

**USES, MOTIVES, FUNCTIONS, AND VIRTUES OF  
SILENCE IN ARGUMENTATION IN LIGHT OF  
JADAL AND *ĀDĀB AL-BAḤTH WA AL-  
MUNĀZARAH***

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**Abstract**

*Munāẓarah* procedure determines who has the right to speak and who should remain silent until his turn comes. In fact, proper argumentation requires each party to remain silent where the right to speak is not theirs. However, the argumentation process in practice does not always follow the ideal rules of behaviour. One such instance is verbal aggressiveness, which often leads to anger and rapid information exchange with the offender. Such verbal exchange is generally characterized by an increase in volume and speed of speech, which usually lay the ground for a quarrel. The transition from healthy argumentation to quarrel is problematic because it changes the priorities of the parties involved in the verbal exchange from disclosing the truth to attacking the opponent. Then, the arguers are faced with the following question: What should I do when argumentation seems to be shifting to quarrel? Should I speak, or should I remain silent? The study argues the use of silence as an argumentation strategy prevents healthy argumentation from turning into a quarrel and enables discussants to conduct an ideal argumentation based on ethical standards. It does this in light of the disciplines of *Jadal* and *Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah*. The study first explains how *munāẓarah* procedure determines who has the

right to speak and who should remain silent. Second, it discusses three argumentative moves in response to which silence might work better as an argumentative strategy. After that, it explores the intricate relationship between silence and *tawfīq* (divine aid). Finally, it investigates the relationship between silence - as a response to verbal aggressiveness - and the virtue of *hilm* (judiciousness).

**Keywords:** Silence; *hilm*; virtue argumentation; *ādāb*; *munāzarah*.

### **Khulasah**

Tatacara *munāzarah* dalam proses perdebatan menentukan siapa yang berhak bercakap dan siapa yang harus berdiam diri sehingga gilirannya tiba. Hakikatnya, perdebatan yang tertib memerlukan seseorang terus diam sekiranya ruang berhujah masih bukan dalam gilirannya. Walau bagaimanapun, debat berpandukan peraturan kelakuan yang ideal sebegini tidak selalu diikuti oleh pendebat. Sebagai contoh, debat secara agresif sering kali mendatangkan emosi marah dan maklumat yang disampaikan bertukar pantas kepada lawan hujahnya. Bentuk perdebatan sebegini secara umumnya dicirikan oleh kata-kata yang kuat dan laju sehingga biasanya akan menyebabkan pertengkaran. Berubahnya perdebatan yang baik kepada pertengkaran merupakan suatu masalah kerana ia mengubah keutamaan mereka yang terlibat dalam perdebatan tersebut iaitu dari sepatutnya mendedahkan kebenaran kepada menyerang lawannya. Oleh itu, pendebat akan berdepan dengan beberapa persoalan berikut: Apakah yang perlu saya lakukan apabila perdebatan berubah menjadi pertengkaran? Adakah saya perlu bercakap atau terus diam? Kajian ini berpandangan bahawa pendekatan diam sebagai salah satu strategi debat mampu mencegah perdebatan menjadi pertengkaran dan ia membolehkan pendebat menyampaikan hujah mereka secara beretika. Pandangan ini berdasarkan disiplin *Jadal* dan *Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāzarah*.

Dengan itu, kajian ini pertamanya akan menjelaskan bagaimana tatacara *munāzarah* dapat menentukan siapa yang berhak bercakap dan siapa yang perlu diam. Kedua, ia membincangkan tiga motif debat sebagai respons di mana diam boleh menjadi strategi terbaik dalam sesuatu perdebatan. Seterusnya kajian ini meneroka hubungan yang rumit antara diam dengan *tawfiq* (pertolongan Tuhan). Akhirnya, kajian ini mengkaji hubungan diam – sebagai respons terhadap debat yang agresif – dengan sifat *hilm* (pertimbangan yang bijaksana).

**Kata kunci:** Diam; *hilm*; perdebatan yang baik; *ādāb*; *munāzarah*.

## Introduction

Verbal aggressiveness often leads to anger and rapid information exchange with the offender. Such verbal exchange is generally characterized by an increase in volume and speed of speech, which usually lay the ground for a quarrel.<sup>1</sup> The transition from healthy argumentation to a quarrel is problematic because it changes the priorities of the parties involved in the verbal exchange whose main motive now shifts from disclosing the truth to attacking the opponent.<sup>2</sup> What makes the situation worse is that the design of the aggression resulting from anger is often communicative in nature. That is, the aggression does not “efficiently injure or kill the target, but instead demonstrates fighting ability, determination, or the willingness to take the interaction into the realm of

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<sup>1</sup> We understand quarrel at two different degrees. At the first degree, it refers to verbal conflict that results from violating *munāzarah* rules and ethics and that prevents manifestation of truth. At the second degree, it refers to verbal aggressiveness which might turn into physical fight. These two degrees of quarrel are often interrelated. Therefore, we use the term quarrel to refer to the two degrees interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> Moira Howes and Catherine Hundleby, “The Epistemology of Anger in Argumentation,” *Symposium* 5, no. 2 (2018), 229–254.

physical harm."<sup>3</sup> Since the shift from peaceful dialogue to a quarrel is stimulated by verbal aggressiveness and intensified by anger, controlling one's inner self becomes a necessary requirement for conducting an ideal argumentation based on ethical standards.

