-

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Lucas, Scott. 2020. "The Value of Classical Islamic Thought for Muslims Today." *American Journal of Islam and Society* 37, nos. 3-4: 149-173 • doi: 10.35632/ajis.v37i3-4.1470  
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losophy and theology, and to appreciate the significant connection they made between the acquisition of knowledge and its application to daily life.

In a spirited essay, Sherman Jackson claimed that liberal/progressive Muslims tend to describe the classical Islamic tradition as “problematic,” while members of modernist Islamic movements consider it largely “irrelevant.”<sup>1</sup> For liberals and progressives, the sole hope for thoughtful Muslims is a new outburst of creative *ijtihād*, or critical thinking, based directly on the unmediated reflection upon the Qurʾān and Sunna. Both liberal and modernist sentiments regarding the classical Islamic tradition, identified by Jackson, are visible in a collection of the late Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani’s essays, titled *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (2005). Dr. al-Alwani claimed that the deep crisis in Islam began after the death of al-Ṭabarī (310/923) and intensified over the subsequent millennium of Islamic history.<sup>2</sup> Its primary cause was the triumph of *taqlīd*, which allegedly “cleared the way for fatalism, which prepared the ground for tyranny, injustice, and despotism.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, according to Dr. al-Alwani, “The Ummah’s intellectual decrepitude reaches its lowest ebb under the Abbasid rulers in the fifth Islamic century.”<sup>4</sup> Perhaps more significantly, given Islam’s global mission, he writes that “unless the call to *ijihad* becomes a widespread intellectual trend, there is little hope that the Ummah will make any useful contribution to world civilization or correct its direction, build its own culture or reform its society.”<sup>5</sup>

The goal of this article is to challenge the frequently asserted premise that Islamic Civilization lost its intellectual vitality around the turn of the fourth/tenth century and argue that this false premise leads Muslims to reject a valuable part of their heritage. In fact, many Western historians of Islam would count the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries among the best years of Islamic thought.<sup>6</sup> This was the age during which the fruits of the vast translation movement of Greek culture into Arabic ripened, yielding such exceptional minds as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Miskawayh, and al-Bīrūnī. In the realm of theology, this was the age of al-Bāqillānī, al-Juwaynī, al-Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, and al-Ghazālī. In law, master jurists such as al-Māwardī, al-Sarakhsī, and Ibn Ḥazm produced extraordinarily comprehensive books. Even in the hadith disciplines, scholars such as Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī made substantial contributions to Islamic thought.

The classification of the fifth/eleventh century as an age of intellectual darkness is harmful for intellectually curious Muslims. It erases some of

the most creative Muslim minds in history. It delegitimizes the traditions of *kalām*-theology, philosophy, and even *fiqh*, traditions which have always been at the forefront of Islamic thought and inquiry. It also silences Muslim scholars whose writings could be highly attractive to non-Muslims and improve their impression of Islam. Therefore, this article will show how the writings of four great thinkers of the fifth/eleventh century—Miskawayh, al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī, Ibn Ḥazm, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī—can help contemporary Muslims negotiate some of the intellectual and spiritual challenges we face today.

I selected these four very different scholars for several reasons. First, they wrote impressive books on a variety of topics, most of which never have been translated from their original Arabic. Secondly, they are all independent thinkers, who freely expressed their personal opinions, while drawing on the teachings of their predecessors. In their individual ways, each of them encourages their readers to think more deeply, and to unlock the potential of their minds. They also write about ethics and, in the cases of Miskawayh, Jishumī, and Ibn Ḥazm, big theological and metaphysical topics of universal significance. Both Miskawayh and, to a lesser degree, Ibn Ḥazm demonstrate how the pre-Islamic Hellenistic tradition directly enriched Islamic thought, and the former illuminates how the teachings of Aristotle and Plato found in Muslim writings are very different from their presentation in modern Western universities. Finally, all of these scholars engage the Qurʾān and prophetic hadith in diverse ways and share a remarkable indifference to the discipline of hadith criticism, which has become so central to contemporary Islamic discourse.

## 1. Miskawayh

The first of our luminaries is Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, whose long life lasted from 320/932 to 421/1030.<sup>7</sup> A Persian secretary, physician and librarian for various Buyid princes, Miskawayh achieved fame for his history, *Tajārib al-umam* (Lessons of the Nations), and his significant work on ethics, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (The Refinement of Character). I wish to focus on this latter work, which received an excellent translation by the American-trained, Palestinian scholar, Constantine Zurayk, in 1968. Divided into six chapters, *The Refinement of Character* covers the topics of the soul and its faculties, character and its refinement, the good, justice, love and friendship, and the health of the soul. Are there any more significant topics to human wellbeing in the temporal world than these?

What makes Miskawayh so pleasurable, in addition to his clear style of writing, is his confident harmonization of Islam with the Graeco-Hellenistic tradition that was translated into Arabic during the early 'Abbāsid period. In the words of Majid Fakhry,

Miskawayh constructs upon a Platonic psychological base an ethical theory in which: (a) the concept of virtue is expressed in Aristotelian and, to a lesser extent, Stoic terms; (b) the theory of happiness, conditioned by (c) the vocation of the soul and its fate after death, though allegedly Aristotelian, is primarily Neo-Platonic.<sup>8</sup>

In other words, Miskawayh ties Aristotle's division of the soul into rational, spirited, and appetitive faculties to Plato's four cardinal virtues of temperance, courage, justice, and wisdom.<sup>9</sup> Then, in an original manner, Miskawayh elaborates a host of subordinate virtues for each of the four cardinal ones. Wisdom (*ḥikma*) is divided into intelligence (*dhakā'*), retention (*dhukr*), rationality (*ta'āqqul*), quickness and soundness of understanding (*jūdat al-dhihn*), clarity of mind (*ṣafā' al-dhihn*), and capacity for learning (*suhūlat al-ta'allum*). For temperance (*'iffa*), the subordinate virtues are modesty (*ḥayā'*), sedateness (*da'a*), self-control (*ṣabr*), liberality (*sakhā'*), integrity (*ḥurriyya*), sobriety (*qanā'a*), benignity (*damātha*), self-discipline (*intizām*), good-disposition (*ḥusn al-hadiyy*), mildness (*musālima*), staidness (*waqār*), and piety (*wara'*). Courage (*shajā'a*) consists of greatness of spirit (*kibar al-nafs*), intrepidity (*najda*), composure (*'azm al-himma*), fortitude (*thabāt*), magnanimity (*ḥilm*), calmness (*sukūn*), manliness (*shihāma*), and endurance (*iḥtimāl al-kadd*). As for justice, the subordinate virtues are friendship (*ṣadāqa*), concord (*ulfa*), family fellowship (*ṣilat al-raḥim*), recompense (*mukāfa'a*), fair play (*ḥusn al-sharika*), honest dealing (*ḥusn al-qaḍā'*), amiability (*tawaddud*), and piety (*'ibāda*).<sup>10</sup>

This catalogue of virtues is further elucidated through the adoption of Aristotle's famous concept of the "golden mean," namely that each virtue is the mean between two extreme vices. For example, courage is the mean between cowardice and recklessness, while temperance is the mean between profligacy and frigidity.<sup>11</sup> Remarkably, all this information is found in the first chapter of *The Refinement*. Many additional surprises and lessons are found in the subsequent chapters, only a few of which can be touched upon here.

