

*AL-KASHSHĀF: AL-ZAMAKHSHARĪ'S (D. 538/1144)*  
MU'TAZILITE EXEGESIS OF THE QUR'ĀN

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By

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ABSTRACT

Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī *Jār Allāh* is one of the last widely known and outstanding Ḥanafī Mu'tazilite scholars who made important contributions in the fields of Qur'ānic exegesis, theology, and Arabic linguistics. Primarily, his fame rests upon the Qur'ān commentary *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa 'uyūn al-ghawāmiḍ fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*. My thesis is that al-Zamakhsharī's Qur'ān commentary is squarely within the Mu'tazilite tradition. I selected those verses where anthropomorphisms need clarification as well as verses that are known to be points of contention between the Mu'tazilites and traditionists. I examined and evaluated *al-Kashshāf* within the dogmatic framework of "the five principles" (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*) which are considered indispensable for a Mu'tazilite identity. These principles are: "God's unity" (*al-tawhīd*), "God's justice" (*al-'adl*), "reward and punishment" (*al-wa'd wa-al-wa'īd*), "intermediate position between belief and unbelief" (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) and "enjoining good and forbidding evil" (*al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). This dissertation demonstrates that al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* is not only a quintessence of Mu'tazilite doctrine which was adopted from the earlier Mu'tazilite exegetes, but also unequivocally establishes the fact that he expounds the five principles throughout his interpretation of the Qur'ān. Despite, al-Zamakhsharī's Mu'tazilite *tafsīr*, it remained popular not only amongst the Mu'tazilites but also was prescribed in the *madrassas*'

curriculums, as well as cited, adopted, and commented upon by the orthodox community, the Shi'ites, and the Zaydites. In fact, no other book in the history of *tafsīr* has been commented upon in the forms of glosses, superglosses, supercommentaries, and *mukhtaṣars* more than *al-Kashshāf*.

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## Introduction

### 1. Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī

Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī was one of the last widely known and outstanding Ḥanafī Mu‘tazilite scholars who made important contributions in the fields of Arabic linguistics, theology, and Qur’ānic exegesis. Mu‘tazilism continued to thrive in Khwārazm, at least until the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century, while in the rest of the Muslim world it had already declined.<sup>1</sup> Primarily, his fame rests upon the Qur’ān commentary *al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-ghawāmiḍ fī wujūh al-ta’wīl* which he began to write upon his arrival in Mecca in 526/1132, and completed in 528/1134. Al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary contains a quintessence of Mu‘tazilite doctrine which was adopted from the earlier Mu‘tazilite exegetes; however, frequently presented his own views. He mentions the views of both the schools – Baṣra and Baghdad, but does not associate himself to any one of them. He was familiar with the Mu‘tazilite theology of Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār and also studied the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044) which is evident in his Mu‘tazilite creed *al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*.<sup>2</sup>

Wilfred Madelung describes that, “For the Mu‘tazilites, *al-Kashshāf* represents the peak of intellectual achievement in Qur’ān commentary.”<sup>3</sup> According to Andrew Rippin,

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<sup>1</sup> Wilfred Madelung, The Theology of al-Zamakhsharī,” *Actas del XII Congreso de la U.E.A.I. (Malaga, 1984)* (Madrid: Union Europeenne d’Arabistas et d’Islamistas, 1986), 485; Wilfred Madelung, “The Spread of Maturidism and the Turks,” in *Actas IV Congreso de Estudios Arabes e Islamicos Coimbra-Lisboa 1968* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 116.

<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 11-12:840-41.

<sup>3</sup> Wilfred Madelung, The Theology of al-Zamakhsharī,” *Actas del XII Congreso de la U.E.A.I. (Malaga, 1984)* (Madrid: Union Europeenne d’Arabistas et d’Islamistas, 1986), 485.

The distinctiveness of al-Zamakhsharī's Qur'ān commentary lies in his Mu'tazilī theological leanings... The Mu'tazilī doctrines of the unity and justice of God and the consequent ideas of the human free will and the need to deanthropomorphize the Qur'ān become the prime themes of the distinctive passages of interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

I will discuss about *al-Kashshāf* later.

## 2. Origin of the Mu'tazilites

Little is known about the origin of Mu'tazilites – one of the most important theological schools of Islam – which was founded in the first half the second/eighth century. Not only the origin of the term Mu'tazila but also its early sources are controversial and contradictory. There are four different viewpoints regarding the origin and emergence of Mu'tazilites. The first view is based upon the meaning of *i'tazala* which denotes abstinence from the worldly desires, pleasures, and sins. Therefore, those who abstained from worldly affairs were called Mu'tazila.<sup>5</sup> The second opinion is that those who took a neutral position during the Muslim civil strife were named Mu'tazila.<sup>6</sup> The third view is that those who withdrew or separated from the community (*umma*) due

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew Rippin, "al-Zamakhsharī," *ER*, 16:554.

<sup>5</sup> Al-'Askarī, Abī Hilāl. *Al-Awā'il*. Edited. Muḥammad al-Miṣrī and Walīd Qaṣṣāb. Damascus: Manshūrāt Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Kitāb Firaq al-shī'a*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Istanbul: Maṭba'a al-Dawla, 1931), 5-6; 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Nāshī' al-Akbar, *Masā'il al-imāma wa-muqtaṭifāt min al-kitāb al-awsaṭ fi al-maqālāt*, ed. Josef van Ess (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1971), 16-17, 53-54; Abū al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-intiṣār wa-al-radd 'alā Ibn al-Rawāndī*, ed. Albert Nader (Beirut: Al-Maṭba'a Kathūlīkiya, 1957), 73-74.

to their theological differences were called Mu‘tazila.<sup>7</sup> And finally, the fourth opinion is that Mu‘tazila movement originated due to political reasons.<sup>8</sup>

The doctrine of *i‘tizāl* formed the starting point for the creation of the Mu‘tazilite theological school. Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 131/748) was the first to formulate the principle of *manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* (intermediate position between belief and unbelief). Later on ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd (d. 144/761) was convinced by Wāṣil and he agreed with him. Wāṣil was the founder of the school and after his death ‘Amr became the leader of the Mu‘tazilites. The period of their activities spanned from the beginning of the second/eighth century to the first half of the second/eighth century, when the Mu‘tazilite school of Baṣra was established. Parallel to this school, another Mu‘tazilite school was founded by Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar (d. 210/825-26) in Baghdād.<sup>9</sup>

In the formative period of the Mu‘tazilites which approximately lasted from the first half of the second/eighth century until the last quarter of the third/ninth century, there developed a variety of theological opinions of individuals, sometimes in agreement, while most of the times contradictory.

The ‘classical’ period of the Mu‘tazilites spanned approximately three centuries, from the last quarter of the third/ninth century to the middle of the fifth/eleventh century (until the arrival of Saljūqīs). During this period, their scholastic thought was systematized and coherent theological frameworks were formulated by Abū ‘Alī al-

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<sup>7</sup> Abū al-Faṭḥ Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal wa-al-nihal*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muḥammad al-Wakīl (Cairo: Mu‘assasa al-Ḥalbī, 1968), 1:48; Abū Maṣū‘ ‘Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayna al-firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Dār at-Ṭalā’i‘, 2005), 92-93.

<sup>8</sup> H.S. Nyberg, “Al-Mu‘tazila,” *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 6: 787-93.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Mu‘tazila,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:783-93.

Jubbā'ī who represented the Baṣra school followed by his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī and by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka'bī al-Balkhī who was associated with the Baghdād school.<sup>10</sup>

Abū al-Hudhayl of the Baṣra school was the first who created a reliable dogmatic framework and defined *al-uṣūl al-khamṣa* “the five principles” of the Mu'tazila, which he developed in his *Kitāb al-ḥujja*. He considered that these principles were indispensable for a Mu'tazilite identity. They were: “God's unity” (*al-tawhīd*), “God's justice” (*al-'adl*), “reward and punishment” (*al-wa'd wa-al-wa'īd*), “intermediate position between belief and unbelief” (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) and “enjoining good and forbidding evil” (*al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). These principles provided an indispensable identity to the Mu'tazila, and determined the structure of their theological works for centuries.<sup>11</sup>

Later on, Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī (d. 319/913) of the Baghdād school, and Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 303/915) of the Baṣra school formulated coherent theological frameworks. Abū Hāshim (d. 321/933), the founder of the Bahshāmiyya or Bahāshima school further systematized and refined the theological doctrines. The last innovative school within Mu'tazilism originated with Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044), who developed independent theological views. However, all the refinements centered within the context of the five principles of Mu'tazila, and these principles are still considered pertinent, and constitute the basis of the Mu'tazilite theology.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Mu'tazila,” *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 7:783-93.

<sup>11</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawhar* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1965), 3:221-23; Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Malaḥī, *al-Tanbīh wa-al-radd 'alā ahl al-ahwā wa-al-bid'*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid b. al-Ḥasan al-Kawtharī (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1968), 38-39; Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, ed. Walī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ṣāleḥ al-Farfūr (Damascus: Maktaba Dār al-Farfūr, 2000), 227-28; Qādī 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Asadabādī, *Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamṣa*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 2006), 128-48.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Mu'tazila,” *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 7:783-93.

### 3. *Tafsīr, Ta'wīl, Ma'ānī, and Sharḥ*

The terms *tafsīr*, *ta'wīl*, *ma'ānī*, and *sharḥ* in Arabic language mean interpretation, explanation or elucidation of something.<sup>13</sup> A *tafsīr* of the Qur'ān is a work, which provides an interpretation of the Arabic text of the scripture. Al-Zarkashī defines *ta'wīl* as,

the science of elucidating the general as well as particular meanings of the words of the Qur'ān. The difference between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* is that *tafsīr* primarily deals with the narratives and accounts (*riwāya*), while *ta'wīl* relates to the deeper knowledge (*dirāya*) of the interior meaning of the Qur'ān. According to some scholars, the words *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* both have the meanings of explanation.<sup>14</sup>

*Tafsīr* is divided into two broad categories: *tafsīr bi-al-ma'thūr* and *tafsīr bi-al-ra'y*. *Tafsīr bi-al-ma'thūr* is exegesis that relies on those traditions which are trustworthy in their transmission (*isnād*) and text (*matn*). It is considered by mainstream Sunnī exegesis to be authentic and reliable. *Tafsīr bi-al-ra'y* is exegesis that is based on personal opinion and rational analysis of the text. While the traditionists consider rationalist commentary to be opinion-based, whimsical and capricious, the rationalists do not find the traditions a reliable source for Qur'ānic interpretation. However, there are no clear-cut boundaries between these two types of commentary. Historically, both traditionists and rationalists have used traditions as well as their own opinions in their exegesis.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *ER*, 14:236-44.

<sup>14</sup> Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1957), 1:150.

<sup>15</sup> Rashid Ahmad, "Qur'ānic Exegesis and Classical Tafsīr," *The Islamic Quarterly* 11 (1968), 81-87; Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *EF*, 10:83-88; Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *ER*, 14:236-44; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur'ānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20; Bruce Fudge, *Qur'ānic Hermeneutics: Al-Ṭabrisī and the Craft of Commentary* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011), 10.

#### 4. The Qur'ānic Exegesis

According to the traditional Muslims view, Qur'ānic exegesis began quite early during the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad. However, he did not explain the entire text of the Qur'ān to his companions as there was no need for it. This was because, as the Qur'ān was revealed in Arabic, the companions understood it and witnessed its circumstances of revelation at first hand. Thus, the Qur'ān was partially elucidated by the Prophet and his verbal explanations were either memorized or written by his companions. The companions added and transmitted his exegesis to their successors (*tābi'ūn*) who added to the previous interpretations and transmitted to their successors (*tābi' tābi'ūn*). Subsequently, the following generations of commentators collected these interpretations of the Prophet, the companions, the successors and successors' successors as established by the authoritative chains of transmission. Therefore, the first *tafsīr* tradition that was initiated by Muhammad is referred to as “the Prophetical exegesis” (*tafsīr al-nabī*).<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the first half of the first century of Islam, four major schools of exegesis had evolved whose views and contribution in this field significantly shaped the science of exegesis of the later generations. These schools were named after the major cities: Mecca, Medina, Kūfa, and Baṣra. The Mecca school of exegesis was founded by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, who was the Prophet's paternal cousin. He was well known for his extensive knowledge of the Qur'ān, Arabic language, pre-Islamic poetry, Arabic history and culture, and Arab genealogy. The Medina school was founded by Ubayy b. Ka'b who was the first scribe of the Prophet. He was well known for his accurate memorization of the Qur'ān and sound knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. The founder of the

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<sup>16</sup> Claude Gilliot, “The Beginnings of Qur'ānic Exegesis,” in *The Qur'ān: Formative Interpretation*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1999), 1-2; Claude Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2:99-124.

Kūfa school was ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd. He was mainly interested in jurisprudence and Qur’ānic exegesis. The founder of the Baṣra school was Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who was one of the students of Anas b. Mālīk – a companion of the Prophet.<sup>17</sup>

According to the Western scholars’ view, the reliability and authenticity of the *isnāds* and *matns* of exegetical *ḥadīths*, reconstructing the early exegetical works and dating them at an early period of Islam cannot be relied upon because they are all suspect.

Nabia Abbott,<sup>18</sup> Fuat Sezgin,<sup>19</sup> and Muhammad Mustafa Azmi<sup>20</sup> believe in the early and continuous written tradition in Islam and their position is that the *isnāds* are historically reliable. Gregor Schoeler’s<sup>21</sup> view is that orality and writing both were complementary and in practice in the beginning period. Georg Stauth,<sup>22</sup> C.H.M. Versteegh,<sup>23</sup> John Burton,<sup>24</sup> Johann Fück,<sup>25</sup> James Robson,<sup>26</sup> N.J. Coulson,<sup>27</sup> and Uri Rubin,<sup>28</sup> though not in full agreement, come to the conclusions that *isnāds* attached to the exegetical *ḥadīths* are reasonably reliable. They are of the opinion that these *isnāds* are

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<sup>17</sup> Hussein ‘Abdul-Rauf, *Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis: Genesis and development* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 147-57.

<sup>18</sup> Nabia Abbott, ‘The Early Development of Tafsīr.’ In *The Qur’ān: Formative Interpretation*. ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 29-40.

<sup>19</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band I: Qur’ān wissenschaften, Ḥadīth, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik bis ca. 430 H* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 1:17-18.

<sup>20</sup> M.M. Azmi, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1992), 1-211.

<sup>21</sup> Gregor Schoeler, “Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung der Wissenschaften im Frühen Islam” *Der Islam* 62 (1985): 201-30.

<sup>22</sup> Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 73-75.

<sup>23</sup> C.H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur’ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> John Burton, “Notes towards a Fresh Perspective on the Islamic Sunna,” *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin* 11 (1984), 12.

<sup>25</sup> Johann W. Fück, “Die Rolle des Traditionalismus im Islam,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 93 (1939), 17.

<sup>26</sup> James Robson, “The *isnād* in Muslim Tradition,” *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 15 (1953-4), 20; James Robson, “Ibn Ishāq’s Use of Isnād,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands’ Library* 38 (1965), 450.

<sup>27</sup> N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 56; N.J. Coulson, “European Criticism of Ḥadīth Literature,” in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 320.

<sup>28</sup> Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by Early Muslims, a Textual Analysis* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 234.



reliable to the extent that the original exegetical works of certain exegetes, such as Ibn ‘Abbās or Mujāhid b. Jabr can be reconstructed. This sanguine approach is in line with the traditional Muslim methodology, which asserts that *isnāds* of *tafsīr ḥadīths* are reliable.<sup>29</sup>

Gautier H.A. Juynboll,<sup>30</sup> Fazlur Rahman,<sup>31</sup> and Harald Motzki<sup>32</sup> are of the opinion that as a whole, some of the *ḥadīths* reflect the Prophet’s words and deeds. They seem to place confidence in the *isnāds* and *matns* despite the fact that either on large scale or small scale fabrication took place. Furthermore, there must have been in existence both oral and written *ḥadīths* upon which the canonical collections were made.

Fred Leemhuis, though skeptical, holds an intermediate position between Sezgin and Goldizher and Wansbrough. He accepts the basic historical framework for the Qur’ān and its *tafsīr* which is in line with the views of Muslims. However, from the skeptical point of view, he does not accept the ascription of exegetical material to Ibn ‘Abbās with certainty and agrees with the skepticism of Ignaz Goldizher and John Wansbrough.<sup>33</sup>

It is evident that the early period of Islamic history has been the main object of opposing views between the Muslim and Western scholars. The Muslim scholarship trusts in the early historical authenticity of exegetical *ḥadīths* and considers the interpretations of early commentators reliable and trustworthy. For Western scholars the

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<sup>29</sup> Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authority of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 42.

<sup>30</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 23, 71.

<sup>31</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Islamabad: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1995), 31-32.

<sup>32</sup> Harald Motzki, “Muṣannaf of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī as a Source of Authentic Aḥādīth of the First Century A.H.,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991), 9.

<sup>33</sup> Fred Leemhuis, “Origin and Early Development of the *tafsīr* Tradition,” in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur’an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 21-30; Berg, *Development of Exegesis*, 91.

historicity and authenticity of early exegesis is open to question. Therefore, there appears to be no resolution to this problem unless either the Western scholarship accepts the traditional Muslim historiography or new materials are discovered to substantiate or refute the skepticism of Western scholars about the early history of Islam.

The formative period of exegesis started in the early second/eighth century with the introduction of philological and grammatical sciences in the Qur'ānic exegetical works. Similarly, the refinement and codification of historiography which turned myths into history contributed to a great extent for the establishment of exegesis as a certain and exact science. In this period, four broad categories of *tafsīr* can be distinguished: paraphrastic, narrative, legal, and linguistic. Paraphrastic and narrative exegesis developed simultaneously. Paraphrastic exegesis consisted of giving brief, often synonymic explanations of the Qur'ānic terms and verses, whereas narrative exegesis illustrates the text of the Qur'ān through Judeo-Christian traditions (*Isrā'īliyyāt*), the nascent Prophetic biography, and pre-Islamic Arab tradition. The legal analysis of the Qur'ān emerged quite early in Islam and the exegetes attempted to order the text of the Qur'ān and its interpretation according to legal topics. The range of these subjects covered those aspects, which dealt with basic beliefs and communities' interaction with each other, such as faith, prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, retaliation, inheritance, usury, wine, marriage, divorce, adultery, thefts, debts, contracts, and holy war. In the first half of the fourth/tenth century, the variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*) were standardized, and seven "readings" belonging to the second/eighth century as authorities on the traditional readings of the 'Uthmānic text were considered authentic by the orthodoxy. These "readers" of the Qur'ān were also the philologists and grammarians

who explained and interpreted the “difficult” (*mushkil*) and “strange/foreign” (*gharīb*) words or passages of the Qur’ān through the sciences of philology and grammar. Therefore, the readings of the Qur’ān and grammar (including elements of lexicography and orthography) became disciplines of the Qur’ānic sciences and integral components of the exegesis.<sup>34</sup>

Theological exegesis started after the First *Fitna* (35/656-40/661).<sup>35</sup> During this period, various sects in Islam emerged, such as Shi‘ite, Zaydite, Khārijite, and Mu‘tazilite, etc. These sects compiled their *tafsīrs* based on ‘*ilm al-kalām* (theology)<sup>36</sup> to justify their views and existence.

The Mu‘tazilites introduced philosophical, philological, and grammatical methodology in the Qur’ānic exegesis. They contributed to the exegesis of the Qur’ān considerably but most of their works are lost. Some of the titles of their works are preserved, and ample quotations from them have survived in the extant works of later authors.<sup>37</sup> The earliest Mu‘tazilite tafsir entitled *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān* was written by Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 131/748).<sup>38</sup> ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd (d. ca. 144/761) composed a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān

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<sup>34</sup> Claude Gilliot, “The Beginnings of Qur’ānic Exegesis,” in *The Qur’ān: Formative Interpretation*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 1-27; Claude Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2:99-124.

<sup>35</sup> The First *Fitna* (35/656-40/661) started after the assassination of the third caliph ‘Uthmān in 35/656 and ended in 40/661 after the murder of the fourth caliph ‘Alī. Stalemate at the Battle of Ṣiffīn and an inconclusive arbitration between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya resulted in the formation of many sects in Islam. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1: 214-17.

<sup>36</sup> ‘*Ilm al-kalām* is defined as “a science which enables a person to procure a victory of the dogmas and actions laid down by the Legislator of the religion and to refute all opinions contradicting them.” See Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī, *Ihṣā’ al-‘ulūm*, ed. Osmān Amine (Cairo: Librairie Anglo-Egyptienne, 1968), 131-32; L. Gardet, “‘Ilm al-kalām,” *IE*<sup>2</sup>, 3:1141.

<sup>37</sup> Sabine Schmidkte, “Mu‘tazila,” *EQ*, 3:466-71.

<sup>38</sup> Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Abū Bakr Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968), 6:7-11; ‘Abd Allāh al-Hamawī al-Rumī Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’ irshād al-arīb ilā ma‘rifat al-adīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (London: Luzac and Company and Cairo: Maṭba‘a Hindiyya, 1923-30), 6:2793-95; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, ed. Ghanīm b. ‘Abbās Ghanīm (Cairo: Al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha lil-Ṭaba‘a wa al-Nashr, 1996), 6:261; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām: Qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-al-nisā’ min al-‘arab wa’l-*

which is mainly derived from the teachings of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.<sup>39</sup> Other prominent and distinguished Mu‘tazilite exegetes are Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/915),<sup>40</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka‘bī (d. 319/931),<sup>41</sup> ‘Abd al-Salām b. Abī ‘Alī Muḥammad Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 321/933),<sup>42</sup> Abū Muslim Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Iṣfahānī (d. 322/934),<sup>43</sup> Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025),<sup>44</sup> Abū Sa‘d al-Muḥāsīn b. Muḥammad b. Karāma al-Ḥākīm al-Jushamī’s (d. 494/1101), and al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>45</sup>

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*musta‘ribīn wa ‘l-mustashriqīn* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāiyyīn, 2007), 8:108-9; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn: Tarājim musannifīn al-kutub al-‘Arabiyya* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1983), 13:159.

<sup>39</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnāwarī Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, ed. Tharwat ‘Ukāsha (Cairo: Maṭba‘a Dār al-Kutub, 1960), 482-3; Abū al-Faraj Muḥammad b. Abū Ya‘qūb Iṣḥāq Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. Ayman Fu‘ād Sayyid (London and Cairo: Mu‘assasat al-Furqān lil-Turāth al-Islāmī, 2009), 1:562-3; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 3:460-62; Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* (Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Sa‘āda, 1931), 12:166-88; Zirīklī, *al-A‘lām*, 5:81; Montgomery Watt, “Amr b. Ubayd b. Bab,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 454; Suleiman A. Mourad, “Amr b. ‘Ubayd,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2008):94-96; Josef van Ess, “Amr b. Ubayd,” *EIr*, 1:991-92.

<sup>40</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:606-8; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4:267-69; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 33; L. Gardet, “al-DJubbā’ī, Abū Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:569; Sabine Schmidtke, “Jobbā’ī,” *EIr*, 14:666-72.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:613-15; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 3:313-17; Raḍī al-Dīn b. Mūsā b. Ja‘far b. Muḥammad Ibn Ṭawūs, *Sa‘d al-su‘ūd* (Qumm: Manshūrāt al-Raḍī, 1363/1962), 192-3, 201-203; D. Gimaret, Djubbā’ī, 28; Claude Gilliot, “L’exégèse du Coran en Asie centrale et au Khorasan,” *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999), 151; Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭawūs and his Library* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1992), 203-4, no. 23; Albert N. Nader, “al-Balkhī, Abū al-Qāsim,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1002; Abbas Zaryab, “Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī,” *EIs*, 2:418; C. Brockelmann, “al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:634.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:627; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, ed. A. Meursinge (Leiden and Tehran: Arabic and Persian Text Series, 1839 and 1960), 33.

<sup>43</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:423-24; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2437-40; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 5:89; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 9:97; ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā* (= *Ghurar al-fawā’id wa-durar al-qalā’id*), ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1954), 1:13, 367; 2:99, 234, 304-5; Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, ed. Āghā Buzurg al-Tehrānī (Najaf: Maṭba‘at al-‘Ilmiyya, 1957), 1-2; Muḥammad ‘Adnān Zarzūr, *al-Hākīm al-Jushamī wa-manhajuhu fī tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*. (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, 1972), 161-62; Sa‘īd Anṣārī, *Muṭṭaḥḥat Jāmi‘ al-ta’wīl li muḥkam al-tanzīl* (Calcutta: Al-Balāgh Press, 1921).

<sup>44</sup> Zirīklī, *al-A‘lām*, 3:273-74; Margareth Heemskerk, “Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 3 (2007):9-18.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Gimaret, *Une lecture mu‘tazilite du Coran. Le Tafsīr d’Abū ‘Alī al-Djubbā’ī (d. 303/915) partiellement reconstitué à partir de ses citateurs* (Louvain, Paris: Peeters, 1994), 25-26.

## 5. *Al-Kashshāf*

Since its inception, *al-Kashshāf* has been subject to both explication and orthodox Sunnī criticism which centered on the basic principles of Mu‘tazilite theology. Those who have denounced and criticized *al-Kashshāf* include leading scholars of Sunnī orthodoxy. Yet, at the same time, al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsīr* was cited, adopted, and commented upon by the orthodox community and there are an almost endless number of glosses, superglosses, and supercommentaries on it. The work by al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta’wīl* is the most famous attempt to distill the essence of al-Zamakhsharī’s work while attempting to omit those views considered reprehensible to Sunnī orthodoxy. Ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683/1284) in his *Kitāb al-Intiṣāf min al-Kashshāf* refuted al-Zamakhsharī’s Mu‘tazilite interpretations. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) in his *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī (d. 745/1344) in his *Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) in his *Muqaddima* and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) all criticized al-Zamakhsharī’s Mu‘tazilite views.<sup>46</sup>

Modern scholarship on al-Zamakhsharī is divided on the extent to which his *tafsīr* expresses Mu‘tazilite doctrine and approach. One study compares the significance of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī in Muslim theology and examines their works *al-Kashshāf* and *Anwār al-tanzīl* which represent the views of the Mu‘tazilites and the Ash‘arites respectively. The study concludes that al-Zamakhsharī as a Mu‘tazilite gives priority to reason over revelation, whereas, al-Bayḍāwī as an Ash‘arite maintains that revelation has priority over reason.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Madelung, *The Theology of al-Zamakhsharī*, 485.

<sup>47</sup> Lupti Ibrahim, *The Theological Questions at Issue between al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī with special reference to al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-tanzīl*. Ph.D. Thesis (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1977), v.

Another study written within the framework of the Mu‘tazilites’ five principles, examines al-Zamakhsharī’s various techniques to substantiate his Mu‘tazilite views, such as rational orientation, variant readings of the Qur’ān, support from the prophetic traditions, usage of similitudes and parables, extension of certain words’ meanings and syntactical methods.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Schub states that according to Henri Fleisch, al-Zamakhsharī’s concise grammatical magnum opus *al-Mufaṣṣal* deals with almost all of the topics included in Sibawayh’s *Kitāb*.<sup>49</sup> Schub’s main thesis is that al-Zamakhsharī significantly and extensively treats these topics covered in *al-Mufaṣṣal* in his commentary of *al-Kashshāf*. Al-Zamakhsharī is an excellent linguist who examines the Qur’ānic text in the light of relevant context and he evaluates various possible readings, or attempts a diachronic explanation. He is an innovative and critical analyst of textual material and does not hesitate to break with the accepted grammatical wisdom of his time. He concludes that al-Zamakhsharī provides many extra-linguistic bits of information which are potentially very illuminating. He is especially insightful in analyzing the syntactic problems. Although al-Zamakhsharī tends to look at verses of the Qur’ān bearing on theological issues through the Mu‘tazilite perspective, his view of those verses containing

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<sup>48</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kā tafsīr al-Kashshāf: ek tahlīlī jā’iza* (‘Aligarh: ‘Aligarh Muslim University, 1982), 292-304. There are four more studies within the framework of the Mu‘tazilites’ five principles, done by al-Hūfī, al-Juwaynī, al-Shīrāzī and ‘Awīḍa. All these studies conclude that al-Zamakhsharī’s *Kashshāf* is a Mutazilite commentary and he believed in the five principles. See Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥūfī, *Al-Zamakhsharī* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1966), 119-66; Muṣṭafā al-Ṣāwī al-Juwaynī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān wa-bayān i’jāzihī* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1968), 107-54; Murtaḍa Ayat Allāh Zāda al-Shīrāzī, *Al-Zamakhsharī lughwīyyan wa-mufasssīran* (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1977), 346-58; Kāmil Muḥammad Muḥammad ‘Awīḍa, *Al-Zamakhsharī: al-mufasssir al-balīgh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1994), 172-231.

