

Yasin Apaydın. *Metafizikğin Meselesini Temellendirmek: Tecrîd Geleneği Bağlamında Umûr-ı Âmme Sorunu* [Justifying the Question of Metaphysics: The Problem of al-Umûr al-Âmme in the Context of the Tajrîd Tradition]. Istanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2019. 341 pages. ISBN: 9786052105450.

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Research on post-classical Islamic thought is proliferating in Turkey. Works written in the post-classical period, especially commentaries and glosses, have increasingly drawn academics' attention in the last decade. İsmail Kara's (2011) book generally evaluates the nature and features of the literature on commentaries and glosses.¹ It is one of the leading sources in Turkish on this topic and points to why this literature should be studied. In his book, Kara mentions Naşîr al-Dîn al-Ṭûsî's (d. 672/1274) treatise, usually referred to as *Tajrîd al-al-'aqqâ'id*, being among the many fundamental texts that have generated commentaries and glosses. In recent years, Ṭûsî's treatise as well as its commentaries and glosses has been the subject of many studies (i.e., theses, articles, and critical editions). Yasin Apaydın's work under review here is the first book written in Turkish with the aim of addressing the concept of *al-umûr al-'amma* [general matters] in the context of the commentaries and glosses on *Tajrîd*.

The book is in fact a revised edition of Apaydın's doctoral dissertation (2017), which he completed at Istanbul University.² The revisions include the addition of the main title *Justifying the Question of Metaphysics*. This is appropriate, as

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1 İsmail Kara, *İlim Bilmez Tarih Hatırlamaz: Şerh ve Haşiye Meselesine Dair Birkaç Not* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2011).

2 Yasin Apaydın, "Tecrîdü'l-Akâid Geleneğinde Umûr-ı Âmme Sorunu" (Doctoral dissertation, Istanbul University, 2017).

the book addresses a more general audience of philosophy and also shows the topic of *al-umūr al-‘amma* to include the fundamental concepts of metaphysics. The book consists of a foreword, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and an appendix. In the foreword, the author specifies the aim of the book as a philosophical analysis of the genealogy, nature, and content of the concept of *al-umūr al-‘amma* by focusing on the texts in the *Tajrīd* tradition (9). In the introduction, Apaydın presents a critical literature review and states the existing studies to have generally dealt with the concepts discussed under the section on *al-umūr al-‘amma* (i.e., existence, quiddity, unity, and necessity) but to have as of yet not touched upon the notion of *al-umūr al-‘amma* itself. Thus, he emphasizes his work to differentiate from previous ones in that it deals with this question and fills the gap in the literature (27). The resulting work must be said to contribute to the field regarding its thematic approach and its successful use of primary sources.

In the introduction, Apaydın first constrains the subject matter of the work. He then theoretically situates his perspective against the narrative of decline by pointing out the problems in the historiography of commentaries and glosses. According to the decline narrative, the texts written after the classical period in the form of commentaries and glosses reflect an intellectual regression. On the contrary, Apaydın suggests *Tajrīd*, a 13th-century treatise written in a laconic language, to have triggered a new interpretive tradition, not a regression. Its commentaries and glosses over the centuries have elaborated upon the inquiries dealt with in the extremely concise text of *Tajrīd*. Among these inquiries is *al-umūr al-‘amma*, to which the author devoted his book in order to demonstrate how the discussions had historically developed within the related texts. Apaydın analyzes these texts by dividing them first into commentaries and glosses. In this way, he shows the relationships commentaries and glosses have with one another. He observes the questions in the commentaries to have been later expanded upon in the glosses as well as in the treatises that focused on those questions. Also, he mentions the problem of determining the commentators’ and glossators’ opinions. According to the author, identifying scholars through the objections they articulated is a defective approach. Instead, Apaydın adopts an interpretive approach that tries to explain first the scholars’ relationship with the main text and then to designate the different ideas in their other works and hence evaluate each text in its own context (26). This interpretive approach is reflected in the restrictions of the book as indicated by *in the Context of the Tajrīd Tradition* in the subtitle. In particular the third chapter, in which the main idea of the book is handled, shows the thinkers to have assumed diverse positions in their various works. For instance, comparing

Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī's (d. 816/1413) interpretations in his *Hāshiyat al-Tajrīd* to those in his *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* shows that they differ (269). In other words, different perspectives about a problem can be encountered when looking at the different works of a thinker.