The ethical dimension of argumentation has been addressed extensively by *munāẓarah*<sup>4</sup> scholars who formulated an ideal discussion procedure to differentiate *munāẓarah*<sup>5</sup> - or ideal argumentation - from quarrelling and power-flexing. While the former is motivated by the normative goal of manifestation of truth the latter is mainly motivated by the desire to silence the opponent by using trickeries, invalid moves, and unorderedly performance.<sup>6</sup> *Munāẓarah* aims at disclosing the truth by following a set of rules and etiquette (*ādāb*), which have both outer and inner dimensions. At the outer level, the discussants follow a set of rules that enable them to conduct an ethical debate. At the inner level, each of the discussants is required to regulate their relationship with God by constantly controlling their inner self.<sup>7</sup> This idea is elaborated by Arif who paraphrases Naquib al-Attas,

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Sznycer, Laith Al-Shawaf, Julian Lim, Andre Krauss, Aneta Feldman, Ruxandra Rascanu, Lawrence Sugiyama, Leda Cosmides, John Tooby, "The Grammar of Anger: Mapping the Computational Architecture of a Recalibrational Emotion," *Cognition* 168 (2017), 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Munāẓarah* is an institutionalized discipline of disputation that started with al-Samarqandi's *Risālah fī Ādāb al-Baḥth*, which encompasses juridical dialectics, philosophical dialectics, and Sufi criticism of dialectics. See Leonard Faytre, " 'Munāẓara' and the Internal Dimension of Argumentation Ethics: A Translation and Commentary of Ahmed Cevdet's Adab-ı Sedad in the Light of Sufism and Western Argumentation Ethics" (Master Thesis, Istanbul, Ibn Haldun University, 2018), 52.

<sup>5</sup> In this article, we use the terms *munāẓarah* and argumentation interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> Abd al-Rashīd al-Jawnpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdiyyah* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Īmān, 2006), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Faytre, "Munāẓara and the Internal Dimension", 52.

“According to him, the concept couched in the word *adab* represents the Muslim ideal of the virtuous and harmonious life of a person who truly knows the proper place of him/herself in relation to God and other fellow creatures, and who, as a result, behaves properly and acts justly towards others and towards oneself”.<sup>8</sup>

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa argues that the discussant should control their inner self before the debate to be able to control their tongue during it. Otherwise, they will eventually fail to conduct an ethical debate.<sup>9</sup> This indicates that there is an interrelation between the attributes of the arguer and their ability to control their tongue. This fact is confirmed by Āmidī who states that arguing properly is an attribute of the arguers, just as quarrelling is the attribute of quarrellers.<sup>10</sup> *Munāzarah* is thus not only the interpersonal act of exchange of arguments but also a procedure that teaches arguers a set of ethical rules and manners and the order of movements to be followed during the debate until they acquire the disposition (*malakah*) of being a good arguer.<sup>11</sup> In other words, as quarrelling is a vice of the vicious person, argumentation becomes an attribute of the virtuous person.

Parties who want to be ideal arguers need to know when to speak and when to remain silent. In fact, it is one of the five major outcomes of *munāzarah* as listed by Taşköprüzade in his *Risālah al-Ādāb fī ‘Ilm Ādāb al-*

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<sup>8</sup> Arif Syamsuddin, “The Art of Debate in Islam: Textual Analysis and Translation of Taşköprüzade’s Ādāb al-Baḥṭh wa al-Munāzarah,” *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam (AFKAR)* 22, no. 1 (2020), 191.

<sup>9</sup> Faytre, “‘*Munāzara*’ and the Internal Dimension”, 52.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Āmidī, *‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘alā Waladiyyah*, (Istanbul: Dersaadet: 1900), 110.

<sup>11</sup> Ismā‘īl Gelenbevī, *Gelenbevī alā Ādāb ma‘ā Ḥāshiyat*, (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘ādah, 1934), 34-35.

*Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah*.<sup>12</sup> He states that *munāẓarah* enables the discussants to disclose the truth, teaches them the methods of sound and ethical argumentation, helps them understand other sciences and disciplines, allows them to reject doubtful evidence, and teaches them when to speak and when to remain silent.

