

# The Qur'ān and Arguments: An Examination of Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's Dialectical Theory in 'Alam al-Jadhal fī 'ilm al-Jada

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## Abstract

This article explores the dialectical theory of the Ḥanbalī scholar Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316) through a comprehensive study of his work 'Alam al-Jadhal fī 'ilm al-Jadal. It begins with a biographical overview, situating al-Ṭūfī within the intellectual and political contours of the late Mamlūk period. The core of the study then offers a structural and conceptual analysis of 'Alam al-Jadhal, highlighting its blend of traditional juridical dialectics with an innovative Qur'ānic hermeneutic. Central to the work is al-Ṭūfī's pioneering method of "dialectical exegesis," where he systematically identifies and reconstructs argumentation strategies embedded within the Qur'ān. The study focuses on four principal dialectical tools found in his exegesis - *qiyās* (analogy), *man'* (negation), *naqd* (refutation), and *mu'āraqa* (counter-argumentation) - exploring their logical structure, rhetorical function, and theological significance. By reconfiguring the Qur'ān as a repository of dialectical method, al-Ṭūfī both extends the Ḥanbalī tradition's rationalist strand and inaugurates a new genre of legal theological commentary. The article concludes by situating 'Alam al-Jadhal within broader Islamic traditions of disputation, examining its contribution to the ethics of argumentation and its potential as a source for reconstructing Islamic rationality in a post-classical context.

## Introduction

In this article I examine the dialectical theory of the erudite and controversial Ḥanbalī poet, polemicist, jurist and Ḥadīth specialist Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī. After first briefly mentioning his educational biography, I then devote a large part of the essay to outlining the structure and contents of his work on dialectical argumentation entitled '*Alam al-Jadhal fī ‘ilm al-Jadal*'.<sup>1</sup> I thereafter close the essay by exploring some examples of what I refer to as al-Ṭūfī's "dialectical exegesis", which is a genre of Qur’ān exegesis he (arguably) inaugurated that specifically focusses on the Qur’ānic presentation of the structure and formulation of different types arguments as well as the pattern of inferences used in making and challenging claims within the various contexts.

### 1 The Life and works of Najm al-Din al-Ṭūfī<sup>2</sup>

Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Qawī b. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Sa‘īd b. Ṣāfi, Abū Rabī‘ or Abū al-‘Abbās was born in the town of Tūfā (or Tūf), a district of Ṣarṣar, roughly 6 miles (10km) outside of Baghdad around the decade following 670/1271. His title was ‘Najm al-Dīn’ but was known more by ‘al-Ṭūfī’ through the association of his birth town. He was a Ḥanbalī jurist, theologian, poet and a specialist in jurisprudence, Arabic language and literature. He was a prolific author with significant works in nearly all major Islamic-related fields of study and inquiry like the Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, law (*fiqh*) and legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), logic (*manṭiq*) and Arabic literature. Al-Ṭūfī began his elementary studies in his native town of Tūfā that consisted in memorising a repertoire of legal and other texts like the *Mukhtaṣar* of al-Khiraqī (d. 334/945) but then throughout the years following 680/1281, he frequented upper Ṣarṣar to study *fiqh* with Zayn al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣarṣarī (c. 720/1320). By the close of 690/1291, in his teens, he travelled to Baghdad to the Mustanṣiriyya school where he studied a number of core Islamic-related disciplines with eminent scholars in residence like Taqī al-Dīn al-Zarīrātī al-Baghdādī (d. 729/1329), Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mawṣilī, Abū Bakr al-Qalānisī (d. 704/1305), Rashīd Ibn Abī al-Qāsim (d. 707/1307), Ibn al-Baṭṭāl (d. 705/1306), Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Baghdādī (d. 726/1326) and many others. Baghdad is where he attained his status as a young scholar in both law and literature demonstrating his astute writing abilities. It was here that he studied logic and dialectics, a subject that would considerably shape his subsequent writings. It was here as well in the Mustanṣiriyya school that he penned his earliest work *al-Ṣa‘qa al-Ghaḍabiyya fī Radd ‘alā Munkirī al-‘Arabiyya*. In 704/1304-1305, he left Baghdad and travelled to Damascus where he met and became a student of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and studied under a number of other leading scholars like ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341). He is said to have written the *Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa* during this time and some works of literature. Around the year 707/1307, after visiting Jerusalem for the first time, he returned to Damascus but ended his sojourn there on an unpleasant note after

<sup>1</sup> Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī, '*Alam al-Jadhal fī ‘ilm al-Jadal*', edited by Wolfhart Heinrichs (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller account of his life and works, refer to Sergün Erkan, "Necmeddin et-Ṭūfī'nin Alemü'l-Cezel fi İlmi'l-Cedel Adli Eserinde Cedelü'l-Kur'an" (MA diss., Karabuk University, 2021), 21-32; Lejla Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo. Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary on the Christian Scriptures. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation with an Introduction* (Brill, 2013), 3-28 and Nazli Hanum Lubis, "Al-Ṭūfī's Concept of Maṣlaḥa: A Study in Islamic Legal Theory" (MA diss., McGill University, 1995), 2-8. Refer as well to Heinrichs list of the major sources in which al-Ṭūfī's biography can be found in '*Alam al-Jadhal*', intro (Arabic), ١ - ٤.

writing harsh and satirical poems about some of the locals. Al-Tūfī then set off for Cairo, one of the leading metropolises in the Islamic world under the Mamlūks, particularly after the fall of Baghdad as a consequence of the Mongol destruction of the city. Here he studied with one of the renown chief judges of the Ḥanbalites Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Ḥārithī (d. 711/1312) as well as authorities in other fields like the famous grammarian and exegete Abū Hayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745/1433), with whom he studied *Kitāb Tajrīd li-Sībawayh*. Al-Ḥārithī's patronage earned him a salaried position as a *mu‘īd* (a kind of a ‘repétiteur’ but for students of *fiqh*) in the Maṣṣūriyya and Nāṣiriyya colleges, where he taught and as a consequence acquired fame in the city. His writing during his time in Cairo was prolific. He authored works such as his extensive commentary on the *Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa*, a commentary on the four gospels of the Bible titled *al-Ta‘līq ‘alā Anājīl al-Arba‘a* and the novel work under analysis in this article *‘Alam al-Jadhal fī ‘Ilm al-Jadal*. After a serious fall-out with his teacher al-Ḥārithī due to impropriety, ensuing intellectual rivalry between himself and al-Ḥārithī's son in addition to accusations of being a crypto-Shi‘ite,<sup>3</sup> al-Tūfī faced legal proceedings against him and was imprisoned in 711/1311 after which he was exiled to Damascus but was barred from entering the city due to his earlier satirical attacks on some of the locals. While in prison, he wrote his Qur’ānic commentary on *sūra al-Inshiqāq* and *al-Naba‘* as well as a book on theology entitled *Hullal al-‘Uqad fī ‘Ilm al-Mu‘taqad*. Unable to live in Damascus, al-Tūfī was forced to move to Damietta after which he travelled to Buṣr and then Qūṣ, upper Egypt where he lived for several years and wrote several works and amassed a huge library. In 714/1315, al-Tūfī went on the Hajj pilgrimage for the second time and stayed for a year in the Ḥijāz studying and writing. In 716/1316, after completing his third Hajj pilgrimage, he visited Jerusalem for a second time. Here he composed perhaps his last work *al-Ishārāt al-Ilāhiyya ilā al-Mabāḥith al-Uṣūliyya* in under a month. Shortly after, in the same year, he passed away in al-Khalīl (Hebron) in 716/1316.

*Teachers and students:* as was mentioned, al-Tūfī travelled widely beyond his hometown and as a result had a geographically dispersed set of both teachers and students. However, the number of students recorded in the biographical literature appears to be extremely low. This may be due to either his long periods of travel to major towns and metropolises which did not enable him to form a permanent and committed circle of students or the accusations of being a crypto-Shi‘ī that lingered with him for which he suffered chastisement from the authorities, personal defamation and hardship. This also led him to lose teaching positions and educational privileges in various institutions. Below is a short list of some his foremost teachers.

#### Teachers:

1. Abū Bakr al-Qalānīsī (d. 704/1305).
2. Al-Dimyāṭī (d. 705/1306).
3. Ismā‘īl Ibn Baṭṭāl (d. 705/1306).
4. Abū Bakr Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Fārūthī (d. 706/1306).
5. Rashīd Ibn Abī al-Qāsim (d. 707/1307).
6. Ibn al-Ṭabbāl (d. 708/1309).

<sup>3</sup> Al-Tūfī's overall scholarly posture, particularly his critical stance toward Shī‘ī theology and consistent use of Sunnī sources and frameworks, suggests he was not a Shī‘ī. Thus, modern scholarship tends to absolve him of these charges, recognising him as an independent-minded Sunnī scholar who engaged with Shī‘ī arguments for the sake of thorough refutation, not endorsement. For a detailed discussion on this controversy, see İbrahim Bayram, “Teşeyyu‘ İle İtham Olunan Necmüddin ET-Tūfī'nin Şia'nın İmamet Analysına Bakışı” *Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 5/2 (2017); Erkan, “Necmeddin et-Tūfī'nin”, 26-29 and Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible*, 8-15.

7. Muḥammad b. Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Ba‘lī (d. 709/1310-1311).
8. Sa‘d al-Dīn al-Ḥārithī (d. 711/1312).
9. Zayn al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şarṣarī (c. 720/1320).
10. Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Baghdādī (d. 726/1326).
11. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328).
12. Majd al-Dīn al-Ḥarrānī (d. 729/1329).
13. Taqī al-Dīn al-Zarīrātī al-Baghdādī (d. 729/1329).
14. Al-Birzālī al-Ishbīlī (d. 739/1339).
15. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341).
16. Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnātī (d. 745/1344).
17. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mawṣilī.
18. Al-Mufīd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al-Ḥarbī.