<sup>49</sup> Henri Fleisch, *Traité de philologie arabe* (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1990), 1:40.

grammatical problems is, generally speaking, scientific in that it is unbiased as to meaning.<sup>50</sup>

Andrew Lane argues in his study that “while al-Zamakhsharī may be well known for his ‘Mu‘tazilite’ commentary on the Qur’ān, exegesis in general and Mu‘tazilism in particular are hardly representative of his literary output... al-Zamakhsharī was neither a theologian nor even a religious scholar in the more limited sense of the word.”<sup>51</sup> He concludes that “This study, then, puts to rest the myth that the *Kashshāf* is a ‘Mu‘tazilite commentary’ that began with *al-ḥamdu li-llāh alladhī khalaqa l-Qur’ān*, and demonstrates that it would even be difficult to define what a ‘Mu‘tazilite commentary’ actually is. There is, in fact, so little Mu‘tazilism in the *Kashshāf* and so many missed occasions to inject some, that to call it such is a misnomer; nor is there any ‘special outlook’ or ‘distinctive approach’ that can be discerned in the *Kashshāf* by which its Mu‘tazilite character could be redeemed.”<sup>52</sup>

## 6. Thesis

My thesis is that al-Zamakhsharī’s Qur’ān commentary is squarely within the Mu‘tazilite tradition. I will argue that Andrew Lane is incorrect because he studied and evaluated al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary only with regard to two *sūras* *al-Dukhān* (Q44: Smoke) and *al-Qamar* (Q54: The Moon), and concluded that *al-Kashshāf* is not a Mu‘tazilite commentary.

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<sup>50</sup> Michael B. Schub, *Linguistic Topics in al-Zamakhsharī’s Commentary on the Qur’ān*. Ph.D. Dissertation (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 1-34.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew J. Lane, *A Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 46.

<sup>52</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 229.

In order to substantiate my hypothesis, I will start with al-Zamakhsharī's methodology of *tafsīr* which comprises: *muḥkamāt wa mutashābihāt*, *'ilm al-ma'ānī wa 'ilm al-bayān*, questions and answers (*as'ila wa-ajwiba*), grammar, *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth* and variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*).

Then I will describe in detail the Mu'tazilites' five principles (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*): God's unity (*al-tawḥīd*), God's justice (*al-'adl*), reward and punishment (*al-wa'd wa-al-wa'īd*), intermediate position between belief and unbelief (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) and enjoining good and forbidding evil (*al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar*).

After that, I will examine and evaluate *al-Kashshāf* within the framework of these five principles (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*) in order to find out whether and in what manner al-Zamakhsharī defends some or all of these five principles. I selected those verses where anthropomorphisms need clarification as well as verses that are known to be points of contention between the Mu'tazilites and traditionists.

To make my dissertation more convenient and understandable for readers, I have provided the following information either in individual chapters or appendices: al-Zamakhsharī biography; different viewpoints regarding the origins of the Mu'tazilites; definitions of *tafsīr*, *ta'wīl*, *ma'ānī*, and *sharḥ*; historical development of the Qur'ānic exegesis; *al-Kashshāf* and commentaries on *al-Kashshāf*; and different interpretations regarding *muḥkamāt wa-mutashābihāt*.



## 7. Notes on Translation and Transliteration

All my Quran translations will be drawn from the translations of Ahmad Ali and Majid Fakhry.<sup>53</sup> I have made some slight modifications to their translations to elucidate certain points where deemed necessary. So far as transliteration is concerned, I have followed the IJMES transliteration system.

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<sup>53</sup> *Al-Qur'ān: A Contemporary Translation*, Ahmed Ali (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); *An Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, Majid Fakhry (New York: New York University Press, 2004).

## Chapter 1

### Al-Zamakhsharī's Biography

Biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaqāt*) provide very little information about al-Zamakhsharī's life. McAuliffe describes, "The biographical material on al-Zamakhsharī strikes very few personal notes." In this study, the information derived from more than twenty-five biographical sources, spans a period of eight centuries from Ibn al-Anbārī's (d. 577/1181) *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-udabā'* to Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī's (d.1395/1976) *al-A'lām. Qāmūs tarājīm li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-al-nisā' min al-'Arab wa-al-musta'ribīn wa-al-mustashriqīn*.

#### 1. Early Life of al-Zamakhsharī

Al-Zamakhsharī's full name is Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar (Aḥmad),<sup>1</sup> his *kunya* (patronymic) is Abū al-Qāsim and his *alqāb* (honorific titles) are *Jār Allāh* (neighbor of God), and *Fakhr Khawārazm* (Glory of Khawārazm).<sup>2</sup> The *nisba* al-Zamakhsharī is derived from the place Zamakhshar in Khwārazm, where he was born on Rajab 27, 467/March 18, 1075.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Muqaddasī (d. 380/990) describes, "Zamakhshar is a small city having a fortress, a ditch, a prison, and gates braced with iron, and bridges are raised every night,

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<sup>1</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn 'Alī b. Yusūf al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbā' al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrahīm (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya, 2005), 3:265; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 7:137; Jamāl al-Dīn Yusūf b. Taghrībardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhira* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya, 2005), 5:274; and Yusūf Ilyān Sarkis, *Mu'jam al-maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya wa'l-mu'arraba* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Sarkis, 1928-31), 1:973) give al-Zamakhsharī's full name as Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar. Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2687; and al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178 mention al-Zamakhsharī's full name as Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad. Al-Suyūṭī in his *Bughya*, 2:279 gives al-Zamakhsharī's full name as Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, while in his *Ṭabaqāt*, 41 provides his name as Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:268; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:279; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98.

<sup>3</sup> All the sources give Rajab 27, 467 A.H. as the date of birth of al-Zamakhsharī, except al-Suyūṭī, who mentions in *Bughya*, 2:279 that he was born in Rajab of 497 A.H. It seems to be incorrect.

and a main street that crosses through the city. The mosque is very elegant which is at the end of the market.”<sup>4</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562/1167) mentions, “Zamakhshar is one of the big villages of Khwārazm which is equivalent to a small city.”<sup>5</sup> Yāqūt quotes al-Zamakhsharī that he said, “As far as my place of birth is concerned, it is one of the unknown villages of Khwārazm.”<sup>6</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī died on Dhū al-Ḥijja 8, 538/June 12, 1144 in Jurjāniyya, where he was buried. Jurjāniyya, also known as Gurganj, capital of Khurāsān is located on the bank of the Jayhūn River. It was ranked after Kath as the second principal city, and had four gates and a large palace near the Bāb al-Ḥajjāj, on the edge of a huge market place and consisted of an outer and an inner city.<sup>7</sup>

Although of Persian origin, al-Zamakhsharī’s command over Arabic was superb, and unparalleled. He was most basically motivated in his scholarship to serve and promote the Arabic language. He always taught his students in Arabic, and used Persian only for those who were beginners in their studies.<sup>8</sup> Arabic was, in his view, the most perfect language which God had preferred to all languages as He preferred the Qur’ān

<sup>4</sup> Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Bannā’ al-Muqaddasī al-Bashsharī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī ma‘rifat al-aqlīm* (Beirut: Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1987), 230.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad b. Manṣūr Al-Sam‘ānī, *A-Ansāb*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 3:181-82; ‘Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Lubāb fī tahdhīb al-ansāb* (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1970), 2:74; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; ‘Abd al-Ḥayyī al-Lucknawī, *al-Fawā’id al-bahīyya fī tarājim al-Ḥanafīyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Nu‘mānī (Banāras: Maktabat Nadwat al-Ma‘ārif, 1967), 167-8 and Muḥammad Bāqir b. Zayn al-‘Ābidīn al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-‘ulamā wa-al-sādāt*, ed. Asad Allāh (Tehrān: Maktabat Isma‘īliyyān, 1970), 8:119 describe Zamakhshar as one of the big villages of Khawārazm.

<sup>6</sup> Yāqūt b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī al-Rūmī, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1957), 3:147.

<sup>7</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, 2:122; B. Spuler, “Gurgandj,” *EF<sup>2</sup>*, 2:1141.

<sup>8</sup> Darwish al-Jundī, *al-Naẓm al-Qur’ān fī Kashshāf al-Zamakhsharī* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa Miṣr lil-Ṭab‘ wa al-Nashr, 1969), 3.

and Islam over all scripture and religions.<sup>9</sup> He was a strong opponent of the *shu'ūbiyya*, who held the view that Persians were superior to the Arabs.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī was lame (*a'raj*) because one of his feet was amputated. There are five different versions, which describe the reasons as to how this happened. According to the first version, when he was a small child, he fell from a roof (*saḥḥ*) and broke his foot. It became bent and was amputated.<sup>11</sup> The second version states that while he was traveling through Khwārazm, “he got frostbite in an extreme cold weather” (*aṣābahu thalj kathīr wa-bard shadīd*) and his foot “fell off” (*saqaṭa*).<sup>12</sup> The third version mentions that his foot was stung by an insect and later it had to be cut off due to abscess developed on the foot.<sup>13</sup> The fourth version describes that on his way to Bukhārā; he fell from his horse and broke his foot. Afterwards, it became so painful that he had the foot removed.<sup>14</sup> Finally, when al-Zamakhsharī was visiting Baghdād, Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Dāmaghānī (d. 540/1145), the Ḥanafīte jurist asked him about his foot. He replied that the cause of his foot amputation was his mother’s prayer. He narrated that when he was a small child he caught a sparrow and tied its foot with a piece of thread. The sparrow managed to escape and took refuge in a wall’s hole. He tried to pull the bird out of the hole but its foot severed by the thread. His mother saw the incident and said, “May God sever your foot as you severed its foot.” Al-Zamakhsharī concluded that, “My mother’s benediction got me this.” Al-Zamakhsharī got his

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<sup>9</sup> Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EP<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 11-12:840-1.

<sup>10</sup> Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 2:362.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Abd al-Salām b. Muḥammad al-Andarāsānī, “Fī Sīrat al-Zamakhsharī Jār Allāh,” ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Yāfī, *Majallat Majma’ al-lughā al-‘Arabiyya bi-Dimishq*, 57/3 (1402/1982), 368.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:169; al-Fāsi, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:140-1; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 4:119; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa’l-a’lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1991-2000), 36:489.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:268.

amputated foot replaced by a wooden one, which he used to hide by wearing a long cloak, so that people would consider him as lame.<sup>15</sup> He always carried with him an official certificate (*maḥḍar*) signed by many witnesses who knew the circumstances and facts of his foot, to avoid suspicion or doubt of the people.<sup>16</sup> The reason that he had to carry an official certificate was that he might not be suspected that his foot was amputated due to punishment for some crime. To avoid this suspicion he always carried the certificate as a proof of the circumstances under which he lost his foot.

## 2. Education of al-Zamakhsharī

Al-Andarabānī and Ṭashkubrīzāda mention that al-Zamakhsharī's father was a scholar (*imām*) in the village of Zamakhshar and he taught him the Qur'ān. His father wanted him to learn tailoring since he was handicapped. However, al-Zamakhsharī requested that he send him to Jurjāniyya for more education, to which he agreed. He studied and acquired knowledge from a number of scholars (*asātidha, shuyūkh, masahā'ikh*). In Jurjāniyya, the brother of Abū al-Faḥ b. 'Alī b. al-Hārith al-Bayya'ī saw his good handwriting and employed him as his secretary.<sup>17</sup> According to Ibn Khallikān,

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<sup>15</sup> Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:99; al-Qiftī, *Inbāḥ al-ruwāt*, 3:268; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:169-70; al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:140-1; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 4:119.

<sup>16</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2688; al-Qiftī, *Inbāḥ al-ruwāt*, 3: 268; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:169; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:119.

<sup>17</sup> According to George Makdisi, "For the *madrassa* in eleventh-century Baghdad exercised an undeniably strong attraction, especially on those who had not the means for the leisure of study. To devote oneself to study meant to sacrifice the opportunity of monetary gain from plying a trade or profession. Prior to the big *madrasas*, both needy professors and needy students had to gain their livelihood outside the field of education. The professor had to hire himself out as copyist for wages. Those with a handsome handwriting gained large sums of money as copyists. This profession was not by any means left to the very greatest calligraphers, such as the Ibn Muqlas and the Ibn al-Bauwābs; others, whose primary interest was elsewhere, but who had a certain talent for calligraphy, could at times gain enough to become rich. But the great majority could only eke out a living with this time-consuming job which, however, had the advantage of keeping them close to their primary interest in helping them to learn their texts," George Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961), 52.

al-Zamakhsharī travelled to Bukhārā when he reached the age to acquire further knowledge and continue his studies outside of his village.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. Al-Zamakhsharī's Teachers

All the biographical dictionaries and *ṭabaqāt* works mention that al-Zamakhsharī acquired his education from a number of scholars. However, most of the information available about these scholars is scanty. There are approximately eleven names which have been mentioned in the sources who were his teachers. Sometimes, information is available about the area of studies in which they were specialized, while in other cases it is not mentioned at all.

According to al-Andarabānī, al-Zamakhsharī when he was already a famous authority on the Qur'ān exegesis became associated with two prominent theologians of Khwārazm – Abū Maṣṣūr<sup>19</sup> and Imām Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. al-Malāḥimī al-Uṣūlī. Al-Zamakhsharī instructed both of them in exegesis, and he studied theology (*uṣūl*) with them. The evidence of al-Zamakhsharī's close relationship with Ibn al-Malāḥimī is supported by the elegiac verses composed by him on the occasion of the latter's death.<sup>20</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī wrote a brief summary of his theological opinions entitled *Kitāb al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*. In his Mu'tazilite creed, he was largely influenced by the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, which is supported by the text. Throughout the book, he usually refrains from expressing his own preference with regard to the conflicting views

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<sup>18</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 368; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:170; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:100.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Andarabānī mentions his name Imām Abū Maṣṣūr and "the Shaykh Abū Maṣṣūr master of theology and preacher of the people of the Khwārazm" (*al-Shaykh Abū Maṣṣūr ṣāhib al-uṣūl wa wā'iz ahl al-Khwārazm*). It seems that he is most likely the Shaykh al-Islām Abū Maṣṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī, one of al-Zamakhsharī's teachers mentioned by his nephew. See Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 368, 379; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2688.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 382.

of various schools on a question without ever entering the controversies. However, at some places when he indicates his opinion, it seems that he is in agreement with the views of Ibn al-Malāḥimī. The theologians most of the time mentioned by names are Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī – “the two *shaykhs*” (*al-shaykhān*), and Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār is referred to only once.

Madelung states that,

Al-Zamakhsharī’s attitude to the Mu‘tazila and their schools thus seems well consistent with what is known of his career. He had most likely been a Mu‘tazilī from his youth. Then he was attracted by the teaching of al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī, representative of the Bahashmiyya, perhaps in particular because of al-Ḥākim’s authority in Qur’ān exegesis. He probably visited Jishum, though apparently after al-Ḥākim’s death, and received his works from a student of his. Later he became closely associated with Ibn al-Malāḥimī, the Kawāzāmian renewer of the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī. He was clearly impressed and influenced by his teaching. Yet he did not identify himself with it. In his theological compendium he rather lent support to a broadly based, catholic Mu‘tazilism.<sup>21</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī studied traditions with Ibn al-Baṭir, Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī and Abū Sa‘d al-Shaqqānī. Al-Andarabānī mentions that al-Zamakhsharī and one of his students Abū al-Mu‘ayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī revived the *ḥadīths* in Khwārazm. He states that,

He [al-Zamakhsharī] was the first to revive the science of Tradition (*‘ilm al-ḥadīth*) in Khwārazm and to make it to flourish there. He brought the books of the Traditions from Iraq and “urged the people” (*hathth al-nās*) to study it. This science was spread out by him and after him by Akḥṭab al-khuṭabā’ (Abū al-Mu‘ayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Madelung, *Theology of al-Zamakhsharī*, 492-93.

<sup>22</sup> Abū al-Mu‘ayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī was al-Zamakhsharī’s favorite student and in the year 550/1155 he wrote a commentary on al-Zamakhsharī’s *Unmūdhaj* entitled *Kifāyat al-naḥw*. See Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 379; Brockelmann, *GAL.Sp*, 1:285, 513, 549, 623; *GAL*, 1:350.

Al-Zamakhsharī compiled four works on *ḥadīth*: *al-Fā'iḳ fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*, *Mukhtaṣar al-Muwāfaqāt bayna ahl al-bayt wa al-ṣaḥāba*, *Mutashābih asmā' al-ruwāt* and *Khaṣā'iṣ al-'ashara al-kirām al-barara*.

Al-Zamakhsharī studied literature with Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. al-Muẓaffar al-Naysābūrī and Abū Muḍar al-Ḍabbī, and compiled fourteen titles on literature. He studied grammar with 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī and Abū Muḍar al-Ḍabbī, and lexicography with Abū Manṣūr b. al-Jawālīqī and Abū Muḍar al-Ḍabbī. In the fields of grammar and lexicography he penned eight and five works respectively. However, no one is mentioned specifically as al-Zamakhsharī's teacher in exegesis.

A list of al-Zamakhsharī's teachers is provided in Appendix 2.

#### 4. Al-Zamakhsharī's Students

According to al-Qifṭī, al-Dhahabī, and al-Dāwūdī, "In any city or town where he entered, people joined him to become his students" (*mā dakhala balad illā wa-ajtama 'ū 'alayhi wa-talamadhū lahu*).<sup>23</sup> Al-Anbārī, Yāqūt, al-Dhahabī and al-Fāsī mention that, "When he passed through 'Irāq on his way to pilgrimage to Mecca, Abū al-Sa'ādāt Hibat Allāh b. al-Shajarī was delighted on his arrival and benefited (from his knowledge)."<sup>24</sup> Ibn Khallikān, al-Fāsī and Ibn al-'Imād describe the meeting between al-Zamakhsharī and the Ḥanafī jurist al-Damaghānī in one of his visits to Baghdad.<sup>25</sup> This means that he

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<sup>23</sup> Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar al-a'lām al-nubalā*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981-96), 20:155; al-Hāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1994), 2:315.

<sup>24</sup> Abū al-Barakāt 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-udabā'*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Nahḍa Miṣr lil-Ṭaba' wa al-Nashr, 1967), 392; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:6288; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 20:153; al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:169; al-Fāsī, *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:140; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:119.



had not only contacts with a good number of scholars but had many students who studied and obtained knowledge from him.

The biographical dictionaries identify a total number of twenty-six names who were al-Zamakhsharī's students. In most of the cases they mention about what students studied with or transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī. However in some cases it is mentioned generally and one does not know their field of study. Six of the students: Abū al-Ma'ālī Yaḥyā b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī al-Shaybānī, Abū al-Ma'ālī Mājīd b. Sulaymān al-Fihrī, Abū Šāliḥ 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. 'Umar al-Tarjumānī, Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ, Abū Maṣṣūr and Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Malāḥimī studied exegesis (*tafsīr*) with al-Zamakhsharī. Abū Maṣṣūr and Rukn al-Dīn al-Malāḥimī were also al-Zamakhsharī's teachers, who taught him theology. Six of the students: Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Yabjūk al-Baqqālī al-Khwārazmī, Abū al-Mu'ayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad, Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ, Abū Šāliḥ 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. 'Umar al-Tarjumānī, Sa'īd b. 'Abd Allāh al-Jalālī al-Mu'abbar and 'Atīq b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Naysābūrī studied grammar with him. Four students: Abū al-Mu'ayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad, Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ, Ya'qūb b. 'Alī al-Balkhī al-Jandalī and Sadīd b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭī studied literature with him. Three students: Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ, 'Atīq b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Naysābūrī and Muhammad b. 'Abī al-Qāsim b. Yabjūk al-Baqqālī al-Khwārazmī studied lexicography with him. Two students: Muḥammad b. 'Abī al-Qāsim b. Yabjūk al-Baqqālī al-Khwārazmī and 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-'Imrānī al-Khwārazmī studied traditions with him. Two students Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd and Ismā'īl b. 'Abd Allāh transmitted al-Zamakhsharī's poetry. Al-Zamakhsharī granted to some

students “license” (*ijāza*)<sup>26</sup> to transmit what they had learned and written. He also granted to others “general license” (*ijāza ‘amma*). Many students and contemporary scholars attended his *majālis* and benefitted from each other’s knowledge.

The names of al-Zamakhsharī’s students are provided in Appendix 2.

## 5. Travels of al-Zamakhsharī

As mentioned above, al-Zamakhsharī went for the first time to Jurjāniyya for more education. However, Ibn Khallikān mentions that he travelled to Bukhārā when he reached the age to acquire further knowledge and continue his studies outside of his hometown.

According to al-Fāsī, al-Zamakhsharī visited Baghdad sometime before 500/1106 where he met many scholars and heard *ḥadīths* from Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Naṣr b. al-Baṭir and others. Afterwards, he left for Mecca and stayed there in the neighborhood of Mecca for a while “to lead a life of ascetism and religious contemplation,” benefitting from the others and being of assistance to them. He studied with ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī al-

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<sup>26</sup> *Ijāza* means “permission,” “authorization” or “license.” It is one of the eight methods (other methods are: *samā’*, *qirā’a*, *munāwala*, *mukātaba*, *i’lām al-rāwī*, *waṣīya* and *wijāda*) to obtain the permission of a scholar to narrate to others the traditions compiled by him. Goldziher states that, “*Ijāza* became a surrogate for those Muslims who were eager to obtain *ḥadīths* but either did not think long journeys convenient or when they did go on *ṭalab* travels were not able to stay long enough in the hometown of the ‘carrier’ of the *ḥadīths* to receive them directly from him. This surrogate was to enable them, without prolonged direct intercourse with the sheikh, to take over *ḥadīths* from him and to spread them in his name. They obtained the sheikhs permission (*ijāza*) to hand down a *ḥadīth* as if they had picked it up from this in verbal form, when in fact they had only received, or even only shown him, a booklet containing his traditions.” See Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqī, *Ḥadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 86; Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, ed. and trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 176; Ignaz Goldziher, G. Vajda and S.A. Bonebakker, “*Idjāza*,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:1020-22.

Andalusī *Kitāb al-Sībawayh*, and this was his main reason. Then he returned to Khwārazm and stayed there for some time.<sup>27</sup>

He visited Baghdād again while he was going to Mecca for pilgrimage, where he met with Ibn al-Shajarī, and al-Jawālīqī.<sup>28</sup> According to al-Suyūfī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda, al-Zamakhsharī visited Baghdād more than once.<sup>29</sup> Madelung states that al-Zamakhsharī performed pilgrimage for seven times, so it is possible that he may have visited ‘Irāq in any of these occasions.<sup>30</sup>

## 6. Al-Zamakhsharī’s Visits to Mecca

Al-Zamakhsharī visited and stayed in Mecca for at least two times for a period of approximately twelve years. Al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda mention that al-Zamakhsharī stayed for five years in “the sacred city” (*al-balad al-ḥaram*).<sup>31</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī mentions about his stay in Mecca in the following verses:

*fa-jāwartu rabbī wa-huwa khayru mujāwar  
ladā baytihi al-bayti al-muḥarram ‘ākiḥ  
aqamtu bi-idhni Allāh khamsan kawāmilan  
wa-ṣādaftu sab‘an bi-al-mu‘arraḥ wāqifā  
ḥalaltu ma‘ al-‘ummār mu‘tamirā lahu  
wa-bittu ma‘ al-ṭuwwāfi bi-al-bayti ṭā‘ifa  
wa-tamma lī al-Kashshāf thamma bi-baldatin  
bihā habaṭa al-tanzīl li-al-ḥaqqi kāshifā*<sup>32</sup>

I was my Lord’s neighbor and He is an excellent neighbor  
by His House, the Sacred Sanctuary, assiduously  
I stayed, with God’s permission, for full five years  
and standing with determination [on the plains of ‘Arafāt] for seven times

<sup>27</sup> Al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā*, 290-1; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:153; al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:351; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98.

<sup>30</sup> Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 11-12:840-1.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:100.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān al-Zamakhsharī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār Ḍayf (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Mukhtār lil-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 2004), 216.

I remained with those who made small pilgrimage<sup>33</sup>  
and spent nights with the pilgrims circumambulating the *Ka'ba*  
And I completed the *Kashshāf*, there in the city  
where the revelation was sent down, unveiling the truth

The first of these visits would have taken place sometime between 500/1106 and 518/1124 when al-Zamakhsharī visited Baghdad where he met many scholars and heard *ḥadīths* from al-Baṭīr, Abū Sa'd al-Shaqqānī, and Abū Maṣṣūr al-Ḥārithī.<sup>34</sup> Afterwards, he left for Mecca and stayed there in the neighborhood of Mecca.<sup>35</sup> Most of the biographers mention in their notes that he spent some time (*zamānan*) or years (*sinīn*) there.<sup>36</sup> However, Abū al-Fidā' writes that al-Zamakhsharī went to Mecca for pilgrimage and stayed there many years.<sup>37</sup> Other biographers mention that when he arrived at Mecca, al-Zamakhsharī visited his teacher 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī al-Andalusī and studied with him *Kitāb al-Sībawayh* and stayed there for five years.<sup>38</sup>

The five years' stay in Mecca is confirmed by al-Qifṭī who states that the greater part of al-Zamakhsharī's life was spent in his town and not at Mecca. After his return from Mecca to Khwārazm, someone asked him, "You have spent the greater part of your life there. What is the motive for your coming back to Khwarazm?" He replied, "I find in my heart here that I do not find there."<sup>39</sup> The information provided by al-Qifṭī that he stayed in Mecca for five years and al-Zamakhsharī's verse: "I stayed, with God's

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<sup>33</sup> 'Umra is a small pilgrimage which can be performed anytime during the year. See R. Paret [E. Chaumont, "'Umra,'" *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 10: 864.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280.

<sup>35</sup> Madelung and others are of the opinion that he moved to Mecca in the year 512/1118 after recovering from his "serious illness" (*nākiha*) and "warning" (*mundhira*). See Madelung, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EI*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:840-1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* 4:119; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:169; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41.

<sup>37</sup> 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. 'Alī Abū al-Fidā', *Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, ed. Muḥammad Zaynham Muḥammad 'Azb (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1998), 3:25.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Andarāsānī, "Sīra," 368; al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:100.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266.

permission, for full five years and standing with determination [on the plains of ‘Arafāt] for seven times” (*aqamtu bi-idhni Allāh khamsan kawāmilan wa-ṣādaftu sab‘an bi-al-mu‘arrāf wāqifa*) proves that during his first visit al-Zamakhsharī stayed in Mecca for five years.

For the second time, al-Zamakhsharī arrived in Mecca in 526/1131 and stayed there for seven years. On his way to Mecca, he passed through Syria for a short time and praised Tāj al-Mulk Tughtakīn (d. 526/1131), the ruler of Damascus. After his death, his son Shams al-Mulk became the ruler and al-Zamakhsharī praised him too. According to al-Qiftī, Ṭashkubrīzāda and al-Dhahabī, on his return from Mecca to Khwārazm, he visited Baghdad in 533/1138 and studied with al-Jawālīqī. All these events strongly prove that during his second visit, al-Zamakhsharī lived in Mecca for seven years from 526/1131 to 533/1138.<sup>40</sup> During this period, he wrote *al-Kashshāf*, which took him two years (from 526/1131 to 528/1133) to complete it. He mentions in the introduction of *al-Kashshāf* that he completed the commentary of *al-Kashshāf* in two years, the duration of the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, even though it was the work of thirty years.<sup>41</sup>

## 7. Crises in the Lives of Muslim Scholars

Crisis literally means a crucial or decisive point or situation. Intellectual crisis can be defined a dramatic change of thinking about the conventional and prevalent ideology. It is a universal phenomenon and has occurred to people in all times and all

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<sup>40</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *An Analytical Study of al-Zamakhsharī’s Commentary on the Qur’ān: al-Kashshāf* (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1982), 132-6; Luṭṭī Ibrahim, *The Theological Questions* 12; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:270; Ṭashkubrīzāda, *Miftāh al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:153.

<sup>41</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Mahmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa-‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwad (Riyād: Maktabat al-‘Ubaykān, 1998), 98.

places. There could be various causes for intellectual crisis, such as doubts about religious knowledge, clash between religion and political authority, customs and practices related ritual observances, disputation between the scholastic theologians, fear of God and the Last Day of Judgment.<sup>42</sup> According George Makdisi,

Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) and Rāzī (d. 606/1209), all had death-bed repentance for having used *kalām*, if we are to believe their biographers...they had begun as rationalists and ended by reverting to that traditionalism which was the legacy left them by their ancestors.<sup>43</sup>

Some Muslim scholars experienced intellectual crises in their lives. Al-Zamakhsharī was afflicted with a serious illness (*nākiha*) and heard warning (*mundhira*).<sup>44</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, one of the most prominent students of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī, the leading Mu‘tazilite theologian of his time, abandoned Mu‘tazilism due to his differences with them on the issues of divine justice, and createdness of the Qur’ān. Al-Ghazālī experienced two crises. The first one was in his early age, when he became skeptical concerning the certainty of knowledge. The second crisis occurred at the height of his reputation as a great scholar of his time, when he suffered a complete physical breakdown which culminated in his serious sickness.<sup>45</sup> Ibn ‘Aqīl’s early upbringing and education as a Ḥanafī Mu‘tazilite encouraged him to study *kalām*. He preferred reason over revelation for searching the truth. He was also interested in mysticism especially the writings of mystic Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (244-309/857-922). Ibn ‘Aqīl was

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<sup>42</sup> According to Fazlur Rahman, the concept of *taqwa* (fear of God) is “perhaps the most important single term in the Qur’ān.” See Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur’ān* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 28.