In this article, we will investigate the last outcome mentioned by Taşköprüzade, namely the appropriate use of speech and silence in argumentation. We will more specifically explore the importance of silence in argumentation by discussing situations where the arguer should speak and situations where they are required to remain silent during argumentation. We will also study the motives and functions of silence in argumentation and demonstrate that the appropriate use of silence is an attribute and a virtue of good arguers. More specifically, we will analyse how silence, born out of the virtue of *ḥilm*, prevents the debate from shifting into quarrel and enables the discussants to conduct an ideal argumentation based on ethical standards.

### ***Munāẓarah*: A General Overview**

The practice of argumentation in Islamdom as a scholarly endeavour can be traced back to the emergence of Islam. The Qur'ān gives directions to the Prophet when arguing with other people: "Call them unto the way of thy Lord with Wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them with that which is best".<sup>13</sup> Faced with this command, Muslim scholars pondered on what would be the best way to argue. This question prompted different disciplines that are produced for various needs from *khilāf* to *jadāl* and to *munāẓarah*. In this essay, we will explore the intricate relationship between the virtue of *ḥilm* - manifested by the arguer's appropriate use of silence as a response to verbal

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<sup>12</sup> Taşköprüzade, *Risālah al-Ādāb fī 'Ilm Ādāb al-Baḥth wa al-Munāẓarah*, 1st ed. (Kuwait: Dār al-Zāhiriyyah, 2012), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Qur'ān, 16:125.

aggressiveness - and argumentation in light of these disciplines. We will start with the definition of *munāẓarah*.

Scholars give four different definitions of *munāẓarah*. The first definition concerns the etymology of the word. The second is about what *munāẓarah* is in daily life. The third concerns what *munāẓarah* is in terms of its subject matter. The fourth definition concerns the method and goal of science.<sup>14</sup> According to the etymological definition, the word *munāẓarah* is derived from the Arabic roots *naẓīr* or *nazar*. If the root *naẓīr* is considered, this means there should be a balance between arguers in terms of power and position. If the root *nazar* is considered, *munāẓarah* means either *ibsār*, *intizār* or *muqābalah*.

*Ibsār* means perception through deliberation. *Intizār* means arguers should wait for the other party to finish with her argumentation. *Muqābalah* means that arguers should be facing each other; that is, the arrangement of the argumentation space should not favour any of the arguers.<sup>15</sup> The second definition is about the meaning of *munāẓarah* in daily life. *Munāẓarah* in this context is defined as "the exchange of words between two people, each of whom wants to establish his claim and refute their addressee with the aim of manifestation of truth".<sup>16</sup> The third definition is based on the subject matter of *munāẓarah*, which is distinguishing the correct inquiry from the wrong.<sup>17</sup> The fourth definition is based on *munāẓarah* method and goal. As such, Gelenbevī defines *munāẓarah* as "a science in which the conditions of

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<sup>14</sup> Al-Āmidī, *ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿalā Waladiyyah*, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Adem Güney, "Critical Edition of Kemāl al-Dīn Masud b. Husain al-Shirwanī's Work Titled Sharh Ādāb al-Samarqandī," *Sakarya University Divinity College Journal* 12, no. 21 (2010), 85-93.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Āmidī, *ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿalā Waladiyyah*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Gelenbevī, *Gelenbevī alā Ādāb ma ʿā Hāshiyat*, 34.

universal inquiries are investigated for the truth to be manifested".<sup>18</sup>

*Munāzarah* is a co-operative act between two persons: the claimant and the respondent. The parties must oppose each other. If there exists no opposition and one party simply wants to learn something, we cannot talk about *munāzarah*. *Munāzarah* requires each party be equal in their degree of knowledge. If one party is in a teaching position, the other will be in a student position who asks questions not to oppose but to inform themselves.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the opposing parties should act in a way that will help both parties. Winning an argument or showing one's argumentative abilities are not counted as argumentation. By formulating an ideal discussion procedure for the normative goal of manifestation of truth, *munāzarah* scholars aim to differentiate argumentation from quarrelling and power-flexing.<sup>20</sup> While quarrelling is disputation to silence the opponent by using trickeries, invalid moves, and unorderly performance, power-flexing is primarily a show-off whose motivation is neither manifestation of truth nor silencing the opponent.<sup>21</sup>

In the following sub-section, we will investigate situations where it is appropriate to speak and situations where silence is more appropriate. We will begin with how one decides to go into an argumentation and continue with how one balances the intricate line between remaining silent and speaking during argumentation.