*List of key works:* al-Ṭūfī composed works in a variety of fields. Due to him being still largely overlooked by European and non-European scholars and the fact that some of his most interesting texts have no longer survived, a deeper appreciation and evaluation of his work is not possible. Some of his works are lengthy whereas others are extremely short. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he had specialisation in several fields such as Qur’ān, Ḥadīth, jurisprudence, law, logic and literature. Although an exhaustive list of his corpus is not possible, some of the major writings, aside from ‘Alam al-Jadhal, are given below. I have restricted the selection to those available in print.<sup>4</sup>

#### Qur’ān

- Bayān mā Waqa‘a fī-l-Qur’ān min al-A‘dād.
- Īdāh al-Bayān ‘an Ma‘nā Umm al-Qur’ān.
- al-Ishārāt al-Ilāhīya ilā al-Mabāhith al-Uṣūlīya

#### Ḥadīth

- Kitāb al-Ta‘yīn fī Sharḥ al-Arba‘īn.
- Mukhtaṣar al-Tirmidhī.

#### Law and Jurisprudence

- al-Bulbul fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh.
- Nihāyat al-Sūl fī ‘Ilm al-Uṣūl.
- Risāla fī Ri‘āyat al-Maṣlaḥa.
- Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa,

#### Theology & Polemics

- Dar‘ al-Qawl al-Qabīḥ bi-al-Taḥsīn wa-al-Taqbiḥ.
- al-Intiṣārāt al-Islāmīya fī Kashf Shubah al-Naṣrānīya,
- al-Ta‘līq ‘alā al-Anājīl al-Arba‘a wa-al-Ta‘līq ‘alā al-Tawrāt wa-‘alā Ghayrihā min Kutub al-Anbiyā’.

#### Arabic Language and literature

- al-Iksīr fī ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr.

<sup>4</sup> For a more complete list, refer to Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible*, 541-542; Erkan, “Necmeddin et-Ṭūfī’nin”, 33-35; the editor’s introduction to *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa* (Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, 1998), 22-32 and the editor’s list in the introduction to *al-Intiṣārāt al-Islāmīyya fī Kashf Shubah al-Naṣrānīyya* (Dār al-‘Ubaykān, 1999), 74-83.

— *Mawā'id al-Hays fī Fawā'id Imri' al-Qays.*  
 — *al-Sa'qa al-Ghadabīya fī al-Radd 'alā Munkirī al-'Arabīya.*

## 2 The Text of *'Alam al-Jadhal fī 'Ilm al-Jadal*

In this section, I present a broad textual examination of *'Alam al-Jadhal* beginning with a very short descriptive account of Heinrichs' critical edition followed by both a structural and topical overview of the contents, concluding with its wider significance within medieval Islamic dialectical theory. It is hoped that this will not only help the reader gain better sense of and an overall familiarity with the text and thereby build a stronger appreciation of it but invite further research and analysis on the work. Before that, some preliminary observations about the text are worth mentioning. Firstly, al-Tūfī gave the title of the book 'The Banner of Happiness in the Science of Disputation' with the aim of "expanding the chest of the reader",<sup>5</sup> meaning to either expand the reader's interest and desire to embrace the contents of the book or make them beneficial recipients of its contents. Secondly, in a closing 'humility' paragraph of the book, al-Tūfī gives us some insights into its composition. He comments:

I apologise to the reader for the deficiency in the four chapters, especially the first chapter, as much of it I dictated and did not intend it to be either comprehensive or detailed. The reason is that prior to [writing] this [book], I completed my commentary on *Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa* in Islamic Law and reading numerous books for that badly affected my health. Hence, my dictation of much of this book is by way of affording me rest and respite from that. In addition, my main aim was no more than the epilogue and fifth chapter, where I hoped to survey the Mighty Book and making that a means for reflection on the expansive meanings and concise wording contained in it. In general, I composed this book – despite books being like deep oceans – to be a training for theoretical strength and a familiar reference for some of the core dialectical definitions.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Tūfī wrote the book in 709/1310 in the Şālihiyya madrasa after a personally exhausting period writing his commentary on *Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa* and reveals how his initial aim was chapter five and the epilogue, which are the substantive parts of the book that contain debate and dialectical examples. It may be that having written these parts first, he then added the theoretical contents of chapters one to four as scaffolding for the reader to understand and identify the corresponding dialectical references. His aim behind the book, in addition to generating enthusiasm for the subject of dialectical argumentation, was clearly for it to be a reference manual. Thirdly, as van Ess noted three decades earlier in his review of Heinrichs' edition of *'Alam al-Jadhal*,

Daß auch der heutige Leser sich dabei entspanne, wird man nicht unbedingt behaupten können. Der Text ist keine Bettlektüre; um ihm Geschmack abzugewinnen, muß man die Gehirnwindungen eines Juristen haben und sich nicht nur in den Winkelzügen der Dialektik, sondern auch in den *fūrū'* des islamischen Rechts gut auskennen.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Al-Tūfī, *'Alam al-Jadhal*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>7</sup> Josef van Ess, Review of *'Alam al-ğadal fī 'ilm al-ğadal li-Nağmaddīn at-Tūfī al-Hanbalī: Das Banner der Fröhlichkeit über die Wissenschaft vom Disput* by Wolfhart Heinrichs in *Die Welt des Islams* 32/2 (1992), 295.

The text is indeed no “bedtime reading” and relies on having strong knowledge of the workings of the juridical mind of medieval Muslim jurists and the sorts of legal and epistemological concerns they were preoccupied with. It also requires being familiar with the “dialectical ploys” and manoeuvres employed by debating parties in their attempt to defeat each other’s arguments. Van Ess also points out how “Ohne diese Schulung wird man sehr schnell merken, daß es durchaus möglich ist, philologisch zu einem Text Vertrauen zu haben und dennoch kein Wort zu verstehen”.<sup>8</sup> Hence, despite al-Ṭūfī’s intimations of the modest nature of the book, it is clearly one for those with some level of speciality. Finally, despite the novel synthesis al-Ṭūfī forged between dialectics and the Qur’ān in *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, he did not depart from juridical dialectics. The book is still squarely within that genre. Chapter four of the book (see the overview below) contains the familiar contents from works in juridical dialectics found in not only his Ḥanbalī predecessors, but from authors belonging to other legal denominations (*madhāhib*).

The only critically prepared edition to date of the *‘Alam al-Jadhal* is that by Wolfhart Heinrichs published by the Orient-Institut, Lebanon in 1987 under the commission of Hans Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden with the support of the German Research Association by Shukayr and Akasheh, Amman, Jordan.<sup>9</sup> Heinrich’s preparation for this edition was conceived as far back 1968 when he began his manuscript studies and by 1979, a complete draft edition was readied and accepted by the Justus Leibig University in Giessen as part of the author’s written habilitation. The draft was taken under the supervision of Orient Institut, German Oriental Society (Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft) in Lebanon and after delays due to the political strife in Lebanon with the civil war, Henrich’s edition was finally published in full, much to the author’s satisfaction and relief. Heinrich tells us that he later added an Arabic introduction at the request of the editor that was not intended to be a mirror-image of the German introduction, which is why reviewers of the book have noted the disparity in both.<sup>10</sup> Both introductions, however, taken together offer valuable details, albeit for the specialist.<sup>11</sup>

In preparing his critical edition of *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, Heinrichs used two manuscripts, both located in collections from Istanbul libraries. The first manuscript is Şehit Ali 2315, dated around 727 Hijri. It was copied by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid al-Baghdādī from al-Ṭūfī’s autograph and labelled in the critical apparatus as ‘S’. The second manuscript is Murat Molla 30 labelled ‘M’. It was completed in 769 (although incorrectly written 669) Hijrī by a Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Bāhī al-Ḥanbalī al-Qurashī on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Jumādā al-Ūlā in al-Ḥākim Mosque. Both manuscripts were originally completed in Cairo by the scribes. Each is an independent witness although S is in a broadly better condition than M. No other manuscript witness of *‘Alam al-Jadhal* are known to exist.

In the German introduction, Heinrichs gives a detailed break-down of the provenance of each manuscript as well their condition and composition, explaining as well variations and discrepancies. I will not rehearse those details here due to space but some of the provenance details do reveal interesting insights into the reception of al-Ṭūfī’s works and ideas about what constitutes the proper place of argumentation and dialectics within religious-focussed disciplines. For example, the Şehit Ali manuscript, a collection of four works by al-Ṭūfī that includes *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, *al-Dar’ al-Qawl al-Qabīh fī-l-Taḥsīn wa-l-Taqbiḥ*, *Kitāb al-Intiṣārāt* and *al-Ta’līq ‘alā al-Anājīl al-Arba‘a*, was acquired by Veliyüddin Carullah (d. 1151/1738) in 1131/1718-19, who founded a library himself adjacent to the Fatih Mosque,

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> There was a second edition published in Beirut, 2018 by Dar al-Fārābī.

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Heer, Review of *‘Alam al-ġadāl fī ‘ilm al-ġadāl li-Naġmaddīn aṭ-Ṭūfī al-Ḥanbalī: Das Banner der Fröhlichkeit über die Wissenschaft vom Disput* by Wolfhart Heinrichs in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111/4 (1991), 788-89.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, 9-30 (German) and ط - لب (Arabic).