<sup>43</sup> George Makdisi, “Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites in Islamic Religious History,” *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), 31.

<sup>44</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Maqāmāt al-Zamakhsharī* (Miṣr: Maṭba‘a al-Tawfiq, 1906), 5.

<sup>45</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, ed. Jamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil ‘Ayyād (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1987), 81, 136.

vehemently opposed by the Ḥanbalites and the *Sharīf* Abū Ja‘far, who issued an edict (*fatwa*) forcing him either to make a public retraction or face execution.<sup>46</sup> Before we discuss al-Zamakhsharī’s crisis, I will mention the crises of al-Ash‘arī, al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Aqīl.

## 8. Crisis of al-Ash‘arī

There are three different events which are mentioned by the biographers regarding al-Ash‘arī’s<sup>47</sup> intellectual crisis that led him to renounce Mu‘tazilism.

<sup>46</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, 16:113; George Makdisi, “Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad (Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-Bannā)” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 18 (1956): 9-31, 18 (1956): 239-260, 19 (1957): 13-48, 19 (1957): 281-303, 19 (1957): 426-443.

<sup>47</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, scholastic theologian and eponymous founder of the school of orthodox theology bearing his name Ash‘arism, was born in 260/873 in Baṣra and was the ninth descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad’s Companion Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī. He was one of the most prominent students of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, the leading Mu‘tazilite theologian of his time. The Ash‘arite called him as a reformer of the religion and Protector of the Sunna (*nāṣir al-sunna*), and renewer of Islam at the beginning of the fourth century of Islam. According to Ibn ‘Asākir, the number of Ash‘arī’s works is ninety-nine, whereas Ibn al-Nadīm mentions only five. His extant works are *al-Ibāna ‘an uṣūl al-dīyāna*, *al-Luma‘ fī al-radd ‘alā ahl al-zaygh wa al-bida‘*, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, *Risāla fī Istihṣān al-khawḍ fī ilm al-kalām*, and *Risāla al-Thaḡhr*. Al-Ash‘arī was renowned in his debating skills and never resorted to accuse the followers of his rival theological schools of unbelief (*takfīr*). Ibn ‘Asākir mentions in his *Tabyīn*, that Zāhir b. Aḥmad al-Saraskhī, who was at the al-Ash‘arī’s side during his last moments, reported that al-Ash‘arī confessed and requested him (Zāhir) to be a witness to the fact that he never called any Muslim (*ahl al-qibla*) an unbeliever, because they all referred to one and same deity (*ma‘būd*), and differed only in their expressions (*‘ibārāt*). Al-Ash‘arī died in 324/936 in Baghdad and was buried in the same city between the district of Karkh and the Baṣra gate. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 648-49; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 1:173-74; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya*, 11:187; al-Khaṭīb Baghdādī, *Tā’rīkh Baghdād*, 11:346-7; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar fī khabar man ‘abar*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjid (Kuwait: Maṭba‘at Ḥukūmat al-Kuwait, 1960-6), 2:202-3; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 15:85-90; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt al-a‘yān*, 3:284-5; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 2:303; Tāj al-Dīn Abū Naṣr ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Kāfi al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya al-kubrā*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī and ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilw (Cairo: Hijr lil-Ṭabā‘a wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘ wa al-I‘lān, 1992), 3:347-444; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:152; Ibn Taghrībardī, *Nujūm al-zāhira*, 3:259-60; Muḥyī al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad Ibn Abī al-Wafā, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī‘a fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafīyya*, ed. ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥilw (Jīza: Hajr li al-Ṭabā‘a wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘ wa al-I‘lān, 1993), 2:544-45; W. Montgomery Watt, “al-Ash‘arī, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:694.

According to the first event,<sup>48</sup> al-Ash‘arī was a Mu‘tazilite for forty years<sup>49</sup> when he renounced Mu‘tazilism due to his differences with them on the “principle of justice” (*al-‘adl*),<sup>50</sup> and “createdness of the Qur’ān” (*khalq al-Qur’ān*). He secluded himself from the people in his home for fifteen days. Then, he came in the mosque of Baṣra for a Friday congregation. He climbed on the pulpit and addressed his audience in a loud voice,

Whosoever knows me, knows me and whosoever does not know me, I am going to introduce myself that I am Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī. I used to say that the Qur’ān is created and God does not see with His eyes. I renounce all those things in which I used to believe, and all those bad deeds which I committed, I repent now. I disassociate completely myself from the Mu‘tazilites and I exit from their disgrace and vices.<sup>51</sup>

In the year 300/913, the second event took place when al-Ash‘arī during the month of Ramaḍān saw the Prophet Muḥammad in his dream three times who said to him, “Give your support to the teachings related on my authority, for they are true (*anṣar al-madhāhib al-marwīyya ‘annī fa-innaha al-ḥaqq*).” After seeing the Prophet in his dream for the third time, al-Ash‘arī said, “Everything besides truth is error” (*mā ba‘d al-ḥaqq illā al-ḍalāl*). Subsequently, “he defended the beatific vision of God, intercession and other doctrines with the support of traditions” (*wa akhadha fī nuṣrat al-aḥādīth fī al-ru’yā’ wa al-shafā’a wa ghayra dhālik*).<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> This event has been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 648-49; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 3: 285; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyya*, 3: 347-8; Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā b. Khalīl Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda wa-misbāḥ al-siyāda fī mawḍu‘at al-‘ulum*, ed. Kāmil Kāmil Bakrī and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Abū al-Nūr (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1968), 2:153; and Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tabayīn*, 149.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Subkī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda mention the al-Ash‘arī remained Mu‘tazilite for forty years. Since al-Ash‘arī was born in 260/873, it is not correct that he continued to be Mu‘tazilite for forty years. His conversion took place in 300/913, therefore, it would be appropriate to infer that he was forty years old at that time. See Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘īyya*, 3: 347; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda*, 2:166.

<sup>50</sup> Justice (*al-‘adl*) is the second principle of the Mu‘tazilites.

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 3: 285.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 348-49.



The third event took place sometime after al-Ash‘arī’s three visions of the Prophet Muḥammad in the month of Ramaḍān, which is as follows:

Al-Ash‘arī debated with Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī one day and asked him about three brothers who died: the oldest an upright and pious believer; the middle one a damned and vicious unbeliever; and the youngest who died young, not having reached the age of puberty. Al-Jubbā’ī said, “As for the ascetic, he is in the ranks [of Heaven]; and as for the unbeliever, he is in the depths [of Hell]” – based upon the fact that reward of the obedient and punishment of the sinner are obligatory upon God, according to them. “As for the child, he is one of those who are saved, neither rewarded nor punished.” So al-Ash‘arī said, “What if the child requested the rank of his big brother in Heaven?” Al-Jubbā’ī said, “God will say, ‘High ranks are the fruits of obedience.’” Al-Ash‘arī said, “And if the child said, ‘The shortcoming and incapacity are not my doing; for if You had kept me alive until I grew up, I would have obeyed You and entered Heaven.’” Al-Jubbā’ī said, “The Creator will say, ‘I knew of you tht if you remained alive, you would have sinned and entered the painful torment of the lowest depths of Hell-fire; so it was best for you that you died young.’” Al-Ash‘arī said, “And what if the sinner abiding in painful torment says, calling out from the depths of the Fire and the strata of Hell, ‘O Lord of the Worlds, and oh Most Merciful of the merciful, Why did You take my brother’s interest into account and not mine, knowing that it would be best for me to die young and not become a prisoner in the Inferno?’ What will the Lord say then?” Al-Jubbā’ī was immediately silenced and could not continue the debate (*inqaṭa‘a ‘an al-jidāl*).<sup>53</sup>

After his breakup with the Mu‘tazilites, al-Ash‘arī followed the school of the great traditionalist Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. He brought his rationalism and employed it in the service of traditionalism. However, he was severely criticized and despised by the ultra-

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<sup>53</sup> This debate has been reported by Abū Maṣū‘ūr ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyya, 1981), 151-52; Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*. (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2003), 1:132-33; S‘ad al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqqā. *Sharḥ al-‘aqā’id al-Nasaḥīyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kuliyyāt al-Azharīyya, 1987), 11-12; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar al-a‘lām al-nubalā*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ut and Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risāla, 1981-96), 15:89; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 356; Sayyid al-Sharīf ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām al-mawqif al-khāmis fī al-ilāhīyyat*, ed. Aḥmad al-Mahdī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Azhar, 1977), 325; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-Sa‘āda*, 2:165-66; Ibn al-‘Imād. *Shadharāt*, 2: 303. The version of the debate has been taken from Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-Sa‘āda*, and its translation has been rendered by Rosalind W. Gwynne. See Rosalind W. Gwynne, “Al-Jubbā’ī, al-Ash‘arī and the Three Brothers: The Uses of Fiction,” *The Muslim World* 75 (1985), 153-54.

conservative traditionalists and the Hanbalites for his rational stance. It was not until a great patron of scholars and powerful Shāfi‘ite *vizier* Nizām al-Mulk, who established for the Ash‘arites “network of institutions called the Nizāmia Colleges, and to them turned over the endowed professional chairs.”<sup>54</sup> The two greatest Ash‘arite theologians, *Imām al-Ḥaramayn* al-Juwaynī and al-Ghazālī defended, supported and protected the Ash‘arism. Later on al-Bāqillānī, al-Shahrastānī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Aḍud al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ījī (d. 756/1355) and ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) played significant roles in projecting the greatness of al-Ash‘arī and the excellence of his doctrines.<sup>55</sup> To sum up, al-Ash‘arī’s intellectual crisis led him to completely break his relationship with the Mu‘tazilites and in the long run the establishment of Ash‘arite school which was overwhelmingly representative of the orthodox Muslim thought.

## 9. Crisis of al-Ghazālī

Approximately two centuries after al-Ash‘arī, al-Ghazālī<sup>56</sup> had intellectual crisis, rather he mentions two crises in his lifetime. The first crisis of knowledge occurred in his early youth sometime before 470/1078. He describes that,

<sup>54</sup> George Makdisi, “Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites in Islamic Religious History, Part I,” *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 39.

<sup>55</sup> See Makdisi, Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites, 64-70; Montgomery Watt, “Ash‘ariyya,” *EI<sup>2</sup>*, 1:696.

<sup>56</sup> Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, honorific title “The Proof of Islam” (*ḥujjat al-islām*), was born at Ṭūs in Khurāsān in 450/1058. His early education began in Ṭūs and studied with ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Rādhakānī, and then he traveled to Jurjān and studied with Abū Naṣr al-Ismā‘īlī. He returned to Ṭūs and stayed there for three years, and after that he went to Nayshābūr and joined the circle of the most distinguished theologian and jurist of his age, Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085), known as the *Imām al-Ḥaramayn* (*Imām* of the two holy places: Mecca and Medina), under whom he studied theology, philosophy, logic, dialectic and natural sciences. Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Ishāq Nizām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092), the great *vizier* of Saljūqī sultans Alp Arsalān (*regnum*: 455-65/1063-72) and Malīk Shāh (*regnum*: 465-85/1072-92) established a series of *madrāsas* which were specifically meant for teaching Ash‘arite *kalām* and Shāfi‘ite jurisprudence. The most celebrated Nizāmīyya *madrasa* was built in Baghdād in 457/1065. Other Nizāmīyya *madrāsas* were established in Balkh, Naysābūr, Harāt, and Marwīn the province of Khurāsān; Baṣra, and Mawṣil in the province of Irāq; Iṣfahān in the province of Jibāl; and Āmul in the province of Ṭabristān. In 478/1085, Nizām al-Mulk invited al-Ghazālī to his camp-court and

The thirst for understanding the real meanings of things was my constant habit from the very early age of my life. It was not due to my choice but a basic instinct and natural impulse endowed by God.<sup>57</sup>

This natural disposition led al-Ghazālī to investigate and verify the truthfulness of matters. He states that,

Then it became clear to me that certain knowledge is that in which the object known is so manifest that there remains neither any doubt, nor any possibility of error or delusion. Even the mind cannot stipulate such a possibility (*wa lā yattasi ‘a al-qalb li-taqdīr dhalika*). Certain knowledge must also be safe from error to such an extent that if someone attempts to show it is false, it would not create any doubt or denial.<sup>58</sup>

He examined the various kinds of knowledge and considered that there was no knowledge with such characteristics except sense perception (*hissīyāt*) and necessary

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bestowed upon him two honorific titles of “Ornament of the Religion” (*zayn al-dīn*) and “Distinguished among the Religious Scholars” (*sharaf al-a’imma*). In Jamādī al-awwal, 484/July, 1091, he was appointed to professorship at the Nizāmīyya madrasa in Baghdād – one of the most distinguished positions in the academic world of his day. Al-Ghazālī taught at the Nizāmīyya madrasa for four years from Jamādī al-awwal 484/1091 to Dhū al-qa‘da 488/November 1095. He mentions that even while teaching three hundred students, he still found time to study the works of the *falāsifa* and compose refutation to them within three years. He wrote many works such as *Mi’yār al-‘ilm fī fann al-manṭiq*, *Miḥakk al-naẓar fī al-manṭiq*, *al-Iqtisād fī al-i’tiqād*, *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, *al-Qisṭas al-mustaqīm* and *Mizān al-‘amal*. During this time, he composed *Mustazhirī*, commissioned by the caliph’s court and dedicated it to the caliph al-Mustazhir who reigned from 487/1094 to 512/1118. Al-Ghazālī was not only an eminent professor at the Nizāmīyya madrasa but also a great dignitary of the Saljūq administration. In addition, he was close to the Caliph’s court and attended its major functions. Al-Ghazālī was present along with al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī (d. 507/1114) and Ibn Aqīl (d. 513/1119) during the bay‘a ceremony of Caliph al-Mustazhir in Muḥarram 487/February 1094. He died in 505/1111 in Tūs. He was considered the “renewer” of Islam of the fifth Islamic century. See al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi’iyya*, 6:195-96; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-al-nihāya*, 12:173-4; al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar*, 4:10; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 19: 322-46; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:10-13; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 4: 216-19; Ibn Taghribardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5: 203; al-Ṣafadī, Ṣalāh al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak, *al-Wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1962), 1:274-77; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-Sa’āda*, 2: 332-51; Abū Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī al-tārīkh al-mulūk wa-al-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā and Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir Atā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 17:124-27; ‘Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn Athīr, *al-Lubāb fī tahdhīb al-ansāb* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1970), 379; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tā’rīkh*, 10:491; Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar b. al-Muzaffar Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rīkh ibn al-Wardī* (Najaf: Maṭba‘a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1969), 29-30; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtṣar*, 2:317-18; Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns*, ed. Muḥammad Adīb al-Jādar (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2003), 2: 516-20; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 16:292, 17:13; Montgomery Watt, “al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>, 2:1038; George Makdisi, “Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdād,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1961), 1-56.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 81.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 82.

knowledge (*darūrīyāt*). When he investigated thoroughly, it became apparent that by reason (*‘aql*) the sense perception was not always reliable and became skeptical. He came to the conclusion that there was no certain knowledge, nor was there any way to achieve it.

During this period, when al-Ghazālī was skeptical, he was inflicted with serious sickness, which lasted approximately for two months. He states that, “Eventually, God cured me from that sickness and my soul was restored to health and equilibrium, and I returned back to the necessary acceptable and reliable intellect with peace and certainty. However, this did not happen by systematic proof and sequential demonstration, but by a light with which God filled my heart, and that light is the key to most of the gnosis.”<sup>59</sup>

Al-Ghazālī’s first crisis was resolved as suddenly as it occurred. His recovery of confidence in reason (*‘aql*) did not take place due to demonstration of logic, but by the light of God in his heart. This fact clearly proved for him that reason has its limitations – neither self-sufficient nor absolute by itself.

At the height of his reputation, with brilliant prospects, and great honor bestowed upon al-Ghazālī, the second crisis occurred in which he suffered a complete physical breakdown, and for a time was incapable of even lecturing. In Rajab 488/July 1095, the crisis turned into his serious sickness. He lost his ability to speak because according to him,

God blocked my tongue and I was impeded from teaching. . . My tongue could not speak a single word and I had no ability. . . It affected my eating and drinking as I became unable to swallow and digest even a morsel, and the physicians stopped their treatment.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 86.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 136.

When recovered from his illness, he announced that he was going on pilgrimage to Mecca, and left Baghdad in Dhū al-Qa‘ada 488/November 1095 and spent sometime in Damascus. Then he went to Jerusalem during the late spring or summer of 489/1096. After that he went to Mecca and Medina and performed the Pilgrimage in 489/1096. He then went back to Damascus for two years in the seclusion and solitude (*al-‘uzla wa-al-khalwa*) to worship and purify his soul and heart with the remembrance of God.<sup>61</sup>

Once again, in search for certainty, al-Ghazālī set out to scrutinize the teachings and doctrines of various seekers after truth and identified four groups: the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*), the *Ismā‘īlīs*, the philosophers and the Ṣūfīs. He could not find certainty and reliability in the teachings and doctrines of the first three groups. However, he grasped the intellectual understanding of Sūfism, and realized that the ultimate truth could only be experienced by practice, that is by renunciation and separation from all worldly desires and attachment and devotion to God only.<sup>62</sup>

Al-Ghazālī left Damascus due to an incident which took place at the Amīniyya *madrasa*, where he was attending a teaching session incognito of a scholar. He heard his name being quoted by the scholar, fearing that pride (*‘ujb*) might overcome him, he left the city.<sup>63</sup> Then he returned back to Ṭūs to join his family in Dhū al-Ḥijja 490/November 1097, and in the course of journey stayed in Baghdad in Jamādī al-Thānī 489/May-June 1097 for a brief time.<sup>64</sup>

In the year 499/1106 Fakhr al-Mulk, son of Nizām al-Mulk who became the *vizier* of Sanjar, the Saljūqī ruler of Khurāsān, pressed al-Ghazālī to return to academic works,

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<sup>61</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 138.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 89-135.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya*, 6:199.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 138.

which he accepted.<sup>65</sup> He taught at the Nizāmīya madrasa for at least three years or more and during this period, he wrote the autobiographical work *al-Munqidh min ḍalāl*. He came back to Ṭūs, and there he established a hermitage (*khānqa*), where he trained young disciples in the theory and practice of the asceticism. He died in Jamādī al-Thānī 505/December 1111.

Montgomery Watt states that, “There is no reason to doubt that he (al-Ghazālī) had an actual experience such as he describes (in *al-Munqidh*).”<sup>66</sup> Kojiro Nakamura agrees with Watt and describes it as follows,

Ghazālī certainly became sceptical about the traditional dogmas, but it was not merely his own particular problem, but also a general phenomenon of his age... The difference is that Ghazālī was conscious of this malaise of the age and faced it as his own problem and tried to overcome it faithfully.<sup>67</sup>

According to Fazlur Rahman,

Although there may be found unconcealed contradictions in al-Ghazālī’s intellectual aspect, the spiritual integrity and organic unity of his personality is beyond a shadow of doubt. The synthesis thus achieved by al-Ghazālī between Ṣūfīsm and *kalām* was largely adopted by orthodoxy and confirmed by Ijmā‘. Its strength lay in the fact that it gave a spiritual basis for the moral practical *élan* of Islam and thus brought it back to its original religious dimensions.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 159.

<sup>66</sup> Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of al-Ghazālī* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1963), 51.

<sup>67</sup> Kojiro Nakamura, “An Approach to Ghazālī’s Conversion,” *Orient* (1985): 56.

<sup>68</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 95-96.

## 10. Crisis of Ibn ‘Aqīl

Ibn ‘Aqīl,<sup>69</sup> contemporary of al-Ghazālī and al-Zamakhsharī, mentions that during his childhood two of the most important events took place which remained in his life. The first event was the entry of the Saljūqī hordes into Baghdād in 447/1055 with their ruthless pillaging of his quarter of Bāb al-Ṭāq which forced him to move. It seems that in the devastation he also lost his parents or guardians. Abū Manşūr b. Yūsuf (d. 460/1068), a great Ḥanbalī merchant and confidential adviser of Caliph Abū Ja‘far al-Qā‘im bi-amr-Allāh, took Ibn ‘Aqīl under his protection, most probably on the recommendation of Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’. The second event started after the death of his teacher Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ in 458/1066 when his troubles began within the Ḥanbalī school.

Ibn ‘Aqīl’s intellectual curiosity could not confine him within the limits of the traditional sciences. The grammarian Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Barhān (d.

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<sup>69</sup> Abū al-Wafā’ ‘Alī b. ‘Aqīl b. Muḥammad b. ‘Aqīl b. Aḥmad al-Baghdādī al-Zafarī, Ḥanbalī jurist and theologian, was born in Baghdād, on the left bank quarter of Bāb al-Ṭāq in 431/1040. He belonged to a Ḥanafī family, not only on his mother’s side, but also on that of his father. Ibn ‘Aqīl owed his literary humanism to the paternal side of his family; and his legal scholasticism and *‘ilm al-kalām*, evidenced by his strong attraction for dialectic and keen interest in the art of disputation was from the maternal side. His “thought was molded by two major cultural forces: a rationalist family background immersed in *kalām* and literary humanism, and a Ḥanbalī Traditionalist education immersed in legal scholasticism. Ibn ‘Aqīl had broad interests ranging from Qur’ān and traditions, grammar and belles-letters, asceticism and Ṣūfism, prosody and the art of letter-writing, to those subjects in which, he particularly excelled, the art of sermon, dogmatic theology, dialectics and legal studies. He mentions that he studied under twenty-three teachers, out of which only two belonged to the Ḥanbalī School, Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ (d. 458/1066) and Abū Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (d. 488/1095). The others were Shāfi‘ite, notably Abū Ishāq Shīrāzī (d. 478/1086); Hanafīte, including the most prominent Qāḍī al-quḍāt Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Dāmaghānī (d. 478/1086); Mu‘tazilite, Abū al-Qāsim b. Barhān (d. 456/1064), Abū ‘Alī al-Walīd (d. 478/1086), who studied Mu‘tazilism under two great masters of the century, Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār and his disciple, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044)] and Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabbān (date of death unknown). He also studied law and pursued it for eleven years from 447/1055 to 458/1066. Ibn ‘Aqīl’s work include *Kitāb al-Funūn* in 200 to 800 volumes, *Kitāb al-Waḍīh fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, *Kitāb al-Jadal* and a series of brieves treatises on the nature of the Qur’ān, written in refutation of Ash‘arī’s doctrines, and *Juz’ fī naṣr karāmāt al-Ḥallāj*, in praise of al-Ḥallāj. Among his other important non-extant works are *Kitāb al-Irshād fī uṣūl al-dīn* and *Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-ahl al-ḥadīth*. Ibn ‘Aqīl died in 513/1119 and according to Ibn Nāṣir, approximately 300,000 people attended his funeral prayers. See Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī al-tārīkh al-mulūk wa-al-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā and Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 17:179; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, 10:561; George Makdisi, “Ibn ‘Aqīl, Abū ‘l-Wafā’ ‘Alī b. ‘Aqīl b. Muḥammad b. ‘Aqīl b. Aḥmad al-Baghdādī al-Zafarī,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>, 3:699; George Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 17-19.

456/1064) encouraged Ibn ‘Aqīl to study *kalām* with Abū ‘Alī b. al-Walīd (d. 478/1086), who was *kalām* theologian and an enthusiastic Mu‘tazilite propagandist.<sup>70</sup> Before the death of his teacher Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’, he frequently attended in secret the study circles of Mu‘tazilite masters and learned *kalām* and became interested in the writings of the great mystic of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, al-Ḥallāj. He was aware of the risks to which he was exposing himself, not only because of its condemnation in the Qādirī Creed,<sup>71</sup> but also due to non-toleration of Ḥanbalī school of rationalist sciences. When some of the Ḥanbalīs found out about it, he was severely beaten to the extent of bleeding. This incident happened during 447/1055, the year of his transfer from to the Ḥanbalī school and 455/1063, the year in which Nizām al-Mulk became the *vizier*.<sup>72</sup>

Ibn ‘Aqīl also praised early Ṣūfīs, whom he held in the highest regard, making a clear distinction between them and those contemporary Ṣūfīs whom he considered were at the lowest level of moral and ethical values. He became interested in the writings of

<sup>70</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 19.

<sup>71</sup> The ‘Abbāsīd caliph Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Ishāq al-Qādir bi-Allāh (*caliphate*: 381- 422/991-1031) issued in 408/1018 his first edict which required the Mu‘tazilites to make a public retraction, stop from the public discussion of *kalām*-theology and stop offer courses on Mu‘tazilism, Rāfidism or any other anti-Sunnī doctrines. The guilty had to sign a retraction to this effect and in case of repetition would suffer corporeal punishment and exile. In 409/1019, he introduced *Risāla al-Qādirīyya*, a profession of faith, defining the official doctrine and promulgated the second edict proclaiming the doctrines of Sunnī Traditionalism, according to which “He who says that the Qur’ān is created is an infidel, whose blood may legitimately be shed.” Three other edicts were issued in 420/1029: the first edict was concerned with the condemnation of Mu‘tazilism and the other two edicts condemned as transgressor (*fāsiq*) who professed that the Qur’ān was created. His son Abū Ja‘far al-Qā’im bi-amr-Allāh (*caliphate*: 422-467/1031-1075) continued with his father’s policy of profession of faith, known as the Qādirī-Qā’imī Creed (*al-I’tiqād al-Qādirī al-Qā’imī*). The Creed was sanctioned by the consensus of the jurisconsults. The Qādirī Creed condemned as heretical all doctrines opposed to Traditionalist Sunnī doctrine. It was manifestly anti-Rationalist, opposed *inter alia* to Mu‘tazilites and Ash‘arites. The Qādirī Creed was not against Ṣūfism in general or Ḥallāj in particular. The Qādirī Creed stated that faith (*īmān*) was composed of words (*qawl*), deeds (*‘amāl*) and intentions (*nīya*); that was variable, capable of increasing or decreasing. It was in line with the concept of al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), but opposed, *inter alia*, to the Mu‘tazilite concept, which identified *īmān* and *islām*, and was therefore a profession of faith that was purely exterior, composed of a set form of words and gestures. It was also opposed to the Ash‘arite concept, i.e., that the profession of faith was invariable, the deeds had nothing with it. See D. Sourdel, “al-Ḳādir Bi’llāh,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 4: 378 and D. Sourdel, “al-Ḳā’im Bi-Amr Allāh,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 4: 457.

<sup>72</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, 17:181; Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 25.



mystic theologian Ḥusayn b. Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (244-309/857-922) specifically the concept of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*.<sup>73</sup>

Usually, the appointments to the professorial chairs of the great mosques, such as the Mosque of al-Maṣṣūr, were made by the Caliph. Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ (d. 458/1066) did not name his successor; though he himself had been designated by his professor, Ibn Ḥamīd (d. 403/1012), to succeed him as professor of law. After Abū Ya‘lā’s death, Abū Maṣṣūr b. Yūsuf (d. 460/1068) was instrumental for the appointment of Ibn ‘Aqīl as the professorial chair,<sup>74</sup> named *Ḥalqat al-Barāmika*.<sup>75</sup> *Sharīf* Abū Ja‘far (d. 470/1077) who was twenty years senior of Ibn ‘Aqīl, resented the appointment and early distinction bestowed upon him. The *Sharīf*’s long years of study under the direction of Abū Ya‘lā,

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<sup>73</sup> It is translated as “unity of vision” or of look (in reference to the meaning of the third form of the root *sh h d*); or by “unity of presence.” However, *shuhūd* really means the act of being present at, of being a witness of. The *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is not only “sight” or “look,” but an actual presence which is total witness: it is God witnessing to Himself in the heart of His votary (*‘ābid*). This union with God (*jam*) leads to a unification (*ittiḥād*) which is not a unification of substance, but operates through the act of faith and of love (*‘ishq, maḥabba*) which welcomes into the emptiness of oneself the Loving Guest (= God), “the essence whose Essence is Love,” as al-Ḥallāj expressed it. See L. Massignon and L. Gardet, “al-Ḥallāj,” *EL*, 3:99, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 41, 43.