### **Three *Munāzarah* Strategies: Persuasion (*Iqnā'*), Silencing (*Ilzām*), and Silence (*I'rād*)**

Despite its importance in disclosing truth, indulging in argumentation is not recommended by many Muslim scholars unless it is necessary to do so. In his book *Ayyuhā*

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Mantık Metinleri 2* (Istanbul: İşaret, 1998), 111.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Jawnpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdīyah*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



*al-Walad* (*Dear Beloved Son*), al-Ghazālī states that one should avoid arguing with anyone on any issue because debate may culminate in enmity and dispute and may eventually be a source of evil traits such as show, arrogance, jealousy, and pride. When one faces a situation where argumentation is necessary, they should make sure that their intention is not winning the debate but disclosing the truth.<sup>22</sup> This is mainly achieved through rational persuasion (*iqnā'*) or rational silencing (*ilzām*).<sup>23</sup>

In rational persuasion, parties try to persuade each other that the claim is successfully defended or successfully rejected. In rational silencing, however, although the claim is defended or rejected, persuasion is not achieved. In those cases, one party is left without any other rational moves to further the discussion. The case is not yet closed, and the truth is not disclosed. However, if the arguer believes that truth would not be disclosed through these two strategies and that there is a possibility that argumentation will turn into a quarrel, they may use a third strategy, namely turning away (*i'rād*).<sup>24</sup>

*I'rād* literally means turning away. In the context of *munāẓarah*, it refers to refraining from argumentation. An arguer might refrain from argumentation either by reminding the other party that it is not possible to continue argumentation if the rules and etiquette are not observed<sup>25</sup>, by using a rhetorical statement to end the conversation<sup>26</sup>, or by remaining silent.

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<sup>22</sup> Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā al-Walad*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Minhāj, 2014), 67.

<sup>23</sup> Faytre, " 'Munazara' and the Internal Dimension", 73.

<sup>24</sup> Abd al-Qāhir Baġdādī, *I'yār al-Nazar fī 'Ilm al-Jadal* (Kuwait: Asfār, 2019), 816.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 816.

<sup>26</sup> This meaning is stated in the Qur'an 25: 63 which runs as follows: "And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace".

In this article, we will focus on the last form of *i'rād*, namely remaining silent. The arguer uses *i'rād* by remaining silent either to make the other party aware of their mistake or to end the debate. Silence in these cases is communicative because it conveys moral messages to the wrongdoer and make them realize that they have committed an unethical move. If they decide to continue argumentation by adhering to its ethical rules, the arguer may breach their silence and continue the debate. Otherwise, they would simply quit the debate through extended silence. Arguers may use silence in argumentation for many reasons, but the overarching motivation is to perform a proper argumentation that aims at disclosing the truth. The manifestation of truth is unlikely where rational persuasion of the other party is not possible or in situations where the setting is not suitable for argumentation. One might remain silent in the presence of *umarā'*<sup>27</sup> or when one is hungry, for instance.<sup>28</sup> In this article, we do not address silence in such instances or silence in response to obvious misdemeanours like insults and belittling. We rather focus on silence in response to violations of the discussion procedure.

In the coming sub-sections, we will discuss some of the main situations where silence is the most appropriate argumentation strategy. After that, we will investigate the functions and motives of silence in argumentation. Finally, we will explore the intricate relationship between the use of silence and the virtue of *hilm*. We will first start with how *munāzarah* determines the right to speak and the obligation to remain silent during argumentation. This will help us determine why virtuous arguers decide to remain

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<sup>27</sup> In the presence of people with institutional power. As in their presence argumentation might turn into a partisan disputation or a power-flexing show.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Jawnpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdīyyah*, 82.

silent during argumentation or why they leave argumentation all together.

### ***Munāzarah* Procedure: Who Has the Right to Speak and Who Should Remain Silent?**

*Munāzarah* procedure determines who has the right to speak and who should remain silent until his turn comes. In fact, proper argumentation requires each party to remain silent where the right to speak is not theirs. During argumentation, the claimant argues for a standpoint and the respondent questions the very same standpoint.<sup>29</sup> The burden of proof is reserved for the claimant. They lay down their premises and conclusion and the respondent begins casting doubt to the standpoint. The duty of the respondent is fashioned in five-stages:

1. Asking for clarification of the premises and conclusions.
2. Vetoing a certain premise with the pragmatic function of asking further reasons.
3. Suggest an alternative to the premise as a means of vetoing and asking for further justification of the contested premise.
4. Refuting the proof of the claimant with the claim that there is any inconsistency between the premises and the conclusion.
5. Coming up with a counterargument that abolishes the claim<sup>30</sup>.

It is in the fourth and fifth stages, after exhausting all moves listed, that the burden of proof is transferred to the respondent. They become the claimant by claiming refutation or coming up with their own counterargument

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<sup>29</sup> Arif Syamsuddin, "The Art of Debate in Islam", 200.