Istanbul (although now located in the Süleymaniye Library). Veliyüddin remarks on reading the entire collection of al-Tūfī's works:

I have read all four books, front to back, and have corrected them as much as possible. I have not found any other versions of them. I have also found highly unique benefits that I have not found in any other book. May God bestow the greatest reward on the author on my behalf and all praise and grace belongs to God for granting me the ability to read these books completing their reading late afternoon on Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramaḍān, 31, 1131 in Istanbul.<sup>12</sup>

Not only does this indicate that Veliyüddin was a careful and precise reader, it also raises interesting questions about al-Tūfī's reception within the late Ottoman period – especially in our case the *'Alam al-Jadhal* – given that by this time, the counterpart genre to *jadhal* – *Ādāb al-Bahth wa-l-Munāzara* – had already penetrated the Ottoman educational circles by nearly two centuries. The text would have no doubt been familiar to Ottoman scholars as it was recorded by Taşköprüzāde (d. 968/1561) in his great encyclopaedia *Miftāh al-Sa 'āda*.<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, as will be shown, *'Alam al-Jadhal* is a unique and significant text, although unfortunately, it fell outside the orbit of interest of many scholars during the Mamlūk period and beyond. Another interesting point from the critical analysis Heinrichs affords us is how a later reader of the manuscript Şehit Ali 2315, fol.1a was confused about title attribution to the collection of works. Crossed out on the top of the main title page, a note reads

this title does not correspond to the contents of the book. It consists of answers to questions related about the Mighty Book, which is the Qur'ān.

Heinrichs on this point comments:

Die durchgestrichene Bemerkung dürfte sich auf den Titel des ersten Werkes in der Handschrift "Banner der Fröhlichkeit, über die Wissenschaft vom Disput" beziehen, weil sie genau darüber geschrieben ist. Sie passt auch inhaltlich dazu. Offensichtlich hat sich ein Leser, der eine der üblichen Abhandlungen über die Disputtechnik erwartet hatte, darüber verwundert, daß der Hauptteil des Werkes von einer Sammlung und Erörterung aller im Koran vorkommenden Streitgespräche gebildet wird.<sup>14</sup>

Until the *'Alam al-Jadhal*, there would have been no expectation of a reader to find contained in a standard book on dialectics a lengthy argument analysis of Qur'anic *sūras*; hence it would not be entirely surprising to find such comments. The manuscript marginalia do reveal an interesting insight into just how different and novel al-Tūfī's text was – it departed from the genre conventions of the juridical dialectics.

Al-Tūfī quite conveniently states for the reader the precise organisation of his book. It consists of, he tells us, three parts:

1. an introduction,
2. five chapters and

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., introduction (German), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Taşköprüzāde, *Miftāh al-Sa 'āda wa-Misbāh al-Siyāda fī Mawdū 'at al- 'Ilm* (Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyya, 1985), 2:498-499.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Tūfī, *'Alam al-Jadhal*, introduction (German), 14.

### 3. an epilogue.<sup>15</sup>

I will briefly explain each. (1) *The introduction*: this part includes a short but useful survey of the etymology of the Arabic word “*jadál*” (vehemence, violence, altercation, disputation and litigation) from the root *j / d / l* as well as the definition and subject-matter of dialectical argumentation.<sup>16</sup> Al-Ṭūfī first explains how *jadál* may plausibly derive from a cluster of words and under each one states how it has a semantic connection to the act of dialectics itself:<sup>17</sup>

1. *jadál* meaning hard, strong, firm and compact. This relates to dialectics in how “both parties to a debate vehemently and passionately argue their case with evidence based on exerting all efforts to be precise and concise.”<sup>18</sup>
2. *jadāla* meaning the ground or a hard ground. The link here is as though “each of the debating sides aims to overpower the other and floor them with speech just like a horseman fells his opponent to the ground with an arrow”.<sup>19</sup>
3. *jadāl* meaning dates (*balāh*) when they turn colour (according to the dialect of the people of Najd) before they harden. The connection to this sense would be in how “both debating sides aim to be superior and greater than their respective opponents through proofs until they rise to the position like that of the *jadál* – which is the date – in respect to the date palm.”<sup>20</sup>
4. *mijdāl* (pl. *majādil*) meaning a well-built castle or palace. This applies to dialectics because “each debating party strengthens their positions against the other with proofs much like how the steward of the palace protects and fortifies it [from attack]”.<sup>21</sup>
5. *jadwal* meaning a rivulet or stream. The link here is as though “each debating side aims to swerve and turn their opponent from their opinion like how water twists and turns in a stream”.<sup>22</sup>
6. *ajdāl* meaning a hawk. The connection in this sense is “each debating side attacks their opponent with proofs like a hawk fiercely does to its prey from the air”.<sup>23</sup>

Al-Ṭūfī concludes that the most appropriate meaning of *jadál* is that denoted in sense 1 above and the remaining word-meanings under 2-6 branch out from it.<sup>24</sup> He proffers a descriptive definition of *jadál* himself, one that he assumes pretty much throughout the book. He writes:

A technical definition of ‘*jadál*’ is said to be: the principles by which to know the nature of topics in terms of whether they are false or true in a way that deflects doubts in the debating parties. I say: what you could say regarding this [definition] is that: [*jadál*] is either refuting one’s opponent via proofs causing them to change their opinion or it

<sup>15</sup> For overviews of the book, refer to the relevant sections in al-Mannā’ī, *al-Jadal al-Qur’ānī* and Erkan, “Necmeddin et-Ṭūfī’nin”.

<sup>16</sup> For the meanings of *jadál* in the classical lexicons, refer to Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Williams and Norgate, 1865), Bk.1, Part 2, 391-93, s.v. For the Qur’ānic uses of *jadál*, refer to Amīn Ḥilmī Amīn, *al-Hiwār al-Fikrī fī-l-Qur’ān al-Karīm* (Dār al-Nahḍa al-Islāmiyya, 1997), 9-11

<sup>17</sup> Cf. al-Juwānī, *al-Kāfiya fī-l-Jadal*, edited by Fawqiya Ḥusayn Maḥmūd (‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Shirkatuh, 1979), 19-20 and ‘Uthmān Ḥasan, *Manhaj al-Jadal wa-l-Munāẓara fī Taqrīr Masā’il al-I’tiqād* (Dār Ishbīliyya, 1999), 1:23-28.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘*Alam al-Jadhal*, 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

could be said: it is the discipline or instruments (*āla*) by which one is able to convince the opponent to abandon their opinion for another through the use of evidence.<sup>25</sup>

From this definition, *jadál* would consist in the following elements: (a) debating parties, (b) a set of principles, (c) a topic of debate, (d) arguments, (e) proof-based responses, (f) convincing the opposing party to abandon their claims for another one. Al-Ṭūfī also critically evaluates other definitions of *jadál* like that given by al-Jawharī (*jadál* as vehement argumentation) and al-Ghazālī (*jadál* as the proficient skill to construct arguments). He feels they lack accuracy and nuance. In the case of al-Ghazālī, al-Ṭūfī disagrees with his characterisation of *jadál* consisting of “a proficient skill by which one masters the art of composing proofs using well-known or sound premises in order to derive a highly probable conclusion”. For al-Ṭūfī, *jadál* is part of human nature (*fitra*) and not a potential capacity in the soul for achieving proficiency in a specific set of argumentative skills although learning and acquiring technical knowledge undoubtedly aids this natural ability.<sup>26</sup>

The introduction concludes with al-Ṭūfī briefly mentioning the basic subject framework of *jadál* such as: (a) its *foundation*, which is Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), (b) its *subject-matter*, which is evidence and its related areas, (c) its *aim*, which is to convince the opposing party to relinquish their claim and (d) its *issues*, which include the set of disputed questions internal to the subject.<sup>27</sup> After the introduction, there are the five chapters that constitute the main body of the book. I will translate the chapter heading and then give an overview of each.

**‘Chapter One: on the legal ruling regarding argumentation’.** al-Ṭūfī begins the first chapter stating the aims of “*munāẓara*” (debate, argumentation, disputation) - a correlate of *jadál* - from the root *n / z / r /*, meaning looking at something, postponing, pondering with the mind and examining carefully.<sup>28</sup> Although al-Ṭūfī does not give any specific definition of *munāẓara*<sup>29</sup> (and it appears he sometimes uses both *jadál* and *munāẓara* almost interchangeably) he does delineate the different aims of *munāẓara* and the legal ruling (*hukm*) pertaining to each aim. This suggests that he sees *munāẓara* as broader than *jadál*. The former is the socially organised process involving differing parties discussing an issue whereas the latter is a defined method and set of principles by which the differing parties examine and argue the claims made about the issue being debated. In any case, the aims of *munāẓara* he states are:

1. Triumph-seeking: where the aim in a *munāẓara* is “merely to defeat one’s opponent or to establish victory by any means”.<sup>30</sup>
2. Truth-seeking: where the aim in a *munāẓara* is to “manifest the truth in whatever way one can”.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 4. Al-Mannā‘ī suggests that al-Ṭūfī’s definition of *jadál* may have been influenced by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī (d. 324/935), *al-Jadál al-Qur’ānī*, 37.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Mannā‘ī, *al-Jadál al-Qur’ānī*, 32-33. Also see the discussion below under the Epilogue.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘*Alam al-Jadhal*’, 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Williams and Norgate, 1893), Bk.1, Part 8, 2810-13, s.v.

<sup>29</sup> A typical definition given by one of his contemporaries who was a specialist in logic and dialectics Burhān al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 687/1288) in *Fuṣūl al-Jadál* with the author’s own commentary is as follows: “an intellectual examination by two sides in relation to two things in order to manifest the truth”. Al-Nasafī, *Sharḥ al-Fuṣūl fī ‘Ilm al-Jadál* (King Saud University Press, 2012), 29:

النظر من الجانبين في النسبة بين الشيئين إظهاراً للصواب.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘*Alam al-Jadhal*’, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Triumph-seeking and truth-seeking: where both truth and victory are the ultimate aims in a *munāẓara*.