<sup>74</sup> The appointment of Ibn ‘Aqīl as successor to Abū Ya‘lā, at the age of twenty-seven was exceptional, but not unprecedented. Shafī‘ī is reported to have started issuing *fatwas* as jurisconsult when he was only fifteen years old. Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) to his father’s chair of law at the age of twenty. Similarly, Ibn Taymīyya (d. 728/1328) succeeded his father’s chair at the age of twenty-one. It may be mentioned that Ibn ‘Aqīl was also consulted for legal opinions in the caliphal Chancery of State. Although new institutions of learning were established with rules and regulations, old customs and practices were still followed by those who had power and influence, especially when the candidates were of the caliber of Shafī‘ī, Juwaynī, Ibn Taymīyya and Ibn ‘Aqīl. See Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 24.

<sup>68</sup> The chair at the Mosque of Maṣṣūr was a Ḥanbalī chair, named *Ḥalqat al-Barāmika*, after its founder. It takes its name from the Ḥanbalī jurisconsult and scholar of *ḥadīth*, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Barmakī, whose *nisba* name is reported to relate to a village called al-Barāmakīya, and two of his sons who were also jurisconsults. Its occupants were the following professors: Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Barmakī (d. 387/997), founder of the chair; Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm (d. 445/1053), the founder’s son; Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’; and Ibn ‘Aqīl. See George Makdisi, “Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961), 5-6; Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 27.

<sup>75</sup> The chair at the Mosque of Maṣṣūr was a Ḥanbalī chair, named *Ḥalqat al-Barāmika*, after its founder. It takes its name from the Ḥanbalī jurisconsult and scholar of *ḥadīth*, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Barmakī, whose *nisba* name is reported to relate to a village called al-Barāmakīya, and two of his sons who were also jurisconsults. Its occupants were the following professors: Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Barmakī (d. 387/997), founder of the chair; Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm (d. 445/1053), the founder’s son; Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’; and Ibn ‘Aqīl. See George Makdisi, “Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 24 (1961), 5-6; Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 27.

his assistantship as repetitor to his master and being the first cousin of Caliph al-Qā'im did not help him to get the coveted position.<sup>76</sup>

As long as Ibn 'Aqīl was under the direction of Abū Ya'lā, and protection of Abū Manṣūr there was no overt opposition from *Sharīf* Abū Ja'far towards him. Opposition started after the death of Abū Ya'lā and it intensified after the death of Abū Manṣūr in 460/1068. The *Sharīf* was vehemently opposed to Mu'tazilism and to Ibn 'Aqīl, whom he considered a Mu'tazilite. When Ibn 'Aqīl had fallen ill, he entrusted some of his work to one of his friend Ma'ālī al-Hā'ik. Ibn al-Jawzī states that on finding their subject matter, Ma'ālī handed over them to the *Sharīf*. Based on these works, the *Sharīf* issued a *fatwa*, which was presumably seconded by Abū 'Alī Ibn al-Bannā', forcing Ibn 'Aqīl either to make a public retraction or face execution.<sup>77</sup>

The promulgation of al-Qādirī edicts and the Qādirī Creed was designed against Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites and Shi'ites doctrines and could be considered a crime against the State. Moreover, neither the name of Ḥallāj, nor any Ṣūfī doctrine was mentioned in the Qādirī Creed. Despite the fact, that there were numerous and well known Mu'tazilites in Baghdād – most of them the members of Ḥanafī school – but the state power was not implementing any of the provisions of the Creed. However, in the Retraction document, two allegations were specified against Ibn 'Aqīl: Mu'tazilism and Ḥallājism. Furthermore, it was not the Caliphal chancery that brought the charges against Ibn 'Aqīl,

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<sup>76</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, 16:113; George Makdisi, "Autograph Diary of an Eleventh-Century Historian of Baghdad (Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Bannā)" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 18 (1956): 9-31, 18 (1956): 239-260, 19 (1957): 13-48, 19 (1957): 281-303, 19 (1957): 426-443.

instead the petition was filed by *Sharīf* Abū Ja‘far, who was amongst others, the main accuser.<sup>78</sup>

On Muḥarram 8, 465/September 24, 1073, at the *masjid*-college of *Sharīf* Abū Ja‘far, in the Mu‘allā Canal Quarter, Baghdād, Ibn ‘Aqīl read the Retraction before a great assembly. On Muḥarram 10, 465/September 26, 1073, in the presence of prime minister Fakhr al-Dawla b. Jahīr (d. 483/1090), Ibn ‘Aqīl signed the Retraction in the Caliphal Chancery of State, witnessed by four notaries. They were: al-Ḥasan b. ‘Abd al-Mālik b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Mālik b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad b. al-Sinnī and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan. It was reported that he escaped execution through the good offices of *vizier* Fakhr al-Dawla b. Jahīr.<sup>79</sup> The extracts of the Retraction of Ibn ‘Aqīl are reproduced in Appendix 6.

Ibn ‘Aqīl lost the chair of the mosque of Abū Manṣūr, but after the death of *Sharīf* Abū Ja‘far, he resumed teaching in a *masjid*-college of his own and became head of the Ḥanbalī guild. The Retraction of Ibn ‘Aqīl continued to be the subject of controversy among the traditionalists of the Shafi‘ī and Ḥanbalī guilds. However, as the time passed posterity had highest praise for his achievements as a religious intellectual. Favorable towards him were Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Silāfī (d. 576/1180), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200), Majd al-Dīn b. Taymiyya (d. 652/1254), Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and Ṣalāh al-Dīn Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363).<sup>80</sup> Muwaffaq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī (d. 623/1220) severely criticized Ibn ‘Aqīl for having fallen under the influence of rationalist doctrines and considered him an Ash‘arite.

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<sup>78</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 41.

<sup>79</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 3-5.

<sup>80</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 46-50.

He devoted an entire treatise, *Tahrīm al-naẓar fī kutub ahl al-kalām* to the censure of *kalām*, in which he condemns the Mu‘tazilites, the Ash‘arites and Ibn ‘Aqīl.<sup>81</sup> Dhahabī (d. 748/1347), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) and Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393) were of the opinion that Ibn ‘Aqīl was influenced by the Mu‘tazilites, specifically in his metaphorical interpretation of the divine attributes.<sup>82</sup>

According to Makdisi,

As an intellectualist, he insisted on the use of reason and authority on an equal footing, maintaining reason’s importance in search of the truth... Nevertheless, his early upbringing and education as a Ḥanafī-Mu‘tazilī remained deeply etched in his memory, and he recalled with fondness and pride his family background, as he did his admiration for the early Ṣūfīs, and keeping his vow of repentance not to replace by promoting Mu‘tazilism.<sup>83</sup>

## 11. Crisis of al-Zamakhsharī

Abū Muḍar Maḥmūd b. Jarīr al-Ḍabbī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 507/1114), one of al-Zamakhsharī’s teachers had access to the court of Niẓām al-Mulk, a generous patron of scholars of religion and litterateurs.<sup>84</sup> It was through him that al-Zamakhsharī was introduced to Niẓām al-Mulk. Al-Zamakhsharī citing his close relationship with Abū Muḍar wrote many laudatory panegyrics for Niẓām al-Mulk,<sup>85</sup> but unfortunately could not receive any reward or official position. He complained in his poetry that despite his

<sup>81</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 47-48.

<sup>82</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 49-50.

<sup>83</sup> Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl*, 259.

<sup>84</sup> Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *Tā’rīkh dawlat Āl-Saljūq*, abridged. Al-Faṭḥ b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Bundārī al-Iṣfahānī (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1980), 32, 78-79; H. Bowen [C.E. Bosworth], “Niẓām al-Mulk, Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Ishāq al-Ṭūsī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 8:69.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 73 (verses 33 to 47); 76-77 (verses 24-36); 79-80 (verses 13 to 31).

high caliber scholarly works and extensive erudition he was ignored, while those people who were no match to him were rewarded and got high offices.<sup>86</sup>

In desperation, al-Zamakhsharī left for Khurāsān and visited the *vizier* Mujīr al-Dawla Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Adristānī and presented his works on grammar and lexicography as well as penned down a *qaṣīda* in his praise. The vizier appreciated his works and rewarded him with one thousand *dīnārs* and a horse.<sup>87</sup>

In Khurāsān, al-Zamakhsharī also met Mu’ayyad al-Malik ‘Ubayd Allāh, son of Nizām al-Mulk, who was a high executive of the “office of seals and correspondence” (*dīwān al-ṭughrā’ wa al-inshā’*), and well-versed in both Arabic and Persian poetry and prose. He wrote a *qaṣīda* in his praise, however, his luck did not favor him there as well.<sup>88</sup> Afterwards, al-Zamakhsharī arrived in Iṣfahān, in the court of Saljūqī Sulṭān Muḥammad b. Malik Shāh (d. 511/1117). He wrote panegyrics extolling the Sulṭān’s services in promoting the cause of Islam and suppressing the *Bāṭiniyya* sect’s activities.<sup>89</sup>

Sulṭān Malik Shāh appointed Anūshtigīn as governor of Khwārazm. After Anūshtigīn death, his son Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh became the governor. He was respectful to the people of knowledge and religion. Al-Zamakhsharī praised him for these qualities in him. After him, his son ‘Alā al-Dīn Atsīz (d. 551/1156) replaced him. Al-Zamakhsharī presented Atsīz his book *Muqaddima al-Adab* which was kept in his collection of the books. In the introduction of this book, al-Zamakhsharī praises Atsīz’s generosity and his appreciation of *belles-lettres*.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 212-13 (verses 39 to 55).

<sup>87</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 85-88 (verses 1 to 48); 98-99 (verses 1 to 29); al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:267.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 153 (verses 1 to 9).

<sup>89</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 280-82 (verses 1 to 28).

<sup>90</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Muqaddimāt al-adab* (Tehran: Mu’assasa-i-Muṭāla‘āt-i-Islāmī, 2007), 1-3.

However, the biographical sources, except al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda,<sup>91</sup> indicate that al-Zamakhsharī could not develop intimate relations with high officials in any of the courts he visited. He was very eager for getting a position in the government but could not succeed in it as he often complained about it in his poetry.<sup>92</sup>

The year 512/1118 is the most important in the life of al-Zamakhsharī. He had completed forty-five years of his life,<sup>93</sup> and in Rajab 512/October 1118, al-Zamakhsharī suffered a serious illness (*nāhika*) and warning (*mundhira*). Al-Zamakhsharī mentions in his book entitled *Maqāmāt* that “he saw in his early morning slumber as if someone called him loudly saying, O Abū al-Qāsim! Destined time and false expectations!” (*annahu uriya fī ba‘d ighfā‘āt al-fajr ka annamā ṣawwata bihi man yaqūlu lahu yā abū al-Qāsim ajal maktūb wa-‘amal makdhūb*).<sup>94</sup> Upon hearing these words, al-Zamakhsharī was so terrified and perplexed that he penned down some aphorisms. He further states that “this incident happened in the year 512/1118 when he was afflicted with a serious illness, which he called as the warning” (*al-wāqi‘a fī sannatin ithnatayi ‘asharat ba‘d al-khamsa mi‘at bi al-marḍati al-nāhika allatī sammāha al-mundhira*).<sup>95</sup> He made a covenant with God (*mīthāq li Allāh*) that if he were cured from the illness he would neither go to the thresholds of the rulers nor offer his services to them. He further

<sup>91</sup> According to al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda, al-Zamakhsharī used to be guest at the table of ministers and kings, praising them in poetry and leading a life of luxury in this world until God showed him His vision, which became the cause of his breaking up with them and turning to the matter of religion. See Al-Andarabānī, “*Sīra*,” 368; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:100.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 73 (verses 33 to 47); 79-80 (verses 13 to 31); 98-99 ((verses 1 to 29)).

<sup>93</sup> Al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda mention in their biographical notes that al-Zamakhsharī was forty-one years old. The illness (*nāhika*) and warning (*mundhira*) took place in Rajab 512/October 1118, and al-Zamakhsharī was born on Rajab 27, 467/March 18, 1075. The age of forty-one reported by both al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda seems to be incorrect because he was actually forty-five years old. See Al-Andarabānī, “*Sīra*,” 368; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:100.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda mention book’s name as *Naṣā’ih al-kibār* which is also known as *Maqāmāt al-Zamakhsharī*. It has fifty *maqāmāt* (articles) and it is mentioned in the first *Maqāmāt al-riḍwān*. See Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Maqāmāt al-Zamakhsharī* (Miṣr: Maṭba‘a al-Tawfiq, 1906), 5.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Maqāmāt*, 5-6.

promised to himself that he would keep his soul and tongue above in composing poetry for their praise, refrain from earning his living with their gifts and presents, “and make utmost efforts to take his name out of the official register and remove it” (*wa yajidda fī isqāṭi ’ismihi min al-dīwān wa maḥwih*).<sup>96</sup> He also promised that he would lead the life of guidance (*al-hudā*), desist from the desires (*al-hawā*) and devote his lifetime in pursuit of the “sciences of various readings of the Qur’ān, the tradition and jurisprudence” (*‘ulūm al-qirā’āt wa al-ḥadīth wa abwāb al-sharḥ*).<sup>97</sup>

Brocklemann and Pellat consider al-Zamakhsharī’s *Maqāmāt* as an indication of his repentance in which he addresses to himself a number of moral exhortations. However, it is not an evidence of his conversion from the previous worldly life rather it is a testimony of his decision to renounce writing profane literature. They further state that he was conscious of being a philologist and wrote a commentary (*sharḥ*) on his *Maqāmāt*.<sup>98</sup>

According to Régis Blachère and Pierre Masnou, following the covenant which al-Zamakhsharī made during his serious illness, he could have turned away from profane literature and dedicated himself to writing that would edify his readers. His *Maqāmāt*, which he addressed to himself in order to stay on the straight path, would have been his

<sup>96</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Maqāmāt*, 6.

<sup>97</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Maqāmāt*, 6-7.

<sup>98</sup> *Maqāma* (pl. *maqāmāt*) is a purely and typically Arabic literary genre. The word is generally translated as “assembly” or “session” (Fr. “séance”), but it is an approximation which does not convey exactly the complex nature of the term. The evolution of *maqāmāt* is attested in the third/ninth century by Ibn Qutayba who in *‘Uyūn al-akḥbār* (2:333-43) gives the title *Maqāmāt al-zuhhād ‘ind al-khulafā’ wa al-mulūk*. Before him, the Mu’tazilite al-Iskāfī had written a *Kitāb al-maqāmāt fī tafḍīl ‘Alī*. Aḥmad Badī‘ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) is considered to be the first to have adopted *maqāmāt* for the creation of a new literary genre. He is said to have written approximately four hundred of the *maqāmāt*, out of which only fifty-two are extant. His most eminent successor was Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) whose *maqāmāt* are no more than a pale reflection of those of al-Hamadhānī. Inspired by al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī, al-Zamakhsharī composed fifty *maqāmāt* in which he addresses to himself a number of moral exhortations. See C. Brocklemann and Ch. Pellat, “Maqāma,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 6:107; Régis Blachère, “al-Hamadhānī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:106; D.S. Margoliouth, “al-Ḥarīrī (sometime Ibn al-Ḥarīrī in Yāqūt) Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān b. al-Ḥarīrī al-Baṣrī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:221.

eternal reward through repentance and good works. They further state that the contents of some of the *maqāmāt* show clearly that after his conversion, al-Zamakhsharī still had not changed completely and his desires remained dominated by the preoccupations of the secular world.<sup>99</sup>

Al-Juwaynī's observation is that al-Zamakhsharī's works written after 513/1119 indicate that there is definitely a change in his style of writing. Specifically he mentions *al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan'at al-i'rāb*, *al-Fā'iq fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*, *Maqāmāt*, *Aṭwāq al-dhahab*, *al-Nṣā'ih al-ṣighār*, *Nawābigh al-kalim*, and *Rabī' al-abrār*.<sup>100</sup>

Almost all the biographical sources except that of al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda are silent about the intellectual crisis of al-Zamakhsharī. The only main source of his crisis is mentioned by al-Zamakhsharī himself in his own writings. Other than al-Zamakhsharī, both al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda provide the same information about it. Despite the fact that this crisis occurred when al-Zamakhsharī was forty-five years old, al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda give his age forty-one at the time. There are no other reports about the crisis from al-Zamakhsharī's contemporaries or even later historians. On the other hand, we have documentation and verification from different sources about the intellectual crises of al-Ash'arī, al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Aqīl. Though the description of these accounts may differ but there is a consensus about the main themes of their intellectual crises. This cannot be said about al-Zamakhsharī because we do not have any mention of his crisis by his biographers except al-Andarabānī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda. The only reliable source of al-Zamakhsharī's crisis is

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<sup>99</sup> Régis Blachère and Pierre Masnou, *Maqāmāt (Séances) choisies et traduites de l'arabe avec une étude sur le genre* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1957), 40-41.

<sup>100</sup> Muṣṭafā al-Ṣāwī al-Juwaynī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī fī tafṣīr al-Qur'ān wa-bayān i'jāzihi* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1968), 53-62.



his writings which we should accept and believe in them. After reading his *maqāmāt* and poetry, there is no reason to doubt about the veracity of his crisis. Al-Zamakhsharī might not be leading a life luxury in the company of high ranking government officials and might not have been their guest, but he was desirous to get a job in accordance with his knowledge and wanted to be appreciated and recognized for his works which were extraordinary compared with his contemporaries.

## 12. Conclusion

Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī was born in 467/1075 at Zamakhshar in Khwārazm, and died in 538/1144 in Jurjāniyya, where he was buried. Al-Zamakhsharī travelled for purposes of education and visited Mecca twice and stayed there for a period of approximately twelve years. His first visit took place sometime between 500/1106 and 518/1124. His second visit to Mecca was in 526/1131 and stayed there for seven years, hence he was called with honorific title of *Jār Allāh* (Neighbor of God). During this period, he wrote *al-Kashshāf*, which is considered a model of the Mu‘tazilite exegesis of the Qur’ān. No other book in the history of *tafsīr* has been commented upon in the forms of *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *mukhtaṣars* more than *al-Kashshāf*. Hājjī Khalīfa in his *Kashf al-zūnūn* lists approximately fifty commentaries.

The biographical dictionaries and *ṭabaqāt* works mention that al-Zamakhsharī acquired his education from approximately eleven scholars. However, most of the information available about these scholars is scanty. These sources also identify about twenty-six of his students. In most of the cases they mention about what students studied

with or transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī, but in some cases information regarding their fields of study is not available.

Although of Persian origin, al-Zamakhsharī's command over Arabic was superb, and unparalleled. He was an outstanding scholar of his time who excelled in many sciences. He was bestowed with the title of *Fakhr Khawārm* (Glory of Khawārm) by his contemporaries. Al-Zamakhsharī's scholarly contribution covers a wide variety of fields: exegesis, traditions, jurisprudence, literature, grammar, and lexicography. The biographical dictionaries mention that al-Zamakhsharī compiled approximately fifty works during his lifetime.

The intellectual crises of al-Ash'arī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Aqīl, and al-Zamakhsharī have been examined in the preceding paragraphs. Every scholar's intellectual crisis differs from each other. Al-Ash'arī who remained a Mu'tazilite until the age he was forty years old, relinquished it because he was not satisfied with the answers of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī regarding the three brothers' anecdote. He became disillusioned with the Mu'tazilites concept of divine justice because he could not find satisfactory solution to resolve the issue of God's justice. Al-Ash'arī's intellectual crisis culminated in his breakup with the Mu'tazilites and the establishment of Ash'arite school (though it took a long time) which was overwhelmingly representative of the orthodox Muslim thought.

Al-Ghazālī experienced two intellectual crises. The first crisis pertained to his skepticism with all kinds of knowledge and he was in search of the certainty of knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqīnī*). Al-Ghazālī's crisis was resolved due to the light of God bestowed in his heart, rather than demonstrative proofs.<sup>101</sup> The second crisis occurred

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<sup>101</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh*, 82, 86.

when he had a conflict between the worldly fame (holding the most illustrious position of the Professorship in the Nizāmia College) and desire to achieve success and salvation in the hereafter. After travelling for eleven years, and carefully investigating the teachings of various groups, he found the ultimate truth in mysticism.

Ibn ‘Aqīl was persecuted and had to make public retraction because of his admiration of the Mu‘tazilites, learning *kalām*, and interest in the writings of mystic Maṣūūr b. al-Ḥallāj. He was the victim his times where intellectualism and rationalism was viewed in great suspicion. The triumph of traditionalism was at its pinnacle, and rationalism had lost its support from government and the majority of the scholars with the exception of a few. He endeavored to find a solution but failed.

Al-Zamakhsharī was afflicted with serious illness and warning. If we analyze his crisis and compare with the crises of al-Ash‘arī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn ‘Aqīl, we find that there are some similarities and some differences between them.

Al-Zamakhsharī and al-Ghazālī both suffered serious illness. During his illness, al-Zamakhsharī made a promise with God that upon his recovery from the illness he would neither approach the rulers nor request for any position from them. Furthermore, he would avoid composing poetry for their admiration, and lead the life of guidance. However, he could not keep up with his promise with God and resumed going to rulers after his recovery from illness. On the other hand, after his serious sickness, al-Ghazālī resigned from his position of Professorship and left in search of truth which he ultimately found in Ṣūfīsm.

Al-Zamakhsharī and al-Ash‘arī both were the Mu‘tazilites. Al-Zamakhsharī was not only a Mu‘tazilite, but professed it openly in public.<sup>102</sup> Whenever he visited someone, he used to introduce himself at the door, “Abū al-Qāsim the Mu‘tazilite is at the door” (*Abū al-Qāsim al-Mu‘tazilī bi al-bāb*).<sup>103</sup> Al-Ash‘arī remained Mu‘tazilite for a long time but relinquished it when he could not find satisfactory solution to resolve the issue of God’s justice in the Mu‘tazilites principle of justice.

Al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn ‘Aqīl both were contemporaries. Mu‘tazilism was in decline in most parts of the Muslim world except Khawārm, the hometown of al-Zamakhsharī. According to Madelung, “In Khawārm Ḥanafism was strongly predominant. However, among the Ḥanafites in Khawārm Mu‘tazilite theology prevailed throughout the Seljūq age. The Khawārmshahs evidently favored Mu‘tazilism, which survived there at least until the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century.”<sup>104</sup> It was in this environment, that al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, which is based upon the Mu‘tazilites five principles, remained popular. On the contrary, Ibn ‘Aqīl’s Ḥanafī-Mu‘tazilism and his thoughts were frowned upon in Baghdad due to the firm foundation of the traditionalism there.

<sup>102</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam*, 18:37-38; Yāqūt al-Hamawī al-Rumī, ‘Abd Allāh. *Mu‘jam al-udabā’ irshād al-arīb ilā ma‘rifat al-adīb*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1993), 6:2688; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a‘lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1991-2000), 36:490; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu‘āt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawīyyīn wa-al-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Maṭba‘at ‘Īsa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1965), 2:279-80; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, ed. A. Meursinge (Leiden and Tehran: Arabic and Persian Text Series, 1839 and 1960), 41; al-Hāfīz Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1994), 2:315.

<sup>103</sup> Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Abū Bakr Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968), 5:170; Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥasanī al-Fāsī, *Al-‘Iqd al-thamīn fī tā’rīkh al-balad al-amīn*, ed. Fu‘ād Sayyid (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1967), 7:141; ‘Abd al-Ḥayyī b. Aḥmad Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Beirut: Maktab al-Tijārī li al-Ṭaba‘ wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘, 1966), 4:120.

<sup>104</sup> See Wilfred Madelung, “The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks” in *Actas IV Congresso de Estudos Arabes e Islammicos* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 116; Madelung, *The Theology of al-Zamakhsharī*, 485.

## Chapter 2

### Mu‘tazilites

#### 1. Origin of the Mu‘tazilites

According to Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1436), “the chain of authorities on which the Mu‘tazilite school is based is clearer than dawn” (*wa-sanad al-mu‘tazila li-madhabihim awḍaḥ min al-falaq*).<sup>1</sup> Four centuries earlier, Qādī ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) claimed that “their (Mu‘tazilites) method in this regard is based upon unequivocal proofs and they have clearly expressed it with rational proofs, the Qur’ān, the Prophetic traditions and consensus” (*wa-ṭarīqahum fī dhālika al-adillat al-qāṭi‘a wa-qad bayyinuhā bi-ḥujaj al-‘aql wa-al-kitāb wa-al-sunna wa-al-ijmā‘*).<sup>2</sup> However, the case is quite contrary to the claims made by these two scholars. Not only the origin of the term Mu‘tazila but also its early sources are controversial and contradictory.

The verb *i‘tazala* means “to withdraw, to separate and to abstain.”<sup>3</sup> Before the emergence of the Mu‘tazilite school, the verb *i‘tazala* was used in different kinds of ‘withdrawal’ and was not used in a specific technical meaning. It also referred to various historical events such as refusal to pay *zakāt* to Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, the first caliph,<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā, *Kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, ed. Susanna Diwald-Wilzer (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a al-Kāthūlikiya; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1961), 7; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Fu‘ād Sayyid, ed. *Faḍl al-i‘tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisiyya lil-Nashr, 1986), 164-65; Qādī ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī al-Asadabādī, *Al-Firaq wa ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, ed. ‘Alī Sāmī al-Nashshār and ‘Aṣām al-Dīn Muḥammad ‘Alī (Iskandriyya: Dār al-Maṭbū‘āt al-Jām‘iyya, 1972), 3-18.

<sup>3</sup> Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955-6), 11:440.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shī‘a*, 4; ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar, *Masā’il al-imāma wa-muqtaṭiḥāt min al-kitāb al-awsaṭ fī al-maqālāt*, ed. Josef van Ess (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1971), 14.

neutrality at the battle of Camel (35/656) and battle of Şiffīn (36/657), and neutrality in the involvement of political activities during the first civil war.<sup>5</sup>

The historical sources attest that during the first Islamic century, the name *mu'tazila* applied to many different groups. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Nawbakhtī (d. 311/923) reports that the withdrawal (*i'tizāl*) of al-Aḥnaf b. Qays al-Tamīmī was “not in the sense of adhering to doctrine of *i'tizāl*” (*lā 'alā al-tadayyun bi-al- i'tizāl*), “but in pursuit of safety from killing and from the loss of property and he said to his people: ‘Abstain from the civil war, it will be better for you’” (*lākin 'alā al-ṭalab al-salāma min al-qatl wa-dhahāb al-māl wa-qāla li-qawmihi i'tazilū al-fitnat aṣlah lakum*).<sup>6</sup>

Before dealing with a detailed analysis of different viewpoints regarding the origin and emergence of Mu'tazilites, it will be appropriate and relevant to provide the biographical information about Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd who are considered to be the founders and pioneers of the Mu'tazila school.

## 2. Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā'

Abū Ḥudhayfa Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' was born in Medina in the year 80/699 and was brought up in Baṣra. He died in 131/748, probably due to the plague which raged at Baṣra during the same year. He was a client (*mawlā*), but it is not certain whether he was a client of the Banū Ḍabba or the Banū Makhzūm or the Banū Hāshim.<sup>7</sup> He had an odd physical constitution (*muḍṭarib al-khalq*) with a very long and twisted neck (*'unuqihī ṭūl*

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<sup>5</sup> Al-Nāshī', *Masā'il*, 16.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shī'a*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:560; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:163; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 6:7; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī. *Lisān al-mīzān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr lil-Ṭaba'a wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1987), 6:261; 'Abd al-Ḥayyī b. Aḥmad b. al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Beirut: Maktab al-Tijārī lil-Ṭaba' wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 1966), 182-83; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 8:108-9.

*wa-i 'wijāj*).<sup>8</sup> He used to remain silent for such a long period of time that people considered him mute.<sup>9</sup> He had a speech defect (*al-thagh*) and could not pronounce the letter r (*rā'*) correctly, but he was a very fluent and eloquent orator of his time<sup>10</sup> and was legendary for completely avoiding this letter in his talk.<sup>11</sup>

Wāṣil's piety and asceticism were exemplary and his main preoccupation was religion. He was considered among those who were known for their religious observance (*fa-huwa ashbaha bi ahl al-dīn*).<sup>12</sup> He used to meet with intellectuals of different religious backgrounds such as Manichaeans and Buddhist. He wrote in his *Kitāb al-Alfa mas'ala* against Manichaeans and was the first to write against the various Muslim sects as well as against other religions.<sup>13</sup> His theological system was developed by the encounters with adversaries and he encouraged his emissaries to invite people "to the truth" (*ilā al-ḥaqq*)<sup>14</sup> and "to God's religion" (*ilā dīn Allāh*).<sup>15</sup> It is reported by his wife, who was the sister of 'Amr b. 'Ubayd that he was the best in his knowledge and he used to spend the night in prayer and writing down arguments and proofs against other religions.<sup>16</sup>

None of Wāṣil's writings has been preserved, but several titles are mentioned in the biographical dictionaries. According to Ibn Khallikān, he compiled ten books: *Aṣnāf*

<sup>8</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:561; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:165.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:561; Abī Hilāl al-'Askarī, *Al-Awā'il*, ed. Muhammad al-Miṣrī and Walīd Qaṣṣāb (Damascus: Manshurāt Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1975), 2:135; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 234; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:560; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 17-18; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 235, 238; al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 65.

