

tion-based commentary) and *tafsīr bi'l-ra'y* (opinion-based commentary) are contrasted and given the status of two different categories of tafsīr literature, but within that same paragraph we are told that “most of the *tafsīr bi-al-ma'thūr* is in reality a *tafsīr bi-al-ra'y* (16).

It is difficult to see how such a schizophrenic work could have been accepted as a doctoral thesis, let alone published as the work of an expert.

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Andrew J. Lane: *A Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī*

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Divided into five chapters, a brief conclusion, and eight appendices, this book initially began, as the author tells us in his “Introduction”, as a thesis intending to study the Mu'tazilite theology of the *Kashshāf*, but its focus shifted from Mu'tazilite theology to Mu'tazilite influences on the *Kashshāf* and later to the broader question of sources for the well-known tafsīr of al-Zamakhsharī. The result is a hybrid product that taps into a large number of primary sources to construct a broad overview of the scholar, his times, and his work as seen from the perspective of a graduate student whose own outlook on the long history of Qur'ānic sciences is shaped and defined by an Orientalism which comes with its own characteristic concerns and methodologies.

When viewed from this perspective, most researchers tend to follow a similar pattern: they search for biographical information, situate their subject in a broad historical perspective, show influences upon the author and his work, and end with his own influence on subsequent scholars. Lane's work follows this recipe and is a useful reference work providing information about primary sources. It does not, however, lend any new insights into the man and his work; it merely accumulates useful information using a methodology marked by Western concerns about historical

accuracy and identification of specific persona, books, and influences.

An oft-repeated feature of this kind of scholarship is the researcher's desire to uncover authentic bio-bibliographical material about the author and the work; this is often not the main concern of the Islamic scholarship which has not bothered to preserve such details for even the most renowned scholars. The modern-day attitude toward lives of important persons makes it almost obligatory for the researchers to find such details about their subjects and their search often frustrates them. Lane's work is not an exception to this modernist trend, and his description of al-Zamakhsharī's life may well be the most comprehensive so far.

The main contribution of Lane's work, however, is in his scrutiny of the methodology used by al-Zamakhsharī in tafsīr which turns out to be quite traditional upon close analysis. This is helpful in undermining the oft-used characterization of *Kashshāf* as a Mu'tazilite tafsīr. Lane devotes a chapter to the analysis of al-Zamakhsharī's use of the Prophetic traditions in his commentary and shows how a work often thought be a commentary based on personal opinions is heavily based upon the traditions. Overall, this is a useful addition to Oriental scholarship on the Qur'ān. Its utility is further enhanced by almost one hundred and fifty pages of eight indices at the end of the book. These indices provide quick guides to (i) Recent Literature; (ii) Teachers and Students [of al-Zamakhsharī]; (iii) [his] Scholarly *Œuvre*; (iv) Authors of Works on the *Kashshāf*; (v) Editions of *Kashshāf*; (vi) Who's Who in the *Kashshāf*; (vii) Editions of the Early Commentaries; and (viii) Sources for al-Zayla'ī (d. 762/1360-1) and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449).

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