In Chapter 1, "*Tajrīd al-'aqqā'id* and the Formation of the Tajrīd Tradition," the author underlines the importance of *Tajrīd* and then examines the nature and content of eight commentaries and six glosses from this tradition alongside another six treatises confined to the problem of *al-umūr al-'amma*. Kātib Çelebi (d. 1067/1657) in his *Kashf al-zunūn* mentioned 37 of the more than 200 works written on *Tajrīd*. In order to limit his book, the author has chosen the most cited works in the literature and those that have a novel approach. After comparing these works, he reveals the changing and unchanging aspects of the questions within.

According to Apaydın, the term *tajrīd al-'aqqā'id* itself, which means abstracting previous discourses on creed after critically evaluating them, indicates the importance of the work. With its brevity, it has been one of the most influential works to initiate a new writing genre in Islamic intellectual history (38). The author quotes Tūsi's reason for having adopted this compositional form as being that it makes the text easy to memorize (41); however, Apaydın notes that this cannot be the only reason. Apaydın alludes to the political changes of the period and recalls the efforts of the time to constitute the curriculum of the al-Mustansiriyya Madrasa in Baghdād as possibly having influenced Tūsi's writing style in the background. Thus, he finds a close connection between Tūsi's writing style and the method for developing a madrasa curriculum (42-43). Even though *Tajrīd* is well-known for its last chapter on *imamate*, which is a controversial topic among different theological sects, the chapter on *al-umūr al-'amma* did not contain sectarian tensions and was relatively neglected. As a result, the whole text was presented as a controversial work. Apaydın, however, highlights its unifying aspect over its controversial one. He calls for studying the textual tradition that has grown around this work, especially for editing the related manuscripts (51). Indeed, most of the commentaries and glosses on *Tajrīd* have focused on the topic of *al-umūr al-'amma* instead of the *imamate*.

The change *Tajrīd* had brought about can be seen in its content as well as in the arrangement of the topics. With his *Tajrīd* commentary entitled *Tasdid al-qawā'id*, Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 749/1349) became the first commentator to interpret how Tūsi had ordered the six chapters of *Tajrīd* by making hierarchical connections between each topic. Apaydın points out the relationship between this order of

the chapters to show textual coherence, and the learning process of the subjects. Because Ṭūsī's system is established over the first chapter on *al-umūr al-‘amma*, the author asserts that *Tajrīd* is based on metaphysics (53).

Apaydın divides the works written on *Tajrīd* into two groups. The first group includes the works written on the whole text in general. These are in the form of commentaries and finding the commentators' own views in them is difficult. For example, Lāhijī (d. 1072/1661), the author of the most voluminous commentary *Shawāriq al-ilhām*, quoted from many different sources but did not provide his own views (88). The second group covers the works that focus on a certain problem in a later period. These are in the form of glosses or super-glosses, and their authors dealt with only a certain chapter or one issue from the main text. They presented the views they had that differed from previous thinkers. For example, Samsūnī's (d. 919/1513) gloss on *Tajrīd* is only about the issue of existence and quiddity, which is a section from Ṭūsī's first chapter. In his gloss, Samsūnī criticized previous interpretations and presented his own evaluations in detail (107).

Apaydın compares and contrasts the commentaries on *Tajrīd* and points out the differences and similarities among them. For instance, when introducing *Tasdīd al-qawā'id*, he states its commonalities with the previous commentary from al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) *Kashf al-murād* and notes some new problems that appeared in *Tasdīd* (62). Furthermore, Apaydın frequently mentions the importance of the student-teacher connection and of teaching activities in the making of the *Tajrīd* tradition. In this regard, ‘Alī al-Qūshjī (d. 879/1474) and Jurjānī were very influential on later scholars. After Khaṭībzāde (d. 901/1496) had written his gloss, the reputation of *Tajrīd* was seen to have increased in the Ottoman lands in particular, and with Ṭaşköprizāde's (d. 968/1561) gloss, the accumulation of various interpretations were seen to be transmitted to the next generations and to have retained its vitality. In addition, Apaydın cites the beginning of discussions between Mīr Şadr al-Dīn Shirāzī (d. 903/1498) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 908/1502), both of whom have glosses on Qūshjī's commentary, and corrects some misleading information in the sources by comparatively analyzing them. Kātib Çelebi noted that Dawānī had first written a gloss and then Shirāzī wrote another gloss aimed at criticizing the first and thus starting the discussion. Apaydın has doubts about this and determined no reference to Dawānī to exist in Shirāzī's gloss. Based on this and other proofs, Apaydın argues that Shirāzī wrote the first gloss among these two glossators (95, 101). At the end of Chapter 1, Apaydın evaluates six treatises among the literature on *al-umūr al-‘amma* treatises, these six being written as superglosses on the

texts taught in Ottoman madrasas such as *Tajrīd* and *al-Mawāqif*. These treatises demonstrate how the question of *al-umūr al-‘amma* had become an independent area of study in the Ottoman geography (129).

