

Review of: "From Avicenna to Salam: The Excommunication of Muslim Scholars in the Islamic World"

Saifuddin Dhuhri

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The discussion concerning excommunication and science in the Islamic world is rare. Fortunately, this article has greatly addressed this important issue. I found this article interesting and impressive. However, there are some issues I am happy to comment on in the hope that it would improve the article. Firstly, I would like to comment on some jargon that might be a useful opening to discuss this article. I agree that there are two mainstreams of Islamic scientific approaches, as indicated in the article: the Peripatetic school and the School of Illumination, but I am of the opinion that the schools should not be called Islamic theology.

In my view, instead of naming them Islamic theology, it would be better to address them as the Islamic worldview or the Islamic scientific paradigm. The scope of Islamic theology is broader, and it consists of many sects, such as Ash`arite, Mu`tazilite, Shi`a, Salafite, Maturidite, to name a few. Whereas the Islamic scientific paradigm can be mainly categorised into Ibn Arabians, the Peripatetic school, such as the works of Naquib Al-Attas' *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam* and the second Suhrawardians, the School of Illumination, which is the least explored by scholars. I do expect that the article will elaborate any further on both positions.

Secondly, while reading the article, I am really inclined to find the quotes of the arguments posed by the Muslim scientists that led them into excommunication. I am concerned about the demonstration of Muslim scientists' genuine arguments and the explanation of why such arguments might bring about excommunication.

Based on much literature, the arguments for and against Muslim infidels/excommunication are discursive and highly academic. For instance, the argument posed by Al-Ghazali in *Tahafuth Falasifah* against philosophers, i.e., Muslim scientists (of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina), is rich with philosophical analysis and based on highly Aristotelian logic. Likewise, the works of Ibn Taymyya, *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa'l-naql*, and *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā 'l-manṭiqiyyīn* are of the greatest endeavours (see Carl Sharif El Tobgui's work on Ibn Taymiyya on Reason and Revelation: A Study of *Dar' ta'āruḍ al-'aql wa'l-naql*). Their argumentations are shown to be both scientifically standard and accepted. Furthermore, Ibn Taymyya's scholarship on the refutation of Aristotle's logic had given a path to inductive reasoning that is the gate of modern scientific work.

Finally, I am compelled to wonder about further detailed discussion of each excommunication case presented in the work. The article has inadequately reviewed related literature to find a relevant framework and position that is intended to be used for discussion of infidel cases of Muslim scientists. This might be the cause of the uncritical discussion of the given issues.