<sup>11</sup> Al-'Askarī, *Awā'il*, 2:135-36; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:163; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 6:8. See Wāṣil's famous sermon in 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn's *Nawādir al-makḥḥūṭāt* (Cairo: Maṭba' al-Sa'āda, 1951), 1:134-36.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 18, 21; al-'Askarī, *Awā'il*, 2:134.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 67.

<sup>15</sup> Abū Sa'īd b. Nashwān al-Ḥimayrī, *Al-Ḥūr al-'ayn*, ed. Kamāl Muṣṭafā (Tehrān: I'ādat, 1972), 208.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 19.

*al-Murji'a, al-Tawba, al-Manzila bayna al-manzilatayn, Khuṭbatahu allatī akhrajā minhā al-rā'*, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān, al-Khuṭub fī al-tawḥīd wa al-'adl, Mā jarā baynahu wa-bayna 'Amr b. 'Ubayd, al-Sabīl ilā ma'rifat al-ḥaqq, al-Da'wa, and Ṭabaqāt Ahl al-'ilm wa al-jahl.*<sup>17</sup> Ibn Nadīm and al-Dāwūdī add two books: *al-Futyā* and *al-Radd 'alā al-Qadariyya* respectively.<sup>18</sup>

He was very generous but never kept money for his personal use. It is reported that “He inherited twenty thousand dirhams from his father but never took anything from it. He ‘ordered to make a hole in the wall’ (*wa amar an taj'ala fī kuwwa*)<sup>19</sup> of a room behind his house (in which to keep that money) and appointed a guard and said to his companions that whoever needs may take from it. The people used to take from it until he died.”<sup>20</sup> He was very careful to give money only to those who were pious.<sup>21</sup>

Wāṣil never took gifts, rewards or honorariums offered to him. After the assassination of al-Walīd II in 126/744, he visited as a member of a Baṣran delegation to welcome the new governor ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd who was appointed by Yazīd III. The governor, quite unexpectedly, asked him to say a few words, and he delivered a speech extemporaneously and in authoritative manner. When the governor offered him an honorarium, he refused to take it, and requested to donate the money for the required improvement of Baṣra’s water supply, probably the canal (*nahr*).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 6:11; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:561; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7: 280-81; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 8:109.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:561; Ḥāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1994), 2:356-57.

<sup>19</sup> *kuwwa* means “an opening in a wall.” See Hasan Saeed al-Karmi, *Al-Mughnī al-farīd: Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut: Maktabat Lebanon Librairie du Liban, 2002), 571.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 239.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Al-‘Askarī, *Awā'il*, 2:136; J. van Ess, “Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’,” *EF*, 11:164.



Wāṣil’s odd and clumsy appearance, sternness, speech defect and long intervals of complete silence were so visible that his first impression upon others used to be embarrassing. However, he knew how to win people over, because with gradual and better acquaintance and understanding, people used to change their opinion about him and admired him. He was honest and straightforward in his talks and never missed an opportunity to admonish. In their first meeting ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd, a celebrated Mu‘tazilite, while looking at him remarked: “There will be no good in a man who has such a long and twisted neck.” Wāṣil responded to him: “Whosoever finds faults with the product, he disgraces the producer because of its relationship between the producer and the product.” ‘Amr said: “O Abū Ḥudhayfa! It is admirable that you admonished me and I will never do it again.”<sup>23</sup>

Wāṣil is the first Mu‘tazilite who formulated the principle of *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*, literally meaning “the position between the two positions” or commonly referred to as “the intermediate position between belief and unbelief”. Wāṣil recorded in his book entitled *Mā jarā baynahu wa-bayna ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd* “What happened between him and ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd?” Like other books of Wāṣil, this book is also lost. The heresiographical accounts differ<sup>24</sup> but the main theme appears to be the following. In one of their meetings between Wāṣil and ‘Amr, the latter presented the view of al-Baṣrī that a Muslim grave sinner was a hypocrite. Wāṣil responded that this view was not correct and explained his principle of the “intermediate position” (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*). He quoted from the Qur’ān that: “Those who do not judge according to God’s revelations

<sup>23</sup> Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:165.

<sup>24</sup> See ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 234; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:165-66; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 22; Abū al-Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān al-Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Īntiṣār wa al-radd ‘alā Ibn al-Rāwandī*, ed. Albert Nader (Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a Kathūlīkiyya, 1957), 118-20.

are the wrongdoers” (*wa-man lam yaḥkum bi-mā anzala Allāhu fa-’ulā’ika hum al-ẓālimūn*).<sup>25</sup> He cited another verse in which unbelievers are called the wrongdoers: “And the unbelievers are the wrongdoers” (*wa-al-kāfirūna hum al-ẓālimūn*).<sup>26</sup> On the basis of these verses, he said that a Muslim who commits grave sin should be called a wrongdoer. Wāṣil argued that it is appropriate to call him a transgressor, because God equates a hypocrite with a transgressor. In this regard, he quoted the verse of the Qur’an: “Surely the hypocrites are transgressors” (*inna al-munāfiqūna hum al-fāsiqūn*).<sup>27</sup> He further stated that all the sects are unanimous in stating that a grave sinner deserves to be called a wrongdoer, as he deserves to be named as transgressor. Then, he explained the prevailing viewpoints of all those who disagreed with him. The Khārijites<sup>28</sup> call a polytheist a

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<sup>25</sup> Qur’ān, 5:45.

<sup>26</sup> Qur’ān, 2:254.

<sup>27</sup> Qur’ān, 9:67.

<sup>28</sup> There are various contradictory narratives regarding the origin of the Khārijites (*al-Khawārij*, sing. *Khārijī*) sect, but it can be traced back when “during the battle of Ṣiffīn (Ṣafār 37/July 657) to settle the differences, arising out of the murder of ‘Uthmān, which had provoked the war, by referring it to two referees who would pronounce judgment ‘according to the Qur’ān.’ While the majority of ‘Alī’s army readily adopted this proposal, ...one group of warriors, mainly of the tribe of Tamīm, vigorously protested against the setting up of a human tribunal above the divine word. Loudly protesting that ‘judgment belongs to God alone’ (*lā ḥukma illā li-llāhi*) they left the army, and withdrawing to the village of Ḥarūra’...elected as their chief an obscure soldier, ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī. These first dissenters took the name *al-Ḥārūrīya* or *al-Muḥakkima*...Another name given to those first *Khawārij* ...is *al-Shurāt* (pl. of *shārī*) the ‘vendors,’ i.e. those who have sold their soul for the cause of God... they proclaimed the nullity of ‘Alī’s claims to the caliphate but equally condemned ‘Uthmān’s conduct and disclaimed any intention of avenging his murder.” See G. Levi Della Vida, “Khārijites,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 6:1074. According to the heresiographers, the Khārijites are divided into more than twenty independent sub-sects. They did not have any unity either in their political actions or theological doctrines. On the question of caliphate they were opposed equally to the legitimism of the Shi‘ites and the quietism of the Murji‘ites. They were of the view that it is the obligation of the believers to depose an *imām* who has gone off the right path, and every believer who is morally and religiously irreproachable can be appointed an *imām*, even if he were a black slave. They rejected the doctrine that a believer even without performing the religious obligations remains a Muslim, and regarded all non-Khārijites as apostates. See Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980), 86-131; Abū Manṣūr ‘Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq bayna al-firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Dār at-Ṭalā‘i’, 2005), 61-89; Abū al-Faṭḥ Ṭāji al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-al-niḥal*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Muḥammad al-Wakīl (Cairo: Mu’assasa al-Ḥalbī, 1968), 114-38.

transgressor (*mushrikan fāsiqan*); the Shi'ites<sup>29</sup> call an unbeliever a transgressor (*kāfir fāsiqan*); the Murji'ites<sup>30</sup> call a believer a transgressor (*mu'minan fāsiqan*); and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī called a hypocrite a transgressor (*munāfiqan fāsiqan*). He concluded that since there is consensus among all the sects to call a grave sinner a transgressor, it is necessary that he should be called by this name. 'Amr agreed with Wāṣil and accepted his principle of "the intermediate position."<sup>31</sup>

### 3. 'Amr b. 'Ubayd

Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. 'Ubayd b. Bāb was born at Balkh in the year 80/699. He was at first a client (*mawlā*) of Banū 'Uqayl and then of 'Arāda b. Yarbū' b. Mālik.

According to Ibn Nadīm, at first he was a client of Banū al-'Adawiyya and then of Banū

<sup>29</sup> The Shi'ites maintain that 'Alī was the first caliph or *Imām* because the legitimate authority rests with a member of the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*). They reject the first three caliphs, Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān and consider them as usurpers. Their name is derived from *shī'at 'Alī*, i.e. the party of partisans of 'Alī, which was first used during the caliphate of 'Alī's distinguishing them from the *shī'at 'Uthmān*, the partisans of the caliph 'Uthmān who were opposed to 'Alī. They are also called the *Imāmiyya* because they believe the Muslim religion consist in the true knowledge of the *Imām* or rightful leader of the faithful. They are also known as *ithnā 'ashariyya* or the "twelvers" due to being the followers of twelve *imāms*. The Sunnites call them *al-rawāfiḍ* or "the defectors or dissenters." However, the Shi'ites call themselves *al-mu'minūn* or "the true believers" because they consider themselves as the "orthodox" Muslims. According to the heresiographers, the Shi'ites are divided into 45 sects but the main sects are Ghāliya, Rāfiḍa, Kaysāniyya, Imāmiyya, Ismā'īliyya and Zaydiyya. See al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 5-85; Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 30-60; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:146-98; Wifred Madelung, "Shī'a," *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 9:420-24.

<sup>30</sup> According to Madelung, "[The Murji'ite sect] arose in the aftermath of the Kūfan Shī'ī revolt under al-Mukhtār in favour of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanfiyya. Ibn Sa'd and other sources describe Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanfiyya's son al-Ḥasan as the author of the doctrine of *irdjā'*, which he first defended in a circle of scholars debating the conflict between 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr. Al-Ḥasan argued that the judgment about the right and wrong in this conflict should be deferred to God, and Muslims should abstain from declaring either solidarity with them or dissociation from them. He then composed an open letter on his doctrine of *irdjā'* and had it read in public. Although some doubt has been cast on the role of al-Ḥasan and the authenticity of the *Kitāb al-Irdjā'* attributed to him (M. Cook), there are no cogent reasons to reject them. Other early sources name either Ḳays b. Abī Muslim al-Māṣir or Dharr b. 'Abd Allāh, both Kūfans, as the first propagators of *irdjā'*." See W. Madelung, "Murdjī'a" *EP*<sup>2</sup>, 7:605. Wensinck states that they were of the opinion that "[W]here there is faith, sins will do no harm. On account of [this] doctrine they were called the adherents of promise (*ahl al-wa'd*), in contra-distinction to the Mu'tazila who were called the adherents of threats (*ahl al-wa'īd*)." See A.J. Wensinck, "Al-Murdjī'a," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 412. According to the heresiographers, the Murji'ites are divided from five to twelve independent sub-sects. See al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 132-54; Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 151-54; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 139-46.

<sup>31</sup> Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:165-69; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 22-24.

Ḥanzala. Originally, his family was from Kābul, Afghānistān, and from there his father moved to Baṣra. ‘Amr died in 144/761 in the town of Marrān, on the road from Mecca to Baṣra, while returning from the pilgrimage.<sup>32</sup>

‘Amr was one of the closest and well-known disciples of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) and was very much involved in his “circle” (*ḥalqa*) of traditionists and *qādirites*.<sup>33</sup> He was a great theologian and was one of the founders of the Mu‘tazilite school. He was famous for his great piety, asceticism, honesty and sincerity. It is reported that he prayed all night. For forty years, he performed the pilgrimage every year on foot, giving his camel to those who were weak.<sup>34</sup> He was always serious and never laughed and looked as if returning from his parents’ funeral. He behaved like a person for whom alone hell was created. He was very careful while speaking and was an extraordinary orator.<sup>35</sup>

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī had a very high opinion of him. When once asked by someone about him, he said: “You are asking me about a person who has been educated by the angels and brought up by the prophets. If he stands up to perform a task, he remains steadfast. If he is assigned a task, he accomplishes it with resolution and if he is prohibited from a thing, he is most strict in abstaining from it. I have never seen a man

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<sup>32</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnawārī Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Ma‘ārif*, ed. Tharwat ‘Ukāsha (Cairo: Maṭba‘a Dār al-Kutub, 1960), 482; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:562; Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā’rīkh Baghdād* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘āda, 1931), 12:166; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 3:460; W. Montgomery Watt, “‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd b. Bāb,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:514; Suleiman A. Mourad, “‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2008):94-96.

<sup>33</sup> See al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 68, where he mentions “He (‘Amr) was amongst the distinguished adherents of Ḥasan” (*wa-huwa (‘Amr) min jillat aṣḥāb al-Ḥasan*). See also al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:165, who states that “‘Amr b. Ubayd was amongst al-Ḥasan’s adherents and students” (*wa-kāna ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd min aṣḥāb al-Ḥasan wa-talāmidhahu*).

<sup>34</sup> Al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 68; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 243; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 69; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 22; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 247.

whose outward is like his inward and vice versa.”<sup>36</sup> He also called him “the best among the Baṣran youths” (*khayrun fiṭyan ahl al-baṣra*).<sup>37</sup>

‘Amr had numerous followers who trusted him without any reservation. Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī states: “‘Amr b. Ubayd’s position among the Mu‘tazilites was such that he had their complete obedience; if he took off his shoes, thirty thousand (Mu‘tazilites) took off their shoes.”<sup>38</sup>

‘Amr wrote a commentary on the Qur’ān, transmitted mainly on the authority of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Most of it is lost; however a few references to it are reproduced in later *tafsīr* literature. Besides it, he wrote *Kitāb al-‘Adl wa-al-tawḥīd* and *Kitāb al-Radd ‘alā al-qadariyya*. These two works are also not extant.<sup>39</sup>

#### **4. Viewpoints regarding the Emergence of the Mu‘tazilites**

There are four viewpoints regarding the origin and emergence of the Mu‘tazilites. The first view is based upon the meaning of *i‘tazala* which denotes abstinence from the worldly desires, pleasures and sins. Therefore, those who abstained from worldly affairs were called Mu‘tazila. The second view is that those who took neutral position during the Muslim civil strife were named Mu‘tazila. The third opinion is that those who withdrew or separated from the community (*umma*) due to their theological differences were called Mu‘tazila. The fourth is that Mu‘tazila movement originated due to political reasons. In the following pages, I provide detailed information about these viewpoints.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 3:460.

<sup>37</sup> Nashwān al-Ḥimayrī, *al-Ḥūr al-‘īn*, 111.

<sup>38</sup> Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-tālibiyyīn*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifā, 1978), 209.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:563; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 3:462; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 5:81.

## 5. Abstinence from the Worldly Affairs

The first view is based upon the meaning of *i‘tazala* which denotes abstinence from the worldly desires, pleasures and sins. Some early Mu‘tazilites were of the opinion that they chose this name themselves because they decided to adopt pious and ascetic lives.<sup>40</sup> ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd instructed his disciples to be “the party which abstains from evil (*al-firqa al-mu‘tazila*).”<sup>41</sup> They called themselves *ahl al-‘adl* or *‘adliyya* “people of justice” because of God’s justice, and *muwahhid* “those who profess the unity of God” because they believed in the absolute unity of God. In support of their argument, they quoted that: “I will draw away from you and from those you call upon” (*wa a‘tazilukum wa mā ta‘budūn*).<sup>42</sup> They also argued that their withdrawal was due to God’s grace as stated in the Qur’ān: “And forsake them graciously” (*wahjurhum hajran jamīla*).<sup>43</sup> They also quoted Prophetic tradition in support of their name which states: “My community will be divided into more than seventy sects but the most reverent and God-fearing among them is the one which withdraws” (*abarruhā wa-atqāhā al-fi‘ata al-mu‘tazila*).<sup>44</sup>

Muḥammad b. Yazdādh al-Iṣfahānī (d. 230/844) mentions that “the Mu‘tazilites are moderate and avoid exaggeration and negligence” (*al-mu‘tazila hum al-muqtaṣida, fa-i‘tazalat al-ifrāt wa-al-taqṣīr*).<sup>45</sup> According to Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987) when al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī gave allegiance to Mu‘āwiya, his followers who were the companions of ‘Alī, separated (*i‘tazalū*) from him and said: “We will devote ourselves in

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<sup>40</sup> Al-‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, 2:135.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 2-3; Fu‘ād Sayyid, *Faḍl al-I‘tizāl*, 165-6; al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4-5; A.J. Wensinck and J. P. Mensing, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane* (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 5:136.

<sup>42</sup> Qur’ān, 19:48.

<sup>43</sup> Qur’ān, 73:10.

<sup>44</sup> This tradition with some variations has been quoted by Tirmidhī, Abū Dā‘ūd, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Mājah, al-Bayhaqī, and al-Ḥākim.

<sup>45</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 165.

seeking knowledge and worship, therefore, for this reason they were named Mu‘tazila” (*nashtaghilū bi al-‘ilm wa al-‘ibāda, fa-sammū bi-dhālika mu‘tazila*).<sup>46</sup>

Ignaz Goldziher is also of the view that the beginnings of the movement were due to ‘fromme, zum Teil weltflüchtige Leute, *mu‘tazila*, d. h. sich Zurückziehende (Büßer)’, or in other words solitary ascetics.<sup>47</sup> The “ascetics” (*zuhhād, nussāk*) of that period were called *mu‘tazila* and there had been a number of ascetics among the early Mu‘tazilites.”<sup>48</sup>

## 6. Neutrality in the Civil Wars

The second view is that those who took a neutral position during the Muslim civil strife were named Mu‘tazila. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan al-Nawbakhtī (d. 311/923) reports that when ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (d. 35/656), the third caliph, was assassinated, people gave their allegiance to ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 41/661) and were called *al-jamā‘a* “the people of consensus”. However, later they were divided into three groups. The first group remained loyal to ‘Alī. The second group turned against ‘Alī and among them were Abū Ṭalḥa (d. 50/670 or 51/671), ‘Ā’isha bt. Abī Bakr (d. 58/678) and ‘Abd Allāh b. Zubayr (d. 73/692). The third group consisting of Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqās (d. between 50/670-1 and 58/677-8), ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (d. 73/693), Muḥammad b. Maslama, and Usāma b. Zayd (d. ca. 54/674) separated (*i‘tazilu*) from ‘Alī and refused to fight on his side or against him despite having already given their allegiance to him and accepting his

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<sup>46</sup> Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Malaṭī, *Al-Tanbīh wa al-radd*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid b. al-Ḥasan al-Kawtharī (Beirut, Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif, 1968), 36.

<sup>47</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, “Arabische Synonymik der Askese”, *Der Islam*, 8 (1918), 207-209, reprinted in Ignaz Goldziher’s *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph De Somogyi (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), 5: 410-12; Ignaz Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 94.

<sup>48</sup> The ascetics, the *zuhhād* and *nussāk* of the time, were referred to as “the Mu‘tazila”, but the verb was also employed for other forms of withdrawal. See Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1954), 165-168; and Leah Kinberg. “What is meant by Zuhd”, *Studia Islamica* 61 (1985): 27-44.

appointment. Their decision of being neutral was based on the conviction that it was not lawful either to fight against ‘Alī or to fight with him. They are called Mu‘tazila and are known as the predecessors of the later Mu‘tazila.<sup>49</sup>

Al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar (d. 293/906) narrates a similar account that Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (d. 52/672), Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693), Abū Mas‘ūd al-Anṣārī and Aḥnaf b. Qays al-Tamīmī withdrew from the war between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya (d. 60/680), because they were not sure which of the two parties was right. They were called Mu‘tazila. He also states that Wāṣil and ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd held the same opinion and they were the leaders of the Mu‘tazila.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Khayyāṭ mentions that Wāṣil considered that in the war between ‘Alī, Abū Ṭalḥa, Zubayr and ‘Ā’isha, one of the parties was wrong, but it is not known which one. Since one of them committed a grave sin, that party should be considered in a state of transgression.<sup>51</sup>

On the basis of the second view, it can be concluded that the name of Mu‘tazila was originally applied to those who were neutral in civil war; it was coined by the Khārijites and the Shī‘ites.

## 7. Withdrawal from the Community

The third opinion is that those who withdrew or separated from the community (*umma*) due to their theological differences were called Mu‘tazila. The heresiographical narrations differ about the key figure but the main theme revolves around the religious state of the Muslim sinner. The account of the historian of the religions, ‘Abd al-Karīm

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<sup>49</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi‘a*, 5-6.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Nāshī’, *Masā’il*, 16-17.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār*, 73-74; al-Nāshī’, *Masā’il*, 53-54.



al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) is usually regarded as the standard one, according to which someone once asked al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī whether the grave sinner should be considered as a believer or an unbeliever. While al-Ḥasan reflected Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā said that the grave sinner was neither absolutely a believer, nor absolutely an unbeliever, but was in an intermediate position (*manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) literally “a position between the two positions”. He then stood and withdrew to one of the pillars of the mosque, followed by a number of those in the circle. Al-Ḥasan remarked “Wāṣil has withdrawn (*i tizala*) from us”. From this remark, he and his followers were called the Mu‘tazila.<sup>52</sup>

More than a century before al-Shahrastānī, a Shāfi‘ite theologian, ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) provides five different views about a person who commits a great sin. First, the Azāriqa<sup>53</sup> and Ṣufriyya<sup>54</sup> considered that whosoever committed sin, either major or minor, was an unbeliever. Second, the Najadāt<sup>55</sup> held that a sinner for whom the whole community decided unanimously that he was a sinner and considered an

<sup>52</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:48.

<sup>53</sup> Azāriqa, named for one of its early leaders, Nāfi‘ b. al-Azraq (d. 65/685) is a sect representing the extremist wing of Khārijites from the middle to the later part of the first century of Islam. Their main doctrines consisted of the exclusion (*barā’*) of the quietists (*al-qa’ada*) from Islam; the examination (*mihna*) of all those who wished to join their army; those who did not make *hijra* were considered unbelievers; exclusion from Islam of those who recognized “dissimulation” (*taqiyya*) either in word or deed; and rejection of the stoning penalty for adulterers. A person who committed a major sin was considered an unbeliever and would be eternally in hell. See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 86-9; Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 68-71; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:118-21; R. Rubinacci, “Azāriqa,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:810; Keith Lewinstein, “Azāriqa,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 1 (2008):174-76.

<sup>54</sup> Ṣufriyya, named for its founder, variously called ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Aṣfar, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ṣaffār al-Sa‘dī al-Tamīmī or Ziyād b. al-Aṣfar, is a sect arising out of the break-up of the Khārijite community in the year 64/684. They did not regard as unbelievers who abstained from fighting provided they agreed with them in their beliefs. Dissimulation was permissible in words though not in deeds. By committing those sins for which punishments are prescribed, a person would not become unbeliever or polytheist. However, in case of major sins such as not performing prayers or fleeing from battles one would become an unbeliever. See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 101, 118; Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 74-6; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:137; Wilfred Madelung and Keith Lewinstein, “Ṣufriyya,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:766.

<sup>55</sup> Najadāt, named for one of its early leaders, Najda b. ‘Āmir al-Ḥanafī al-Ḥarūrī (d. 72/692) is a sub-sect of Khārijites. Their main doctrines were admissibility of *ijtihād* and *rā’y*; justification of an error committed in ignorance but not for the obligatory precepts (*wājib*); one who did not make *hijra* was called *munāfiq*; and one who committed lesser sins and persisted in his/her error was a *mushrik*, whereas who committed grave sin without persisting in it was a Muslim. See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 89-93; Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 71-3; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:122-5; R. Rubinacci, “Nadjadāt,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:858.

unbeliever and polytheist whereas a sinner about whom the community differed was to be judged by the juriconsults. Third, the Ibāḍiyya<sup>56</sup> claimed that the person who committed a sin against which he was warned, knowing of the existence of God and His revelations, was an unbeliever; however his heresy was not the same as that of the polytheist. Fourth, some of the people of that era were of the opinion that a person who committed a grave sin was a hypocrite and a hypocrite was worse than an unbeliever who publicly professed his unbelief. Fifth, “scholars amongst the successors of that period” (*‘ulamā’ al-tābi‘īn fī dhālika al-‘aṣr*) held the view that whoever committed a grave sin was a believer (*mu‘min*) and remains in the community of the Islam due to his knowledge of the prophets and the books revealed by God, and his acknowledgement that whatever has been revealed is true; however, he is a “transgressor due to his committing a grave sin” (*fāsiqun bi-kabīratahu*).<sup>57</sup>

However, Wāṣil differed from all the five views and claimed that he was neither a believer nor an unbeliever but in an intermediate position between unbelief and belief (*manzila bayna al-manzilatayn al-kufr wa al-īmān*). Al-Baghdādī suggests that Wāṣil was the person who seceded from al-Ḥasan’s circle.<sup>58</sup>

Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān al-Mufīd (d. 413/1032) provides the generally accepted account that the name of Mu‘tazila took place when Wāṣil introduced the doctrine of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibāḍiyya, named for ‘Abd Allāh b. Ibāḍ al-Murrī al-Tamīmī, is one of the main branches of the Khārijite, appeared in 65/685 after breaking away from the Khārijite extremists. Their main doctrine was that those opposed to them were unbelievers (*kuffār*) not polytheists (*mushrikūn*). They did not believe in the assassination of their adversaries for religious reasons. Marriage with non-Ibāḍīs was permissible. They considered that the existence of an *imām* was not necessary because of the unfavorable circumstances, and it was called *al-kitmān* (the secret). An *imām* elected in the normal situation was considered as *imām al-bay‘a* (*imām* of allegiance), while an *imām* invested by the *ahl al-kitmān* (the people living in a state of secrecy) to defend them in misfortune was known as *imām al-difā’* (*imām* of defense). See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 102-5; Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 83; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:134-6; T. Lewicki, “Ibāḍiyya,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 3:648.

<sup>57</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 92-93.

<sup>58</sup> Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 93-94.

*manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*. However, he adds the name of ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd who agreed with Wāṣil’s viewpoint and both of them withdrew from al-Ḥasan’s circle.<sup>59</sup>

Ibn Qutayba’s (d. 276/889) version gives the name of ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd who believed in the doctrine of free will (*qadar*) “and used to invite people for it” (*wa yad’ū ilayhi*). He and his companions withdrew from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s circle and therefore, they were named the Mu‘tazilites.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230/845) provides information in his *Ṭabaqāt* only of ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd as a Mu‘tazilite, while Wāṣil is not even mentioned.<sup>61</sup> However, the relations between al-Ḥasan and ‘Amr were never broken off. ‘Amr continued to regard himself as a disciple of al-Ḥasan and transmitted his teachings.<sup>62</sup>

Another version links ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd al-Qays<sup>63</sup> to the circle of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Abū Bakr b. Durayd (d.321/933) states that; “It is he (‘Āmir) who separated from al-

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<sup>59</sup> Muḥammad b. al-Nu‘mān al-Mufīd, *Awā’il al-maqālāt fī al-madhāhib wa al-mukhtārāt*, ed. Faḍl Allāh Zanjānī and Hibat al-Dīn Muḥammad Shahrastānī. (Tabrīz: Maktabat Ḥaḳīqat, 1951), 4-6.

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 482-483.

<sup>61</sup> Muḥammad b. Sa‘ad, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kānjī, 2001), 9:272.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 69.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd al-Qays was a successor of the companions (*tābi’ī*) and an eloquent orator whose sayings have been preserved. He was a famous ascetic of Baṣra and was considered one of the eight great *zuhhād* in the generation of *tābi’ūn*.<sup>63</sup> Ibn Qutayba mentions that during the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, he was exiled from Baṣra to Syria but does not give any reason for that. He died probably during the caliphate of Mu‘āwiya. *Tābi’ūn* (sing. *tābi* or *tābi’ī*) are the members of the generation of Muslims that followed the companions (*ṣaḥāba*) of the Prophet Muḥammad or those Muslims who knew one or more of the companions but not the Prophet himself. See also M. Murani, “Ṣaḥāba,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 8:827. *Ṣaḥāba* (sing. *ṣaḥābī*) are the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad. According to Muḥammad b. Isma‘īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), a *ṣaḥābī* is one who is a believing Muslim and must have accompanied (*ṣaḥiba*, *lahu ṣuḥba*) the Prophet or have seen him. In general, a participation in a number of the Prophet’s campaigns, adulthood (*bulūgh al-ḥulum*) and capability of transmitting directly from the Prophet are considered basic prerequisites. See Ibn Sa‘d, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:126; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba, *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: Mu’assasat al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma, 1964), 1:308, 2:370, 3:184; Abū Nu‘aym Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Iṣfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyā’ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā’* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1967), 2:87-95; Ch. Pellat, “‘Āmir b. ‘Abd al-Qays,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:441; Susan A. Spector, “Tābi’ūn,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:28.