For al-Ṭūfī, the first aim is unlawful and blameworthy, especially if it involves a kind of *dialectic eristic*<sup>32</sup> which employs sophistry, fallacies, dishonest stratagems and tactics of attack and diversions which hinder productive debate, dialogue and discussion for arriving at truth. These kinds of stratagems and tactics are in effect forms of “deception, lying, fallacies and unnecessary opposition in clear matters” which are all impermissible in law.<sup>33</sup> He laments that such subversive aims are prevalent in his time where people are ignorant of the method, principles and art of dialectics and thus cannot conduct meaningful and purposeful debate through a question-and-answer format. The final two aims, he states, are lawful (*mashrū*) and ought to be pursued. Al-Ṭūfī then moves on to offering his legal reasoning for why learning the discipline of *jadal* is a communal obligation (*fard kifāya*) and not an individual one (*fard 'ayn*).<sup>34</sup> He gives a general legal argument and then a specific legal one. The basic reasoning behind his general legal argument for the legal ruling pertaining to undertaking the study of *jadal* as a communal obligation is as follows:

- (1) If something contains a general benefit (*maṣlaḥa 'āmma*),<sup>35</sup> then it is a communal obligation.
- (2) Manifestly establishing the truth is a general benefit.
- (3) Learning dialectical argumentation (*jadal*) leads to manifestly establishing the truth.
- (4) Therefore, learning dialectical argumentation is a communal obligation.

Al-Ṭūfī states that “learning *jadal* is to ensure the truth is manifestly established” and this manifestation or triumph of the truth benefits people in that “manifestly establishing the truth for the people is a general benefit because when [truth] is manifest, people will believe in it and act according to it; otherwise, it would not be possible for them to do that; they would be like the sick without a doctor.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, for al-Ṭūfī, *jadal* is more *intellige ut credas*, in that proper understanding will lead to accepting truth and therefore belief. It is *jadal* that enables understanding to be attained in a person and thereby becomes an indispensable tool for accessing salvation. Moreover, for al-Ṭūfī, the reason why learning *jadal* is not an individual obligation is because

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<sup>32</sup> I take this term from Arthur Schopenhauer who defines eristic dialectic as:

*Eristische Dialektik* ist die Kunst zu disputieren, und zwar so zu disputieren, daß man *Recht* behält, also *per fas et nefas*. Man kann nämlich in der Sache selbst *objective* Recht haben und doch in den Augen der Beisteher, ja bisweilen in seinen eignen, Unrecht behalten (*Die Kunst, Recht zu behalten*, <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/schopenh/eristik/eristik.html> [accessed January 2021]).

<sup>33</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘Alam al-Jadhal, 7.

<sup>34</sup> For more on this concept of *fard kifāya*, see al-Ṭūfī’s discussion in *Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar al-Rawḍa*, edited by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muhsin al-Turkī (Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Dawah and Guidance, date), 2:403-410. For English translations of these discussions, refer to Nahla El-Haraki, *The Rise and Development of Societal Obligation (Fard al-Kifaya) in the Fundamentals of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Dār Al-Salam, 2011), 114-15.

<sup>35</sup> For an overview of the concept of *maṣlaḥa* as a law-finding concept in al-Ṭūfī’s legal theory, see the analysis in Lubis, “Al-Ṭūfī’s Concept of *Maṣlaḥa*”, 42-77 and Felicity Opwis, *Maṣlaḥa and the Purpose of the Law Islamic Discourse on Legal Change from the 4th/10th to 8th/14th Century* (Brill, 2010), 200-46. On al-Ṭūfī’s own account of *maṣlaḥa* as it intersects with theology and law, see his short treatise *Risāla fī Ri‘āyat al-Maṣlaḥa*, edited by Ahmad ‘Abd al-Rahīm Sāyiḥ (Dār al-Miṣriyya al-Lubnāniyya, 1993), 13-57.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘Alam al-Jadhal, 7.

any act that the law obligates contains a benefit but if the law stipulates that the benefit must be realised by each and every morally and legally responsible person as a religiously legal devotion, then such an obligation is an individual one like praying and the rest of its integrals.<sup>37</sup>

In other words, for any action  $\varphi$  obligated by the Law and for any morally responsible agent A,  $\varphi$  is an individual obligation iff: the Law seeks (i) the benefit  $b$  accruing from  $\varphi$  to be realised for A and (ii) for A to  $\varphi$  out of an act of religious legal devotion (*al-ta'abbud al-shar'i*). However, in the case of communal obligations, there is no aim stipulated for the benefit to be realised by each and every morally responsible agent. The action only accrues a benefit in general. Hence, “if no religiously legal devotion is sought by the Law [through obligating the act] and the aim is only to realise the general benefit, then this would be a communal obligation like jihad and other acts.”<sup>38</sup>

Al-Tūfī's specific legal argument for the legal ruling pertaining to undertaking the study of *jadāl* as a communal obligation is a textual one citing as evidence the Qur'ānic verses “*do not argue with the people of the book except in the best way*” (29:46),<sup>39</sup> and “*argue with them in the best way*” (16:125).<sup>40</sup> The aim behind these commands is for the Muslims to argue and debate their monotheistic neighbours in order to manifest the truth. If legal commands by default take the value of an obligation (*wujūb*), it would mean each and every person would be obligated to undertake argumentation and debate. However, the command becomes specified if the general benefit accruing from the argumentation and debate is achieved by some of those addressed by the command. The few who do achieve it, absolve the obligation from the rest.<sup>41</sup>

Before concluding Chapter one, al-Tūfī addresses three objections that some may raise against the use or need for dialectical argumentation, and they are the following: Objection 1: The Qur'ān and Sunna alone are sufficient for manifestly establishing the truth. Reply: to this objection, al-Tūfī acknowledges that the revelatory sources of the Qur'ān and Sunna are true and manifest the truth, but this does not preclude aspects within these sources being either ambivalent or ambiguous and thus stand in need of clarification in order to avoid confusion.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> See al-Tūfī, *al-Ishārāt*, 492.

<sup>40</sup> According to al-Tūfī, like many scholars before him, Q. 16:125 contains a reference to three of the five argumentative methods, which are: (i) demonstrative (*burhānī*), (ii) dialectical (*jadālī*), (iii) rhetorical (*khaṭābī*), (iv) sophistical (*safsātā'i*) and (v) poetical (*shi'rī*). Different to his predecessors, however, is how he adduces this verse as explicit proof for the obligation to have logicians (*mantiqiyūn*) in the community with sound knowledge of logic in order for it to be used for constructing proofs and solid arguments in the path of inviting others to God. He tells us that “the reason why this is the case is that logic is the only science by which we theoretically know what strong and weak syllogisms are as well as what are valid and invalid ones that enables truth to be established and falsehood to be invalidated”, *al-Ishārāt*, 386. Another way he puts the argument for the necessity of logic is as follows:

We say that using [logic] in calling to the path of truth is obligatory because it has been commanded [in the verse] to be used in calling to the path [of truth] and a command by default carries the value of an obligation. Logic for meaning is like grammar for words; without it, proofs cannot be correctly constructed and if proofs cannot be correctly constructed then the truth cannot clearly be known. That is why we say using [logic] is mandatory. There are, however, some doubts about [aspects of] logic which I have discussed elsewhere. The instruction in the verse is according to the meanings [of argumentation] we mentioned [earlier]. Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī discussed the same point at the beginning of his commentary on the *Ishārāt* (*al-Ishārat*, 386-87).

Al-Tūfī's teacher Ibn Taymiyya vehemently rejected this interpretation of the verse; see his *al-Radd 'alā al-Manṭiqiyūn* (Mu'assasa al-Rayyān, 2005), 482-92.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Tūfī, 'Alam al-Jadhal, 9.

The principles of *jadal* enable logical discussion and reasoning by dialogue as an intellectual method of investigation to arrive at clarity and disambiguation. This makes it extremely important and necessary. Objection 2: God has completed the religion of Islam and so nothing beyond its own sources is necessary (see Q. 5:3). Reply: here too, al-Ṭūfī acknowledges the truth of this claim but argues that Islam's completeness means its foundational doctrines and theological rubrics have been clearly delineated. Like his reply to the first objection, the foundational completeness of the religion does not insulate it from things being unclear or not obvious. The way to remove this challenge is through examination, reflection and clear reasoning and *jadal* facilitates this. Objection 3: Argumentation has been censured by the Prophet Muḥammad and therefore is a blameworthy engagement. Reply: al-Ṭūfī's reply to this objection is that the censure of argumentation by the Prophet is not absolute; only argumentation that is sophistical and deliberately opposed to seeking the truth are strongly censured; otherwise, as he argued, dialectical argumentation is necessary for manifestly establishing the truth.<sup>42</sup>

Interestingly, al-Ṭūfī concludes the chapter with an anecdote related by al-Qādī ‘Abd al-Jabbār supposedly in the *Tabaqāt al-Mu’tazila*<sup>43</sup> where the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 706-809) was sent a letter by a king of India requesting someone to answer the various theological questions they had about Islam and its truth claims. The Ḥanafī Ḥasan b. Ziyād al-Lu’lu’ī (d. 204/820) was sent for this apologetic purpose but on arrival was mocked by his Indian host and his audience and returned home for failing to answer questions beyond mere citations of Qur’anic verses and Prophetic hadīths. Enraged at hearing of al-Lu’lu’ī’s humiliation, Hārūn al-Rashīd dispatched the Mu’tazilī Thumāma ibn al-Ashras (d. 213/828) as the trained and skilled theologian in order to save caliphal embarrassment.<sup>44</sup> The clear moral of this anecdote is that scholars who are not trained in dialectics or argumentation (more broadly the discipline of *kalām*) ought not to debate intellectual peers for fear of failing to convince them and thus become a liability. It is not sufficient for polemical purposes to argue with an opponent on the basis of mere citations of Qur’anic verses and Prophetic ḥadīths; there must be independently established intellectual arguments and proofs. The entire anecdote was cited by al-Ṭūfī in order to clearly vindicate the use of *jadal*.

