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Ya'qūb? He asked his children: "Whom will you serve after me?" They said: "We shall serve your God, the God of your forefather, Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl and Iṣḥāq, the One God, and unto Him do we submit" (*al-Baqarah* 2: 132-133).

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**ISLAMIC LEGAL METHODOLOGY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON UṢŪL AL-FIQH.** By Ahmad Kazemi-Moussavi and Hamid Mavani. Herndon/Richmond: IIIT, 2023, 229pp. ISBN: 978-1642055672.

The book under review is less a new perspective on *uṣūl al-fiqh* than an impressive summary of paradigmatic Islamic legal thinkers' methodological particularities, alongside a subtle endorsement of modern proposals to the adjustment of traditional Islamic legal methodologies. Accordingly, the work could have made an excellent textbook on the roughly chronological development of Islamic legal theory, through a study of its most prominent thinkers. However, despite, or perhaps because of, its breadth, the work misses some foundational details covered by its peers, limiting its depth and potential as a ground-breaking introduction. Nevertheless, its strong engagement with Shī'ī legal theorists and its occasional comparative approach add to the study's novelty. The work's accessibility and clear organizational structure make it particularly valuable for students new to the field, while its wide coverage of both classical and modern thinkers provides a useful reference for established scholars.

Chapter 1 covers the origins of Islamic legal theory, introducing al-Shāfi'ī's (d. 204/820) foundational role in formalizing *uṣūl al-fiqh*. The authors provide a concise summary of his contributions, including a synopsis of al-Shāfi'ī's methodology as portrayed in his *Risālah*. The organizational structure of this chapter is repeated throughout: a brief summary of the context of engagement for given thinkers followed by a summary of some of the key points displayed in one or more of their extant *uṣūl* works. The authors' ability to truncate a wide variety of often dense *uṣūl* works should be commended.

Chapter 2 reviews the legal approaches of several Mu'tazilī and Ash'arī thinkers, culminating in a detailed examination of the legal methodology of the Ḥanafī-Mu'tazilī scholar Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044). While the authors provide a solid chronological overview of prominent pre-modern Ash'arī and Mu'tazilī theologians' legal methodologies, they do not adequately explore the close and evolving relationship between Islamic theology and legal

theory. Although a fully exhaustive treatment may not be expected, omitting a deeper exploration of this relationship—a topic well-covered in other secondary sources—feels like a missed opportunity. Chapter 3 concentrates on developments within the Ḥanafī school starting in the fourth/tenth century, which the authors see as “incorporating new and changing social realities into [their] legal methodology” (p.27). The authors highlight figures like al-Razī al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370/981), who contributed to a pragmatic methodology that “can be situated between rationalism and traditionalism” (p.30). (More complication of the rationalist/traditionalist binary would have been welcome). This chapter outlines how the Ḥanafī school sought consistent application of *uṣūl* principles, yet the analysis frequently reads more like a broad survey of intellectual positions than a cohesive examination of Ḥanafī contributions.

Chapter 4 brings a valuable inclusion of Shīʿī perspectives, enriching the reader’s understanding of Islamic legal diversity. The authors begin by drawing on the works of Hossein Modarresi, Devin Stewart, and others to reject the idea that Shīʿī law and legal theory remained underdeveloped while the Imams were accessible and that it evolved in isolation from Sunnī jurisprudence. The authors explore the works of Būyid scholars like al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022), with particular emphasis on Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifah al-Ṭusī’s (d. 406/1067) role in shaping Shīʿī legal theory. The chapter traces shifts in the seventh/thirteenth century, including the formal adoption of *ijtibād* and aspects of *qiyās*, which arguably expanded the doctrinal basis of Shīʿī *uṣūl*. In this context, it examines the works of figures like al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277). Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion on the rise of Akhbarism. Overall, chapter 4 is one of the more cohesive and developed sections in the book and presents a well-rounded view of Shīʿī legal evolution that enriches our overall understandings of Islamic legal theory.

Chapters 5 through 10 pivot to broader theoretical developments as well as provide a discussion of modern (mostly reformist) thought. Chapter 5 addresses the adoption of “Aristotelian epistemological elements” into *uṣūl al-fiqh* (p.54), covering thinkers like the Zāhirī Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) and the prolific Shāfiʿī Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), and concluding with a discussion of late medieval thinkers like Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771-2/1369). Chapter 6 addresses later developments in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, specifically studying how legal theory was moulded to emphasize the “social and practical aspects of Islamic legal methodology” (p.72). This chapter features thinkers like the Ḥanbalī al-Ṭūfī (d.716/1316), and the Malikī al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388), specifically looking at their incorporation of the concept of public welfare (*maṣlahah*) in their legal theorizations.

Chapter 7 covers a few modern reorientations of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, focusing on scholars like Shāh Walīullāh (d.1176/1762) and the Egyptian Azharī Shaykh Muḥammad Abū Zahrah (d. 1974). A brief discussion of the role of Islamic legal maxims (*qawā'id al-fiqh*) makes its way to the beginning of the chapter but, given the topic was introduced by the authors, the lack of a more comprehensive discussion is an unfortunate shortcoming. Chapter 8 explores the revival of the Shī'ī *Uṣūlī* doctrine in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Chapter 9 discusses “non-traditional” intellectuals’ proposals for “reforming Islamic law and ethics,” focusing on those who “reform from within,” like Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1357/1938) (p.113). Finally, chapter 10 moves to those who attempt to reform ‘externally’ through the use of a “new series of epistemological analyses, i.e., modern hermeneutics” (p.141). This chapter outlines the outlooks of thinkers like Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (d. 2010) and Abdolkarim Soroush (b.1945).

The book’s two main objectives, as outlined in the introduction, are to trace the evolution of *uṣūl al-fiqh* by examining contributions from key jurists and to explore how modern reformers propose bypassing traditional legal language through new hermeneutics (p.xiv). The authors succeed in presenting an impressive range of legal thought within a concise volume of under 200 pages, though this ambitious scope sometimes makes the work read more like a loosely connected series of encyclopaedia entries than a cohesive study.

Finally, the authors’ emphasis on highlighting “new perspectives in *uṣūl al-fiqh*” seems to reflect broader anxieties about the pace of change in Islamic law. In that case, a deeper exploration of *uṣūl al-fiqh*’s role within the broader, integrated legal system of “Islamic law” would have added valuable context. Overall, this book is a welcome addition to the often inaccessible field of Islamic *uṣūl al-fiqh*, shedding light on both its historical foundations and contemporary development.

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**HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE AND ISLAMIC ENDOWMENTS**, by Nurul Adilah Hasbullah and Asmak Ab Rahman. Oxon: Routledge, 2023, 220pp. ISBN: 978-1032565279.

There is no doubt that the role of tertiary education is pivotal in the progress of any economy, as it provides the necessary human capital to address various areas of economic development. This in turn contributes towards the overall GDP of the country. It also creates career opportunities for individuals. However, the