

Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology: Evolution of Being

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“comparing Zāhirism to textualism is thus essentially sound” (198). However, this might not resonate with some readers, especially since the two juridical doctrines differ not only on the continuity/change character of the law, but also on its authorship – divine for Ibn Ḥazm, secular for Scalia. What is most challenging here is the equation of (1) a secular system with one that is believed by its adherents to be divine, (2) a modern and a pre-modern legal tradition, and (3) two entirely dissimilar language systems (Germanic vs. Semitic). So, was the theory of textualism a good fit, and is equating it with Zāhirism “essentially sound”? Most likely not.

Osman’s emphasis on modern Western theories and his lack of attention to Muslim classical criticism of the Zāhirī *madhhab* leave a central question unanswered: how is the Zāhirī legal doctrine conceived of within the Islamic tradition? Another, though less important, issue is that his translation of *majāz* as “metaphor” or “metaphoric use of language” blurs at times the meaning of the original text (on 174 and 212, for example). Within the legal context, the term *majāz* is better rendered as “non-literal language.” (The equivalent of “metaphor” in Arabic is *isīti ‘āra*.)

These comments notwithstanding, *The Zāhirī Madhhab* makes an incisive contribution to the history of Islamic law generally and the Zāhirī *madhhab* in particular. Readers should find Osman’s comprehensive discussion of the origin and development of the Zāhirī tradition, as well as his elaborate biographies of Dāwūd al-Zāhirī and Ibn Ḥazm, rich, lucid and highly informative. Specialist readers will greatly appreciate his extensive and meticulous footnotes throughout, which show the extent to which Osman engaged with his subject of research with much sincerity, passion and attentiveness.

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Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology: Evolution of Being, by Eiyad S. Al-Kutubi, Routledge Sufi Series, New York, Routledge, 2015, viii + 152 pp., \$145.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1138794160

In many ways, the writings of Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1640) mark a new horizon in the history of Islamic philosophy, and he is rightly credited with being the founder of a highly influential intellectual perspective commonly referred to as “transcendent philosophy” (*al-ḥikma al-muta‘āliya*). Eiyad Al-Kutubi’s *Mullā Ṣadrā and Eschatology* is an investigation into Ṣadrā’s treatment of the nature of the afterlife and how it is connected to the nature of the human being, that is, the soul (*nafs*) and its (existential) development. Although Ṣadrā studies is reaching a critical mass with over 20 books in various European languages on different aspects of his thought, a full monograph on the topic of “the Return” (*al-ma‘ād*) and its philosophical underpinnings in Ṣadrīan eschatology has not been carried out until the present endeavor. Nevertheless, mention should be made of a number of noteworthy studies that have examined aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā’s eschatology, such as the problem of soteriology (in Mohammed Rustom’s *The Triumph of Mercy* [2012]), and the relationship between death and imagination (in Christian Jambet’s *The Act of Being* [2006]).

This book is divided into seven chapters. The first outlines the Qur’anic view of the concept of “the Return,” and how earlier thinkers attempted to explicate its meaning philosophically. Al-Kutubi also notes the difference in approach between Ṣadrā and earlier philosophers, and

how the former's training in the transmitted sciences (*al-'ulūm al-naqliyya*) allows him to tackle the problem more comprehensively. However, the author's contention that earlier philosophers such as al-Fārābī (d. 950), Avicenna (d. 1037), and Suhrawardī (d. 1191) were not trained in the transmitted sciences (14) is rather misplaced, for it is known that many earlier philosophers, including Avicenna, were in fact so trained, as the latter himself claimed in his autobiography (see, e.g. Arberry 1951). Be that as it may, the discussion in the first chapter sets the scene for expounding Ṣadrā's philosophical doctrines. To help contextualize his inquiry, al-Kutubi outlines all the premises of bodily resurrection (*ma'ād jismānī*) in the introduction, and provides a translation of one of Ṣadrā's shorter treatises on *ma'ād*, his *Zād al-musāfir* (The Traveler's Provision), at the end of the book. The discussions of the key philosophical principles in Chapters 2 (the primacy of being), 3 (individuation and identity), and 4 (substantial motion) prepare the reader to deal with Ṣadrīan psychology in Chapter 5. This chapter expatiates on the body–soul relationship in Ṣadrā's psychology, based on the latter's well-known maxim, “the soul is bodily in origination and spiritual in subsistence” (*jismāniyyat al-ḥudūth wa-rūḥāniyyat al-baqā'*). This then paves the way for a treatment of Ṣadrā's theory of imagination and the imaginal world, which forms the basis of Chapters 6 and 7 (in part). Al-Kutubi judiciously places Ṣadrā's theory of imagination in the context of the preceding schools of Islamic philosophy, such as the Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) and Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) schools, and the writings of Ibn 'Arabī, to whom Ṣadrā is most indebted on this particular issue.