The first major surprise in *The Refinement of Character* is the presentation of Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, as pious monotheists. The historical process by which this happened is long and not entirely preserved,

but it is important to recognize that the “monotheist Aristotle” is far easier and more attractive for Muslims to appreciate than the contemporary polytheist (and largely secular) Aristotle taught in Western universities. In the words of Richard Walzer, this religious Aristotle allowed Miskawayh to argue that “the agreement between the Divine Law and philosophy is absolute, the precepts given by the Prophet and by philosophy are identical, the Divine Law can, without any reservation, be understood as providing the essential preparation for a philosophical life.”<sup>12</sup> The following quote, which Miskawayh puts in the mouth of Aristotle, epitomizes this unfamiliar, monotheistic Aristotle:

Whoever loves God is cared for by Him, as friends care for one and another, and he becomes the object of His beneficence.... God is the Wise, the Happy, and the Perfect in wisdom and happiness, and He is loved only by the truly happy and wise man, for a being finds pleasure only in his like....[Man] should rather aim with all his capacities to live a divine life. For though man is small in body, he is great by his wisdom and noble by his intellect.<sup>13</sup>

The second surprise is that Miskawayh’s philosophy culminates in mysticism. This, too, is a result of historical developments over the centuries prior to Islam, especially Neo-Platonism, but it remains striking how, in Miskawayh’s account, the master philosophers are essentially the same as Sufi masters in classical Islam. Of course, this confluence is not accidental, as we know al-Ghazālī and other intellectual Sufis read Miskawayh carefully, but given the modern custom of separating philosophy from mysticism, it is refreshing to see them reunited in *The Refinement*. Thus, while the first rank of humans is someone who “follows right conduct which keeps to the mean in virtue and does not transgress the judgment of reason,” the highest rank is the person who “loses all his will in regard to the outside world and all the accidents that affect his soul, and until his thoughts arising from these accidents die away and he is filled with a divine flame and a divine aspiration.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, according to Walzer, Miskawayh may have coined the expression “spiritual father” (*wālid rūḥānī*), which today is commonly used in diverse religious traditions.<sup>15</sup>

A final surprise in Miskawayh’s *Refinement* is a rational argument in defense of prayer and the author’s discussion of the higher objectives of the laws of prayer in Islam. His argument for prayer is straightforward: “it is disgracefully absurd and abominably unjust not to observe any obligation towards [God] not to offer Him, in return for these benefits and favors,

what would remove from us the mark of injustice and of failure to fulfill the stipulation of justice.”<sup>16</sup> In a passage that has attracted the attention (and admiration) of several Western scholars,<sup>17</sup> Miskawayh then describes the higher purpose of communal prayer, Friday prayer, the Festival prayer, and even the Ḥajj:

Possibly the Law made it an obligation on people to meet five times a day in their mosques and preferred communal prayer to individual prayer in order that they may experience this inborn fellowship which is the origin of all love and which exists in them in potency.<sup>18</sup>

Do we not see here a variety of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*, the higher objectives of Islamic law? And is it not remarkable that the *maqāṣid* here are related not to the *ḥadd* penalties, as they are in Ghazālī’s writings, but to that foundational practice of Islamic devotion, prayer?

But what about scripture? It is true that *The Refinement of Character* makes minimal references to the Qurʾān or the Prophet Muḥammad. Therefore, it is necessary that we turn briefly to Miskawayh’s anthology of wisdom, *Jāwīdān khirad*, which was published under the title *al-Ḥikma al-khālida* (The Perennial Wisdom). This Arabic work arranges a large number of wisdom sayings by ethnicity: Persians, Arabs, Indians, Greeks, and then, abandoning the ethnic categories, ‘Abbāsīd-era Muslims, such as Ibn al-Muqaffa’, al-Fārābī, and al-ʿĀmirī. Within the section devoted to wise Arab men, Miskawayh relates 72 prophetic hadiths, without *isnāds*, as is common in *adab* anthologies. Most of these are short statements, but one of the longer ones is well-known today (with an important twist):

The Prophet said to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās: “O nephew, shall I not teach you some words, such that God may benefit you by means of them?” Ibn ‘Abbās said: I said, “Yes, O Messenger of God.”<sup>19</sup> He said: “Be mindful (*iḥfaz*) of God, and God will protect you. Get to know God in prosperity, and He will know you in adversity. If you ask, ask of God. If you seek help, seek help from God. If you can act sincerely toward God with certainty, then act [accordingly]. If you are unable to do this, know that there is much good for those who are patient with what they detest. Know that victory comes with patience; relief comes after calamity, and that verily with hardship there comes ease.”<sup>20</sup>

This hadith is found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Tirmidhī’s *Jāmiʿ*, and became widely known through al-Nawawī’s *Forty Hadith*.<sup>21</sup> In these traditionalist Sunni sources, this hadith has a strong, unmistakably

predeterminist message, as can be seen from al-Tirmidhī's version, which includes the statement:

Know that if the Community were to gather together to benefit you with anything, it would benefit you only with something that God had already prescribed for you, and that if they gather together to harm you with anything, they would harm you with something God had already prescribed for you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried (*rufi'at al-aqlām wa-jaffat al-ṣuḥuf*).<sup>22</sup>

By contrast, Miskawayh highlights human free will in his account of this hadith, and even employs the verb *istaṭā'a*, the nominal form of which is used as a technical term for the human capacity to act in Islamic theological discourse. Even though scripture is peripheral to Miskawayh's overall intellectual project, it is fully harmonious with his understanding of the philosophers, whose guidance and insights into the nature of our souls he finds so valuable for the attainment of happiness here on earth.