Ḥasan, so that they were called Mu‘tazilites.”<sup>64</sup> But it seems unlikely that he was such a great leader to have started a new school by his separation.

According to other sources it was not al-Ḥasan but Qatāda b. Di‘āma al-Sadūsī<sup>65</sup> who used the term Mu‘tazila. Qatāda and ‘Amr both were disciples of al-Ḥasan. After the death of al-Ḥasan, Qatāda used to conduct the circle. One day when Qatāda entered the mosque, he realized that ‘Amr and a group of people withdrew from his circle. Qatāda remarked that they were the Mu‘tazila, and from that day they were called Mu‘tazila.<sup>66</sup>

This version appears to be credible in the sense that there was some rivalry between Qatāda and ‘Amr, and ‘Amr was the leading person who separated along with his followers. In addition, Wāṣil is not mentioned at all in this episode. However, this account also does not appear to be tenable and Qatāda could not have invented this term because it was already in use, although he might have used it in a derogatory manner.<sup>67</sup>

Some historians derive the name of Mu‘tazila from the principle of *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* (the intermediate position between belief and unbelief). One of the proponents of this theory is Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956), an eminent

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<sup>64</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd, *Al-Ishtiqāq*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Khānjī, 1958), 213-14.

<sup>65</sup> Qatāda b. Di‘āma al-Sadūsī was born in 60/679 and died of plague at Wāsiṭ in 117/735. He was a successor of the companions (*tābi‘ī*) and blind from birth. He was one of the distinguished scholars in lexicography, historical traditions, Qur’ānic exegesis and *ḥadīth*. Also, he was proverbial for his extraordinary memory and his knowledge about genealogies. According to Abū ‘Ubayda Ma‘mar al-Muthannā (d. 209/824), Arabic philologist and exegete of the Qur’ān, Qatāda surpassed all his contemporaries (*ajma‘ al-nās*) by the quantity of information which he had collected. See Ibn S‘ad, *Ṭabaqāt*, 228-30; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 462; Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā’*, 2:333-45; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 5:2233-34; Abū Zakariyyā Muḥyī al-Dīn b. Sharf al-Nawawī, *Tahdhīb al-asmā’ wa-al-lughāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1970), 1:57-8; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4:85; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Nakt al-himyān fi nukat al-‘umyān* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘ al-Jamāliyya, 1911), 230-1; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Jazarī, *Ghāya al-nihāya fi ṭabaqāt al-qurrā’*, ed. G. Bergstraesser. (Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī, 1933), 2:25-6; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar, al-‘Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1907), 8:351-56; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 1:153-4. Ch. Pellat, “Qatāda b. Di‘āma b. Qatāda al-Sdūsī, Abu’l-Khaṭṭāb,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 4:748.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4:85-86; al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, 1:167; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> See al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 115; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 166, “When many people called them with this name, it became a title for them” (*fa-lammā sammwuhum bi-dhālika wa-kathura sāra laqaban lahum ‘alā mā dhakarnā*).

historian, who says that it is the basic foundation of *i'tizāl*.<sup>68</sup> The orthodox claim that those people who adopted Wāṣil's position and opposed the consensus “were called the Mu'tazilites” (*lammā khālafū al-ijmā' fī dhālika summū mu'tazila*). However, the Mu'tazilites assert that “they did not oppose the consensus and their position was agreed upon in the early period of Islam and they refused to accept all the novel innovations” (*lam yakhālafū al-ijmā' bal 'amilū bi-al-majma' 'alayhi fī al-ṣadr al-awwal wa-rafaḍū al-muḥdathāt al-mubtadi'a*).<sup>69</sup>

## 8. Political Movement

The fourth viewpoint is that the Mu'tazila movement originated due to political reasons. We discussed earlier that during the Muslim civil strife, people were divided into three groups. The first group remained loyal to 'Alī. The second group turned against 'Alī and the third group called itself neutral and separated from 'Alī and refused to fight on his side or against him. Among the second group were Abū Ṭalḥa, 'Ā'isha and Ibn Zubayr. During the civil war, political arguments revolved around 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Mu'āwiya and the arbitrators. Wāṣil was of the view that “one of the parties in the battles of the Camel (35/656) and Ṣiffīn (36/657) was in error, though it could not be established which one” (*fī al-fariqayn min aṣḥāb al-jamal wa-aṣḥāb al-ṣiffīn innā aḥada humā mukḥṭi'ī lā bi-'aynihi*). Similarly, in the case of 'Uthmān, those who assassinated and deserted him, he said that “one of the parties was certainly sinful” (*inna aḥada al-fariqayn fāsiq lā maḥālā*). In his opinion, the testimony of the party in error could not be

<sup>68</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahāb wa ma'ādin al-jawhar* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1965), 3:222, 4:22; al-Balkhī, *Maqālāt*, 115. See Abū Zayd Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Balkhī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa-al-tārīkh*, ed. Khalīl 'Imrān al-Manṣūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997), 2:186.

<sup>69</sup> Ibn al-Murtadā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5; Ibn al-Murtadā, *al-Munya*, 4; 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 93.

accepted and the situation was to be compared to the procedure of *li'ān*, when both litigants appear together, the culprit not being known, their judgment (‘*adāla*) is suspended.<sup>70</sup>

‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd’s views were similar to Wāṣil’s except with a difference towards the parties in the battle of Camel. He considered that one of the parties was more sinful and if anyone amongst the parties testifies, it must not be accepted.<sup>71</sup> He was anti-‘Alid and preferred Abū Bakr to ‘Alī.<sup>72</sup>

Abū al-Hudhayl could not decide whether Abū Bakr or ‘Alī deserved the successorship after the Prophet Muḥammad, although he seems to agree with the traditional viewpoint that the succession from Abū Bakr to ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān was justified.<sup>73</sup> He also stated that “We do not know whether ‘Uthmān was assassinated unjustly or justly” (*lā nadrī qutila ‘Uthmān ḡāliman aw maḡlūman*).<sup>74</sup> With regard to the battles of Ṣiffīn and the Camel, he sided with both parties because it could not be decided by consensus which of the two sides was right.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Mīlal*, 1:49. See J. Schacht, “Li‘ān,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 5:730 and Muḥammad A‘lā b. ‘Alī al-Tahānawī, *Iṣṭilāḡāt al-‘ulūm al-Islamiyya al-ma‘rūf bi-Kashshāf iṣṭilāḡāt al-funūn* (Beirut: Khayyāt li-al-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, 1966), 5:1309. In Islamic law, *li‘ān* is an oath which gives a husband the possibility of accusing his wife of adultery without legal proof and without his becoming liable to the punishment for this, and the possibility also of denying the paternity of a child borne by the wife. In the language of *Shari‘a*, evidence given by husband, strengthened by oaths, by which the husband invokes the curse (*la‘na*) and the wife wrath of God upon themselves, if they should lie; it frees the husband from *ḡadd* for *qadhf* (the legal punishment) and the wife of *ḡadd* for incontinence.

<sup>71</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *al-Mīlal*, 1:49.

<sup>72</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḡ Nahja al-balāgha*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḡl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1959-64), 1:7.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Malaṡī, *Tanbīh*, 41.

<sup>74</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maḡālāt*, 455.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-Shi‘a*, 13.

Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar considered that ‘Alī was right in his appointment of arbitrators and his opponents were wrong. In his view arbitrators were also wrong because they did not render the judgment in accordance with the Qur’ān.<sup>76</sup>

Al-Aṣamm states that ‘Alī, Abū Ṭalḥa, Zubayr and Mu‘āwiya are to be judged right or wrong according to their motives, whether they were seeking the good of the Muslims or their own advancement. If ‘Alī fought for the betterment of the people then his reason was right. On the other hand if Mu‘āwiya fought for his own sake and advancement then he was wrong.<sup>77</sup> He is of the opinion that once someone has been elected by the consensus (*ijmā‘*) of the Muslims, the election is irreversible, even if a better (*afdāl*) candidate is available afterwards.<sup>78</sup>

According to Nyberg,

There are quite definite indications that the Mu‘tazila was of political origin, and that it arose under the same constellation as the Shi‘ī [*sic*] and Khārijī movements. The accession of ‘Alī (Dhū al-Ḥijja 35/May 656) is the greatest watershed in the currents of the history of Islam. It is well known that several notable Companions of the Prophet refused to pay ‘Alī the homage which he demanded, or offered it reluctantly. The most frequently mentioned were Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr but the names of many others have been preserved: Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, Muḥammad b. Maslama, Usāma b. Zayd, Shu‘ayb b. Sinān and Zayd b. Thābit. [*al-Ṭabarī*, i: 3072] Of these Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr openly rebelled against ‘Alī but the majority remained neutral. The Medinese in general followed the example of the latter and in Baṣra al-Aḥnaf b. Qays with 6,000 Tamīmīs and a group of Azadīs under Sābra b. Shaymān also stood aside from the quarrel. [*al-Ṭabarī*, i: 3169, 3178] In speaking of the latter the text uses the verb *i‘tizala*, which still has its proper sense of ‘to separate from’, but which is already on the way to become a political term meaning ‘to take up a neutral attitude in the quarrel between ‘Alī and his adversaries.’<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 453.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 457-58.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Nāshī, *Masā’il*, 59.

<sup>79</sup> H.S. Nyberg, *al-Mu‘tazila*, *ET*<sup>1</sup>, 6: 787-88.

Nyberg also states that,

In a general way the teaching of Wāṣil on *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* can only be perfectly understood if we see in it the theoretical crystallization of political programme of the ‘Abbāsids before their accession to power.<sup>80</sup>

Nyberg’s thesis of political origin of Mu‘tazila has been accepted by Pellat, Gardet and Anawati with some modifications.<sup>81</sup> Wilfred Madelung, Montgomery Watt and Josef van Ess do not agree with Nyberg’s views and they reject his identification of the Mu‘tazilites with ‘Abbāsīd *da‘wa*. However, Watt and van Ess agree with Nyberg that the term *i‘tizāl* meant political neutrality rather than an active involvement in political dissensions, which the Mu‘tazilites faced due to civil war among the Muslims.<sup>82</sup>

According to Josef van Ess, “the inclination towards systematic theology, which marked the physiognomy of the school, was not due to Wāṣil, and certainly not to ‘Amr, but to Ḍirār b. ‘Amr (d. ca. 200/815).” He further elaborates that, “Ḍirār went out of favor in the movement, so that his teaching was attributed to Wāṣil, and he is the only founder of the Mu‘tazila. ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd kept his distance for a long time, until the moment when, after al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s death and before the advent of the ‘Abbāsids, he joined the movement.”<sup>83</sup>

Montgomery Watt argues that the divergence of views suggests that neither Wāṣil nor ‘Amr but Abū al-Hudhayl al-‘Allāf (d. 226/841) was the originator of the Mu‘tazilite

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<sup>80</sup> H.S. Nyberg, *al-Mu‘tazila*, *ET*<sup>1</sup>, 6: 788-89.

<sup>81</sup> C. Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ḡāḥiẓ* (Paris: Librairie d’Amérique et d’Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1953), 175; Louis Gardet and M.M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane: essai de théologie comparée* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1970), 46.

<sup>82</sup> Wilferd Madelung, *Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), 30; Montgomery Watt, “The Political Attitudes of the Mu‘tazilah,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1963), 55-56; Josef van Ess, *Une lecture à rebours de l’histoire du Mu‘tazilisme* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1984), 29, 46, 65.

<sup>83</sup> Van Ess, *Lecture*, 66, 56.



school. “There is no evidence whatsoever that either Wāṣil or ‘Amr was at all versed in the Greek conceptions or methods of argument which were at the heart of the distinctive Mu‘tazilite position.”<sup>84</sup>

Nyberg’s thesis is not tenable because the origin of the Mu‘tazilites was not due to any political movement. Calo Nallino argues “that at the time of the first civil war, those of the Companions (‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqās, etc.), who had chosen to side neither with ‘Alī nor with his adversaries, were for this reason called *mu‘tazila*.”<sup>85</sup> So far as the conclusions drawn by van Ess and Watt are concerned, these are contrary to what the Muslim sources describe. Wāṣil separated from the circle of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and formulated the principle of *manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* to which ‘Amr agreed. Therefore, the Mu‘tazilite school was formed by Wāṣil and ‘Amr.

The first beginning of theology (*kalām*) and asceticism in Islam in the proper sense of the word go back to the second/eighth century, when the Mu‘tazilites and a great number of other sects appeared as separate entities. Later Mu‘tazilite texts and heresiographers’ accounts, only some of which are reliable provide information about the formation and variations of common doctrines of the Mu‘tazilites. It is evident from these sources that they participated in the lively controversies which were characteristic of that period.<sup>86</sup>

Wāṣil was not only a pious ascetic but also an intellectual who was interested in theological questions, such as free will and God’s unity.<sup>87</sup> He developed his own

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<sup>84</sup> Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1968), 211.

<sup>85</sup> Calo A. Nallino, “Sull’origine del nome dei Mu‘taziliti,” in *Rivista degli studi orientali* 7 (1916-19), 442-47.

<sup>86</sup> S. Pines, “Philosophy,” in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. P.M. Holt, Ann S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2:788-89.

<sup>87</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-i‘tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajawī (Cairo: Matba‘at ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), 4:212, 6:234-36.

systematic thought which is evident in his writings. His interest in epistemology is confirmed by his works which includes the title of *Kitāb al-Sabīl ilā ma‘rifat al-ḥaqq*. In this book, according to Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāhiz (d. 255/869), Wāṣil states that “the truth can be perceived by four aspects of knowledge: eloquent book, agreed-upon tradition, rational proof, and consensus” (*al-ḥaqq yu‘rafu min wujūh arba‘: kitāb nāṭiq, wa-khabr mujtama‘ ‘alayhi, wa-ḥujjat al-‘aql, wa-ijma‘*).<sup>88</sup> According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, Wāṣil introduced the concept of proof by deduction (*dalīl*) in a dispute between Jahm b. Ṣafwān<sup>89</sup> and the Buddhists regarding the knowledge and existence of God.<sup>90</sup>

According to Wāṣil’s wife, he was a prolific writer and he left two boxes of the books containing his manuscripts, which she gave to Abū al-Hudhayl.<sup>91</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār mentions that: “Perhaps Abū al-Hudhayl might have taken most of his knowledge from these manuscripts” (*fa-‘asā an yakun jull kalāmihi min dhālik*).<sup>92</sup>

Wāṣil’s doctrine of *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* was an extraordinary solution to a very controversial and sensitive issue of that time. Both his works *Kitāb al-Manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* and *al-Tawba* dealt with it.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Al-‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, 2:134.

<sup>89</sup> Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746) a theologian, was a client of the Banū Rāsib, and secretary to Ḥārith b. Surayj (d. 128/746) and an intellectual protagonist of his revolt against the Umayyads. Jahm was the founder of Jahmiyya sect leaning towards the Murji’ites. He agreed with the Mu‘tazilites in denying the eternal attributes to God. He held an extreme view of predestination (*jabr*) and believed that the Qur’ān was created. Jahm was captured and executed by Salm b. Aḥwaz al-Māzinī. See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 279-80; al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal*, 1:86-87; Abū Maṣū‘ūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 157-58; Montgomery Watt, “DJahm b. Ṣafwān, Abū Muḥriz,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 2:388.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 240.

<sup>91</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 35; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 19, 21; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 241.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 241.

<sup>93</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 6:11; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i‘tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajawī (Cairo: Matba‘at ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), 4:329; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 4:22.

According to Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī (d. after 400/1010), Wāṣil was the first to be called *mu‘tazilī*.<sup>94</sup> Stroumsa is of the opinion that:

It is very difficult to accept this statement literally ... But certainly one could claim that Wāṣil was the first *mu‘tazilī* in the sense that Wāṣil turned the *mu‘tazila* into a movement. Before Wāṣil, ‘the Mu‘tazila’ was a term applied, without much precision, to various kinds of sects. It is only after Wāṣil had appeared on the scene (and probably not immediately thereafter), that the name of Mu‘tazila came to designate one specific movement, holding specific doctrines.<sup>95</sup>

It is evident from the above mentioned viewpoints that the doctrine of *i‘tizāl* formed the starting point for the creation of the Mu‘tazilite theological school. Biographers may differ whether the Mu‘tazilites’ origin was due to abstinence from the worldly affairs, or neutrality in the civil wars, or withdrawal from the community, but in all the first three viewpoints the doctrine of *i‘tizāl* is common theme for the establishment of the Mu‘tazilite school. Furthermore, the Mu‘tazilites’ origin did not take place due to political movement. Wāṣil was the first to formulate the principle of *manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*. Later on, ‘Amr was convinced by Wāṣil and he agreed with him. It can be concluded that Wāṣil was the founder of the school and after his death ‘Amr became the leader of the Mu‘tazilites. The period of their activities spanned from the beginning of the second/eighth century to the first half of the second/eighth century, when the Mu‘tazilite school was firmly established.<sup>96</sup>

In the formative period of the Mu‘tazilites, which approximately lasted from the first half of the second/eighth century until the last quarter of the third/ninth century,

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<sup>94</sup> Al-‘Askarī, *Awā‘il*, 2:134.

<sup>95</sup> Sarah Stroumsa, “The Beginning of the Mu‘tazila Reconsidered,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 13 (1990), 289.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar mentions in his *Rasā‘il* that “Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā and ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd both were leaders of the Mu‘tazilites” (*Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā wa ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd wa-humā ra’īsā al-mu‘tazila*). See Al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar, *Rasā‘il*, 17.

there developed a variety of theological opinions on individuals, sometimes in agreement, while most of the times contradictory.

The ‘classical’ period of the Mu‘tazilites spanned approximately three centuries, from the last quarter of the third/ninth century to the middle of the fifth/eleventh century (until the arrival of Saljūqīs). During this period, their scholastic thought was systematized and coherent theological frameworks were formulated by Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī who represented the Baṣra school, followed by his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī and by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka‘bī al-Balkhī who was associated with the Baghdād school. The classical period is further divided into two distinct periods between *al-mutaqaddimūn* or *al-qudamā’* (those of the earlier period) and *al-muta’akhhirūn* (those of the later period).<sup>97</sup>

Very soon, the Mu‘tazilites constituted two separate schools: Baṣra and Baghdād.

## 9. Mu‘tazilite Schools of Baṣra and Baghdad

As mentioned above, the Mu‘tazilite school of Baṣra was established by Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā in the first half of the second/eighth century. It subsequently became one of the most important schools, which articulated the speculative theology of Islam. It is evident from the preceding accounts that the doctrine of *i’tizāl* was the focal point for the creation of the school. Muslims agreed that he who committed a grave sin deserved to be called “transgressor” (*fāsiq*), but opinions differed with regard to the terminology to be applied for such an individual. The Khārijites considered him as “unbeliever” (*kāfir*). The Murji’ites regarded him as “believer” (*mu’min*) in spite of his transgression. Ḥasan al-

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<sup>97</sup> See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahja al-balāgha*, 3:288-89, 11:119-20.

Baṣrī and his circle described him as “hypocrite” (*munāfiq*). Wāṣil’s view was that the description provided in the Qur’an of a believer and unbeliever could not be applied to a believer who had committed a grave sin; the latter, therefore, could be neither a believer nor an unbeliever. The only possible terminology for a transgressor then was to call him “the one in an intermediate position” (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*).

‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd’s views were usually similar to Wāṣil’s. Both of them formulated the basic Mu‘tazilite doctrines regarding God’s unity, justice, free will and *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*. However, there were some differences between them on certain issues, especially their respective objections to the caliphs ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī and their opinions towards the parties involved in the battle of the Camel.

The other most significant figures of the earlier period (*al-mutaqaddimūn* or *al-qudamā’*) are Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 201/816), al-Nazzām (d. 221/836), Mu‘ammar b. ‘Abbād (d. 215/830), Abū al-Hudhayl (d. 226/841), Hishām b. ‘Amr al-Fuwāṭī (d. between 227/842 and 232/847), al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), ‘Abbād b. Sulaymān (d. ca. 250/864), and Abū Ya‘qūb al-Shaḥḥām (d. after 257/871).

The most outstanding persons of the later period (*al-muta’akḥḥirūn*) are Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/933) and his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 321/933) – “the two *Shaykhs*” – Abū ‘Alī b. Khallād (d. middle of 4th/10th century), Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī (d. 369/980), Abū Ishāq b. ‘Ayyāsh, Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), Abū Rāshid al-Naysāburī, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 426/1044), and Abū Muḥammad b. Mattawayh (d. 468/1075) – all three were the disciples of ‘Abd al-Jabbār.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Firaq wa ṭabaqāt*, 135; Daniel Gimaret, “Mu‘azila,” *ET*, 7:783.

Parallel to the school of Baṣra, another Mu‘tazilite school was founded by Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar (d. 210/825-26) in Baghdād. He wrote refutations of the views of Abū al-Hudhayl and other Baṣran Mu‘tazilites.

The other most important figures of the earlier period (*al-mutaqaddimūn* or *al-qudamā’*) are Thumāma b. Ashras (d. 213/828), Abū Mūsā al-Murdār (d. 226/841), Ja‘far b. Ḥarb (d. 236/850), Ja‘far b. Mubashshir (d. 234/848), and Abū Ja‘far al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854). The most prominent persons of the later period (*al-muta’akhhirūn*) are Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d. ca. 300/913), Abū Bakr b. al-Ikshīd (d. 326/938), and ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994).<sup>99</sup>

## 10. Conclusion

The origin of the term “Mu‘tazila” in its early sources is not only controversial and but also contradictory. The verb *i‘tazala* means “to withdraw, to separate and to abstain.” The historical sources attest that during the first Islamic century, the name *mu‘tazila* applied to many different groups. The doctrine of *i‘tizāl* formed the starting point for the creation of the Mu‘tazilite theological school. Biographers may differ whether the Mu‘tazilites’ origin was due to abstinence from the worldly affairs, or neutrality in the civil wars, or withdrawal from the community, but in all the first three viewpoints the doctrine of *i‘tizāl* is common theme for the establishment of the Mu‘tazilite school. However, the Mu‘tazilites’ origin did not take place due to political movement as suggested by Nyberg, and others. Wāṣil was the first to formulate the principle of *manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*. Later on, ‘Amr was convinced by Wāṣil and

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<sup>99</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Firaq wa tabaqāt*, 136; Gimaret, “Mu‘tazila,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:783.

he agreed with him. It can be concluded that Wāṣil was the founder of the school and after his death ‘Amr became the leader of the Mu‘tazilites.

In the formative period, from the first half of the second/eighth century until the last quarter of the third/ninth century, there developed a variety of theological opinions on individuals, sometimes in agreement, while most of the times contradictory among the Mu‘tazilites. During the ‘classical’ period, from the last quarter of the third/ninth century to the middle of the fifth/eleventh century, their scholastic thought was systematized and coherent theological frameworks were formulated by Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī who represented the Baṣra school, followed by Abū al-Qāsim al-Ka‘bī al-Balkhī who was associated with the Baghdād school.

## Chapter 3

### Qur'ānic Exegesis

Muṣṭafā b. 'Abd Allāh Kātib Čelebī also known as Ḥājjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1628), the eleventh/seventeenth century historian, bibliographer and geographer, in his outstanding compendium entitled *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn* says that *tafsīr* is “the noblest of sciences, and the greatest of them” (*ashraf al-'ulūm wa-a'zamu-hā*), and it is the first and foremost of the sciences (*ra's al-'ulūm wa-ra'isu-hā*).<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. *Tafsīr, Ta'wīl, Ma'ānī, and Sharḥ*

The terms *tafsīr*, *ta'wīl*, *ma'ānī*, and *sharḥ* in Arabic language mean interpretation, explanation, or elucidation of something. Various Arabic sources deal with these terms and opinions differ with respect to their precise meanings. Historically, *ma'ānī* appears to have been the earliest major term used for the title of works of interpretation. *Ta'wīl* and *tafsīr* were introduced probably in the third/tenth or fourth/eleventh centuries specifically for Qur'ānic exegesis. *Sharḥ* has been primarily reserved for non-religious works such as commentaries on poetry, and religious works especially law, but it was also used for Qur'ānic supercommentaries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Muṣṭafā b. 'Abd Allāh Kātib Čelebi Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1992), 1:427, 434. It is one of the greatest bibliographical dictionaries in Arabic. The introduction deals with the importance of learning and the classification of the various branches of knowledge; the main text lists some 14,500 titles in alphabetical order, with some commentary.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *ER*, 14:236-44.



## 2. Tafsīr

*Tafsīr* is one of the most important disciplines of the Qur'ānic sciences ('*ulūm al-Qur'ān*),<sup>3</sup> and is mentioned only once in the Qur'ān as a commentary of it: "They do not

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<sup>3</sup> See Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), 2:381-409. According to him, other disciplines of the Qur'ānic sciences are: occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), various modes of the Qur'ānic readings (*qirā'āt*), abrogative and abrogated verses (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*), philological sciences (*al-lughāt*), narrative accounts of the ancient nations (*qaṣaṣ al-umam al-māḍia*), information regarding the future happenings/occurrences (*akhbār mā huwa kā'in min al-hawādith*) and affairs concerning the Day of Resurrection and Day of Return (*umūr al-ḥashr wa al-ma'ād*). See Claude Gilliot, "Traditional Disciplines of Qur'ānic Sciences," *EQ*, 5:318-39. Most of the exegetes have written introductions to their commentaries which include different aspects of the sciences of the Qur'ān. Some exegetes have written about the importance and definitions of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* in detail, while others have treated briefly in their exegesis. They are: Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1972), 1:2-35; Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Vanlioğlu and Bekir Topaloğlu (Istanbul: Dār al-Mizān, 2005), 1:3-4; Abū al-Layth Naṣr b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm baḥr al-'ulūm*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahīm Aḥmad al-Zaqqa (Baghdad: Matba al-Irshad, 1985), 1:201-11; Abū Ishāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Tha'labī, *Al-Kashf wa-al-bayān an tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 1:73-87; Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muqaddamāt Jāmi' al-tafsīr*, 27-109; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī, *Al-Nukat wa-al-'uyūn: tafsīr al-Māwardī*, ed. Sayyid b. 'Abd al-Manṣūr b. 'Abd al-Rahīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1992), 1:3-5, 36-42; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Shawqī al-Amīn and Aḥmad Ḥabīb Qaṣīr (Najaf: Maktbat al-Amīn, 1957), 1:3-21; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-majīd*, ed. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd, 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiḍ, Aḥmad Muḥammad Ṣīra and Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Jamāl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1994), 1:3-17; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Farrā al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī al-musammā Ma'ālim al-tanzīl*, ed. Khālīd 'Abd al-Rahmān al-'Akk and Marwān Suwār (Multan: Idāra-i-Ta'lifāt-i-Ashrafīyya, 1988), 1:27-36; Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaqq b. 'Atīyya al-Andalusī, *Al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-'azīz*, 1:1-38; Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-bayān li-'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1958), 1:3-22; Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrestānī, *Mafātīḥ al-asrār wa-maṣābīh al-abrār* (Tehran: Dā'ira al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmī, 1988), 1:1-27; Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, *Al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Yaqza al-'Arabiyya, 1968), 1:3-5; Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurtubī, *Al-Jāmi' li-ahkām al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī, 1967), 1:1-86; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Juzayyī al-Kalbī, *Al-Tashīl li-'ulūm al-tanzīl*, ed. Raḍa Faraj al-Hamāmī (Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-'Aṣriyya, 2003), 1:8-78; Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd and 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), 1:99-121; 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khāzin, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-jalīl al-musammā Lubāb al-ta'wīl fī ma'ānī al-tanzīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1970), 1:2-11; Abū al-Fidā Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm* (Cairo: Maktaba Dār-al-Turāth, 1980), 1:3-6; al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:146-216; 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Tha'labī, *al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Ammār al-Tālabī (Algiers: al-Mu'assassa al-Waṭaniyya lil-Kitāb, 1985), 1:19-25; Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar al-Biqā'ī, *Maṣā'id al-naẓar lil-ishrāf 'alā maqāsid al-suwar*, ed. 'Abd al-Samī' Muḥammad Aḥmad Ḥasnayn (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1987), 1:97-496; Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūfī, *Al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), 2:381-409; Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm wa-al-sab' al-mathānī* (Miṣr: Idāra al-Ṭiba'a al-Muniriyya, 1927), 1:2-31; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-ta'wīl*, ed. Aḥmad b. 'Alī and Ḥamdī Ṣubḥ (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2003), 1:20-240.

bring you any simile but We bring you the truth and the best explanation,” (*walā ya’ūnaka bi-mithlin illā ji’nāka bi-al-ḥaqq wa aḥsana tafsīran*).<sup>4</sup>

*Tafsīr* signifies discovering, detecting, revealing, and developing what is meant by a dubious expression.<sup>5</sup> The Muslim sources describe *tafsīr* as an Arabic word which deals with the interpretation, explanation, and elucidation of Qur’ānic verses. However, Gilliot is of the opinion that “Although *tafsīr* with no other qualification refers in most cases to a Qur’ānic interpretation or commentary, its origin is not Arabic. The verb *fassara*, ‘to discover something hidden,’ is a borrowing from Aramaic, Syriac, or Christian-Palestinian (*peshar*, *pashshar*).”<sup>6</sup> According to Fraenkel, *fassara* is a borrowing from the Syriac, ‘to expound, make clear,’ which is very commonly used in early Syriac texts in the sense of interpretation of scripture. In the Aramaic, it means ‘to solve, to interpret.’ The Arabic *fassara* is doubtless of the same origin, and *tafassara* and *tafsīr* were later formed from this borrowed verb.<sup>7</sup>

Rippin considers that,

*Tafsīr* is an Arabic word meaning ‘interpretation;’ it is, more specifically, the general term used in reference to all genres of literature which are commentaries upon the Qur’ān.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Qur’ān, 25:33.