Chapter 2 of the study, as indicated by the title “Discussions on the Subject Matter-Questions and the Problem of Division of Existents as Preparatory of *al-Umūr al-‘Āmma*,” examines the elements that had contributed to the emergence and development of *al-umūr al-‘amma*. These elements include discussions on the subject matter (*mawḍū*), universal science, and division (*taqṣīm*) of existents in later theologians’ (*muta’akhhirūn*) works. *Al-Umūr al-‘amma* was first used in Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī’s (d. 606/1210) *al-Mabāḥith* as a chapter title. However, Apaydın examines the connection between the subject matter of metaphysics and its questions (*masā’il*) by tracing back to the works of al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). Also, by looking at the division of sciences, Apaydın tries to determine *al-umūr al-‘amma*’s position in metaphysics. Apaydın considers al-Lawkarī (d. 517/1123) to have made an important contribution in his work *Bayān al-ḥaqq* by dividing metaphysics into two. Lawkarī called the first part universal science (*al-‘ilm al-kullī*) and the second part science of the Lord (*al-‘ilm al-rubūbī*). Locating *al-umūr al-‘amma* under universal science, he separated it from theology (166). In this context, Apaydın emphasizes al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), the founder of illuminationist philosophy, to have divided metaphysics into divine science (*al-‘ilm al-ilāhī*) and universal science and to have placed the division of existents under universal science. Afterwards, Apaydın addresses later theologians’ approaches to the subject matter of a discipline and its questions. He examines the interpretations about determining the subject matter of *kalām*, its principles, and its questions in *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* in particular. Then he reveals the contributions the *Tajrīd* tradition has made to the discussion on subject matter. Even though *Tajrīd* does not have a section on the subject matter of *kalām* in its text, most *Tajrīd* commentators and glossators were interested in this problem. Another problem related to *al-umūr al-‘amma* is the division of existents as put forth in the introduction of Iṣfahānī’s commentary on the *Tajrīd*. Apaydın calls this kind of division “multiple division of existents”, (215) which encompasses both philosophical and theological traditions through a general and concise outlook. Apaydın differentiates the attitudes to the divisions that appeared before and after Iṣfahānī. He concludes that a close relationship had existed between *al-umūr al-‘amma* and the division of existents in the *Tajrīd* tradition.

Chapter 3, which provides the main idea of the book and is titled “The Problem of

al-Umūr al-‘Āmma: Definition and Approaches,” covers the four basic approaches to the definition of *al-umūr al-‘āmma* and the three kinds of approaches to its properties. By attempting a definition, Apaydın presents the problematization process of *al-umūr al-‘āmma* and discussions on its nature and content. He focuses on the reasons for it having been posed as a philosophical problem itself (237). As for the content of *al-umūr al-‘āmma*, Ṭūsī divided it into three parts in *Tajrīd*: (i) existence and non-existence, (ii) quiddity and its attachments, and (iii) cause and effect.

Ṭūsī did not define *al-umūr al-‘āmma* in *Tajrīd*; however, some commentaries alluded to its definition while later glosses explicitly and extensively discussed it. Apaydın (277) gathers and classifies those definitions under four headings: commonality (*ishtirāk*), inclusion (*shumūl*), particularity (*ikhtisāṣ*), and opposition (*taqābul*). Those emphasizing commonality define *al-umūr al-‘āmma* as “common things in all or most of the existents” (246). Some thinkers preferred a definition that would indicate its inclusive feature and thus used the phrase *al-umūr al-shāmila* instead of *al-umūr al-‘āmma*. In this respect, they usually defined it as “inclusive things for all or most of the existents” (256). When analyzing the interpretations on the content of *al-umūr al-‘āmma*, the effects of the discussions on the subject matter become visible. For example, according to al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), if the subject matter of *kalām* is “that which is known” (*ma‘lūm*), not “existent” (*mawjūd*), then the definition must be changed to “inclusive things for most of the existents and non-existents” (264). Al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) defined *al-umūr al-‘āmma* in his *Mawāqif* as “things not unique to any part of the existent (i.e., necessary/substance/accident).” Apaydın notes this third definition to emphasize the fact that *al-umūr al-‘āmma* is not particular to any part of existents (266). Qūshjī related this definition to the arrangement of *Tajrīd* in which *al-umūr al-‘āmma* needs an independent chapter because it does not belong to any part of the existent (271). According to the fourth definition propounded by Jurjānī, *al-umūr al-‘āmma* includes concepts and their opposites, such as existence and non-existence. These four approaches have been criticized and revised over the course of time.