**‘Chapter Two: on the etiquette of argumentation’:** al-Ṭūfī in this chapter, mentions the ethical code of behaviour (*ādāb*) governing the interaction within an organised debate setting. Some codes apply to both debating or arguing participants while others apply to one or the other of them as it relates to their specific role within the overall debate format or protocols. I will mention only a selection of these codes as they apply to the debate participants.

Some codes governing both debating participants include:

- To be gentle and polite as this makes the participants agreeable and receptive to the claims being put forward.
- To avoid cutting each other off as constant interruptions hinders arriving at understanding the claims.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 9-10. For a detailed discussion on the rulings related to debate and argumentation within the Islamic tradition, see Ḥilmī, *al-Hiwār al-Fikrī*, 20-45; Ḥasan, *Manhaj al-Jadal*, 1:279-371 and Ḥamad al-‘Uthmān, *Uṣūl al-Jadal wa-l-Munāẓara fī-l-Kitāb wa-l-Sunna* (Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2004), 29-85.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, 11. He also cites the variations found in the *Tabaqāt al-Mu’tazila* on 237-39.

<sup>44</sup> Heinrichs in a footnote states he was unable to locate this exact version cited by al-Ṭūfī via ‘Abd al-Jabbār (*‘Alam al-Jadhal*, 11, fn.1). I too was unable to locate it. Josef van Ess helpfully discusses the various versions of this anecdote involving Abū Kalāda and others in van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, translated by Gwendolin Goldbloom (Brill, 2018), 3:96-98.

- To avoid debating matters neither participant has any knowledge or speciality in as this is a waste of time and lowering oneself.
- To avoid mocking and ridiculing as these are not befitting for seeking truth.
- To avoid casting aspersions at each other as this distracts and diverts, wasting valuable time.
- To avoid vulgarity.
- To abide by the orders of the debate moderator.
- To accept defeat gracefully.

Codes governing either one of the debating participants include:

For the proponent (*mustadill*):

- To state the initial claim (*da'wa*) followed by the argument for it without unnecessary delay.<sup>45</sup>
- To avoid unusually long gaps between delivery of a claim and the argument for it.

For the opponent (*mu'tarid*):

- To wait until the proponent has finished making her point.
- To address the evidence the proponent's claim rests on.
- To avoid delaying in making counterpoints.

These codes are clearly not a systematic presentation of arguer *virtues* based on like an Aristotelian mean; rather they are simply virtues that are regulative for achieving the proper ends of a *munāzara* - manifesting the truth and then accepting it. The contrary, arguer *vices*, would be whatever impedes the proper ends of a *munāzara*, i.e. qualities that block an individual from reaching truth. Hence, these codes are for controlling unruly and inappropriate behaviour, preventing any loss of virtue and decorum and for minimising any distraction towards that singular objective of the debate. Al-Tūfī affords little space on this topic as much of the general rules are based on the ethical precepts and codes found in the Prophet Muhammad's emphasis on exemplifying good, upright character and high moral conduct. The sparse nature of the chapter was also to do with al-Tūfī dictating its contents from memory and not by writing it based on thorough research.

The introduction, chapter one and two comprise the shortest segments of the book, which from a content point of view is understandable as issues such as definitions and etiquettes are not the more substantive parts of the book in comparison to the practical format and theoretical components of argumentation. These take up chapters three and four. However,

<sup>45</sup> The example al-Tūfī gives is the sale by an uncommissioned agent (*bay' al-fudūlī*); a type of sale the jurists disagreed over. He writes that “the sale by an uncommissioned agent pending authorisation is legally valid because it is a form of use or disposal (*taṣarruf*) without any detriment. Any use or disposal without detriment is something legally valid”, ‘Alam al-Jadhal, 17. Here, the proponent's claim is the legal permissibility of sales undertaken by an unauthorised agent. The argument (*hujja*) given to justify the claim is the proposition: ‘any type of disposal that does bring about a detriment is legally valid’. To make the argument clearer, we could reformulate it as follows:

- (1) Any contractual disposal without causing detriment is legally valid.
- (2) The sale by an uncommissioned agent pending authorisation is a contractual disposal that does not cause detriment.
- (3) Therefore, the sale by an uncommissioned agent is legally valid.

what we do gather from these short segments is how al-Tūfī envisions *jadál* as a disciplined, collaborative search for truth, not an arena for rhetorical dominance. All participants must be committed to epistemic humility, ethical speech, and submission to sound reasoning. Al-Tūfī's ethical framework particularly, serves to distinguish *constructive dialectic* - praised in the Qur'ān and Islamic tradition - from *destructive polemic*, which is condemned. This distinction ensures that *jadál* remains a noble and spiritually responsible practice. Something emphasised before the Ottoman polymath Taşköprüzāde is said to have given Islamic argumentation theory an ethical turn.<sup>46</sup>

**‘Chapter Three: on the integrals of dialectical argumentation’:** al-Tūfī sets out the “integrals” (*arkān*) of *jadál*. He presents two meanings of the term. One meaning is that it is “an internally constituent part of something like the acts bowing and prostrating are for the prayer.” The other meaning, more general, is “whatever something depends on in order to be realised”.<sup>47</sup> According to the first meaning, the integrals of *jadál* would be: (i) questions, (ii) responses, (iii) reasoning or arguments and (iv) objections. According to the second meaning, the integrals of *jadál* would include: the (i) the indicant (*dāll*) which is the *grundnorm*, an ultimate basis for evidence like God and His directives or a derived source like the Prophet Muḥammad's example (*sunna*) that practically clarifies and explicates God's directives; (ii) the indication (*dalīl*), the evidence used for some objective, (iii) the reasoner (*mustadill*), the one reasoning with evidence towards some desired conclusion or objective, (iv) the judgment or ruling that is sought by the reasoner (*al-mustadall 'alayhi*) and (v) the cause behind some reasoning (*al-mustadall lahu*). However, it is the former meaning of *jadál* that al-Tūfī expands on, which I now outline.

The first integral in on questioning (*al-su'āl*). Here, al-Tūfī divides the integral into four sections and explains each one. Section one is on the modes or tools (*adawāt*) of questioning which consists of explaining the different grammatical forms and implications of the Arabic interrogative. Section two describes various types of questioning that is directed at for example (i) the judgment (*hukm*) of some claim or argument, (ii) its evidence, (iii) the way the evidence is used and (iv) whether the evidence is valid. Section three briefly discusses the valid and invalid types of questioning that specifically identify fallacious, irresponsible and incorrect modes of asking questions as opposed to virtuous modes that seek out required details, beneficial clarifications and are wholly relevant. Finally, Section four is a page on what is incumbent on a questioner on some specific topic like whether she is bound by a specific viewpoint or the commitments of some legal or theological school that defines the parameters and scope of questions.<sup>48</sup> The second integral in on responding (*al-jawāb*). This is the counterpart to the previous integral and consists of three sections. Section one presents a short account of the Arabic grammatical forms of responses to various degrees of questioning. Section two is a brief discussion on the valid and invalid types of responses that include those that are either elongated, irrelevant, partial or vague. Section three consists of a paragraph long outline on what is incumbent on the respondent like whether she ought to respond in a general or specific way to a question.<sup>49</sup> The third integral is on inferences (*al-istidlāl*). Al-Tūfī here defines inferences, which are the various ways to derive conclusions based on a specific mode

<sup>46</sup> Abdessamad Belhaj, “Tāshköprüzāde's *Ādāb al-baḥth wa-l-munāzara*: Intersection of Ethics, Logic, and Law,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Europe and Beyond. Études arabes et islamiques en Europe et au-delà*, edited by Maurus Reinkowski, Monica Winet, S. Yasargil (Leuven, 2015) and idem, “Taşköprüzāde *Adab al-baht wa-l-munazara-ja*: az etika, a logika és a jog találkozása,” in *Ünnepi kötet Maróth Miklós hetvenedik születésnapja tiszteletére*, edited by Fodor György and Sarbaki Gábor (Szent István Társulat, 2013).

<sup>47</sup> *Alam al-Jadhal*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-35.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.

of reasoning from evidences. He elaborates on it in detail in chapter four. The fourth and final integral is on objections (*al-i tirāqāt*) and the modes of responses to them. Here, al-Tūfī devotes considerable space to delineating twenty-two different types of objections. These are various ways a challenge can be registered within a debate format. The details of these last two integrals are amplified and elaborated by al-Tūfī in chapter four of his book and I turn to explaining that now.