For Ṣadrā, as for many traditional philosophers, reality is stratified into physical, imaginal, and spiritual realms of existence. Thus, the physical body is only the first stage in the soul's development, through which it moves into the imaginal phase after “death.” Equipped with the notions of imagination, the imaginal world, and the imaginal body, Al-Kutubi's Ṣadrā goes on to explain that the “motion” of the soul after death is not biological, as is the case when it resides “in” a physical body. Rather, the post-mortem stage of the soul's development takes shape in an imaginal body based on previous deeds and spiritual actions performed on earth. In other words, an imaginal body begins to develop from the physical body in accordance with the “acquired” dominant dispositions of the soul. However, it must be kept in mind that this is not another body or “thing” that is superimposed upon or attached to the physical body. Rather, this doctrine is to be understood in the sense of the physical body's integration into the subtle body. The more perfect the soul becomes in its existence (according to Ṣadrā's doctrines of the primacy of being and substantial motion), the more the body becomes limpid and subtle, and its attachment to the soul becomes stronger and more intense. As the soul continues its movement after physical death, it enters into the next phase, that is, the imaginal phase (where it “takes on” an imaginal body). One of the implications of Ṣadrā's position here is that all the happenings in the afterlife, namely felicitous states in heaven and states of damnation in hell, are the natural outcome of the nature of the soul itself.

It is also pertinent to note here that Ṣadrā and other metaphysicians, such as Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 1350), locate all of these realities in the imaginal world. Yet, it may be asked, what happens to the individuality of the human self beyond the imaginal realm? This is an important point, which is unfortunately left unaddressed in this study.

Nevertheless, the book's overall argument brings to light the connection of the psychological development of the soul to the afterlife in that “the Return” of the soul is a natural event in the eschatological journey of human beings, in which the physical body plays no role. The author turns to Ṣadrā's views on the Return in the very last chapter of the book, because he reckons it is necessary to exposit *in detail* some of the key premises/principles on which it is based. (Ṣadrīan eschatology is based on 15 premises/principles, including individuation, substantial motion, and the nature of the the soul.) Such reasoning in part reflects the structure of

Şadrā's magnum opus, the *Asfār*, in which eschatology appears at the very end, and where Şadrā too states that, in order to understand his eschatology, one needs to accept all the premises. However, Al-Kutubi could have curtailed the exposition of some of them, given that they have already been covered by a sizable secondary literature, and instead focused more on the main topic of the book (i.e. eschatology), but this does not affect the overall clarity of the book's central thesis.

This study has some lacunae when it comes to the completeness of its bibliography and its rendering of key terms. It is striking that the author does not take into account Christian Jambet's *Mort et résurrection en islam* (2008), which also expounds Şadrā's eschatology. And the rendering of *muta'āliya* as "transcendental" (instead of "transcendent") in numerous places is also problematic, as it can be readily confused with Kant's use of the same term in his *The Critique of Pure Reason*, although these two thinkers stand worlds apart on the entire question of transcendence and the manner of human access to it.

These critical remarks do not, however, detract from the value of Al-Kutubi's excellent presentation of Şadrā's complex eschatology and he is to be congratulated for making an original contribution to the rapidly expanding field of Şadrā studies. The book will be of interest to both students and scholars of religion, theology, and philosophy.

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David in the Muslim Tradition: The Bathsheba Affair, by Khaleel Mohammed, Lanham, MD, Lexington Books, 2014, 227 pp., \$85.00 (hbk), ISBN 978-0-7391-9715-8

Khaleel Mohammed's *David in the Muslim Tradition* traces the development of Islamic exegesis of a single qur'anic pericope, Q 38.21–25, a passage of particular interest in the history of both Qur'an interpretation and Islamic theology. In this brief narrative, which the Qur'an refers to as "the account of the litigants," two individuals intrude on King David in a private space and exhort him to arbitrate between them; one has purportedly wronged the other by taking his only ewe and adding her to his flock of 99. David denounces this as transgression, then realizes that he is being tested and repents. Scholars have consistently identified this passage as an allusion to the biblical story of David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11–12, in which David covets Bathsheba, the wife of one of his soldiers, Uriah the Hittite; he commits adultery with her, arranges the death of Uriah in battle, and takes her for himself. Subsequently, the prophet Nathan shames David into repenting by recalling a parable that makes the king realize the seriousness of his transgression. The qur'anic passage at Q 38.21–25 is typically understood as a rewriting of the original biblical version of this parable (2 Samuel 12.1–46).