## 2. Al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī

With our second luminary from the fifth/eleventh century, we shift from philosophy to Mu'tazili theology. Abū Sa'd al-Muḥassin b. Muḥammad b. Karāma (413-494/1022-1101), or al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī for short, is barely known to Muslims or Western scholars of Islam. A Sunnī Mu'tazilī from the culturally rich region of Bayhaq and Nishapur, al-Ḥākim may have converted to Zaydism late in life, settled in Mecca, and was killed after writing a controversial book. He was the author of many works, including a large Qur'an commentary, *al-Tahdhīb fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, which was published only recently.<sup>23</sup> Fortunately, manuscripts of several of his most important books have been preserved and some of them, such as the sixty sessions during which he discussed hadiths, are available online.<sup>24</sup>

I wish to highlight two of al-Jishumī's major works here: *al-Safīna al-jāmi'a li-anwā' al-'ulūm* and his Qur'an commentary, *al-Tahdhīb*. The *Safīna* is a massive encyclopedia of Islamic teachings, ranging across the fields of theology, the qualities of the Prophet, stories of the Prophets, merits of the Companions, merits of the Family of the Prophet, ethics, renunciation, and topics concerning death.<sup>25</sup> The *Tahdhīb* is a voluminous *tafsīr* work, organized according to the following eight categories of exegesis: Readings, lexicography, grammatical syntax, structure, meaning, occasion of revelation, evidence and rulings, and narratives.<sup>26</sup> Both works testify to al-Jishumī's success in harmonizing the critical rationalist spirit of the Mu'tazila with

an appreciation for the vast heritage of hadiths, reports of early Muslim religious authorities, and didactic poetry.

The Mu'tazila are famous for their championing of rational inquiry and human freewill, and al-Jishumī does not disappoint on either account. The first chapter of *al-Safīna* is a synopsis of Mu'tazili theology, arranged according to the four categories found in al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Mukhtaṣar*: divine oneness, divine justice (free will), prophethood, and divine laws. Despite the familiar arguments and positions, one cannot but be struck by the quantity of prophet hadiths al-Jishumī relates, including the famous *ḥadīth qudsī*, narrated by Abū Dharr, in which God says, "O My servants! I have forbidden oppression for Myself and made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress."<sup>27</sup> Jishumī uses this widely-known hadith as a proof text that humans have free will, because, if God forbade oppression (*ẓulm*) for Himself, and, given that there is injustice in this world, it must come from us.<sup>28</sup> This is probably not the interpretation al-Nawawī was seeking to promote when he included this hadith in his collection of *Forty Hadith!*

Possibly the largest surprise in the chapter on theology in *al-Safīna* is al-Jishumī's discussion of *taqlīd*.<sup>29</sup> He defines *taqlīd* as "the acceptance of someone else's opinion without proof or an indicator," and states that there is consensus among the Companions and jurists that *taqlīd* is permissible in legal matters. The dispute, however, concerns *taqlīd* regarding theological matters. The Basran Mu'tazilites, Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī and his son Abū Hāshim, argue that *taqlīd* is strictly forbidden in this case, and that it is incumbent upon every Muslim to know the proofs behind each theological topic. By contrast, the Baghdādī Mu'tazili, Abū'l-Qāsim al-Balkhī, and the Zaydī Imām, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, argue that *taqlīd* is permissible if the person accepts and adopts true opinions. Jishumī remarks, dispassionately, that there are many Qur'ānic verses and narrations that support each position, and then proceeds to relate a dozen or so of them. What is more interesting is the summary of the arguments in defense of *taqlīd* that follows his selection of reports. Altogether, al-Jishumī narrates six arguments in favor of *taqlīd*, with the important caveat that the *muqallid* must adopt true theological opinions:<sup>30</sup>

1. The verse "Therefore, give good tidings to my servants/ who hear advice and follow the best thereof" (Q. 39:17-18) does not stipulate the act of seeking out the evidence (*istidlāl*). Likewise, the verse "Lo! Those who say: Our Lord is God, and afterward are upright, the angels descend upon them" (Q. 41:30) and the hadith "My Companions are like stars; you will

be guided by any of them whom you emulate,” do not require seeking out the evidence. Given that the objective of rational investigation (*nazar*) and seeking out the evidence is to acquire true belief, if this objective is obtained, then it is permissible without any causal link (*sabab*) to reasoning. Also, given that knowledge (*ilm*) is the belief in something as it really is (*i'tiqād al-shay' alā mā huwa bihi*), if one is correct, then it is the same regardless of whether this [knowledge] was preceded by rational investigation.

2. We know that during the time of the Prophet, peace and blessings upon him, and his Companions, there were *muqallidūn*, such as the Bedouins, who would spread Islam among their people without stipulating that they seek out the evidence or reason.

3. That which is obligatory can either be knowledge, by itself, with reasoning as a means (*sabab*), or as an obligation itself. There is no disagreement that having the correct belief is the primary objective.

4. Abū'l-Qāsim [al-Balkhī] said: What do you say about someone whose belief is true with an indicator, then he investigates and realizes that the indicator is incorrect, and that the indicator is something else—what is his status, given that he has correct belief? Everything that has been said here applies [only] to the *muqallid* of the truth (fol. 18v).

5. Given that the *muqallid* of falsehood perishes, without a doubt, if the *muqallid* of truth also perishes, then his beliefs would be irrelevant, and this is incorrect.<sup>31</sup>

6. Finally, in the [famous] hadith, “Islam is built upon five [pillars],”<sup>32</sup> the act of seeking out the evidence is not stipulated among the pillars.

What is al-Jishumī’s conclusion? In short, knowledge of the proofs for theological matters is a collective obligation, rather than an individual one, which means that so long as one Muslim has sought out the evidence for the true theological positions, the obligation is fulfilled. This is the argument that gets the last word in this section, but al-Jishumī does not explicitly endorse it. Altogether, it is surprising to observe some rationalist Mu‘tazilites embrace *taqlid*; their arguments may reflect their frustration that most theologians forbid *taqlid* yet, from the Mu‘tazili perspective, consistently come up with the incorrect theological positions. In other words, isn’t it

better to accept the truth from someone who has interpreted scripture correctly than to reflect upon the scripture by oneself and come up with mostly incorrect answers?

Like Miskawayh, al-Jishumī demonstrates the compatibility between rationalist Islam and spirituality in *al-Safīna*. While the Mu‘tazila frequently are portrayed as the “defenders of reason,” al-Jishumī displays his spiritual side in the second chapter of *al-Safīna*, titled *Ilāhiyyāt*.<sup>33</sup> This section reads like a Sufi manual, with sections devoted to the invocation (or remembrance) of God, gratitude toward God, and the vastness of God’s mercy. It concludes with the following twelve brief sections:<sup>34</sup>

1. The love of God and His Messenger
2. Intimacy with God and desire for Him;
3. Reliance upon God;
4. Total devotion to God and seeking His help;
5. Modesty toward God;
6. God’s Scrutiny and total awareness;
7. Positive Thinking about God;
8. Ease and Waiting for Relief from God;
9. Weeping;
10. On being Deceived about God;
11. Fear of God;
12. Sorrow and the Sorrowful Heart.