<sup>5</sup> Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, ed. Stanley Lane-Poole (1863-72; repr., New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1955), 6:2397; Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1956), 5:55; Muḥammad Murtaḍa al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs*, ed. Ḥusayn Naṣṣār (Kuwait: Maṭba‘āt Ḥukumat al-Kuwayt, 1965-2001), 13:323-24; Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb Firūzābādī, *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* (Beirut: Mu‘assasa al-‘Arabiya li-al-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1970), 2:110; ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf b. Tāj al-‘Ārifīn al-Munāwī, *Al-Tawqīf ‘alā muhimmāt al-ta‘ārīf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣāliḥ Hamadān (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1990), 104, 260.

<sup>6</sup> Claude Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2:99-124.

<sup>7</sup> See Siegmund Frankel, *Die Aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden: Brill, 1886), 286; Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 92.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *ER*, 14:236-44.

Rippin notes that although the word *tafsīr* is historically related to the exegesis of the Qur’ān, it is also used by Muslim scholars for commentaries on Greek scientific and philosophical works, being equivalent to *sharḥ*, ‘explanation, explication.’<sup>9</sup>

Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) says that,

*Tafsīr* is a knowledge through which the book of God that was revealed to His Prophet Muḥammad may be comprehended in its meanings, its law and wisdom. This knowledge is derived from philology (*‘ilm al-lughā*), grammar (*naḥw*), morphology (*taṣrīf*), metaphorical and rhetorical sciences (*‘ilm al-bayān*), principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), various modes of Qur’ānic readings (*qirā’āt*), occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) and the familiarity with the abrogative and the abrogated verses (*al-nāsikh wa al-mansūkh*).<sup>10</sup>

He elaborates that *tafsīr* includes the circumstances of the revelation of a verse, chapter or story and its historical context. It provides the chronology of the text whether it was revealed in Mecca or Medina. In addition, it determines whether a verse is *muḥkam* (perspicuous) or *mutashābih* (ambiguous) and whether it has a general or specific reference to the text.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. *Ta’wīl*

*Ta’wīl* signifies the discovering, detecting, revealing, expounding, or interpreting to which a thing is or may be reduced or that which it comes or may come to be. *Ta’wīl*, the verbal noun of the form II verb *awwala* is derived either from *awl* ‘going back to the origin, returning to the beginning,’ or *ma’āl* ‘end, outcome, consequence’ or *iyālā*

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:83.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:383.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:148.

‘putting into right condition, managing properly.’ Therefore, *ta’wīl* means ‘explanation, clarification, discovery’ and is synonymous with *tafsīr*.<sup>12</sup>

The word *ta’wīl* occurs seventeen times in the Qur’ān signifying different meanings. In verse 3:7, it is mentioned twice and used in the context of interpretation of verses: “As to those in whose hearts there is doubt, they pursue what is allegorical in it seeking dissention and giving its interpretation. However, no one except God knows its interpretation,” (*fa amma alladhīna fī qulūbihim zayghun fa yattabi ‘ūna mā tashābaha minhu ibtighā’a al-fītnati wa ibtighā’a ta’wīlihi*). In verses 12:36, 37, 44, 45, and 100, it implies explanation or interpretation of a dream (*ta’wīl al-aḥlām* and *ta’wīl ru’yā*). In verses 12:6, 21, 101; 18:78, and 82, it means explanation or interpretation of an event (*ta’wīl al-aḥādīth*). In verses 7:53 (twice) and 10:39, it is used to denote the occurrence of a forewarned future event: “Are they looking for anything but its interpretation? On the Day (of resurrection) will come its interpretation,” (*hal yanẓurūna illā ta’wīlahu yawma ya’tī ta’wīluhu*); and “And whose interpretation (in events) has not yet come to them,” (*wa lammā ya’tīhim ta’wīluhu*) respectively. However, in verses 4:59 and 17:35, it indicates the end, result, or final consequence of a thing: “That is the best and excellent (in respect of) consequence,” (*dhālika khayrun wa aḥsanu ta’wīla*).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1:126; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 11:33-34; al-Munāwī, *al-Tawqīf*, 89-90; al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:148-49; al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, 2:381; Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balāgha* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1979), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 1:127; I. Poonawala, “Ta’wīl,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:390.

#### 4. *Ma‘ānī*

*Ma‘nā* signifies the meaning or intended sense of a word or saying, for instance, ‘*anā bi al-qawl kadhā* (he intended by the statement such and such).<sup>14</sup> *Ma‘nā* is derived from ‘*a n w* and ‘*a n a*. The word *ma‘ānī* is used in Arabic language in the sense of *ma‘ānī ashyā’*, which means interpretation, explanation, or elucidation of something.<sup>15</sup>

*Ma‘niyūn*, according to al-Rāghib signifies the importance of a word or an expression from the phrase ‘*anati al-arḍu bi al-nabāti* (the land made apparent or showed its plants or herbage).<sup>16</sup> Al-Munāwī (d. 1031/1621) states that a mental image in which a word is formed and a resulting image as having a word or an expression is termed as meaning. The intended meaning of that word or expression is termed comprehension (*mafḥūm*). A response to “what is it?” (*mā huwa*) is termed essence (*māhiyya*). So far as its external proof is concerned it is considered its “reality” (*ḥaqīqa*) and distinguished from others and termed “essence” (*huwiyya*).<sup>17</sup>

According to al-Rāzī, *alfāz* denote what is in the mind of a person and demonstrate their meanings (*ma‘ānī*). Hence, *ma‘nā* is what a speaker intends to say and it is synonymous with the term “intention” (*qaṣd*).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 5:2181; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 15:106; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 39:122.

<sup>15</sup> When an exegete uses *qāla aṣḥāb al-ma‘ānī*, it means those interpreters who wrote books on *ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, for instance, al-Kisā‘ī (d. 189/805), al-Rū‘āsī (d. 190/806), Qutrūb (d. 206/821), al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822), Abū ‘Ubayda Ma‘mar b. al-Muthannā (d. 209/824-5), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Akhfash (d. between 210 and 221/825 and 835), Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838), Abū al-‘Abbās al-Tha‘lab (d. 291/904), Abū al-Ḥasan b. Kaysān (d. 299/311-12), Salma b. ‘Āṣim (d. 310/922), al-Zajjāj (d. 316/928), Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr b. al-Khayyāt (d. 320/932), Abū Ja‘far b. al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950), Ibn Durustawayh (d. 346/957) and Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181). However, when later writers refer the term *ma‘ānī*, they use it as a branch of the rhetoric sciences.

<sup>16</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 5:2181; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 39:122-23.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Munāwī, *al-Tawqīf*, 309.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 1: 23-24.

## 5. *Sharḥ*

*Sharḥ* means an ‘exposition, explanation or interpretation’ in the form of a running commentary comprising the entire text of the work which it expounds. It is distinguished from a *ḥāshiya* which is a commentary only on particular words and passages.<sup>19</sup> However, according to Gilliot, probably the first *shurūḥ* (plural of *sharḥ*) were applied to the *gharīb* (strange/foreign) words of the Qur’ān and of *ḥadīth*. These were not commentaries on a work, but explanations of a term, of a verse or of a tradition. In fact, most often they are titled as *gharīb/tafsīr al-Qur’ān* or *al-ḥadīth*, or *sharḥ gharīb al-Qur’ān* or *al-ḥadīth*, for instance, Abū ‘Ubayda’s (d. 207/822) *Majāz al-Qur’ān* also known *Majāz fī gharīb al-Qur’ān* and the Mu‘tazilite Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī’s (d. 322/934) *Sharḥ ta’wīl al-Qur’ān wa-tafsīr ma’ānīhī*. For the explanation of isolated passages of the Qur’ān, *sharḥ* is sometimes applied to a few *juz’* (parts) in the forms of *sharḥ qawlihi ta’āla* or *sharḥ āyāt* or *sharḥ/tafsīr sura* or *sharḥ al-basmala* or *sharḥ kalimatayn al-shahāda*.<sup>20</sup>

## 6. Similarities and Difference between *Tafsīr*, *Ta’wīl*, *Ma’ānī*, and *Sharḥ*

In the first two Islamic centuries, there was no differentiation between *tafsīr*, *ta’wīl*, and *ma’ānī* when used as a technical term for the works of exegesis. At the beginning of the third Islamic century, there arose differences of opinions among the lexicographers and philologists about the precise meaning of these terms and their relationship to each other. Some scholars considered that *tafsīr*, *ta’wīl*, *ma’ānī*, and *sharḥ*

<sup>19</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 4:1530; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 2:497; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 6:502-3; al-Munāwī, *al-Tawqīf*, 203.

<sup>20</sup> Claude Gilliot, “Sharḥ,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:317.

were synonymous and have the same meanings, and early commentators used these terms interchangeably. However, others argued that these terms have different meanings.<sup>21</sup>

Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Tha‘lab (d. 291/903) and Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azharī (d. 370/980) state that *ma‘anī*, *tafsīr* and *ta‘wīl* are one and the same in their meanings as explanation or interpretation. Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838), Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ziyād b. al-A‘rābī (d. 231/845), Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr (d. 711/1311) and Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb Firūzabādī (d. 817/1415) subscribe to the same view. These terms have been used in the phrase *hādha ma‘na kalāmihī*, signifies that ‘this is the meaning of his saying.’ It is in agreement with the viewpoints of both Abū Zayd Sa‘īd b. Aws al-Anṣārī (d. 214/829 or 215/830) and Abū Ibrāhīm Ishāq al-Fārābī (d. 350/961). The grammarians and the lexicologists also have agreed in saying *hādha bi-ma‘nā hādha* (this is used with the meaning of this) and *hādha wa hādha fī al-ma‘nā wāḥid* (this and this are one in meaning) *fī al-ma‘nā sawa* (in meaning alike) and *hādha fī ma‘nā hādha* (this is used in the sense of this). Therefore, according to them, *ma‘anī*, *tafsīr* and *ta‘wīl* are synonymous, interchangeable and closely related to each other in their meanings and there is no difference between these terms as far as their meanings are concerned.<sup>22</sup>

The most widely used terms for the Qur’ānic exegesis have been *tafsīr* and *ta‘wīl*. Some exegetes consider that these terms are synonymous. For instance, Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722), Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/927) and Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) used the term *ta‘wīl* in the titles of their Qur’ānic commentaries: *Jāmī‘ al-bayān ‘an ta‘wīl āy al-Qur’ān* and *Ta‘wīlāt al-*

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *ER*, 14:236-44.

<sup>22</sup> Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 5:2181.

*Qur'ān* respectively. Even much later, the commentaries of ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasaḥī (d. 710/1310), Nāṣir al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca. 716/1316) and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khāzin (d. 745/1344) are entitled *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqā’iq al-ta’wīl*, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta’wīl* and *Lubāb al-ta’wīl fī ma‘ānī al-tanzīl* respectively. Similarly, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) considers that both terms – *ta’wīl* and *tafsīr* – refer to exegesis and are equivalent and *ta’wīl* in fact is *tafsīr*. He elaborates that these terms give the meaning of a text. *Tafsīr* or *ta’wīl* is an effort to understand the meaning of a statement by referring back to the text. To arrive at this definition, he considers the etymology of the term *ta’wīl* which is rooted in the verb *āl* (to return). Therefore, “*ta’wīl* is both the source and ultimate return of something” (*wa al-ta’wīl marja’ al-shay’ wa maṣīruhu*).<sup>23</sup>

Other exegetes are of the opinion that *tafsīr* and *ta’wīl* are two different terms and differ in their meanings. Abū al-Qāsim b. Ḥabīb al-Naysābūrī (d. 406/1015-16) notes that those who claim to be exegetes, cannot even differentiate between *tafsīr* and *ta’wīl*. *Tafsīr* is associated with narration, tradition, and text (*riwāya*), while *ta’wīl* is associated with understanding and interpretation (*dirāya*). Another distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta’wīl* is that *tafsīr* is the explanation (*bayān*) of a word with one interpretation, while *ta’wīl* takes into account multiple meanings and aspects of a word.<sup>24</sup> The early exegete Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) makes a distinction between *tafsīr* and *ta’wīl*. For him, *tafsīr* refers to what is known on the human level and *ta’wīl* as what is known to God

<sup>23</sup> Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 14:95.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:381.



alone.<sup>25</sup> Al-Māturīdī differentiates between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. According to him *tafsīr* belongs to the companions because they witnessed the events and knew the circumstances of the revelation of the Qur'ān, whereas *ta'wīl* is the domain of the scholars.<sup>26</sup>

Abū Ishāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Tha'labī (d. 427/1035) states that,

The function of *tafsīr* ... is the unveiling (*al-kashf*) of the subject matter of the verse, its story, its meaning, and the reasons behind its revelation. *Ta'wīl*, on the other hand, is the rendering of the meaning of the verse (*ṣarf al-āyah*) into a different meaning that it might entertain (*ma'nā yaḥtamiluh*) which is consistent with what comes before and after it.<sup>27</sup>

Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. prob. 502/1109) considers that *tafsīr* deals with general explanation, whereas *ta'wīl* is concerned with specific meanings, and compared to *ta'wīl*, *tafsīr* is understood easily. Furthermore, *tafsīr* is used for both God's scriptures and human beings' books, while *ta'wīl* is used specifically only for God's scriptures.<sup>28</sup> Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) and Aḥmad b. Yūsuf Muwaffiq al-Dīn al-Kawāshī (d. 680/1281) are of the same opinion that *ta'wīl* is the rendering of the meaning of the verse through inference (*istinbāṭ*) which is consistent with the earlier and later verses and is not contrary to the Qur'ān and *sunna*.<sup>29</sup> Muḥyī' al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) considers that every verse of the Qur'ān has exoteric and esoteric meanings. *Tafsīr* signifies the uncovering of exoteric meanings and *ta'wīl* the esoteric meanings of the Qur'ān.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *ER*, 14:236-44.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Māturīdī, *Ta'wīlāt*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qur'ān Commentary of al-Tha'labī* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 92.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:149.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:382-83.

<sup>30</sup> Muḥyī' al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Yaqza al-'Arabiyya, 1968), 1:4.

*Sharḥ* has been mainly used in the context of *ḥadīths*, such as the “Forty Prophetic Traditions” (*al-Arba‘ūn al-nawawīyya*), the collection of Muḥyī’ al-Dīn Abū Zakariyyā’ al-Nawāwī (d. 676/1277); Islamic Law (Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi‘ī, Hanbalī and Shī‘ī); dialectical and scholastic theology, such as *al-‘Aqā’id* of Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) and *Muḥaṣṣal al-afkār* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī; mysticism, such as *Kitāb al-Ta‘arruf* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Qalābādhī (d. 380/990) and the *Risāla* of Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) and certain religious texts, such as the *Burda*, a panegyric of the Prophet Muḥammad by Sharf al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Sa‘īd al-Būṣīrī (d. 694/1294).<sup>31</sup>

## 7. Qur’ānic Exegesis in Early Islam

There are two views regarding the Qur’ānic exegesis in early Islam: the traditional Muslims’ views and the Western views.<sup>32</sup>

## 8. Traditional Muslims’ Views

According to the traditional Muslims’ views, Qur’ānic exegesis began quite early during the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad. Even before the whole of the Qur’ān was revealed, companions used to ask the Prophet questions relating to the meaning of certain terms or statements in the revealed verses. In case of an ambiguity, he would interpret

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<sup>31</sup> Claude Gilliot, “Sharḥ,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:317.

<sup>32</sup> According to Herbert Berg, “The distinction between ‘Muslim’ and ‘Western’ is becoming more blurred. There are Muslims who work within the ‘Western’ tradition, and Western scholars (geographically speaking) who operate within a Muslim framework.” See Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam: The Authenticity of Muslim Literature from the Formative Period* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 5n.

and clarify the meanings of those verses, which were referred to him. According to Helmut Gätje,

As long as the Prophet was living, one could turn to him when in doubt and provide an occasion for him to give an explanation or even an elaborating revelation. Thus, it is statements by the Prophet and testimonies of his companions that stand in the center of the older exegesis, as tradition (*ḥadīth*) handed down from the first generation of Islam.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the Qur’ān was partially elucidated by the Prophet and his verbal explanations were either memorized or written by his companions. The companions added and transmitted his exegesis to their successors (*al-tābi‘ūn*) who added to the previous interpretations and transmitted to their successors (*tābi‘ al-tābi‘īn*).

Subsequently, the following generations of commentators collected these interpretations of the Prophet, the companions, the successors and successors’ successors as established by the authoritative chains of transmission. Therefore, the first *tafsīr* tradition that was initiated by Muḥammad is referred to as “the Prophetical exegesis” (*tafsīr al-nabī*).<sup>34</sup>

After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, the companions’ (*ṣaḥāba*)<sup>35</sup> exegetical views not only gained an extraordinary authority but also were held in great esteem and accorded a special status as *marfū‘* (elevated) that is, attributed to Muḥammad. The

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<sup>33</sup> Gätje, *Qur’ān and its Exegesis*, 31.

<sup>34</sup> Leemhuis, *Origin*, 13-4; Claude Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 1-2; Claude Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2:99-124.

<sup>35</sup> Ten of the companions are considered as exegetes. They are the first four caliphs: Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (d. 35/656) and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661); and Ubayy b. Ka‘b (d. 30/650), ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652), Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (d. 42/662), Zayd b. Thābit (d. 45/666), ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās (d. 68/687), and ‘Abd Allāh b. Zubayr (d. 73/693). Anas b. Mālik (d. 91/709), Abū Hurayra ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sakhr (d. 57/676), ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (d. 73/693), Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697), and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d. 63/682) are also mentioned in this category because they appear very frequently in the exegetical transmissions. See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1:429-30.

“companions’ successors” (*tābi ‘ūn*)<sup>36</sup> and the “successors’ successors” (*tab ‘ tābi ‘ūn*)<sup>37</sup> interpreted the Qur’ān. By the end of the first half of the first century of Islam, four major schools of exegesis were evolved whose views and contribution in this field significantly shaped the science of exegesis of the later generations. These schools were named after the major cities: Mecca, Medina, Kufa, and Baṣra.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Among the “companions’ successors” (*tābi ‘ūn*), the famous exegetes are the disciples of Ibn ‘Abbās, who transmitted exegetical traditions from him. They are: Abū al-‘Āliyya al-Riyāhī (d. 93/711), Sa‘īd Jubayr (d. 95/714), Mujāhid b. Jabr, ‘Ikrama, the client of Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 105/723), al-Ḍahhāk b. Muzāhim (d. 105/723), Abū Mijlaz Lāhiq b. Ḥumayd al-Sadūsī al-Baṣrī (d. 106/724), al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Qatāda b. Dī‘āma al-Sadūsī (d. 118/736) ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa al-Hāshimī (d. 120/737), and Abū Ṣāliḥ Badhām, client of Umm Hānī bt. Abī Ṭālib. However, it may be pointed out that neither al-Dahhāk nor al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī were disciples of Ibn ‘Abbās. Ḥajjī Khalīfa mentions Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, Mujāhid b. Jabr, ‘Ikrama, the client of Ibn ‘Abbās, Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān (d. 106/724) and ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāh (d. 114/732) with the remarks that all of them were scholars from Mecca. See Arthur Jeffery, *Two Muqaddimas to the Qur’ānic Sciences: The Muqaddima to the Kitāb al-Mabānī and the Muqaddima of Ibn ‘Aṭīyya to his Tafṣīr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1954), 196; Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 8; Ḥajjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1:430.

<sup>37</sup> Among the “successors’ successors” (*tab ‘ tābi ‘ūn*), the famous exegetes are Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa (d. 143/760) Shu‘ba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776), Sufyān b. Sa‘īd al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 196/811), Wakī’ b. al-Jarrāh (d. 197/812), Rawḥ b. ‘Ibāda al-Baṣrī (d. 205/820), Yazīd b. Hārūn al-Salmī (d. 206/821), ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-San‘ānī (d. 211/827), Ādam b. Abī Iyās (d. 220/835), Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Rāhwayh (d. 238/853) and ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd (or Ḥumayd) (d. 249/863). Ḥajjī Khalīfa gives ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd or Ḥumayd’s name as ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥamīd. See Ḥajjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1:430.

<sup>38</sup> The Meccan school of exegesis was founded by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, who was the Prophet’s paternal cousin. He was well known for his extensive knowledge of the Qur’ān, Arabic language, pre-Islamic poetry, Arabic history and culture (*ayyām al-‘Arab*), and Arab genealogy (*ansāb al-‘Arab*). He was called the learned scholar and the pioneer commentator of the Qur’ān. Among his notable students were: Sa‘īd b. Jubayr, Mujāhid b. Jabr, ‘Ikrama, the *mawlā* of Ibn ‘Abbās, Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān al-Yamānī (d. 106/724), and ‘Aṭā’ b. Abī Rabāh. The main characteristics of the school were that it emphasized the use of *ijtihād* (independent judgment) and *iṣṭinbāt* (inference) for Qur’ānic interpretation and encouraged the students of taking notes of Ibn ‘Abbās’s exegesis. Although Ibn ‘Abbās encouraged his students to take lecture notes, there was no Qur’ānic exegesis in book form that is holistic and well-structured until the first quarter of the second/eighth century. Ibn ‘Abbās, for instance, did not write his *Tafṣīr*. Similarly, *Tafṣīr Mujāhid* was in the form of lecture notes but was later recorded in a book form by Ibn Abī Najīh as transmitted by (‘an) Mujāhid. The Medinan school was founded by Ubayy b. Ka‘b who was the first scribe of the Prophet. He was a well-educated Jewish convert, well known for his accurate memorization of the Qur’ān and sound knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. Among his students were Abū al-‘Āliya (d. 90/708), ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (93/711), Muḥammad b. Ka‘b al-Qurazī (d. 118/736), and Zayd b. Aslam (d. 130/747). The school was mainly interested in the exegesis of those Qur’ānic verses, which were related to legal rulings. It also dealt with the circumstances and reasons of revelation. The school was not in favor of taking and recording lecture notes of Qur’ānic exegesis. It is reported that ‘Urwa b. Zubayr destroyed and burnt his lecture notes of Qur’ānic exegesis. In addition, the school was against Jewish anecdotes to be incorporated in the *tafsīr*. The founder of the Kufan school was ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd. He was mainly interested in jurisprudence and Qur’ānic exegesis. Among his students were ‘Alqama b. Qays (d. 61/680), Masrūq b. al-Ajda‘ (d. 63/682), al-Aswad b. Yazīd (d. 75/694), Mara al-Hamadānī (76/695), ‘Alqama b. Qays (d. 102/720), and ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī (d. between 103/721 and 110/728). The school was mainly concerned in the interpretation of those Qur’ānic verses which related to legal rulings. It was not interested in the Judeo-

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Christian anecdotes to be incorporated in the *tafsīr*. In addition, the school was against the recording of Qur’ānic exegesis. The founder of the Baṣran school was Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who was one of the students of Anas b. Mālīk – a companion and servant of the Prophet. His notable student was Qatāda al-Sadūsī. The Baṣran school was influenced by the Medinan school of exegesis. The school was not stringent with *ḥadīth* in terms of its text and chain of authorities and incorporated them in the Qur’ānic exegesis without either sound chain of authorities or even without any chain of authorities. See Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis: Genesis and Development* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 147-57.

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### **9. *Tafsīr bi-al-ma’tḥūr* and *Tafsīr bi-al-ra’y***

*Tafsīr* is divided into two broad categories: *tafsīr bi-al-ma’tḥūr* and *tafsīr bi-al-ra’y*. *Tafsīr bi-al-ma’tḥūr* is exegesis that relies on those Prophetic traditions which are trustworthy in their transmission (*isnād*) and text (*matn*). It is considered by mainstream Sunnī exegesis to be authentic and reliable. *Tafsīr bi-al-ra’y* is exegesis that is based on

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<sup>40</sup> Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 151-52.

<sup>41</sup> Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 152-54.

<sup>42</sup> Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 154-57.

personal opinion and rational analysis of the text.<sup>43</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said that: “Whoever says about the Qur’ān without knowledge let him make his place in the Fire” (*man qāla fī al-Qur’ān bi-ghayri ‘ilman fa-al-yatabawwa’u maq’adahu min al-nār*).<sup>44</sup> Another *hadīth* indicates that the Prophet said: “Whoever speaks about the Qur’ān with his personal opinion, or without knowledge let him make his place in the Fire” (*man qāla fī al-Qur’ān bi-ra’yihī aw bi-mā lā ya’lamu fa-al-yatabawwa’u maq’adahu min al-nār*).<sup>45</sup>

While the traditionists consider rationalist commentary to be opinion-based whimsical, and capricious, the rationalists do not find the traditions a reliable source for Qur’ānic interpretation. However, there are no clear-cut boundaries between these two types of commentaries. Historically, both traditionists and rationalists have used traditions as well as their own opinions in their exegesis. According to R. Marston Speight, “the polarity between *tafsīr bi-al-ma’tūr* and *tafsīr bi-al-ra’y* was often accentuated by polemics in disciplines other than scriptural exegesis alone, that is, in legal theory, philosophy, theology, and political theory. Practically speaking, even that great monument to *ma’tūr* interpretation which is the commentary of al-Ṭabarī contains much that can be labeled as *tafsīr bi-al-ra’y*.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rashid Ahmad, “Qur’ānic Exegesis and Classical Tafsīr,” *The Islamic Quarterly* 11 (1968), 81-87; Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *EF*, 10:83-88; Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *ER*, 14:236-44; Jane Dammen McAuliffe, *Qur’ānic Christians: An Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20; Bruce Fudge, *Qur’ānic Hermeneutics: Al-Ṭabrisī and the Craft of Commentary* (London; New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011), 10.

<sup>44</sup> Abī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2006), 2: 1253.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, 2:1254.

<sup>46</sup> R. Marston Speight, “The Function of *hadīth* as Commentary on the Qur’ān, as Seen in the Six Authoritative Collections,” in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur’ān* ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 68.