Besides the above-mentioned definitions, various properties of *al-umūr al-‘āmma* have been discussed. Apaydın classifies these discussions on its properties into two periods: Before and after the emergence of its definitions. The property of essential accident (*‘araḍ dhātī*) was put forth prior to the emergence of definitions for *al-umūr al-‘āmma* while the properties of being principle and second intelligible were emphasized afterward. The author first scrutinizes the association between *al-umūr al-‘āmma* and essential accident. When looking at the later period, its other properties

such as being principle (*mabādi*) became more prevalent over essential accident. The emphasis on *al-umūr al-‘amma* being principle occurred in different levels too. İşfahānī qualified it as principle and stated that it took primacy because it is more clear than theological questions (294). Lastly, Apaydın handles the association of *al-umūr al-‘amma* with being a second intelligible. Tūsī made a connection between first intelligibles and second intelligibles. As an example, he qualified the concepts of *one* and *many* as the first intelligibles and the concepts of *oneness* and *plurality* as second intelligibles. İşfahānī confirmed Tūsī on this matter and asserted that “second intelligibles are accidents which attach to the first intelligibles in the mind; no form is found to correspond to them in the outside world” (304). On the other hand, Qūshjī criticized Tūsī’s view and opened the door to new discussions. These three properties show the location of *al-umūr al-‘amma* in metaphysics. The appendix section of Apaydın’s book contains two tables, including the subtitles for the *al-umūr al-‘amma* chapters in pre- and post-*Tajrīd* works. These tables present a general view on the differences among the works. Examining these charts before reading the third chapter of the book would benefit readers in being able to follow the discussions.

The only questionable issue in the book is the way the thinkers who have appeared in the *Tajrīd* tradition were introduced. Apaydın objects to strict disciplinary approaches that distinguish the works of *falsafa* from *kalām* in post-classical Islamic thought (26). Therefore, Apaydın in Chapter 1 mentions two kinds of discourses regarding whether the location of *Tajrīd* is in the *kalām* [theology] or *falsafa* [philosophy] tradition. The first discourse is that *falsafa* melted into *kalam*, and the second is that *kalam* melted into *falsafa*. Apaydın states his preference for the first approach (i.e., *kalām* contains *falsafa*) and provides supportive evidence from Ibn Khaldūn’s (d. 808/1406) work. This view can be supported with the fact that the commentators and glossators of *Tajrīd* are theologians, even though Tūsī has been viewed as an Avicennian philosopher (46). However, Apaydın implies viewing some commentators and glossators of *Tajrīd* (e.g., Hıllī, Qūshjī, Dawānī, Khaṭībzāde and Ṭāşköprizāde) as belonging to the philosophy discipline, for he qualifies them with the notion of “philosopher” in various parts of the book (94, 201, 220, 278, 311). In fact, philosopher was used in that period as a term for the thinkers who followed the Peripatetic tradition. Although they may be described as such with today’s more expansive notion of philosopher, observing the distinctions prevalent at the time, the studies written in the history of Islamic thought would have been better. If not, then mentioning his preference in the introduction of the study would have been more appropriate.

In conclusion, I should enunciate the book to be a product of meticulous research. When examining how the issue was handled and the rich sources that were used, clearly great effort has been spent in writing the book. The book has a fluency in narrative and language for those who are familiar with Islamic thought. The different parts of the book being very well connected should be emphasized as it makes following the arguments easy. With this study, Apaydın has unearthed several commentaries and glosses that have not been edited or published yet. The author also used the critical editions cautiously and consulted the original manuscript copies when needed. Making evaluations based on primary sources has enhanced the value of Apaydın's work. In addition, his way of analyzing the writing styles of the commentaries and glosses and showing the differences among them through examples makes this a significant study. With these features, the book exemplifies a good conceptual study in philosophy using a historical method. Being the first book on the *Tajrid* tradition in Turkish, this study of Apaydın cannot be ignored in future studies on the topic.