**‘Chapter 4: on the different types of reasoning and its possible enumerations’**: this chapter is divided by al-Tūfī into three parts. Part one is a typology of various inferences (*al-istidlālāt*), part two is a presentation of a catalogue of different argument objections (*al-i tirāqāt*) with examples and part three is a rich typology of inferences. Al-Tūfī begins section one of the chapter with the ‘inference’ or ‘rule of reasoning’ (*istidlāl*). He basically defines it as “a proponent establishing a claim based on evidence”.<sup>50</sup> He discusses various typologies of inferences based on *source*, *scope* and *dependence*. Inferences based on source are: (1) rational (*‘aqlī*) inferences, which involves the use of rational postulates like the laws of logic. (2) Observational (*hissī*) inferences consisting of drawing conclusions and making judgments from perceptible data like cause and effect and that for example properties have property bearers. (3) Legal (*sharī’ī*) inferences which consists of using the legal sources of law like the Qur’ān, Sunna, analogy (*qiyyās*) and consensus (*ijmā’*) and (4) Mixed (*murakkab*) inferences that which employs any combination of 1-3.<sup>51</sup> Next are inferences based on scope and they are (1) universal (*kullī*), which are general conceptual rules discerned and grasped by reason, e.g., all smoke implies fire. Such propositional truths are rationally known and not subject to reason. (2) Particular (*juz’ī*) where these are specific judgments grasped by or known through the senses, e.g., ‘this specific smoke comes from that fire’ or ‘this fire is hot because I can feel it’. The intellect is suited for universal cognition, whereas the senses is suitable to particular perception.<sup>52</sup> The third type of inferences concerns whether they are (1) independent (*mustaqill*) such as rational knowledge (*‘aqlī*) or instinctual awareness (*wijdān*), e.g., knowing pain or hunger directly or (2) non-independent (*ghayr mustaqill*), which relies on a composite or secondary source, such as combining scripture and reason. For instance, the trustworthiness and impeccability of the Prophet Muhammad (*ma’sūm*) is accepted based on reason and then used to validate the truth of the Qur’ān and Hadīth.<sup>53</sup> Tūfī further explains that rational proofs assert universal truths and are used to confirm or negate propositions with certainty, sensory evidence can trigger rational conclusions (e.g., seeing smoke prompts the rational conclusion of fire) and scriptural arguments rely on the assumption of the infallibility of the Prophet or the authority of consensus. When these sources are combined (e.g., rational demonstration to validate scriptural authority), they constitute *non-independent* reasoning.<sup>54</sup>

However, the soundest form of inference for al-Tūfī is either the categorical (*hamlī*) or conditional (*isthīnā’ī*) syllogism. The clearest and easiest of them all he insists is the categorical syllogism in the First Mood of the First Figure, often known in Europe by its Latin mnemonic BARBARA (because it contains all universal affirmative propositions for its premises and is given the code letter A, hence AAA).<sup>55</sup> A typical AAA syllogism will look like the following (note: the letter *P* designates the *major term*, that which is the predicate of the conclusion. The

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 38 and 81.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 39-40 and 44-55.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Tūfī also describes it as inference through universal propositions (*al-istidlāl bi-l-muqaddimāt al-kullīya*), Ibid., 84. For some examples of AAA syllogisms identified in ‘Alam al-Jadhal, see section three below.

letter *S* designates the *minor term*, that which is the subject of the conclusion, and the letter *M* designates the *middle term*, that term appearing in both premises, but not in the conclusion):

AAA – BARBARA

All M is P

All S is M

All S is P

In symbolic notation:

$$\forall x Mx \rightarrow Px$$

$$\forall x Sx \rightarrow Mx$$

$$\therefore \forall x Sx \rightarrow Px$$

Example:

1. All human beings<sup>M</sup> are mortal.<sup>P</sup>
2. All Ḥanbalīs<sup>S</sup> are human beings.<sup>M</sup>
3. Therefore, all Ḥanbalīs<sup>S</sup> are mortal.<sup>P</sup>

I will leave off elaborating on the categorical syllogism here as its familiarity is well-attested in the Arabic logic works. As for the *istihnā’ī* inference or reasoning, I will briefly outline his discussion of it. Al-Ṭūfī presents *istihnā’ī* reasoning as a distinctive form of syllogistic inference within the framework of *jadal*. This form of argumentation operates not by asserting a claim directly, but by proposing a conditional relationship and then denying its consequent. The structure follows the classical logical form known as *modus tollens*: ‘If X were true, then Y would follow; but Y is false; therefore, X must also be false.’ More formally,

$$p \rightarrow q$$

$$\neg q$$

$$\therefore \neg p$$

Within the terminology al-Ṭūfī uses, this involves the negation of the necessary consequence (*lāzim*) to refute the antecedent (*malzūm*). This technique is particularly effective in dismantling an opponent’s position by showing that it leads to untenable or contradictory results. A paradigmatic example al-Ṭūfī offers is the argument against the eternity of the world (*qidam al-ālam*) - a central point of contention between Islamic theologians and the Islamic philosophers. He formulates the argument as follows: If the world were eternal (*qadīm*), it would not require a cause (*mu’aththir*). However, since everything that exists must be preceded by non-existence and thus requires a cause to bring it into being, the consequent (non-dependence) is false. Therefore, the antecedent (eternity of the world) must also be false.<sup>56</sup> In logical terms, the major premise is that anything eternal does not require a cause; the minor premise is that the world is caused and contingent; hence the conclusion is that the world cannot be eternal. This is a textbook case of *istihnā’ī* reasoning applied in *kalām* to counter the philosophical doctrine of eternity of the world. Al-Ṭūfī’s formulation of this *istihnā’ī* inference relies heavily on the concepts of necessity and dependency. The *malzūm* refers to the premise that supposedly brings about the consequence, while the *lāzim* is the

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 44.

outcome that logically follows. The strength of the inference lies in the denial of the *lāzim*: if the consequent fails, the premise collapses. A simple empirical example illustrates this: If there is fire, there will be smoke. If there is no smoke, we conclude that there is no fire. Al-Ṭūfī sees this form of inference as crucial to both rational and revelatory arguments, operating across theological and empirical contexts.<sup>57</sup>

The utility of *istithnā’ī* reasoning, according to al-Ṭūfī, is particularly evident in complex theological or metaphysical issues where direct demonstration may be either impractical or insufficiently persuasive. Instead of attempting to prove a thesis outright, this method exposes the internal flaws of an opposing view by tracing its consequences to absurd or contradictory ends. For instance, discussions about divine attributes, the createdness of the universe, and the need for a first cause are all prime domains in which such reasoning thrives. By showing that denying a consequence leads logically to the denial of the entire position, the interlocutor is forced to retreat from their original claim. Importantly, he notes the syntactic and logical flexibility within Arabic dialectical expression when it comes to ordering the components of such syllogisms. The terms *lāzim* and *malzūm* can be presented in different sequences, depending on stylistic or rhetorical choices. What matters is not their grammatical order but their logical relationship - that is, which concept is dependent upon the other. As such, the soundness of the argument is judged not by its surface arrangement, but by the accuracy of its underlying dependency structure. Al-Ṭūfī concludes his discussion with a more mundane, illustrative example: If this wall had no foundation, it would collapse. But since the wall has not collapsed, we infer that it must have a foundation.<sup>58</sup> This demonstrates how *istithnā’ī* reasoning, while rooted in sophisticated theological discourse, also has wide application in rational and empirical domains. Its strength lies in its clarity, its indirect but forceful method of refutation, and its capacity to link theological reasoning with universal principles of logic.

Returning to the outline of this chapter, in part two, al-Ṭūfī devotes considerable space to delineating twenty-two different types of objections. He considers objections to be challenges raised against aspects like the claim of a proponent, a mode of inference that is employed or specific premises in an argument. These challenges with their own specificities are to either attack, weaken, undermine or defeat any aspect of an argument.<sup>59</sup> Finally, in part three, He discusses a total of fifteen inference rules summarised from the Ḥanbālī Ibn al-Mi’mār al-Baghdādī’s (d. 642/1244) *Kitāb al-Munāzarāt fī-l-As’ila wa-l-I’tirādāt ‘alā Anwa’ al-Iṣtidlālāt*, which are purely rational (non-textual) inference rules (*qawā’id istidlāliyya*) employed in a legal dialectic in the absence of a clearly stipulated legal text (*naṣṣ*), *ijmā’* or *qiyās*.<sup>60</sup> Al-Ṭūfī explains that he only listed the results (*natā’ij*) of these inference rules without fully reproducing the *questions* and *objections* that Ibn al-Mi’mār had elaborated upon at length. He chose to present them in a simplified, abbreviated, and categorized format, tailored for practical use, especially for those who require clarity and conciseness due to limited time or learning capacity. He affirms that such rules are not merely logical tools, but they structure entire branches of legal inference and disputation. They clarify ambiguous cases and reinforce consistency in deduction. His contribution is to systematize these rules in a way that is both practical and tightly reasoned, combining the strength of classical jurisprudence with logical rigour.<sup>61</sup>

In his brief typology, al-Ṭūfī positions *istidlāl* at the heart of theological and legal reasoning. It grounds juridical and doctrinal claims in structured logic, accommodates both

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 55-81.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 81-91.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 90-91.

empirical and rational modes of knowing, recognises the epistemic interdependence of revelation and reason and offers a bridge between philosophical logic, legal methodology, and Qur'ānic argumentation. This approach reflects al-Tūfī's broader project of rationalising *jadal* within the framework of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, while preserving scriptural authority.

More broadly, what the structural overview from chapters one to four shows is that al-Tūfī's *jadal* theory consists of the following elements:

1. A dialectical lexicon.
2. A set of inference rules.
3. Argument types.
4. Virtues in argumentation (what ought to be done).
5. Vices in argumentation (what to avoid).
6. A criterion for evaluating arguments.
7. A defined format of dialectical exchange.

