

Murat Kaş. *İrade ve Özgürlük Eylem ve Değer: Mukaddimât-ı Erbaa Tartışmaları Kavram-Problem-Argüman-Yaklaşım Haritası*. Ankara: Sonçağ Akademi Yayınları, 2023. 195 sayfa. ISBN: 9786256569010

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The place of the will (*irāda*) in actions and the related issue of freedom are at the heart of metaethical debates. A second problem area related to this is the criterion by which the value of moral actions is determined. These two significant ethical issues are analyzed within different disciplines and contexts in the Islamic tradition. Since the establishment of *kalām*, key issues include the acts of servants, how to ground their will and freedom in God's will and creation, and how to determine the source of moral action between the axes of reason and divine determination. These have constituted the main concerns of the discipline. Peripatetic Islamic philosophy treated issues such as will, freedom, and the value of actions as part of necessitarian causality. Later Peripatetic philosophers were categorized under the “*jabrī*” approach to human actions, suggesting a deterministic view. After Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), a critical stance permeated both theoretical disciplines, such as philosophy, *taşawwuf*, and *kalām*, and the discourse and methodology of Islamic sciences, such as *uşūl al-fiqh*. Consequently, the intensity and depth of discussions on human actions increased in the texts of *uşūl al-fiqh*. A crucial example of this is Şadr al-Sharī'a (d. 747/1346), whose approach to human freedom and the value of human action through the four premises (*al-muqaddimāt al-arba'a*) was so influential that this part of the text became the subject of many commentaries and glosses for centuries after him. His work formed a significant sphere of dis-

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cussion and literature known as “*al-muqaddimât al-arba’a treatises.*” The text has become particularly significant because it influences other issues of *kalâm* and *uṣûl al-fiqh* and remains a lively area of debate between the Ash’ari and Mâturîdî theological positions.

Recently, scholars have been focusing on the commentaries and glosses on Şadr al-Sharî’a’s *al-Muqaddimât al-arba’a* in various articles and theses. Notably, there has been an increase in studies analyzing the contents of these works by considering all the commentaries and glossaries collectively. However, there has not yet been a metaethical study that comprehensively addresses Şadr al-Sharî’a’s position along with the interpretations and criticisms from commentators and *muḥaṣṣhî* (glossators) in a holistic manner. Murat Kaş’s work, titled *İrade ve Özgürlük Eylem ve Değer: Mukaddimât-ı Erbaa Tartışmaları Kavram-Problem-Argüman-Yaklaşım Haritası*, aims to fill this gap in the literature. As stated in the book’s title, the author organizes the book into three chapters: a concept map of the tradition of interpretation woven around the four premises, a problem-argument map, and a map of the positions. By doing so, the author aims to trace the development of concepts and issues formed around the *al-Muqaddimât al-arba’a* and highlight previously unaddressed problem domains.

In the first chapter, where he draws a conceptual map, he discusses the concepts of *fi’l* (act), *nafs al-amr*, *i’tibâr*, *iqā’*, *wujûb* (necessity), *irâda-ikhtiyâr* (will-free choice), *tarjîh*, *qaşd* (intention), *kasb*, *’aqlî* (reason-based), *dhâtî* (essential) and *ḥusn-qubḥ* (good-evil). Although many of these concepts are commonly applied in theoretical discussions with certain central meanings, each theoretical scholar has transformed these concepts by assigning new meanings to them within the framework of his theory. Therefore, before moving on to the content of the discussions, we need to clarify the content of these concepts by taking into account the limits Şadr al-Sharî’a maintained in the context of the four premises and the contributions of later commentators. Among these concepts, “*iqā’*” has a particular role. This is because Şadr al-Sharî’a allocated this concept as an intermediate category to provide a basis for human freedom and clarify the process between will and action, placing this concept at the center of his perspective on will-freedom. To ground that human is free

1 For the further information about this literature see Asım Cüneyd Köksal, “Osmanlılarda Mukaddimât-ı Erbaa Literatürü”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 14/27 (February 2018), 101-132; Şule Güldü, *Osmanlı Dönemi Fıkıh Usûlü Çalıřmaları: Hüsin-Kubuh Zemininde Oluřan Mukaddimât-ı Erba’a Literatürü*, (Ankara: İlahîyat Yayınları, 2021).