Each section begins with a Qur’ānic verse, prophetic hadiths, generally narrated by a Companion without *isnāds*, and also quotes from pious men, like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Fuḍayl b. ‘Iyāḍ. For example, we find many hadiths from Abū Hurayra, such as, “Mercy is for the merciful, forgiveness is for those who forgive, and repentance is for those who repent. The people who are most severely chastised in this world are those who are most severely chastised in the Hereafter.”<sup>35</sup> Jesus is quoted in another section saying, “The love of the Garden and fear of Gehenna bequeath patience in adversity and drive the servant away from ease in the temporal world.”<sup>36</sup> Even the renunciant Dāwūd al-Ṭā’ī<sup>37</sup> makes an appearance, teaching that:

Whoever fears the Threat, what is remote is brought near to him. Whoever extends his hope, his deeds become weak. Everything that will come is near. Everything that distracts you from your Lord is marked against you. Know that all worldly people are people of the graves; they will only regret what follows and be joyful for what they did earlier. (fol. 70r)

He further includes a prophetic hadith, “The peak of wisdom is fear of Your Lord.”<sup>38</sup> In short, there is no tension between rigorous Mu‘tazili rationalism and classical Islamic spirituality (at least of a sober variety), according to al-Jishumī.

His talents as a rationalist exegete are on full display in his Qur‘ān commentary, *al-Tahdhīb*, in his analysis of the ambiguous expression *ūlī‘l-amr* in the famous verse, “O you who believe! Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority (*ūlī‘l-amr*); and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger if you are (in truth) believers in God and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end” (Q. 4:59).<sup>39</sup> Under the section devoted to “meaning,” al-Jishumī narrates the following nine opinions regarding the meaning of *ūlī‘l-amr*:

1. They are military commanders, according to Abū Hurayra, Ibn ‘Abbās (a), Maymūn b. Mihrān, al-Suddī, Abū ‘Alī [al-Jubbā‘ī];
2. They are commanders of the raids during the lifetime of the Messenger, according to Abū Muslim;<sup>40</sup>
3. They are scholars, according to Jābir [b. ‘Abd Allāh], Ibn ‘Abbās (b), Mujāhid, al-Ḥasan, ‘Aṭā, Abū‘l-‘Āliya, and al-Ḍaḥḥāk. It is what al-Qāḍī [‘Abd al-Jabbār] selected, because it is not necessary to follow the commanders until after it is known that they are following God and His Messenger, while the scholars (*‘ulamā*), whenever they agree on something, it becomes a proof. Also, this is correct because God says right after this “and if you have a dispute,” and that does not apply to the scholars; and, finally, because it is obligatory for the commanders to follow the scholars;
4. They are the four Rightly-guided Caliphs (no authorities cited);
5. They are the Caliphs Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān, according to ‘Ikrima, whose evidence is the [Prophet’s] statement: “Follow those who come after me: Abū Bakr and ‘Umar;”
6. They are the Emigrants, Helpers, and those who follow them in goodness/virtue, according to ‘Aṭā;
7. They are the Companions, according to Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh;
8. They are the Commanders and rulers (*salāṭīn*): when they fulfill their obligations to their subjects, then their subjects are commanded to obey them, according to Ibn Zayd; and
9. They are all who possess sound judgment and knowledge, who administer the people’s affairs, according to al-Aṣamm.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, all nine of these opinions are found in al-Tha‘labī’s (d. 427/1035) seminal Qur‘ān commentary, *al-Kashf wa al-bayān*, although

in a very different order, and without the Mu'tazilī opinions of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī, Abū Muslim, and al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>42</sup> And, it is not until the following section, devoted to "rulings," that al-Jishumī informs his readers that his preference is for *ūlī'l-amr* to mean "scholars."

The section devoted to rulings indicated by Q. 4:59 displays al-Jishumī at the height of his exegetical powers. In a remarkable *tour de force*, he argues that all four sources of Islamic law are supported by the Qur'anic clause, "and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to God and the Messenger." This passage is worth quoting in full:

[This clause] indicates [the validity of] all of the legal indicators, because there are four: The Book of God; the Sunna of the Messenger of God; the consensus of the Community; and rational investigation and analogy. It indicates consensus by saying "if you have a dispute;" for, were consensus not a proof, it would have been obligatory to refer [back to God and His Messenger] in the absence of a dispute, just as it is obligatory to refer to it in the presence of [a dispute]. Otherwise, there is no point in making the dispute a condition [for the referral].

Then we were commanded to refer back to the Book of God, which indicates that it is a proof, because it is truthful, wise speech. Then He commanded [us] to refer back to the Messenger, the intention of which is his sound *sunna*. If it were not a proof, it would not be obligatory [for us] to refer to it. Then he commanded us to refer back—and if there is an explicit text, we take it. When He commanded us to refer back, it is obvious that the intended meaning is legal reasoning (*istinbāṭ*), and to refer the branch back to the root; and this is equivalent to what has been narrated about when [the Prophet] sent Mu'adh to Yemen and said "With what will you judge?" He replied, "With the Book of God." "And if you do not find [the answer there]?" He said, "The *sunna* of the Messenger of God." He said, "And if you do not find [the answer there]?" He replied, "I will strive with my opinion (*ajtahid ra'i*)."<sup>43</sup> He replied, "All praise belongs to God who aided the Messenger of God." This indicates the invalidity of those who deny *qiyās* and *ijtihād*, and it indicates the invalidity of the school of the Rāfiḍa (Imāmī Shī'ites), regarding consensus and *qiyās*, and it shows the invalidity of their school concerning the obligation to take one's religion from the Imām, because God (Exalted is He) [only] obligates referral back to the Book and the Sunna, and does not make any mention of the Imām.<sup>43</sup>

In short, al-Jishumī provides his readers with rich Qurʾanic exegesis, sophisticated rational arguments, and a profound spirituality in his massive corpus of writings, the vast majority of which today remains confined to old manuscripts located in Yemen and Europe. He provides valuable insight into the complex articulation of the Sunni Muʿtazili tradition that had developed in fascinating ways by the fifth/eleventh century of Islamic civilization, a tradition which balanced rigorous commitments to rational inquiry, scripture, ethics, and spirituality.