**'Chapter 5: an analysis of argumentation instances in the Qur'ān':** this is the largest chapter of the book and is a novel contribution by al-Tūfī to the genre of Islamic argumentation theory. Here he sequentially moves through the Qur'ānic *sūras* analysing select verses and passages through an argumentation framework. The specific format of al-Tūfī's analysis of these select verses or passages of the Qur'ān is of broadly two types:

Type-A analysis (explication): this is where a verse or passage of the Qur'ān that directly mentions a polemical encounter, exchange, dialogue or argument between a representative of God (prophets and messengers) and their adversaries captures - according to al-Tūfī - the features and aspects of argumentative protocols, techniques, methods and manoeuvres that he explains at length in chapters three and four. This analysis consists of a broad exegesis of the Qur'ānic content in order to identify any correspondence or exemplification they have with relevant ideas, precepts within the dialectical theory.

Type B analysis (reconstruction): this is where relevant Qur'ānic verses and passages appear amenable for rich argumentative analysis. This is achieved by al-Tūfī often through reconstructing the claims and statements of various interlocutors or reformulating passages of the Qur'ān in order to unearth their underlying logical structure which is then theologically and philosophically explicated.

Although al-Tūfī does not examine every *sūra* of the Qur'ān (either because he was unable to identify any substantive argument example in it or he felt he had already sufficiently covered examples in other *sūras* and thus wanted to avoid repetition), his scope is still indeed very impressive. Out of a total of 114 *sūras*, he examines select verses from 54 with *sūra* al-Baqara and al-Shu'arā' receiving the most extended treatments. His focus is on inferences and how methods of argumentation are constructed within their respective contexts. Some examples of these analysis types will be further examined in section three below.

**'The Epilogue':** the concluding part of '*Alam al-Jadhal*' is a select inventory of interesting 'marketplace' debates, discussions and exchanges throughout Islamic history. Examples range from the Prophet Muhammad's use of analogical reasoning, the strong dialogue between his Companions, the dialogues of various well-known scholarly personalities as well as less reputable ones from the Umayyad and Abbasid eras. The selection appears to be on account of either a display of some skill in debate, discussion and argumentation, witty and intelligent

retorts or employment of an identifiable feature of dialectical argumentation. To nearly each one of the debate examples, al-Ṭūfī gives his own gloss – marked by “I say” (*qultu*) – that not only identifies and explains argument features set out in his book but are also critical observations. There are a few reasons, I think, why al-Ṭūfī includes these debate examples. One reason is that he wants to cement in the reader’s mind how integral debate, discussion and dialogue are to Islamic intellectual culture stretching all the way back to the Prophet’s time. This would be to address any religious sceptics and hardliners that deny there is any place for *jadal* within Islamic discourse. Historical precedence in this way can be powerful evidence. Another reason is that the nature of argumentation (like interrogating for clarity, raising objections, positing reasons, etc.) is natural and immediate (something even children do and understand) and so denying it having any value or basis would be tantamount to denying an obvious aspect of human nature. Again, al-Ṭūfī probably has in mind the religious sceptics and hardliners who consider Islam as self-contained and require nothing beyond whatever is within the internal parameters of the Qur’ān and Sunna. By riveting argumentation to human nature, he can circumvent the claim that *jadal* is a foreign or borrowed discipline, alien to Islam. It cannot be alien if it is natural.<sup>62</sup> A final reason could be that although argumentation is something natural, there are nevertheless more technical and theoretical notions as well and more formal methods of how to argue and answer objections that are not so immediate and therefore require a specialist to present them for the reader in order to familiarise them with it. In this way, the epilogue has a pedagogical aim: learning how to argue is best achieved by being familiar with models of argumentation in order to imitate them. By al-Ṭūfī citing historical examples and not fictive ones, it means he cannot artificially contrive the questions and their responses and thus control the entire dialogue production; this allows the reader to appreciate the natural way arguments and claims are made, defended or attacked. Some of the sources for the examples brought in the epilogue include al-Mu’āfā’s *Kitāb al-Jalīs*, al-Mustawfi’s *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* and the *Kitāb Tabaqāt al-Mu’tazila* of Ibn al-Murtadā. Al-Ṭūfī’s justification for including anecdotes from the latter Mu’tazilī source (the one he cites the most) is because of the many debates and discussions the Mu’tazila had against Muslim adversaries; hence they were known to have a degree of proficiency and skill in that.<sup>63</sup>

Concluding this section of the article, several factors arguably make *‘Alam al-Jadhal* a highly significant text. I briefly mention only three of these factors. First, al-Ṭūfī through *‘Alam al-Jadhal* identifies himself within the tradition of more rationally inclined members of his School that do not blanketly censure theology (*kalām*), logic and argumentation. This favourability too positions him in a venerable line of Ḥanbalī predecessors who have also written on *jadal* like Abū Ya’lā (d. 458/1066), Ibn ‘Aqīl (d. 513/1119) and Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 634/1236-7).<sup>64</sup> Thus, the book extends this intellectualised dimension of Ḥanbalism. Second, *‘Alam al-Jadhal* is innovative in how it marries exegesis with argumentation inaugurating a new genre of Qur’ānic exegesis that Jane Dammen McAuliffe calls “topical commentary”<sup>65</sup> and what Rosalind Ward Gwynne more particularly characterises as “tafsīr *jadalī*” (dialectical exegesis).<sup>66</sup> Finally, al-Ṭūfī suggests how the Qur’ān is a paradigm of argumentation. This is

<sup>62</sup> Al-Mannā’ī, *al-Jadal al-Qur’ānī*, 32-33.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, *‘Alam al-Jadhal*, 239. For a list of al-Ṭūfī’s cited works, refer to 274-75.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Abdessamad Belhaj, “Disputation is a Fighting Sport: *Munāẓara* according to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya”, *Mamlūk Studies Review* 19 (2016), 79-89.

<sup>65</sup> Jane Dammen McAuliffe, “Debate with them in the Better Way: The Construction of a Qur’ānic Commonplace” in *Myths, Historical Archetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature: Towards a New Hermeneutic Approach. Proceedings of the International Symposium in Beirut, June 25<sup>th</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> 1996*, edited by Angelika Neuwirth et al (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 181.

<sup>66</sup> Rosalind Ward Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning in the Qur’ān: God’s Arguments* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), xix.

part of his overall polemical apologetics on the intellectual superiority of Islam and how the Qur'ānic testament is saturated with argumentation forms and techniques. He therefore heavily invests the Qur'ān with dialectical significance. This parallels in some ways, al-Ghazālī's endeavour two centuries earlier where he argued that logic itself is embedded in the Qur'ān which underscores its normativity for rational discourse and thereby investing it with an unprecedented theological significance.

### 3 Dialectical Exegesis

In this final section of the article, I give examples of Type A and Type B analysis, showing how al-Tūfī presents different arguments that are embedded in various interlocutions in the Qur'ān. I will first give examples of Type A analysis, where al-Tūfī systematically explores the Qur'ān's dialectical strategies, among which four distinct forms of argumentative engagement are particularly noteworthy: *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), *man'* (engagement through blocking or denial), *naqd* (refutation through contradiction), and *mu 'ārada* (counter-argumentation through opposition). These methods illustrate how the Qur'ān not only conveys divine truths but also actively engages and dismantles falsehoods through rigorous reasoning and rhetorical strategy. First, *qiyās* in the Qur'ānic context, as presented by al-Tūfī, refers to the use of comparison or analogy to demonstrate the absurdity of false beliefs or to affirm theological truths. Unlike formal logical syllogism, this form of *qiyās* is rooted in intuitive and rhetorical comparison, often appealing to what is known or observable to prove what is denied or doubted. Some examples are: (a) creation and resurrection: the Qur'ān frequently draws analogies between initial creation and resurrection. For instance: "*How can you disbelieve in Allah? When you were dead and He gave you life...*" (Q. 2:28) and "*The One who created them in the first place will bring them back*" (Q. 36:79). These examples argue that the recreation of human beings is no more difficult than their original creation, refuting objections to bodily resurrection.<sup>67</sup> (b) Earthly revival and eschatological resurrection: the Qur'ān draws comparisons between the revival of barren earth after rainfall and the resurrection of the dead: "*You see the earth lifeless, then We send down rain and it stirs and swells...*" (Q. 22:5; 50:11). This analogy demonstrates that just as lifeless soil can regenerate, so too can human bodies after decomposition. (c) Sociopolitical claims: in the appointment of Tālūt as king (Q. 2:247-252), the Israelites protest on the basis of his lack of wealth and tribal lineage. The Qur'ān replies by redefining kingship through knowledge and physical ability, not material or hereditary prestige. This contrast exposes the fallacy of their analogy, redirecting attention to merit over privilege.<sup>68</sup> (d) Iblīs's false analogy: Iblīs's claim that fire is superior to clay (Q. 7:12) is rejected. He assumes superiority based on material composition, but the Qur'ān exposes this as a flawed analogy, one that fails to grasp the criteria of divine preference, namely obedience and divine command.<sup>69</sup> *Qiyās* is thus used to bridge the known and the unknown, to invite reflection and expose contradictions in the interlocutor's worldview. It encourages inferential reasoning, often leading to epistemic humility and acknowledgment of divine power.

Second, *man'* refers to the Qur'ān's strategy of blocking or pre-emptively denying false assumptions or claims made by its opponents. It functions to interrupt a faulty line of reasoning before it is fully developed, often exposing the internal incoherence of the claim being made. Three examples are as follows: (a) "*When it is said to them: Do not cause corruption on the earth, they say: We are only reformers*" (Q. 2:11). The Qur'ān immediately blocks their self-

<sup>67</sup> See below under type B example.

