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Articles

The annihilation of the fire (*fanā' al-nār*], is an expression used by Ibn Taymiyya in *Al-Radd 'alā man Qāla bi-Fanā' al-Janna wa-l-Nār*. It acts as a rejoinder to those who maintain that the annihilation of the Garden and the Fire within Islamic theology is a fascinating theory that could quite easily be confused with the Christian Patristic *apokatastasis* or the *falsafa* cosmological hypothesis, which emerged in the works of al-Kindī (d. 873) and Fakhr ad-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209).

Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, in *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (New York: OUP, 2012), supported the argument that the nature of Heaven and Hell has been subjected to a range of interpretations stretching from the purely literal to the utterly allegorical. Hell is a place of just chastisement for sin, an everlasting location for sinning believers; whether or not any punishment there would be truly eternal, has been the subject of considerable dispute.

My objective in this article is not to focus on al-Ghazālī or Ibn al-Taymiyya, but on those scholars who, at an earlier stage, had elaborated a rational speculation on the *fanā' al-nār*. At the same time, this article does not set out to provide a comparative analysis linked with the late Patristic authors or Manichean and Zoroastrian influences which, conversely, appear as possible theories. The main goal is to uncover the backgrounds of the authors in Islamic kalām and mysticism who, preceding the Ghazalian phase, were engaged in elaborating the annihilation of the fire. Al-Baghdādī ('Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir, d. 1037) in *Al-Farq bayna al-Firaq*, argues that the Mu'tazilite Abū al-Hudhayl al-'Allāf (d. 850), probably influenced by Ḍirār ibn 'Amr (d. unknown) and Jahm Ibn Safwān (d. 746), were the first to theorize on the finiteness of both Heaven and Hell. However, it is plausible that different early Muslim mystics from the same century also supported the annihilation of at least the latter. All options remain open to debate.

Sabine Damir-Geilsdorf and *Lisa Maria Franke*   *411–437*

Narrative Reconfigurations of Islamic Eschatological Signs: The Portents of the "Hour" in Grey Literature and on the Internet

Current political developments have not only been interpreted by Muslim religious scholars and individual laymen as signs, which inaugurate the end of time (*ashrāṭ al-sā'a*), but these eschatological interpretations have also been and still are being instrumentalized by various religious and political groups. Among them, for example, the IS (*dawla islāmiyya*) in Iraq and Syria, which has inaugurated an eschatological fear that is mirrored in numerous online discussion forums and online publications. Especially in social media and grey literature, motifs and figures that appear at the end of time according to the *aḥādīth* and the Qur'an, are often reinterpreted and synthesized with other sources, ideologies, worldviews and conspiracy theories. The article explores these narrative reconfigurations, focusing on these central motifs or figures: the Dajjāl and its apocalyptic antagonist, the Mahdī, tribulations and trials (*fitan*) and the political victory over a perceived enemy. It reveals that the "end" and the last things identified in these narratives are often reinterpreted as a political turn and change in the here and now through spatial and historical reconfigurations. We argue that the functions of these narratives are manifold: They can provide a simple orientation by means of a clear cut dualistic identification of good and evil, or they can offer meaning to otherwise hardly understandable or bearable events. They can also act as a call for political action in a declared sacral conflict.

Mária Lacináková   *439–474*

Death and the Hereafter in Islamic Tradition According to al-Kisā'ī

The objective of this study is to present the views on death and the hereafter as described by four manuscripts of the medieval collection of Islamic orally transmitted stories, *Kitāb 'Ağā'ib al-Malakūt*, compiled by al-Kisā'ī. An attempt has been made to take selected pieces of information gained from its chapters on this topic and review them through reference to interpretations of the same scenes and notions in texts that constitute the basis of Islamic doctrine (*'aqīda*), such as Quranic exegeses, *ḥadīṯs* and their exegeses, as well as a number of books focusing on fatwas, Islamic law, history, morals etc. The author has striven to elucidate and comment on the level of agreement (or otherwise) that exists between the images presented in the collection and the data acknowledged or even prescribed by the Islamic authorities as fundamental tenets of belief.

The Sufi Journey to the Next World: The Sepulchral Symbolism of Muslim Mystics, Its Context and Interpretations

Since the very birth of Islam, the Last Things have become a subject of passionate dispute among Muslims. In addition to the "external" approaches of Islamic jurists and theologians with regard to death, funerals, the Hereafter, etc., Sufis have incorporated sepulchral images into their symbolic ways of expression. This article sets out to precisely discuss such Sufi symbolism and the interpretation has a twofold goal: first, to discuss the emblematic approaches to the Last Things, within the framework of Sufi spiritual legacy. The second objective is to prove that symbolic interpretation of the eschatological journey has its demonstrable "earthly counterpart" within Sufi teaching about the spiritual progress of the human being.

The Veneration and Visitation of the Graves of Saints in Soviet Central Asia. Insights from the Southern Ferghana Valley, Uzbekistan

The article contributes to the development of a deeper understanding of the changes in the practice of venerating and visiting of the graves of saints in Central Asia during the Soviet period. For this purpose, the article explores the archival reports and oral histories from the region of the southern Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan from the 1920s to the1980s. The article reveals that the broad "categories" often used to study the issues associated with the graves of saints and their visitation, such as the ideological conflict between communist politics and Islam, or the gap between normative and popular Islam, are largely insufficient when describing the practice during this period. The common "schemes" are blurred or interconnected – "believers" used the Soviet system to fulfil their goal of venerating the graves of saints, while the local authorities often helped to retain the practice, or eliminate it, as determined by the needs of their own career advancement. In addition, the process of hagiography continued under the new conditions, irrespective of the levels of education or the individual stances towards the state that existed among the different actors. For the most part, people learned how to combine both Soviet modernity and the veneration of the graves of saints in innovative ways. This analysis contributes to the innovative research process in relation to Islam in Soviet Central Asia. The article also seeks to contribute to the recent debate about the graves of saints and the gap between normative and popular Islam.

Jeanine Dağyeli   *537–567*

How to Do a Burial Right: Negotiations of Identity, Religious Practice and the State

The "correct" performance of death and burial rituals is a highly contested field in Central Asia today. Scripturalist or other reform-minded Muslims, as well as governments, each for their own reasons, often harshly criticise their co-religionists' death-related practices for being unlawful, superstitious and wasteful. For many Central Asians, lamentations, mourning and commemoration ceremonies have an emblematic value. Even if people do not observe all of the traditions over the one year mourning period, or are not familiar with the symbolism and meaning of single rituals, they know that these exist and form an integral part of a mourning system which is regarded as a valued element of one's own "traditional" (i.e., pre-Soviet) culture. Only after all the required ceremonies during the one year mourning cycle have been performed, can the deceased be successfully integrated into the world of spirits and take on their new role as guardian of the descendants. The conceptualisation of the mutual relationship between the living and the dead is informed by the belief that they are symbiotic and that the welfare of both parties is dependent on the other.

Petr Kubálek   *569–598*

End of Islam, End of Time. An Eschatological Reading of Yezidism

The article summarises and analyses Yezidi texts on the final battle before the End of Time that reflect the community's thorny history of relations with Islam. The author pursues an intertextual and historical contextual reading that provides plastic explanations for symbols, metaphors, and allusions found in the Yezidi texts on the End of Time. Moreover, an eschatological reading of other Yezidi texts that are not primarily concerned with the End of Time suggests that eschatological visions may once have been much more prominent in the community's mind-set than is the case at present. The article is likely to be the first of its kind in the field of Yezidism.