### 3. Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ḥazm

The third luminary in our short survey of fifth/eleventh century Islamic thought is the iconoclastic scholar from al-Andalus, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. Saʿīd, known as Ibn Ḥazm (384-456/994-1064). A famous scholar of wide-ranging interests, Ibn Ḥazm wrote on everything ranging from love, genealogy, ethics, law, legal theory, theology, Biblical criticism, and even logic. Even though only his treatises on love, ethics, and categories of the sciences have been translated into English, most scholarly attention has been directed towards Ibn Ḥazm's unique Zāhiri hermeneutics. Ibn Ḥazm's rejection of analogy, weak hadiths, consensus of Muslim generations after the Companions, and *taqlīd*, opens up space for creative and interesting legal positions. He is one of the only scholars of which I am aware to have constructed a complete articulation of Islamic law from scratch, solely on the basis of the Qurʾān and sound hadiths, which is preserved in his book *al-Muḥallā bi-l-āthār*. Perhaps the best-known case of his independent legal reasoning is his approval of music (or at least singing), which was quoted at length by the twentieth-century scholar, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, and many others.<sup>44</sup> Camilla Adang has shown that Ibn Ḥazm's rigorous methodology (rather than sympathy for the accused) led him to reject the most severe punishments found in the mainstream law schools against same-sex intercourse.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, on the topic of criminal penalties, one of Ibn Ḥazm's most surprising rulings is that the maximum discretionary punishment is only ten lashes per crime. How did he get that number? Apparently, the mainstream law schools never heeded a sound hadith found in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* that says, "Do not flog anyone more than ten lashes, save in the case of a *ḥadd* penalty."<sup>46</sup>

Ibn Ḥazm's Zāhirism and theological polemics make for engaging reading, so long as one can look beyond his caustic pen. No topic is off limits, whether it is the Bible, God's attributes (or lack thereof, in his view),

or the nature of the soul. The first dimension I wish to focus on here is Ibn Ḥazm's advocacy for the intrinsic value of some of the non-religious disciplines. The most helpful work here is A. G. Chejne's 1982 book, *Ibn Ḥazm*, which was published by a small Chicago-based publisher. Chejne not only re-edited and translated Ibn Ḥazm's short treatise on the sciences, *Marātib al-'ulūm*, but also wrote an extended analysis of Ibn Ḥazm's appreciation for pre-Islamic disciplines, such as logic, and his muted enthusiasm for Arabic ones, such as poetry and advanced grammar. He summarizes Ibn Ḥazm's short treatise, *al-Tawqīf 'alā shāri' al-najāh*, by quoting his observation that philosophy and rules of logic are "a lofty and good science because it contains the cognition (*ma'rifa*) of the whole world and what it contains regarding genera (*ajnās*), species (*anwā*), particulars (*ashkhāṣ*), substances (*jawāhir*), and accidents (*a'rāḍ*), and because it leads to the establishment of proof (*burhān*) without which nothing can be regarded as true."<sup>47</sup> Mathematics, geometry, medicine, and astronomy are also praised, and declared to be "very useful in this world." However, Ibn Ḥazm, in contrast to Miskawayh,<sup>48</sup> stresses that the prophetic sciences are superior to the sciences of the Ancients for three reasons:

1. They lead to "the improvement of spiritual character and the upholding of justice, generosity, continence, truthfulness, courage, patience, clemency, mercy, and avoidance of all things."
2. They repel injustices, protect personal property, and provide security from invasions.
3. They inform us that the world is created, has a beginning and an end, and that time and space are finite.<sup>49</sup>

Near the end of his life, according to Chejne, Ibn Ḥazm revisited the various fields of learning and composed his treatise, *The Categories of the Sciences*. He identified seven sciences, three of which—religion, language, and history—are particular to each nation or religious community, and four of which are universal. The following table reproduces Chejne's summary of these seven sciences:

- I. Religious Law (*sharī'a*)
  - a. Readings & meanings
  - b. Hadiths
  - c. Jurisprudence (*fiqh*)

- d. Theology (*kalām*)
- II. Language
  - a. Grammar (*naḥw*)
  - b. Lexicography (*luḡha*)
- III. History
  - a. Dynastic
  - b. Annalistic
  - c. Countries
  - d. Classes/Generations (*ṭabaqāt*)
  - e. Genealogy (*nasab*)
- IV. Astronomy
  - a. Astronomy proper
  - b. Astrology
- V. Numbers
- VI. Logic
  - a. Rational
  - b. Sensory
- VII. Medicine
  - a. Spiritual
  - b. Corporal
    - i. Nature of corporal things
    - ii. Composition of the organs
    - iii. Knowledge of diseases
    - iv. Surgery
    - v. Preventive medicine

What may be most striking about this analysis is the significance Ibn Ḥazm awards the sub-disciplines of history. While Muslims have a rich historiographical tradition, it is unusual to see history alongside the religious sciences and those pertaining to the Arabic language. It is also reassuring for aspiring Muslim doctors or scientists that their fields are just as legitimate as core Islamic sciences, even though Ibn Ḥazm states clearly that the religious sciences are superior to them. It is less reassuring for those Muslims who find Miskawayh and his monotheist Greek philosophers inspiring, as Ibn Ḥazm allows no space for non-Islamic metaphysics, and there is little evidence of his approval of a mystical relationship between believers and God that we find in Miskawayh's *The Refinement of Character*.

While Ibn Ḥazm's analysis of the sciences illustrates the value of many non-religious sciences, his explanation of the nature of the soul and its journey demonstrate his fiercely independent mind. Recent research has

proven Ibn Ḥazm's influence on the author of the most celebrated book on the nature of the soul in Sunnism, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, who wrote *Kitāb al-rūḥ*.<sup>50</sup> In his *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, Ibn Ḥazm identifies five theories concerning the nature of the soul:

1. The soul does not exist, according to al-Aṣamm;
2. The soul is an accident, according to Galen and Abū'l-Hudhayl;
3. The spirit (*rūḥ*) is merely the accident of life, but not the soul, according to al-Bāqillānī and the Ash'arites who follow him.<sup>51</sup>
4. The soul is a substance that is neither a body nor an accident (*jawhar laysat jisman wa-lā 'araḍan*); it lacks length, width, or depth; it is not in a specific space; it is indivisible; it is an agent and manager; it is the person, according to some of the Ancients and Mu'ammār b. [Abbād] al-'Aṭṭār,<sup>52</sup> one of the Mu'tazila.
5. The soul is a body, with length, width, and depth; it exists in space, and is rational and discerning (*mumayyiza*); it controls the body, according to all of the other people of Islam and adherents to religions that believe in the Hereafter.<sup>53</sup>

In the pages of *al-Fiṣal* that follow, Ibn Ḥazm meticulously (and passionately) destroys each of these theories, save the last one, which he embraces and defends. He heaps abuse upon the Ash'arite al-Bāqillānī, accusing him of advocating the heretical position of the transmigration of souls, which would put him outside the fold of Islam.<sup>54</sup> He devotes special attention to the theory, adopted by most Muslim philosophers, that the soul is an incorporeal substance.<sup>55</sup> Ibn Ḥazm stresses that a three-dimensional body can be imperceptible, and describes the soul as the most delicate (*khafī-fā*) body imaginable, which needs no nourishment, and experiences no growth, which actually brings him close to the philosopher's description of the incorporeal soul.<sup>56</sup> Like Miskawayh, he defines the death of the soul exclusively as its separation from the body, not that it becomes nonexistent.<sup>57</sup> He seeks to undermine the argument that, if the soul were a body, it would need another soul to govern it, leading to an infinite regress, with the argument that this is a false premise:

the agent (*fā'il*) for the soul, and all of the other bodies in the world, and that which grasps them and preserves all of them, and which grants

those, which are incapable of acting, the capacity to act, is the One who brought into being (*al-mubtadi'*) the soul and all of the bodies and accidents in the universe, and the One who perfects all of that: God, the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner (Mighty and majestic is He).<sup>58</sup>