<sup>30</sup> Necmettin Pehlivan and Muhammed Çelik, "Zamanı Olsaydı Daha Kısa Yazacaktı: Birgivi Mehmed Efendi'nin Risâle fi'l-âdâb'ı", in *Balıkesirli Bir İslâm Âlimi: İmâm Birgivi* III, Mehmet Bayyigit, Mehmet Özkan, Ahmet Ali Çanakçı, Asem Hamdy Abdelghany eds. (Balıkesir: Balıkesir Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2019), 433–434

that aims at abolishing or nullifying the argument of the other party. However, in order to earn the right of speaking, they must conform to some conditions. For instance, the refutation should be justified with evidence<sup>31</sup> and the counterargument should come after exhaustion of all possible moves with procedural relevance.<sup>32</sup> In this sketch of *munāzarah* procedure, the most important part is the allocation of moves in such a manner that the claimant is able to prove their arguments and the respondent fulfils their own duties in accordance with the discussion procedure. This is how argumentation becomes a co-operative act rather than a quarrel that might lead to more unwanted consequences. To acquire the disposition to speak properly and remain silent when necessary is thus fundamental for a co-operative argumentation.

### **Silence as a Response to Unethical Moves During *Munāzarah***

We have seen how *munāzarah* regulates the right to speak and the obligation to remain silent through the allocation of discussion moves. The discussion procedure is designed for the manifestation of truth, which is to be achieved through using rational persuasion (*iqnā'*). In an ideal argumentation, parties will confine themselves to rational persuasion. The parties continue argumentation up until one is left without any other possible move. If one party breaches the ethical conduct during argumentation, the other party has two options: rationally silencing (*ilzām*) or remaining silent and leaving the argumentation (*i'rād*).

However, the option of rationally silencing the other party should be chosen only when it is more appropriate than remaining silent. The reason behind this is that silencing an opponent, even if it is achieved rationally and without any aggression is still a form of quarrel where the

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Jaunpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdiyyah*, 32.

<sup>32</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Mantık Metinleri* 2,118.

goal is not helping each other for the manifestation of truth.<sup>33</sup> In cases where rationally silencing is not morally beneficial for both parties, *i'ṛāḍ* becomes the most optimal argumentation strategy. Silence in this case should not be understood as an acknowledgment of defeat.<sup>34</sup> Scholars have opposing ideas when it comes to rationally silencing or remaining silent. While some scholars claim that in cases where the other party breaches the goal of argumentation, it is "charity" to respond in the same manner<sup>35</sup>; other scholars disagree. The latter suggests remaining silent or leaving the disputation setting all together.

Some *munāẓarah* scholars state that even a sound argument should be rejected in cases of violation of any rule of *munāẓarah* procedure and ethics.<sup>36</sup> Thus, any further response to the opponent in such cases is seen as a deviation from the main goal of the debate, which is disclosing the truth. When the ethical violation is committed by the respondent, the claimant's silent response is referred to as *i'ṛāḍ*. When it is committed by the claimant, the respondent's silence is called *imsāk*.

We had already established that argumentation is a cooperative quest for the manifestation of truth. We have also elaborated on how *munāẓarah* is not only the name of the act of arguing but that it is also an attribute of the agent. The intricate correlation between the agent and the act is observed in the violations of the discussion moves. The claimant cannot simply claim something and remain silent. They have to provide proofs that support their claim. Failure to do so is called *tahakkum* (despotism).<sup>37</sup> In the same manner, if the respondent insistently stops

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Āmidī, *'Abd al-Wahhāb 'alā Waladiyyah*, 103-104.

<sup>34</sup> 'Abd al-Malik al-Juwaynī, *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, 1st ed. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1999), 318-325.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Āmidī, *'Abd al-Wahhāb 'alā Waladiyyah*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Güney, "Critical Edition of Kemāl al-dīn Masūd", 118.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Jawnpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdiyyah*, 84.

short at merely vetoing a premise or a standpoint without further justification, this insistence will be called *mukābarah* (obstinacy).<sup>38</sup> If one party steals the right to speak of the other, this act will be called *gashb* (usurpation).<sup>39</sup> In the same manner, coming up with a counter argument without exhausting the available moves is called '*ajalah* (hastiness).<sup>40</sup> These violations often turn argumentation into a quarrel. Below, we will shed light on three unethical moves to which silence is more appropriate than speech in argumentation.

### **Silence as a Response to *Ghashb* (Usurpation)**

In *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, attributed to al-Juwaynī, the author lists a series of rules for ethical conduct of argumentation. We will choose some rules that directly pertain to silence as an argumentative strategy. By adjoining the views of *munāzarah* scholars in later centuries, we will examine how silence as a strategy is employed. We will begin with *gashb* (usurpation).