<sup>68</sup> See below, fn. 77.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Tūfī, 'Alam al-Jadhal, 121-122.

righteous claim by asserting “*Indeed, they are the corrupters, but they perceive it not.*” Here, *man’* operates by identifying a contradiction between self-perception and actual behaviour, thereby negating moral legitimacy.<sup>70</sup> (b) “*Shall we believe as the foolish have believed?*” (Q. 2:13). The response, “*Indeed, they are the foolish, but they know not,*” blocks the pejorative framing of belief as folly and reverses the accusation, revealing the arrogance and ignorance of the speaker.<sup>71</sup> (c) Regarding divine use of creatures like flies as examples, sceptics object to such “lowly” metaphors (Q. 22:73). The Qur’ān responds by asserting that God is not ashamed to present such examples and that such parables lead some to guidance and others to misguidance. Here, the *man’* strategy pre-empts anthropomorphic assumptions about divine speech and reasserts divine wisdom.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, *man’* serves a corrective function, disarming interlocutors by undermining the premises upon which their arguments rest. Its rhetorical effect is to halt the spread of falsehood and redirect the audience to sound reasoning.

Third is *naqd*, the process by which a claim is refuted through direct contradiction, typically by exposing internal inconsistencies or historical hypocrisies. It reveals that the claim logically collapses when measured against either its own standards or established facts. A few examples al-Tūfī picks are: (a) “*Do you then believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?*” (Q. 2:85). This challenges the Jews who, while claiming to uphold the Torah, selectively ignore its commands. The Qur’ān exposes the contradiction between their profession of faith and their actual practice, rendering their claim of fidelity to revelation null and void.<sup>73</sup> (b) Those who claim to believe in their own scripture yet reject the Qur’ān are reminded that “*Moses came to you with clear signs, yet you took the calf (for worship) after him*” (Q. 2:91-92). Here, past actions invalidate present claims, and the claim of reverence for revelation is refuted by pointing to clear breaches. (c) “*We only believe in what was sent down to us*” (Q. 2:91). The Qur’ān refutes this by demonstrating that even their own prophets were killed or rejected, showing that this claim is neither consistent nor sincere.<sup>74</sup> (d) “*If the Home of the Hereafter is for you alone with Allah... then wish for death*” (Q. 2:94-96). Their unwillingness to die exposes the falsehood of their claim to divine exclusivity. It is a test of sincerity that reveals internal contradiction.<sup>75</sup> Hence, *naqd* operates through historical memory, moral exposure, and logical consequence. It renders the interlocutor’s position untenable, thereby affirming the Qur’ān’s rational and ethical superiority in the debate.

Finally, there is *mu’ārada*, which refers to the Qur’ānic method of confronting a false claim with a counter-claim, offering a logically and morally superior alternative. Rather than merely blocking or refuting, *mu’ārada* provides a parallel argument that inverts or deconstructs the opponent’s assertion. Examples include: (a) “*Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah cannot create a fly...*” (Q. 22:73). This is a mocking counter-example against the notion of idol-gods. If even the weakest of creatures overpowers them, how can they be divine?<sup>76</sup> (b) “*If you are in doubt about what We sent down... then produce a surah like it*” (Q. 2:23-24). A challenge by counter-demonstration, where the Qur’ān asserts its inimitability and invites critics to replicate its linguistic and theological majesty - knowing they cannot. (c) The Israelites object to Tālūt’s kingship due to his lack of wealth. The counterclaim is that God endowed him with knowledge and physical strength, which are truer indicators of leadership. The Qur’ān thereby overturns materialistic assumptions (e.g. lineage and status) about political legitimacy (see Q. 2:247).<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

(d) “*Had it been from anyone other than Allah, you would have found in it many contradictions*” (Q. 4:82). The Qur’ān addresses accusations of forgery by challenging critics to find contradictions, which are absent - thus invalidating the claim and reinforcing the truth of divine authorship.<sup>78</sup> (e) The people of Hūd accuse him of madness; he asserts his integrity and divine mission, dismantles their appeals to ancestral religion, and calls for rational submission (Q. 7:65-71).<sup>79</sup> Thus, we see that *mu’ārada* serves as a strategic offensive, turning the opponent’s logic against them by offering a sharper, more coherent narrative. Its function is not merely to silence but to displace the falsehood with truth, inviting reflection and repentance.

The Qur’ān’s dialectical engagement as illuminated by al-Ṭūfī reveals a methodologically rich and rhetorically sophisticated discourse. Through *qiyās*, the Qur’ān invites analogical reasoning; through *man‘*, it halts false assumptions; through *naqd*, it dismantles inconsistencies; and through *mu’ārada*, it confronts and replaces falsehood with truth. Together, these methods reflect the Qur’ān’s aim not only to instruct but to persuade, reform, and guide, offering divine reasoning for human reflection.

As for Type B, I will briefly examine two of al-Ṭūfī’s reconstructed analysis of Qur’ānic passages but due to space will restrict myself to examples of the categorical syllogism BARBARA that he identifies. The first example is Q. 39:71-72. It recounts how the guardians of hell (*khazana*) remind the cohort of non-believers about to be entered into hellfire how they wilfully rejected the invitations of divinely dispatched Messengers and cannot use God’s foreknowledge as an excuse for causally determining their own choices:

*And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups until, when they reach it, its gates are opened and its keepers will say, “Did there not come to you messengers from yourselves, reciting to you the verses of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this Day of yours?” They will say, “Yes”, but the word of punishment has come into effect upon the disbelievers. [To them] it will be said, “Enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein, and wretched is the residence of the arrogant.”*

Al-Ṭūfī formulates this response by hell’s guardians in AAA form as follows:<sup>80</sup>

- (1) Whoever has been warned and disbelieves will enter the hellfire.
- (2) A group of you have been warned and disbelieved.
- (3) A group of you will enter the fire.

He considers the argument a species of “accepting the conclusion entailed by accepting the premises” and one that is “clear in and of itself”.<sup>81</sup> For perhaps rhetorical effectiveness, al-Ṭūfī inverts the order of the major and minor premises in his formulation.<sup>82</sup> Although this does not affect the validity of the argument, it is nevertheless a departure from strict and standard form of the categorical syllogism that states the major premise first followed by the minor premise. I have retained the standard form in the above formulation.<sup>83</sup> The core logic of the argument he is uncovering is that any warnings that are not wilfully heeded result in damnation and thus anyone who dismisses such warning will also be damned.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 108-109

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning*, 159.

<sup>81</sup> Al-Ṭūfī, ‘Alam al-Jadhal, 193 and Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning*, 159.

<sup>82</sup> Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning*, 159.

<sup>83</sup> Al-Mannā‘ī, *al-Jadal al-Qur’ānī*, 63.

The second example is Q. 50:3-5, where the denial of resurrection by non-believers followed by God's response is recounted as follows:

*"When we have died and have become dust, [we will return to life]? That is a distant return." We know what the earth diminishes of them, and with Us is a retaining record. But they denied the truth when it came to them, so they are in a confused condition.*

Al-Tūfī's construction of the argument in AAA is as follows:<sup>84</sup>

- (1) Whatever is announced by one who tells the truth will occur.
- (2) Bodily resurrection is a possibility announced by one who tells the truth.
- (3) Therefore, bodily resurrection will occur.

Again al-Tūfī interchanges the order of the major and minor premises (and thereby departs from the strict form of the categorical syllogism). I have once again retained the standard form in the above formulation.<sup>85</sup> The incredulity of the non-believers in there being a bodily resurrection (v.3) is met by God's reply (vv.4-5). The metaphysical possibility of bodily resurrection is established through God's knowledge of the post-mortem conditions of all decomposed bodies (v.4) and the epistemic possibility is established by God informing human beings through Prophets and Messengers about its occurrence (v.5). The veracity of these Prophets and Messengers are confirmed by evidentiary miracles. Al-Tūfī gives a Type-B analysis of Q. 50:3-5 spelling out the theological argument embedded in the verses in a little more detail.

## Conclusion

Al-Tūfī's *'Alam al-Jadhal fī 'Ilm al-Jadal* stands out as novel contribution to Islamic dialectical theory. It represents a sophisticated synthesis of jurisprudential logic, theological disputation, and Qur'ānic hermeneutics. While drawing on the technical resources of classical *jadal*, al-Tūfī radically reframes its application by relocating its centre of gravity to the Qur'ān itself. In doing so, he does not merely reference scriptural examples to illustrate dialectical rules but proposes that the Qur'ān is in fact the archetype of argumentation, rich in logical, analogical, and rhetorical strategies. Through the fourfold typology of *qiyās*, *man'*, *naqd*, and *mu'āraḍa*, al-Tūfī uncovers the Qur'ān's underlying inferential architecture and frames divine speech as a model of rational engagement. This in turn transforms *jadal* from a technical discipline into a hermeneutic imperative: a means of reading Scripture that foregrounds intellectual integrity, coherence, and truth-seeking. Furthermore, al-Tūfī's recognition of *istithnā'ī* and *hamlī* inferences, his commitment to debate ethics, and his extensive use of historical exempla all underscore the epistemic seriousness with which he approached dialectic - not as eristic combat but as a spiritually responsible search for truth. In a post-classical milieu where rationalist disciplines were increasingly marginalised or moralised, *'Alam al-Jadhal* offers a unique glimpse into a tradition striving to balance reason, revelation, and polemical necessity. It warrants renewed scholarly attention not only as a text in dialectics but as a window into how Muslim intellectuals once imagined the rational structure of divine speech - and how, perhaps, it might be reimagined today.

<sup>84</sup> See Gwynne, *Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning*, 159 and Cf. Erkan, "Necmeddin et-Tūfī'nin", 143-44.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Tūfī, *'Alam al-Jadhal*, 199-200.



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