Ibn Ḥazm's arguments for the corporeal nature of the soul are reproduced and adopted by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and need not detain us here.<sup>59</sup> Of greater interest is Ibn Ḥazm's possibly unique position that every single soul was created simultaneously, long before the bodies to which they become attached.<sup>60</sup> His evidence for this is the famous "Verse of the Covenant," (Q. 7:172) and an earlier verse in the same Sūra, which reads: "And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall prostrate before Adam!"<sup>61</sup> In other words, God created all of our souls a very long time ago, our souls testified that God is our Lord (Q. 7:172), then they remained alive in a realm called the Barzakh<sup>62</sup> until God breathed them into the bodies He created for them. Death, as mentioned above, is merely the soul's separation from the body and return to the Barzakh until Resurrection Day, when God reattaches it to its body, which then enters either the Garden or Hellfire. This theory answers the big questions of where souls go after death, how all humanity answered God's question "Am I not your Lord?" (Q. 7:172), and how the Prophet Muḥammad met earlier prophets or saw that the souls of saved people were on the right of Adam, while the souls of the damned were on the left. The fact that Ibn Ḥazm does this in a few pages is impressive, even though his position enraged later Sunni scholars, such as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī

The fourth and final luminary from the fifth/eleventh century whom I wish to introduce briefly is Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī, known as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392-463/1002-1071). Most famous for his massive biographical dictionary, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām* (or *Tārīkh Baghdād*), al-Khaṭīb composed treatises in most subfields of the hadith sciences. His major work on ethics and etiquette, *al-Jāmi' li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmi'*, is devoted solely to the proper conduct between the hadith teacher and the student of hadith. Unlike the previous three scholars, al-Khaṭīb's works deal mostly with highly specialized topics of interest only to the most dedicated hadith scholar. Why, then, is he here with the philosopher Miskawayh, the Mu'tazili theologian al-Jishumī, and the iconoclastic Zāhirī Ibn Ḥazm?

One of al-Khaṭīb's short works sheds light on the relationship between hadith and Islamic thought. Many revivalists, including Dr. Taha Jabir al-Alwani, have been adamant that new Islamic thought must be based squarely on the scriptural wellsprings of Islam, namely the Qur'ān and sound hadith.<sup>64</sup> As laudable a project as this may be, al-Khaṭīb's treatise, *Iqtidā' al-'ilm al-'amal* (Knowledge Necessitates Action), shows how this may be impossible, especially when it is juxtaposed with the previously-discussed texts in this paper.

As indicated by its title, *Knowledge Necessitates Action* has a sharp, focused message. The purpose of acquiring religious knowledge is not to think or reflect on God or the cosmos, but rather to improve one's actions. There is no theoretical knowledge in al-Khaṭīb's worldview, merely practical knowledge. His treatise is divided into a series of eleven mostly short chapters on topics ranging from "Censure of those who seek knowledge for fame," to "Displeasure of those who seek hadiths to boast," to even censure of those who only study grammar. In his short introduction, al-Khaṭīb quotes an unnamed sage, who said:

Knowledge is the servant of action. Action is the objective of knowledge. Were it not for action, knowledge would not be sought, and were it not for knowledge, action would not be sought. It is preferable to me to depart from the truth out of ignorance, than for me to depart from it by abstaining from it.<sup>65</sup>

This message is amplified by multiple religious authorities. The Companion Abū l-Dardā' said, "Verily, you will not be knowledgeable (or a scholar) until you become a learner; and you will not become a learner until you act upon what you have learned."<sup>66</sup> The Sufi Sahl al-Tustarī succinctly says, "Knowledge—all of it—is fleeting (*dunyā*); the Hereafter is only that of it which is acted upon."<sup>67</sup> He also adds that "All people are intoxicated, save the scholars; and all scholars are bewildered except the one who acts upon his knowledge."<sup>68</sup> The Sufi al-Khawwāṣ<sup>69</sup> was even blunter than Sahl, as he said, "Knowledge is not acquired by large numbers of narrations. A scholar is only the person who heeds his knowledge and seeks to apply it, and emulates the *sunna*, even if he only has a little knowledge."<sup>70</sup> Finally, Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ sums up al-Khaṭīb's message nicely: "A scholar remains ignorant of what he knows until he acts upon it. When he acts upon it, then he is a scholar."<sup>71</sup>

Despite its brevity, al-Khaṭīb's treatise contains a wealth of memorable and catchy citations, all related to the importance of acting upon one's knowledge. In one hadith, the Prophet is reported to have said "The similitude of the scholar who teaches people good things but neglects them himself is like a lamp, which provides light for people but burns out itself."<sup>72</sup> The Kufan-turned-Meccan hadith expert, Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, said, "If knowledge doesn't benefit you, it harms you," which, as al-Khaṭīb explains, means that if one does not act upon it, it will be evidence against them on Judgment Day. The Caliph 'Umar warned, "Do not be deceived by the person who recites the Qur'ān—it is just the words that we speak. Rather, direct your attention to the person who acts in accordance with it."<sup>73</sup> In another hadith, which the modern editor describes as totally baseless, the Prophet allegedly said, "Nobody recites the Qur'ān until they act in accordance with it."<sup>74</sup> Finally, in a hadith narrated by the direct descendants of the Prophet, 'Alī taught, "Act each day according to what is in it, then you will be rightly-guided."<sup>75</sup>

Another, presumably unintended, message from *Knowledge Necessitates Action* is that weak hadiths are an inescapable component of Islamic thought. In fact, there are so many weak hadiths in this work that its editor, the famous Salafi scholar, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (1914-99), felt obliged to write a short preface explaining, but not fully defending, al-Khaṭīb's citation of these questionable narrations. As long as the author provided *isnāds*, according to al-Albānī, he is free from sin, as it is the reader's responsibility to know the caliber of the narrators. This is a weak defense, and al-Albānī acknowledges that it would have been better had al-Khaṭīb not included so many weak and defective hadiths. However, there is a broader lesson here, which is that classical scholars were comfortable using weak and bizarre hadiths to make their points, and the tremendous anxiety among modern Muslims over the authenticity of every single hadith may be unnecessary and even unhealthy.