Al-Juwaynī states that arguers should listen attentively to each other and respect each other's turn to speak. If the arguer is interrupted by his opponent, he should remind the latter that he is required to listen and remain silent until his turn comes. If he keeps interrupting him, the arguer should end the discussion because such behaviour disturbs both the speaker and the listener and negatively affects the flow of understanding.<sup>41</sup>

In this rule, al-Juwaynī emphasizes an important rule that discussants are required to follow during the argumentative discourse, namely attentive listening and respecting each other's right of speech. *Munāzarah* scholars refer to violation of this rule as *gashb* (usurpation). *Ghashb* takes place when the right to speak of one party is

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<sup>38</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Mantık Metinleri 2*, 116-117.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Āmidī, '*Abd al-Wahhāb 'alā Waladiyyah*, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Jawnpūrī, *Sharḥ al-Rashīdiyyah*, 82.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Juwaynī, *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, 321.

stolen by the other party. It mostly happens when the respondent starts to disprove the claimant's argument. The procedure requires that the right to speak should be reserved for the claimant. If the claimant has not proved her claim yet, the only option for the respondent is to object to the claim. Instead, the respondent attributes proof to the claim of the claimant and starts arguing against it. There are scholars like Gelenbevī who disagree that usurpation is an invalid move with the claim that the content of usurpation might be beneficial for the manifestation of truth.<sup>42</sup> However, almost all other *munāẓarah* scholars argue that *gaṣb* is a violation of *munāẓarah* ethics because it deprives the claimant from performing his main task in *munāẓarah*, which is proving his claim. In this case, the opponent's intervention is considered invalid regardless of the content of his statement.<sup>43</sup>

### **Silence as a Response to *Mukābarah* (Obstinacy)**

It is stated in *al-Kāfiyah* that the arguer should not argue with someone who is obstinate or arrogant (*muta'annit*).<sup>44</sup> A discussion move is rendered *mukābarah* on a number of occasions.<sup>45</sup> Here we focus mainly on the case where one-party objects to an evidently true premise. When faced with *mukābarah*, the other party might employ rational silencing. When this strategy does not work, the arguer is required to remain silent. *I'rāḍ* as silence is believed to be the most appropriate augmentation strategy when the opponent is obstinate (*muta'annit*) because the latter keeps relying on what he knows and stubbornly refuses to change his opinion or consider other points of view even when it is self-evident. His intervention is thus seen as a

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<sup>42</sup> Gelenbevī, *Gelenbevī alā Ādāb ma'ā Hāshiyat*, 122-124.

<sup>43</sup> Güney, "Critical Edition of Kemāl al-din Masud", 118; al-Āmidī, *'Abd al-Wahhāb 'alā Waladīyah*, 77.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Juwaynī, *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, 320.

<sup>45</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Mantık Metinleri* 2, 116.

violation of *munāzarah* rules and ethics.<sup>46</sup> The word *mukābarah* is etymologically related to the word *kibr*, which means arrogance. Rejecting a self-evident premise without providing any logical argument is an indicator not only of obstinacy but also of arrogance.

### **Silence as a Response to Irrelevant Moves of the Other Party**

One of the names for the science of argumentation is '*ilm al-tawjīh*, roughly translated as 'the science of relevance'.<sup>47</sup> In a proper argumentation, the exchange between parties happens in such a manner that each move is relevant to the other. In *al-Kāfiyah*, al-Juwaynī states that the arguer should respond to his opponent in one of three ways. If the opponent shows an inconsistency or a weakness in his argument, he is expected to correct it and provide strong evidence that supports his claim, this is called *inqiyād*. If he notices an inconsistency or a weakness in his opponent's statement, he should refute it, this is called *isqāt*. If he sees that his opponent's argument is irrelevant, he should refrain from arguing with him, this is called *i'rād*.<sup>48</sup>

In this rule, al-Juwaynī states that silence is the most appropriate response to the opponent who, out of ill intention, deviates from the main topic of discussion by presenting an argument that is irrelevant to the issue debated or that is irrelevant in terms of the right order of discussion moves. This act is believed to be a violation of rules and ethics of argumentation because it indicates that the aim of the respondent is not disclosing the truth but winning the debate. According to *munāzarah* ethics, the discussants should not deviate from the main topic of the debate<sup>49</sup> and should keep in mind their initial goal, which

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<sup>46</sup> Al-Āmidī, '*Abd al-Wahhāb 'alā Waladiyyah*, 59.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Juwaynī, *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, 323.

<sup>49</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Mantık Metinleri* 2, 126



is nothing but disclosing the truth. The party that deviates from the topic in fact acknowledges defeat but acts otherwise. Therefore, *i'rād* as silence is more appropriate than rational persuasion or silencing in this case.

*Munāzarah* is thus a discipline that teaches arguers when to remain silent and when to speak. One is a good arguer when they make the right, logical, procedural moves in the order suggested; remain silent when silence is more appropriate than speech; and leave argumentation in a setting where they believe that co-operative quest for the manifestation of truth is impossible.<sup>50</sup> Below, we will investigate motives and functions of silence (*i'rād*) in the above-mentioned situations.