in his actions, Şadr al-Sharī'a introduced the concept of *īqā'*, which is not "created" and therefore neither existent (*mawjūd*) nor non-existent (*ma'dūm*), but can only be considered as an "*ītibār*". *īqā'* is accepted as a "*ḥāl*", but although it is neither existent nor non-existent, *īqā'* is not identical with all the consequences of Abū al-Ḥāshim's (d. 321/933) *aḥwāl* theory. This is because entities such as existence, unity, and contingency are characterized by those who do not accept the *aḥwāl* position as neither existent nor non-existent. Thus, it is impossible to accept the category of "being neither existent nor non-existent" as identical to the category of *ḥāl*. On the other hand, Kaş states that even if we agree that *īqā'* is a *ḥāl*, the key point here is not that it is a *ḥāl*, but that it is something exists in the *nafs al-amr* (24). Among the commentators, issues such as the meaning of *īqā'* as a concept that is neither existent nor non-existent, and the implications of understanding *īqā'* as a *ḥāl*, caused severe debates (22-30). Yet why did Şadr al-Sharī'a feel compelled to develop the concept of *īqā'* to ground human freedom? From his point of view, analyzing human action through will and *ikhtiyār* alone without acknowledging *īqā'* leads to an infinite regression by attributing the act to the creator, and as a result, the *murajjihs* ends in "something eternal" such as God's essence and his will. In this case, since the act is necessary, *jabr* comes into play and human freedom is no longer applicable. More precisely, "while the existing act comes into existence through the creation of divine power, *īqā'* is a part of the complete cause necessary for the existing act to come into existence" (27). In this case, in the relation established between the servant's *īqā'* and God's creation, since *īqā'* is *ītibārī*, it is not subject to *takwīn*, and thereby a voluntary (*ikhtiyārī*) space is opened for the servant's inclination towards action. The will of the servant is not subject to divine power, but the "act" formed by the combination of the *īqā'* and the will of the servant becomes subject to divine power. In this context, the author draws attention to the fundamental problem of how *īqā'* can be attributed to the power of the servant and the creation of the act to divine power. This is because the "act" exists externally as a single thing dependent on divine *takwīn* and the servant's *īqā'*, whereas *takwīn* and *īqā'* are separate entities from the act in the *nafs al-amr* (30).

After analyzing the concepts, in the second chapter titled "Problem-Argument Map," the author deals with the sub-problems of will-freedom and the origin of moral judgments within the four premises. He analyses this on the axis of the principle of *ḥusn-qubḥ*. The author has made this connection because Şadr al-Sharī'a, while grounding the human will and freedom, made references to the discussions on the principle of *ḥusn-qubḥ*. In this chapter, the author analyses the problems related to the problem of will-freedom under the titles of "Negation of the Will," "The Claim and

Denial of Absolute Autonomy,” and “The Doctrine of Non-Creative Active Act (*Īqā'*).” The other main titles in the chapter are “The Problem of *Husn-Qubh*” and “Secondary Problems,” in which the author briefly touches upon the issues related to the subject. The author’s main purpose in drawing the problem-argument map is to reveal the context of the discussion that will make Şadr al-Sharī’a’s position clearer in the third chapter. The second part analyzes the views of the two main problems of will-freedom and *husn-qubh* among the Mutazilite-Ash’arite schools within the framework of Şadr al-Sharī’a’s references. In Şadr al-Sharī’a’s view, the two propositions underlying the Ash’arite theory of *husn-qubh* are: “*husn* and *qubh* are not essential” and “the servant has no will”. This position, which is an example of the necessity of the servant’s actions, is expressed by the author in the form of the following syllogism:

- a. The acts of the servant are not voluntary.
- b. Anything that is not voluntary cannot be labeled *husn* and *qubh*.
- c. Therefore, the servant’s action cannot be labeled with *husn* and *qubh* (76).

Kaş suggests that Şadr al-Sharī’a developed the *al-muqaddimāt al-arba’a* in opposition the first premise of this argument, namely, to prove that servants have volition in the emergence of their actions. After demonstrating that a servant has will and volition, he put forward an argument against the second premise that would prove that *husn-qubh* is rational in a way that differs from the Mutazilite approach and conforms to the Maturīdi perspective. This is because if the servant’s action is not voluntary, there will be no reason-based determination of his action. In this case, it follows that *husn-qubh* will be determined not by reason but by *sharī’a*. An act that is not voluntary but accidental and necessary cannot be defined by reason-based *husn* and *qubh*. If it is proved that the servant has volition, this conclusion regarding *husn-qubh* will also change. Kaş argues that Şadr al-Sharī’a’s approach to the servant’s will, which can be expressed as “neither *jabr* nor *tafwīd*, but something in between”, can also be read as a criticism of the Mutazilite position and the philosophers’ claims. In his opinion, Şadr al-Sharī’a considers al-Ash’arī’s view as “an aspect that ignores volition” because he sees no difference between absolute *jabr* and moderate *jabr* (*jabr al-mutawassīt*) as a result (77).

For Şadr al-Sharī’a, *īqā'*, which is neither existent nor non-existent, is the element that provides the connection between the temporal act and the eternal being, and at the same time, human freedom is grounded on the existence of this element. Human freedom can be justified only by proposing that *īqā'* is not related to God through

necessity. The *iqā'*, which is subject to human power, is necessarily brought into existence together with the other elements attached to it for the actualization of the act, and as a result, it is "created" by God. Therefore, he demonstrated that *iqā'* is neither existent nor non-existent. Therefore, both the view of God as *mūjib bi-l-dhāt* is ruled out and the conception of a God who has a will is grounded in a way that does not compromise the servant's freedom. Ṣadr al-Sharī'a turned away from both the necessitarian understanding of God, which was the approach of philosophers, and the Ash'arite approach, which could not justify the servant's having will even though it was *jabr al-mutawassit*. On the other hand, he could explain God's creation and the servant's volition in a way that is not contradictory.