## 5. Conclusion

Near the end of his *Refinement of Character*, Miskawayh writes:

For when the soul ceases to speculate and loses the power of thought and of deep searching for meanings, it becomes dull, stupid, and devoid of the substance of all good. If it becomes accustomed to laziness, shuns reflection, and chooses to remain idle, it draws near to destruction, because,

by this idleness, it casts off its particular form and returns to the rank of the beasts.<sup>76</sup>

I think that all four of the scholars I have discussed in this article would concur with this statement. Whether they consider Islamic law the first stage of education, prior to philosophy (in the case of Miskawayh), or the ultimate goal of education (in the case of Ibn Ḥazm), all four men encourage and demand that their students think hard and be thorough in their research.

In my opinion, these four thinkers collectively challenge the widespread notion among many liberal and modernist Muslim reformers that the classical Islamic tradition has little to offer contemporary Muslims. Here are some of the salient points I have derived from reading just a small selection of their voluminous writings:

1. It is good—and maybe necessary—to go outside Islamic scripture to find meaning in Islamic thought. Miskawayh, al-Jishumī, and Ibn Ḥazm boldly address big questions facing humanity—what is happiness, what is the soul, do we have free will, where do we go after we die—drawing on both scriptural and extra-scriptural texts in their inquiries.

2. There is complete harmony between philosophy and Islamic law: Aristotle is a muslim, with a lower-case “m.” Miskawayh, and the Muslim philosophers in general, have an assessment of the great Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, which contrasts sharply with the atheism associated with many modern philosophers. Their religiosity reinforces my previous point and may even encourage contemporary Muslims to profit from the rich Hellenistic legacy in classical Islamic thought that has withered significantly in the face of strict scripturalism over the past several centuries.

3. Harmony also exists between rationalism and spirituality. Both Miskawayh’s mystical philosophy and al-Jishumī’s Mu’tazili spirituality recognize the natural human yearning for a connection to the divine, which can be achieved, according to them, through the intensive cultivation of one’s intellect and personal piety, rather than total submission to a Sufi master.

4. Classical Muslims have a wealth of insight into the nature of the soul. There is a tremendous imbalance in Western education today between

the intensive study of bodies and the negligible study of souls, and Muslim thinkers can make a truly valuable contribution to the latter subject.

5. Maybe *taqlid* isn't our biggest problem. Jishumī's account of the rationalist defense of *taqlid* serves as a reminder that the objective of rational inquiry and research is to obtain a result that is truthful and correct, not merely to follow the best methodology. The expectation that everyone must engage in *ijtihād* or *istidlāl* is highly unrealistic; what we really need are Muslims getting and adopting better answers to the big questions in life.

6. Weak hadiths are a significant part of our heritage. It is not only philosophers and Mu'tazili theologians who use them; the very best hadith scholars, such as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, fill their books with them. (Ibn Ḥazm is the exception that proves the rule.) This finding opens up an even vaster range of scriptural texts that Muslims can use in their creative interpretations of Islam.

7. The objective of hadith study is primarily worldly, in that it leads to beautiful conduct, rather than sophisticated thought. This is manifest in al-Khaṭīb's *Knowledge Necessitates Action*, but also reiterated by Miskawayh, who quotes Aristotle as saying, "It is not sufficient to know the virtues; one must also apply and practice them."<sup>77</sup> Therefore the profound value of Islamic thought is twofold: it serves to enrich our minds and elevate our conduct.

And God knows best.

## Endnotes

1. Sherman Jackson, "Liberal/Progressive, Modern, and Modernized Islam: Muslim Americans and the American State," in *Innovation in Islam*, ed. Mehran Kamrava (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 167-89.
2. Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Herndon, VA: IIIT, 2005), 108.
3. *Ibid.*, 78.

4. Ibid., 113. The fifth Islamic century began August 24, 1009 and ended August 31, 1106.
5. Ibid., 67.
6. For example, see Joel Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, second edition (Leiden: Brill, 1992) and Lenn E. Goodman, *Islamic Humanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
7. The most thorough study of Miskawayh remains Mohammed Arkoun, *Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IVe/IXe siècle: Miskawayh (320/325-421) = (932/936-1030), philosophe et historien* (Paris: Vrin, 1982 [1970]). A useful biography can be found in Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 222-33.
8. Majid Fakhry, "The Platonism of Miskawayh and Its Implications for His Ethics," *Studia Islamica* 42 (1975), 40-41.
9. Richard Walzer, "Some Aspects of Miskawaih's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*," in *Greek into Arabic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 221.
10. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 17-22. I have adopted Zurayk's translation throughout this paper. Miskawayh also includes a brief analysis of the virtue of liberality in this passage.
11. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 24.
12. Walzer, "Some Aspects," 233.
13. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 152.
14. Ibid., 78-80.
15. Walzer, "Some Aspects," 230. The expression "spiritual father" is found on p. 134 of *Refinement*.
16. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 108.
17. Walzer, "Some Aspects," 233-234; Goodman, *Islamic Humanism*, 109.
18. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 127.
19. Oddly, the text has *na'am*, instead of *balā*, which would be the proper response to a question posed in the negative.
20. Miskawayh, *al-Ḥikma al-khālida*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Tehran reprint), 108.
21. It is hadith no. 19 in al-Nawawī's *Forty Hadith*; see *an-Nawawī's Forty Hadith*, trans. Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Damascus: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1976), 68-71. It is no. 2669 in the Shu'ayb Arnā'ut edition of *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* in 50 volumes. Similar versions are hadiths no. 2763 and no. 2803 in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. See also Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, 12 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2007), 1:388-89.
22. Nawawī, *Forty Hadith*, 69.
23. Fu'ād Sayyid (ed.), *Faḍl al-i'tizāl wa ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila* (Tunis: Dār al-Tūniyya, 1974), 353-93.