## **Motives, Functions and Virtues of Silence in *Munāzarah***

### **a. Motives and Functions of Silence in *Munāzarah***

The main motive behind silence - as *i'rād* - in the above - mentioned situations is related to the conception of how truth is achieved. This conception is emphasized by al-Juwaynī who states that the arguer should first and foremost observe his intention and make sure that his aim is disclosing the truth and not winning the debate.<sup>51</sup> He also states that the arguer should ask for *tawfīq* (divine aid) to be able to distinguish right from wrong.<sup>52</sup> In these rules, al-Juwaynī emphasizes not only the aim of *munāzarah* which is disclosing the truth, but also the way it can be achieved. In other words, if manifestation of the truth is the ultimate aim of the discussants, it is only through divine aid (*tawfīq*) that this aim can be achieved. Faytre states: "If *munāzarah* demands to pay attention to other discussants' points of view it is above all in a

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<sup>50</sup> We noted some issues pertaining to silence in argumentation. We did not discuss obvious issues like insulting or belittling.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Juwaynī, *al-Kāfiyah fī al-Jadal*, 318.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

metaphysical relationship with God and with truth, and not only in a profane dimension that would just take discussants and audience into account."<sup>53</sup>

In *munāẓarah* context, the discussant is supposed to purify their intention, seek divine aid (*tawfīq*), and then follow a set of logical and ethical rules and standards to disclose the truth. This is not to say that there is a causal relation between adherence to *munāẓarah* rules and gaining divine support. Rather, this is to indicate that failure to respect such rules is believed to deprive the discussants from *tawfīq*. This meaning is emphasized in the following *hadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah, he said:

A man insulted Abū Bakr in the presence of Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). The Prophet remained seated and smiled. The man kept reviling Abū Bakr until the latter responded back to some of what he said. At that time, the Messenger of Allah got angry and stood up. Abū Bakr followed the Prophet and asked him: "Messenger of Allah! When the man insulted me, you remained seated, and when I responded back to what he said, you became angry and got up." The Prophet said: "When you remained silent, an angel was responding to his [the man's] insults on your behalf. When you responded back, a devil came down. I was not going to sit when the devil came down." Then the Prophet said: "Abū Bakr, (keep in mind) three things which are always true, whenever a person is subjected to an injustice but leaves the matter to Allah, then Allah will come to his aid..."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Faytre, "Munāẓara and the Internal Dimension", 51.

<sup>54</sup> 'Alī Ibn Abū Bakr al-Haytāmī, *Majma' al-Zawā'id wa Manba' al-Fawā'id*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Ma'ārif, 1986), 8:192.

This *ḥadīth* indicates that silence in the form of *i'ṣrāḍ* is the most appropriate response to verbal aggressiveness as we discussed above. If speech in such situations results in deprivation from divine support (*tawfīq*), silence is to be seen as an act that prevents this incident from happening. We can say that one of the main motives of silence in these cases is preventing an unpleasant incident from happening, namely deprivation from *tawfīq*.

Silence as a response to the opponent's unethical moves in *munāẓarah* performs various functions. Through silence, the arguer indicates that the opponent has violated one of *munāẓarah* ethical rules. The silent response also transmits valuable moral messages to the opponent by showing them that the arguer is not willing to stoop to their level by committing a likewise unethical move. Silence also contributes to the moral and spiritual development of the arguer who elevates himself morally and spiritually by controlling their tongue. Finally, silence helps maintaining social harmony by preventing the debate from shifting to quarrel.

Silence as a response to verbal offense or similar unethical behaviour is believed to be an achievement accomplished through the acquisition of the virtue of *ḥilm*, often translated as judiciousness or forbearance. In the following sub-section, we will investigate the relationship between silence and the virtue of *ḥilm*<sup>55</sup> as well as the importance of the latter in preventing the shift from healthy argumentation to quarrel and enabling the discussants to conduct an ethical discussion.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ḥilm* is often translated as judiciousness or forbearance. In this essay we prefer using the original term because we believe that it compasses these two virtues and transcends them.