After discussing the relation of the servant's will with *iqā'* and *ḥusn-qubḥ*, the author moves on to secondary subjects. He states two reasons for dealing with these topics: 1. To show which matters relate to the discussions on these two issues. 2. To determine which subjects the commentators who deepen the debate use the two primary issues as a channel to bring up (104). The author states that when dealing with secondary issues, he analyses them regarding their connection with the two main issues and does not draw a detailed argument map. Considering the book's main subject, this preference seems correct regarding respecting the limits drawn.

After presenting the concepts and argument map, in the third chapter titled "Map of the Positions", the author presents Ṣadr al-Sharī'a's position on the two issues and the tradition of commentary on the content of the ideas in detail. Kaş states that although there are different classifications of these positions in the commentaries on the *al-Muqaddimāt al-arba'a*, there is no detailed discussion on them. The main focus of the author in this chapter is as follows: The problem of will, which Ṣadr al-Sharī'a addresses with four premises, how the issue of *ḥusn-qubḥ*, which he discusses concerning the problem of will, is analyzed in the commentaries of the *al-Muqaddimāt al-arba'a*, and how it is subject to criticism or approval. Kaş argues that al-Ṣadr al-Sharī'a's approach to will and freedom, which is based on four premises, is oriented towards moderate *jabr* (*jabr al-mutawassit*), which is the position of Ash'arism, rather than a strict understanding of *jabr* that rejects human will altogether. On the other hand, the author argues that Ṣadr al-Sharī'a opposes the Mutazilite view of the human as an autonomous being that gives existence to the act (*tafwīḍ/istiqlāl*) and develops a different interpretation of the theory of *kasb* supported by *iqā'* and *qasd*. Taking all these into account, Kaş constructed his map of the positions in a way that centered on the concepts of *jabr*, *tafwīḍ*, and *kasb*.

In Şadr al-Sharī'a's account, a theory of *kasb* that does not include the idea of *īqā'* seems to be destined to lead to moderate *jabr* (132). In this case, the author asks whether *kasb* is directly *īqā'* itself or something else that includes it. To him, it is necessary to draw attention to the concept of "*qaşd*" to clarify what the referent of *kasb* is. In Kaş's interpretation, *īqā'* means the actualization of the act by first demonstrating the will and then the power; thus, *kasb* consists of the combination of two *qaşds* and *īqā'* related to the will and power (151). Since the human intention is an incomplete cause (*al-'illa al-nāqışa*) of the act's existence, it does not necessitate actualization. On the contrary, the existence of a complete cause, which includes elements such as "divine power and will, the essence, will, power, *qaşd* and *īqā'* of the human being, and the absence of obstacles" necessitates the act (152).

The author examines the approaches to *husn-qubh* with the modern categorization of the value of moral actions. He analyses these approaches under the doctrine of divine command, nomological ethics, and nomo-theo-logic. According to Kaş, Ash'arism, which represents the claim that *husn* and *qubh* is *shar'ī*, represents the doctrine of divine commandment. In contrast, Mu'tazila, which represents the claim that it is based on reason, can be interpreted as nomological (law-dependent) ethics. The author states that although such labels exist for the Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite approaches, a category representing the Māturīdī view has not been developed. He proposes to refer to the Māturīdī school's approach, "nomo-theo-logical ethics," in the sense that it "adopts the idea of essential and reason based *husn* and *qubh*, but does not accept the claim of *wujūb 'alā'llāh* and the theory of *tawlid* in the process of knowledge." In this labeling, which includes the concepts of law, God, and reason, God, who "transcends" both law and reason, stands above both elements as a supreme concept that determines them. In such a context, Şadr al-Sharī'a moved away from a system in which human reason ascribes necessity to God's actions, as in the Mu'tazilites, and pointed to a ground in which basic rational principles are grasped by human reason (172-173).

In conclusion, the author underlines the following: It is difficult to defend, as al-Şadr al-Sharī'a did, a view of the case that would ensure the human's real will between *jabr* and *tafwīd* in the question of will-freedom. Likewise, it is very challenging to establish the reasonability of *husn* and *qubh* between a necessitarian essential *husn* and *qubh* and divine determination. Both challenges are related to the complexity of providing the theoretical instruments to be developed. The tradition of commentary around Şadr al-Sharī'a's *al-Muqaddimāt al-arba'a* also points to the

efforts to develop solutions to these challenges over the centuries. Referring to the commentaries and glosses of the text to the extent of the subjects, the author carries the comments into the context of the text, which allows reading the two issues by associating them with this background. Nevertheless, in the presence of such rich content, it could have been expected that more detailed analyses would have been made on the points to which the comments carry the text and how to categorize and differentiate the comments that differ. As the author points out, this flaw can be excused because this is the first time that the points of connection of the subject have been presented in such a holistic way. The book demonstrates that this tradition, centered around Şadr al-Sharī'a's *al-Muqaddimāt al-arba'a*, should be given much more attention as an essential element in contemporary metaethical debates on will-freedom and the value of action. Only through such acquisition can the solutions developed by Şadr al-Sharī'a and his commentators become an organic part of current debates.