24. This book is called *Kitāb jalā' al-abṣār* and is available in manuscript at: <http://pubd.princeton.edu/objects/2r36tz81t>.
25. Very few manuscripts of this book survive. For a discussion of its contents, see Oscar Löfgren and Renato Traini, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Vicenza 1981), 2:142-3.
26. Suleiman Mourad, "Towards a Reconstruction of the Mu'tazili Tradition of Qur'anic Exegesis: Reading the Introduction to the *Tahdhīb* of al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101) and its Application," in *Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qur'anic Exegesis (2nd/8th -9th/15th c.)*, ed. Karen Bauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 103-4.
27. Al-Nawawī, *Forty Hadith*, 81 (no. 24).
28. Al-Jishumī, *al-Safīna al-jāmi'a li-anwā' al-'ulūm*, MS Milan, Ambrosiana C31, fols. 31v-32r. This manuscript was copied in 619/1222.
29. al-Jishumī, *al-Safīna*, MS Milan, Ambrosiana C31, fols. 16v-18v.
30. This is a summary translation of *al-Safīna*, MS Milan, Ambrosiana C31, fols. 18r-18v.
31. In other words, it is outrageous to believe that a Muslim who had the correct theological opinions would be sent to Hell because she did not seek out the evidence in support of them.
32. This is the third hadith in Nawawī's *Forty Hadith* and is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.
33. *Ilāhiyāt* frequently means "theology," but in this context it seems to mean spirituality or reaching out to God.
34. al-Jishumī, *al-Safīna*, MS Ambrosiana C31, fols. 69r-73v.
35. *Idib.*, fol. 67v.
36. *Ibid.*, fol. 73r.
37. His full name is Dāwūd b. Nuṣayr al-Ṭā'i; he was a Kufan renunciant who lived for a while in Baghdad. He died between 160-165/776-82; see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-salām*, ed. Bashshār Ma'rūf, 17 vols. (Beirut 2001), 9:311-20; and al-Qushayrī, *al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism*, translated by Alexander Knysh (Reading, UK: Garnet, 2007), 29-30.
38. Al-Jishumī, *al-Safīna*, MS Ambrosiana C31, fol. 73r.
39. Al-Jishumī, *al-Tahdhīb fī l-tafsīr*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sālīmī, 10 vols. (Beirut and Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī and Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣrī, 2018-2019), 2:1604-7.
40. Abū Muslim is Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Iṣbahānī, a Mu'tazili scholar who wrote a Qur'ān commentary and died in the year 322/934; Shams al-Dīn al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* (Beirut 2002), 373 (read "Abū Muslim" for the printed "Abū Salama"); al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl al-ī'tizāl*, 323.
41. al-Jishumī, *al-Tahdhīb*, 2:1606. al-Aṣamm is an early Mu'tazili scholar whose name is 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān.
42. al-Thā'labī, *al-Kashf wa al-bayān*, 5 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2004), 2:307-10.

43. al-Jishumī, *al-Tahdhīb*, 2:1607.
44. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Sunna al-nabawiyya bayn ahl al-fiqh wa ahl al-ḥadīth*, 12th ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001), 82-85. See also the fatwa on music at the Dār al-Iftā' al-Miṣriyya, which quotes Ibn Ḥazm, among others: <http://www.dar-alifta.org/Foreign/ViewFatwa.aspx?ID=6870>.
45. Camilla Adang, "Ibn Ḥazm on Homosexuality: A Case-Study of Zāhiri Legal Methodology," *Al-Qantara* 24, no. 1 (2003): 5-31.
46. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā bi'l-āthār*, 12 vols. (Beirut 1988), 12:421-5. This hadith is found in *Kitāb al-ḥudūd: Bāb 43: kam al-ta'zīr wa al-adab* in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.
47. A.G. Chejne, *Ibn Hazm* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 1982), 95.
48. To be clear, Miskawayh considers a prophet's knowledge to be equal to that of the very best philosopher, but he only considers the religious sciences of law and related fields to be useful for the education of young people, as preparation for them to study philosophy; Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 45.
49. Chejne, *Ibn Hazm*, 95.
50. A contribution to this research, as well as a useful guide to it, is Livnat Holtzman, "Elements of Acceptance and Rejection in Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Systematic Reading of Ibn Ḥazm," in *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba: The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, ed. Camilla Adang, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 601-44.
51. Ibn Ḥazm states that *nafs* (soul) and *rūḥ* (spirit) are two words for the same substance, which is the soul; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal fi l-milal wa-l-ahwā' wa-l-niḥal*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2007), 3:254.
52. The printed text erroneously has 'Amr instead of 'Abbād. For more on this early Mu'tazili, see Hans Daiber, "Mu'ammār b. 'Abbād," *EI2*. Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī ascribes this opinion only to the Baghdādī Mu'tazili, Ja'far b. Mubashshir; see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, ed. Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, 2 vols. (Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-'Aṣriyya, 1990), 2:30. He also affirms that al-Aṣamm believed that the soul (*rūḥ*) did not exist.
53. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 3: 253-4.
54. *Ibid.*, 3:257.
55. For Ibn Sīnā's defense of the soul as being an incorporeal substance, see Jon McGinnis and David Reisman, *Classical Arabic Philosophy: An Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), 188-92.
56. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 3:260, 268.
57. *Ibid.*, 3:268-9. According to Miskawayh, "death is nothing more than the soul's abandonment of the use of one's tools, namely, the organs which, when taken as a whole, are called a body, just as an artisan abandons the use of his own tools" (*Refinement*, 185).
58. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 3:264. The final clause of this sentence is from Q. 59:24: *huwa'llāhu'l-khāliqul-bāri'u'l-muṣawwir*.

59. See Holtzman, "Elements of Acceptance," 615-16.
60. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal*, 2:375-9. This discussion occurs in the chapter devoted to the resting place of the souls after death.
61. Q. 7:11. This is the part of the verse Ibn Ḥazm cites; the full verse is "And We created you, then fashioned you, then told the angels: Fall prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblis, who was not of those who make prostration."
62. See Christian Lange, "Barzakh," *EI3*. This Qur'ānic word refers to an intermediate realm where souls reside between death and Resurrection Day.
63. Holtzman, "Elements of Acceptance," 616-18.
64. Al-Alwani writes, "The proper remedy [to our decline] would have been a comprehensive intellectual and fiqh-based effort to return the Muslims to the original sources, the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, and, through them, to bring about change in every aspect of life" (*Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, 117).
65. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Iqtidā' al-'ilm al-'amal*, ed. Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Islāmī, 1984), 15.
66. *Ibid.*, 26.
67. *Ibid.*, 28. Arabic: *al-'ilm kulluhu dunyā, wa'l-ākhirā minhu al-'amal bihi*.
68. *Ibid.* Arabic: *al-nās kulluhum sukārā illā'l-'ulamā', wa'l-'ulamā' kulluhum ḥayārā illā man 'amila bi-'ilmihī*. In another quote on the following page, Sahl says "Knowledge is one of the pleasures of the temporal world and, if [a person] acts upon it, it will count toward the Hereafter."
69. Al-Khawwās probably is Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad, a native of Samarra, who wrote books and made multiple pilgrimages to Mecca. He died in Rayy in 291/903 or 284/897; see al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-salām*, 6:493-97; and Qushayrī, *Qushayrī's Epistle*, 56.
70. al-Khaṭīb, *Iqtidā'*, 30.
71. *Ibid.*, 37.
72. *Ibid.*, 49.
73. *Ibid.*, 71.
74. *Ibid.*, 72.
75. *Ibid.*, 109. Arabic: *i'mal kulla yawm bi-mā fihi, tarshud*. Another less literal meaning might be, "Act one day at a time, and you will be on the right path."
76. Miskawayh, *Refinement*, 160.
77. *Ibid.*, 153.