### **b. Virtues of Silence in *Munāẓarah***

Silence as a response to verbal aggressiveness is believed to be born out of the virtue of *ḥilm*.<sup>56</sup> *Ḥilm* is defined as a combination of *anāt* (deliberateness) and *‘aql* (intelligence). It is also defined as the opposite of foolishness. "The virtue described by *ḥilm*, which renders its possessor *ḥalīm*, is in general terms at least, 'judiciousness', keenness of mind and prudence in action... The possession of *ḥilm* or judiciousness derives from the capacity to correctly weigh up contingencies, in particular negative ones, to be resolute in soul and calm in conduct, in absolute confidence of a positive outcome."<sup>57</sup>

*Ḥilm* may manifest itself in different ways but it remains basically a virtue that enables the person to respond with good manners to offensive action. This meaning is emphasized in the following *hadīth* reported by Abū Hurayrah, he said:

A man came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, and said: "Messenger of Allah! I have relatives with whom I maintain ties while they cut me off. I am good to them while they are bad to me. They behave foolishly towards me while I am forbearing towards them." The Prophet said: "If things are as you said, you will not lack divine aid as long as you continue to do that".<sup>58</sup>

Al-Bustī states that the two main cornerstones of *ḥilm* are intelligence and silence.<sup>59</sup> Muslim scholars argue that *ḥilm* is gained through the practice of silence as a response

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<sup>56</sup> Abū Hātim al-Bustī, *Rawḍah al-‘Uqalā’ wa Nuzhat al-Fuḍalā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1977), 32-42.

<sup>57</sup> Ida Zilio-Grandi, "*Ḥilm* or 'Judiciousness': A Contribution to the Study of Islamic Ethics," *Studia Islamica* 110 (2015), 84.

<sup>58</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2016), 993.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Bustī, *Rawḍat al-‘Uqalā’*, 32-42.

to an offensive action. This process is called *taḥallum*. Prophet Muḥammad said: "Knowledge is gained through learning (*ta'allum*) and *ḥilm* is learned through *taḥallum*".<sup>60</sup> The difference between *ḥilm* and *taḥallum* is that the former refers to controlling one's anger whereas the latter refers to controlling one's desire for vengeance. By forcing oneself to respond with silence to an offensive action, one refrains from responding back and thus gradually eliminates their desire to take revenge. This exercise would eventually culminate in the acquisition of the moral virtue of *ḥilm*, whereby self-control and benevolence become one's second nature. It is narrated that 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Mubārak once said: "I lived with a fool for a long period and kept enduring his harm and controlling my anger until *ḥilm* became a second nature (*malakah*) to me."<sup>61</sup>

*Ḥilm* is also manifested by forgiveness since the silent person forgoes a verbal response and abstains from vengeance. It enables the wronged to transform his feeling into a productive force that would aid his moral and spiritual development and increase social harmony. It also protects the wronged from the feeling of pain which is often accompanied with the desire to harm the wrongdoer and protects the wrongdoer from any aggressive or harmful reaction that would pave the way to quarrel. An additional function of *ḥilm* is mentioned by Zilio-Grandi who argues that "*ḥilm* performs a formidable civic function, i.e., that of prophylaxis (*rad'*) because it forms a barrier in the heart of that who does evil and receives good in return, a barrier that would prevent them from committing a similar offense again".<sup>62</sup> Silence in this case

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<sup>60</sup> Cited in Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* 3, (Beirut: Dār Sāḍir, 2004), 5 vols., 218.

<sup>61</sup> Abū Sa'īd al-Khādimī, *al-Barīkah Sharḥ al-Ṭarīqah* 2, (Istanbul: Al-Haqīqah, 2011), 2 vols., 20.

<sup>62</sup> Zilio-Grandi, "Ḥilm or 'Judiciousness'", 90.

is a persuasive act because it has the power to activate the addressee and urge them to act in a certain way, externally or internally.<sup>63</sup>

## Conclusion

In this essay, we argued that the appropriate use of silence in argumentation not only prevents the debate from shifting to quarrel but also enables the discussants to conduct an ideal argumentation based on ethical standards. Our research was done within the overall framework of *munāẓarah* and *jadal*. As such, we have claimed that the rules and ethics of argumentation regulate speech and silence and that there are three main argumentation strategies, namely *iqnā'* (rational persuasion), *ilzām* (rational silencing), and *i'rād* (turning away).

We have also stated that silence might be regarded as the most appropriate response to unethical moves during argumentation on some occasions. These unethical moves include *ghaṣb* (usurpation), *mukābarah* (obstinacy), and irrelevant moves. After that, we argued that one of the main motives of silence in these and similar cases is preventing an unpleasant incident from happening, namely deprivation from *tawfīq* (divine aid). Nonetheless, the benefits of silence during argumentation go beyond deprivation into adornment, for we have also explained how silence as a response to verbal aggressiveness is a manifestation of the virtue of *hilm*, whereby self-control and benevolence become one's second nature.

Far from being limited to the individual person only, silence born out of *hilm* has social repercussions as well. This is because *hilm* is also communicative in nature, and its civic function is done through forming a barrier in the heart of the wrongdoer, a barrier that would prevent them from committing a similar offense again. Silence in this

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<sup>63</sup> Mary Joanne Church Farrell, "The Rhetoric of Silence" (Ph.D thesis, McGill University, 1999), 40.

case is a persuasive act because it has the power to activate the addressee and urge them to act in a certain way, externally or internally.

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