## 10. Western Scholars' Views

According to the Western scholars' views, the reliability and authenticity of the *isnāds* and *matns* of exegetical *ḥadīths*, reconstructing the early exegetical works and dating them at an early period of Islam is all suspect. However, exegetical *ḥadīths* are a subset of all the *ḥadīths* as a whole. The exegetical *ḥadīths* relate to the Qur'ān and encompass the historical and legal genres in so far as they relate to the Qur'ān. In addition, most of the exegetical *ḥadīths* are immune from the sectarian and legal debates.<sup>47</sup>

The debate about the origin of *tafsīr* started in the work of Goldziher who suggested that Qur'ānic exegesis in the early years of Islam was discouraged by the more pious Muslim scholars and leaders. And well into the second Islamic century, it was still considered a dubious activity. For Goldziher these suspicions arose because *tafsīr*, at least when it was condemned, was associated with the legendary material told by storytellers (*quṣṣās*) about the battles fought by Muḥammad and about the last days.<sup>48</sup>

Joseph Schacht followed Goldziher's tradition of skepticism and concluded that,

Every legal tradition from the Prophet, until the contrary is proved, must be taken not as an authentic or essentially authentic, even if slightly obscured, statement valid for his time or of the time of the Companions, but as the fictitious expression of a legal doctrine formulated at a later date.<sup>49</sup>

Harris Birkeland agrees with Goldziher in his contention that at least certain circles opposed the utilization of the books of the *ahl al-kitāb* for the purpose of

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<sup>47</sup> Berg, *Development of Exegesis*, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, ed. S.M. Stern, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 192.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 149.



interpreting the Qur'ān and leading circles showed aversion towards the pious story-tellers. However, he states that there was no opposition to any kind of *tafsīr* until late in the first century. Strong opposition to all types of *tafsīr* took place in the second century. During the second century and first half of the third century, when *tafsīr* was brought into line with orthodox doctrine and subjected to the strict methods of transmission used for legal *ḥadīths*, it received general acceptance. The opposition lessened and *tafsīr* became a Qur'ānic science because it had gradually obtained its theoretical foundation. The history of *tafsīr* is, thus, parallel to that of *fiqh*, with which it was intimately connected.<sup>50</sup>

Nabia Abbott asserts that there was an early continuous written transmission of exegesis. During the first century the practice of *tafsīr* increased so rapidly that the *ḥadīth* and personal opinions of second-generation Muslims far exceeded those of the companions and the Prophet, especially *tafsīr al-nabī*. Two important characteristics of the exegetical activity were the absence of sound *isnāds* and the strong opposition to *tafsīr mutashābihāt al-Qur'ān* among the pious orthodox. *Tafsīr* literature increased steadily throughout the second century and it was classified into four main categories:

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<sup>50</sup> Harris Birkeland, *Old Muslim Opposition against Interpretation of the Koran* (Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1955), 31; Harris Birkeland, *The Lord Guideth: Studies on Primitive Islam* (Oslo: H. Aschehoug, 1956), 55, 133-4; R. Marston Speight, "The Function of *ḥadīth* as Commentary on the Qur'ān, as Seen in the Six Authoritative Collections," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 79; Frederick Mathewson Denny, "Exegesis and Recitation: their Development as Classical Forms of Qur'ān Piety," in *Transitions and Transformations in the History of Religions: Essays in Honor of Joseph M. Kitagawa*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Theodore M. Ludwig, (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 105-6, 121; John Burton, "The Interpretation of Q 4:23 and the Muslim Theories of *naskh*," *Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies* 1 (1986), 40-54; John Burton, "Notes towards a Fresh Perspective on the Islamic Sunna," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin* 11 (1984), 3-17. It may be pointed out that *tafsīr* was able to find its way into the six canonical collections of *ḥadīths*, particularly those of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Tirmidhī. However, it was by then already moulded into the form of *ḥadīths* and had become a category of *ḥadīth* literature. Older forms of exegesis are evident in the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishāq, but it has been moulded by the legendary interpretation of Muḥammad – the legend of Muḥammad was of course at work on strictly exegetical works too. Thus the oldest form of literary exegesis, in which *ra'y* was exclusively employed, is no longer extant. Speight comes to almost same conclusion when he finds the presence of *tafsīr* in the *ḥadīth* collections. Burton argues that exegesis and *sunna* not only overlap, but exegetical discussion originated and preceded the legal discussion. In addition, exegetical discussions were historicized in the form of *ḥadīths*.

legalistic *tafsīr* from the knowledge of which one is excused; linguistic *tafsīr* based on the speech of the Arabs; the formal *tafsīr* of scholars; and *tafsīr al-mutashābihāt* which is known only to God. In the second half of the century, as earlier *tafsīr* works became more readily available, these works began to be classified as “the best” and “the worst.” Concentration on the formal *isnād* in the field of *ḥadīth* is reflected in greater emphasis on the *isnād* in *tafsīr* as well. It was not only the quality of the *isnād*, but also the contents of *tafsīr* that determined the acceptability of *tafsīr*. Abbott concludes that,

During the third century, ways and means were devised by which the method and transmission of orthodox *tafsīr* were regulated. Also, there evolved a rationale for not only the permissibility but also the desirability of cautious commentary on the *mutashābihāt al-Qur’ān*. Typical arguments for this stand are presented by Ibn Qutayba, who devoted a chapter to this specific theme in a work that deals with entirely with the interpretation of the difficult passages of the Qur’ān.<sup>51</sup>

Fuat Sezgin considers that the bibliographical and biographical descriptions are genuine, and “almost all the earliest Qur’ānic commentary together with the transmission chains are preserved unaltered in later works.”<sup>52</sup>

Mohammad Mustafa Azmi does not agree with Schacht that the *isnād* system began in the early second or perhaps the late first century,<sup>53</sup> and states that the use of *isnāds*, like the use of written records was very early and cites the report ascribed to Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728) that the use of *isnād* was demanded after the

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<sup>51</sup> Nabia Abbott, “The Early Development of Tafsīr,” in *The Qur’ān: Formative Interpretation*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1999), 29-36.

<sup>52</sup> Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, Band I: Qur’ān wissenschaften, Ḥadīṭ, Geschichte, Fiqh, Dogmatik, Mystik bis ca. 430 H* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 1:17-8.

<sup>53</sup> M.M. Azmi, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1992), 1-211.

First *Fitna*.<sup>54</sup> He admits that faulty *isnāds* exist in *ḥadīth* material and points out that al-Shāfi‘ī admitted that his faulty memory had caused him to forget parts of *isnāds*. Others for the purpose of brevity might have given incomplete *isnāds*. Azmi concludes that, “There is no reason to reject the *isnād* system. It is proved that it has every element which can command the acceptance of the system as a whole.”<sup>55</sup>

Johann Fück states that the Companions most frequently cited in *isnāds* as authority are the younger ones such as Abū Hurayra and Ibn ‘Abbās instead of Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān. He argues that if all *isnād* were spurious, then it would be more likely for the older companions to be cited more frequently. In other words, if one is going to invent an *isnād*, then it should have been attached to older and more respected companions. Since the transmitters have not done this, it appears that the *isnāds* are genuine.<sup>56</sup>

James Robson argues that it seems logical that Muḥammad’s followers, because the impression of his personality must have made on them, preserved a genuine core within the *ḥadīths*.<sup>57</sup> With regard to *isnāds*, Robson accepts the report of Ibn Sīrīn concerning their beginning either in 64 or 72 A.H. That is when the Second *Fitna* took place and concludes that the use of *isnāds* started from the last third of the first Islamic century.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> The First *Fitna* (35/656-40/661) started after the assassination of the third caliph ‘Uthmān in 35/656 and ended in 40/661 after the murder of the fourth caliph ‘Alī. Stalemate at the Battle of Ṣiffīn and inconclusive arbitration between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya resulted in the formation of many sects in Islam.

<sup>55</sup> Azmi, *Early Ḥadīth*, 247.

<sup>56</sup> Johann W. Fück, “Die Rolle des Traditionalismus im Islam,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 93 (1939), 17.

<sup>57</sup> James Robson, “Ibn Ishāq’s Use of *Isnād*,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands’ Library* 38 (1965), 450.

<sup>58</sup> James Robson, “The *Isnād* in Muslim Tradition,” *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 15 (1953-4), 20. The Second *Fitna* (60/680-72/692) started when Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī was killed in 60/680 at Karbalā and the most prominent figure in this movement was ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr who was killed in 72/692 at Mecca.

N.J. Coulson admits that *isnād* may be fictitious but this does not mean the substance of the *matn* has also been fabricated.<sup>59</sup> He neither accepts the traditional Islamic view of *ḥadīth* nor subscribes to Schacht's proposition and concludes that the truth lies somewhere between traditional Islamic legal theory and the rigorous historical approach of Schacht.<sup>60</sup>

Uri Rubin believes that the *isnāds* were fabricated, and their presence was designed to make the reports to which they were attached appear authentic.<sup>61</sup> He argues that the names of successors do not recur in the companion *isnāds*, regardless whether they are Prophetic or not. In other traditions, Muḥammad and the Companions are part of the "original hard core." On the basis of these observations, he concludes that there was no backward growth of *isnāds*.<sup>62</sup>

Gautier H.A. Juynboll states that,

The earliest origins of standardized *ḥadīth* cannot be traced back earlier than, at most, to the seventies or eighties of the first century. What had preceded this was .... still unstructured and still unstandardized material of edifying contents (*quṣṣāṣ*, *tahrīb wa-targhīb*) or with a political slant (*faḍā'il/mathālib*).<sup>63</sup>

He concludes that as a whole the *ḥadīths* do reflect reasonably accurately Muḥammad's words and deeds.<sup>64</sup>

According to Fazlur Rahman,

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<sup>59</sup> N.J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 65.

<sup>60</sup> N.J. Coulson, "European Criticism of Ḥadīth Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston, et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 320.

<sup>61</sup> Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by Early Muslims, a Textual Analysis* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 234.

<sup>62</sup> Uri Rubin defines those traditions which are original and essential part of *matn* as "hard core." See Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 246, 249, 354, 256-57.

<sup>63</sup> G.H.A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition: Studies in chronology, provenance and authorship of early ḥadīth* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 23.

<sup>64</sup> Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 71.

Ḥadīth from the Prophet must have existed from the very beginning of Islam is a fact which may not reasonably be doubted. Indeed, during the lifetime of the Prophet, it was perfectly natural for Muslims to talk about what the Prophet did or said, especially in a public capacity. The Arabs, who memorized and handed down poetry of their poets, sayings of their soothsayers and statements of their judges and tribal leaders, cannot be expected to fail to notice and narrate the deeds and sayings of one whom they acknowledged as the Prophet of God. Rejection of this natural phenomenon is tantamount to grave irrationality, a sin against history.<sup>65</sup>

For Rahman the allegations made by the skeptics that *ḥadīths* are merely an attempt to give the actual practice of the Community Prophetic authority is irrelevant. The actual practice of the Community was already Prophetic, at least in spirit if not always in detail. The *isnāds* and in some cases even the *matns* may have been fabricated; however, the *ḥadīths* remain Prophetic.<sup>66</sup>

Gregor Schoeler states that in early Islam, teaching often involved lecturing without the use of written notes. Expressions such as “I never saw a book or written material in his hands, he used to lecture orally” (*mā ra’aytu fī yadihi kitāban qaṭṭu, innamā kāna yahfazū*) does not mean that the teacher rejected the use of written notes. The *Muwattā’* of Mālik b. Anas is a good example of this practice. It appears that writing and orality were more complimentary than mutually exclusive and difficult to distinguish between the author and the transmitter during the early period of Islam.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Islamabad: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1995), 31-2.

<sup>66</sup> See Ibrahim Özdemir, “The Concept of Islamic Tradition in Fazlur Rahman’s Thought,” *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 9 (1992): 245-49.

<sup>67</sup> Gregor Schoeler, “Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung der Wissenschaften im frühen Islam,” *Der Islam* 62 (1985), 201-30.

Harald Motzki argues that even if the *aḥādīth* and *asānīd* were forged, it must not lead someone to conclude that all of them are fictitious or that the genuine and the spurious cannot be distinguished with some degree of certainty.”<sup>68</sup>

Georg Stauth states that the *matn* contents of exegetical *ḥadīths* in the *tafsīrs* of Mujāhid b. Jabr, al-Ṭabarī, Sufyān al-Thawrī and ‘Abd al-Razzāq – Ma‘mar b. Rāshīd are similar despite their various recensions, therefore *isnāds* appear to be fairly good indicators of the origin and chronology of early *tafsīr ḥadīths*. He is of the opinion that the doubts raised by Goldziher and Schacht about the fictitious nature of *isnāds* are not applicable to *tafsīr ḥadīths*.<sup>69</sup>

Fred Leemhuis states that in the time of Warqā’ b. ‘Umar (d. 160/776) *tafsīr* traditions were written down<sup>70</sup> which included both additional and contradictory material and were attributed to various predecessors, such as Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, al-Zuhrī, and others not identifying the actual exegete who originated the material. He concludes that,

In the late second or early third century AH, commentaries which specialized in the textual difficulties of the Qur‘ān partly drew upon traditional sources, but also introduced more developed notions of grammar, syntax, and style in their analysis of the meaning of the text... From the end of the second century onward, *tafsīr* material of different kinds that could be considered authoritative on the basis of a sound *isnād* was collected more and more into compilatory *tafsirs*. This process had in fact started when the living tradition had become fixed. It was developed and provided with a sound basis in accordance with the science of *ḥadīth* by men like Ādam b. Abī Iyās (d. 220/835), was continued by men like Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd al-Rāzī (d. 248/862), and al-Muthannā b. Ibrāhīm al-Amulī (d. after 240/854), and was crowned by the achievement of Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 311/923).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Harald Motzki. “Muṣannaf of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī as a Source of Authentic Aḥādīth of the First Century A.H.” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 50 (1991), 9.

<sup>69</sup> Berg, *Development of Exegesis*, 73-75.

<sup>70</sup> Leemhuis states that writing of already existing variant versions of a *tafsir* tradition started around 150/767. See Leemhuis, *Origin*, 21.

<sup>71</sup> Leemhuis, *Origin*, 30.

John Burton is in agreement with Leemhuis and maintains that in some cases exegetical discussions came first which later on resulted in the form of *ḥadīths*.<sup>72</sup> He argues that the Muslim exegetes presented different explanations through different approaches to the text of the Qur'ān, and one can trace many of the different opinions that came to be reflected in *ḥadīths* and one should not disregard the role of the exegesis in the generation of *ḥadīths* and thus, in the creation of Muslim opinions. Burton concludes that the exegetical materials were earlier than the other *ḥadīth* material and they can be reliably gleaned from later collections.<sup>73</sup>

John Wansbrough's hypothesis is that the Islamic exegetical material is not homogeneous in terms of function and style. By function, he means the role a certain type of exegesis plays "in the formulation of history by a self-conscious religious community." By style, he means the "explicative elements" or "procedural devices."<sup>74</sup>

C.H.M. Versteegh asserts that the Muslims' interest in *tafsīr* began very early. Muqātil b. Sulaymān's *Tafsīr* is authentic, while those of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Mujāhid are authentic to the extent that the works go back to these exegetes, but not in the sense of *verbatim* transmission. He does not think that Ibn 'Abbās produced a book on *tafsīr*, but

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<sup>72</sup> John Burton, "Notes towards a Fresh Perspective on the Islamic Sunna," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin* 11 (1984), 12.

<sup>73</sup> Burton, *Notes*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> John Wansbrough identifies twelve "explicative elements," which are: variant readings, poetic citations, lexical explanation, grammatical explanation, rhetorical explanation, periphrasis, analogy, abrogation, circumstances of revelation, identification, Prophetic tradition and anecdote. Borrowing some terms from Jewish scriptural interpretation, he classifies the material into five sequential categories. Narrative (haggadic) exegesis is concerned with textual exegesis, which aims at furnishing the Qur'ānic passage with details based on prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*). Allegorical exegesis is concerned with esoteric (*bāṭin*) interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of Qur'ānic passages in the light of mystical experience. Legal (halakic) exegesis features Islamic legal topics such as faith, prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, retaliation, inheritance, usury, wine, marriage, divorce, adultery, thefts, debts, contracts and holy war. The textual (masoretic) exegesis focuses upon the lexicon of scripture, grammar, philology and variant readings of the text. Rhetorical exegesis is concerned with the literary excellences and stylistic features of the Qur'ānic verses. See John Wansbrough, *Qur'ānic Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121-246; Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *ER*, 14:236-44.

believes that the *tafsīr* literature can provide a clear picture of his teachings. He also does not agree with Gilliot's assertion that Ibn 'Abbās was a mythic figure to whom were attached all manner of teachings by latter generations.<sup>75</sup>

It is evident from the above discussion that the early period of Islamic history has been the main object of opposing views between the Muslim and Western scholars. The Muslim scholarship trusts in the early historical authenticity of exegetical *ḥadīths* and considers the interpretations of early commentators reliable and trustworthy. For Western scholars the historicity and authenticity of early exegesis is open to question. Therefore, there appears to be no resolution to this problem unless either the Western scholarship accepts the traditional Muslim historiography or new materials are discovered to substantiate or refute the skepticism of Western scholars about the early history of Islam.

## **11. The Development of the Qur'ānic Exegesis**

The Qur'ānic exegesis started in the early second/eighth century with the introduction of philological and grammatical sciences in the Qur'ānic exegetical works. Similarly, the refinement and codification of historiography which turned myths into history contributed to a great extent for the establishment of exegesis as a certain and exact science. In this period, the following broad categories of *tafsīr* can be distinguished: paraphrastic, narrative, legal, linguistic, philosophical, mystical, and theological.

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<sup>75</sup> C.H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 55-60; Claude Gilliot, "Portrait 'mythique' d'Ibn 'Abbās," *Arabica* 32 (1985), 127-84.



## 12. Paraphrastic and Narrative Exegesis

Paraphrastic and narrative exegesis developed simultaneously. Paraphrastic exegesis consisted of giving brief, often synonymic explanations of the Qur'ānic terms and verses. This type of exegesis is represented by Mujāhid b. Jabr, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 196/811).<sup>76</sup> Narrative exegesis illustrates the text of the Qur'ān through Judeo-Christian traditions (*Isrā'īliyyāt*), the nascent Prophetic biography and pre-Islamic Arab tradition. To this genre belong al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim, al-Suddī al-Kabīr, al-Kalbī, Muqātil b. Ḥayyān (d. 135/753) and Muqātil b. Sulaymān.<sup>77</sup>

## 13. Legal Exegesis

The legal analysis of the Qur'ān emerged quite early in Islam and the exegetes attempted to order the text of the Qur'ān and its interpretation according to legal topics. The range of these subjects covered those aspects, which dealt with basic beliefs and community's interaction with each other, such as faith, prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage, retaliation, inheritance, usury, wine, marriage, divorce, adultery, thefts, debts, contracts and holy war. This category of exegetes includes: Muqātil b. Sulaymān, Ibn Wahb, Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 154/770), 'Abd al-Razzāq al-San'ānī (d. 211/827), Qatāda and Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742). Other prominent exegetes who wrote legal exegesis are Da'ūd b. 'Alī b. Khalaf Zāhir al-Iṣfahānī (d. 270/ 883), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Zāhid al-Ṭaḥāwī (d. 321/933), Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Rāzī (d. 370/981), Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ilkiyā al-Harrāsī (d. 504/1110), Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abd

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<sup>76</sup> See Leemhuis, *Origin*, 21; Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur'ānic Exegesis*, 13-17; Gilliot, "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval," *EQ*, 2:99-124.

<sup>77</sup> Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur'ānic Exegesis*, 17-18; Gilliot, "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval," *EQ*, 2:99-124.

Allāh b. al-‘Arabī (d. 543/1148), and Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272).<sup>78</sup>

#### 14. Linguistic Exegesis

In the first half of the fourth/tenth century, the variant readings of the Qur’ān (*qirā’āt*) were standardized by Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936), the influential “reader” in Baghdad with the support of the government. He recognized seven “readings” belonging to the second/eighth century as authorities on the traditional readings of the ‘Uthmānic text.<sup>79</sup> These “readers” of the Qur’ān were also the philologists and grammarians. They were the first to explain and interpret the “difficult” (*mushkil*) and “strange/foreign” (*gharīb*) words or passages of the Qur’ān through the sciences of philology and grammar. Therefore, the readings of the Qur’ān and grammar (including elements of lexicography and orthography) became disciplines of the Qur’ānic sciences and integral components of exegesis. In this category, the following *mufasssirīn* are worth mentioning: Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Kisā’ī, al-Farrā’, Abū ‘Ubayda Ma‘mar b. al-Muthannā (d. ca. 210/825), Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘īd b. Mas‘ada al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. between 210/825 and 221/835), Ibn Qutayba, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), Abū Bakr al-Anbārī (d. 328/940), Abū Ja‘far al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/950), Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib al-Qaysī (d. 437/1047), Abū al-Baqā’ al-‘Ukbarī (d. 616/1219), and Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 754/1344).<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2:99-124.

<sup>79</sup> The recognized seven readers were: Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir (d. 118/736), Abū Bakr ‘Āṣim (d. 128/745), Abū ‘Amr Zabbān b. al-‘Alā’ (d. 154/770), Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb (d. 156/722), Nāfi‘ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 169/785), Ḥafṣ b. Sulaymān b. al-Mughīra (d. 180/796), and Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/805).

<sup>80</sup> Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur’ānic Exegesis*, 1-27; Gilliot, Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval, *EQ*, 2: 99-124; Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:83.

## 15. Philosophical Exegesis

Towards the end of second/eighth century, a massive movement for the translation of Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic took place. The Muslims learned these sciences, specifically philosophy and logic to respond adequately to the arguments of their opponents and new converts' questioning about their new religion. In the learning process, two groups of philosophers emerged. The first group considered philosophy neither in accordance with nor against Islam. Whenever they interpreted the Qur'ān and found that the viewpoint of the Qur'ān is in accord with philosophy, they accepted it. However, when the interpretation of the Qur'ān was contrary to philosophy, they rejected the latter. Al-Rāzī's *Tafsīr al-kabīr* also known as *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* falls in this group.

The second group considered that all philosophical thoughts are true and interpreted the Qur'ān in accordance with philosophical concepts. This group includes Ikhwān al-Ṣafā (*ca.* 313/927 - 363/975), Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) and Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198).

Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, literally "Brethren of Purity" was an association of authors of famous *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa-khillān al-wafā'*. The Ikhwān believed in adopting all the sciences and wisdom produced by the efforts of the philosophers and those revealed by God in the course of the previous millennia. These sciences express the profound "realities" (*ḥaqā'iq*) of the universe, which support revelation and religious laws. Traditional sciences essentially comprise the Qur'ānic and Traditional sciences. The interpretation of the Qur'ān refers to simple "commentary" (*tafsīr*) that is intended for the

general public while the realities or philosophical and prophetic sciences lead the soul progressively to the goal of the sciences and wisdom.<sup>81</sup>

Al-Fārābī followed both Plato and Aristotle, and derived his views from the Plotinus treatise *Theology* that he, along with the whole Alexandrian and Christian traditions, mistook for a work of Aristotle's.<sup>82</sup> He built "an elaborate metaphysical scheme in which the Qur'ānic concepts of creation, God's sovereignty in the world and the fate of the soul after death are interpreted in an entirely new spirit."<sup>83</sup> Al-Fārābī believed that human reason is superior to religious faith, and hence assigned only a secondary place to the different revealed religions which provide an approach to truth for non-philosophers through symbols. Philosophical truth is universally valid whereas these symbols vary from nation to nation; they are the work of philosopher-prophets, of whom Muḥammad was one.<sup>84</sup> His Qur'ānic exegesis of some verses can be found in *Fūṣūṣ al-Ḥikma*.<sup>85</sup>

Ibn Sīnā followed the encyclopaedic conception of the sciences that had been traditional since the time of the Greek Sages in uniting philosophy with the study of nature and in seeing the perfection of man as lying in both knowledge and action. He was also as illustrious as physician as he was as philosopher.<sup>86</sup> He added his views in Al-Fārābī's speculative theories of logic, epistemology and metaphysics. The general

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<sup>81</sup> See Ismā'īl R. al-Fārūqī and Lois Lamyā' al-Fārūqī, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 306; Y. Marquet, "Ikhwān al-Ṣafā," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:1071. The identity of Ikhwān – authors of the epistles of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa-khillān al-wafā'* – has been established by the diaries of Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), a contemporary of the Ikhwān. He mentions Zayd b. Rifā'a, Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad b. Ma'shar al-Bustī (al-Maqdisī), Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Hārūn al-Zanjānī, Abū Aḥmad al-Nahrajūrī, and al-'Awfī.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Fārūqī, *Cultural Atlas*, 307-8.

<sup>83</sup> Majid Fakhry, *al-Fārābī* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 2.

<sup>84</sup> R. Walzer, "al-Fārābī," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:778.

<sup>85</sup> Following are the verses for which he gives exegesis: 24:35; 30:11; 73:5; 54:49; 85:21; 41:11, 53; 34:3; 2:117; 3:47; 21:23, 104; 40:16; 7:145; and 17:44. See Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān al-Fārābī, *Fūṣūṣ al-Ḥikma*, ed. 'Alī Owjabī (Tehrān: Anjuman-i-Āthār wa-Mafākhir-i-Farhangī, 2003).

<sup>86</sup> A.M. Goichon, "Ibn Sīnā," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:941.

frameworks of their thought were identical.<sup>87</sup> Ibn Sīnā's exegesis of *Sūras Ikh̄lās* and *Mu'awwadhatayn* (*al-Nās* and *al-Falaq*) can be found in *Jāmi' al-badā'i*.<sup>88</sup>

Ibn Rushd states that God communicates the people through three types of discourse as revealed in the Qur'ān: "Call them to the path of your Lord with wisdom, good exhortation and reason with them in the best way possible."<sup>89</sup> In cases where the Qur'ān does not use rational demonstration, it means that it is clear in its meaning and in agreement with the conclusion of the syllogism. However, if it is in apparent disagreement, then it is necessary to make an interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the literal meaning in a figurative (*majāzī*) sense. With regard to the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* verses, he illustrates that the *muḥkamāt* verses are perfectly explicit and precise in their meanings and do not need any interpretation. The interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the *mutashābihāt* verses is known to God and to those who have a solid grounding in scholarship.<sup>90</sup>

## 16. Mystical Exegesis

Mystical exegesis is associated with the development of the Sufi movement (*taṣawwuf*) and intense interest in the spiritual aspects of Islam. The *ṣūfīs* believe that the philological, legal, philosophical, and theological debates have kept the Muslims away from understanding the real meanings of the Qur'ān. According to them, the Qur'ān could be interpreted literally (*ẓāhirī*) as well as symbolically (*bāṭinī*). For them, the

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<sup>87</sup> Al-Fārūqī, *Cultural Atlas*, 308.

<sup>88</sup> *Sūwar Ikh̄lās* and *Muwwadhatayn* are chapters 112, 113 and 114 of the Qur'ān. Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *Jāmi' al-badā'i*, ed. Muḥyī' al-Dīn Ṣabrī Kurdī (Miṣr: Maṭba'at Sa'āda, 1917), 16-32.

<sup>89</sup> Qur'ān, 16:125.

<sup>90</sup> R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Rushd," *EF*, 3:909-20; Majid Fakhry, "Philosophy and the Qur'ān," *EQ*, 4:68.

symbolical dimension of the Qur'ān was paramount and one could not understand it by literal interpretation alone.

Mystical exegesis is traced back to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī but there is no book, which could be solely attributed to him, rather his teachings have been preserved in the form of fragments in various *tafsīr* works. A *tafsīr* is attributed to Abū 'Abd Allāh Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) in which he consolidated the mystical doctrines of the earlier period. He said that there are four aspects of the Qur'ānic exegesis: *al-'ibāra* (literal explanation), *al-ishāra* (allegorical allusion), *al-laṭā'if* (mystical subtleties), and *al-ḥaqā'iq* (spiritual realities). The literal explanations/expressions and allegorical allusions are addressed to “the common people” (*al-'awāmm*) and “the select” (*al-khawāṣṣ*) respectively, while the mystical subtleties and spiritual realities are perceived by “the mystics” (*al-awliyā'*) and “the prophets” (*al-anbiyā'*) respectively.<sup>91</sup>

The prominent mystical exegetes are Abū Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 283/896)<sup>92</sup>, Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh b. al-Masarra (d. 319/931)<sup>93</sup>, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī al-Sulamī's (412/1021), Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1072),<sup>94</sup> Abū al-Ḥakam 'Abd al-Salām b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Barrajan (d. 536/1142), Abū Muḥammad Rūzbihān al-Baqlī al-Shīrāzī (606/1209), Abū al-Jannāb Aḥmad b. 'Umar Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220),<sup>95</sup> and Muḥyi' al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-'Arabī.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Nwyia, “Le Tafsīr mystique, attribut     Ga'far Ṣādiq,” *M  langes de l'Universit   Saint-Joseph* 43 (1968), 188.

<sup>92</sup> Gerhard B  wering, “Sahl al-Tustar  ,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 8:840-41.

<sup>93</sup> Gerhard B  wering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'  nic Hermeneutics of the Ṣ  fi Sahl al-Tustar   (d. 283/896)* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), 141; Gilliot, *Exegesis of the Qur'  n: Classical and Medieval*, *EQ*, 2: 99-124.

<sup>94</sup> H. Halm, “al-Qushayr  ,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 5:526-27.

<sup>95</sup> Ab   al-Jann  b began writing his commentary entitled *al-Ta'w  l  t al-Najmiyya*, also known as *Baḥr al-ḥaq  'iq* or *'Ayn al-ḥay  t*. Important contributions were made by his disciple Ab   Bakr 'Abd All  h b.

## 17. Theological Exegesis

According to medieval Muslim heresiographers, after the First *Fitna* (35/656-40/661),<sup>97</sup> a large number of “sects” (*firaq*) emerged in Islam, such as Shi‘ite, Zaydite, Kharijite, and Mu‘tazilite, etc. However, most of these were not sects but legal and theological schools, as has been pointed out by Goldziher and others.<sup>98</sup> These schools compiled their *tafsīrs* based on *‘ilm al-kalām* (theology) to justify and substantiate their views and existence, and to refute the opinions of their opponents.<sup>99</sup>

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Muḥammad Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (d. 654/1256) and it was finally completed by ‘Alā al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336).

<sup>96</sup> Other than *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn al-‘Arabī’s monumental work is *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya fī asrār al-mālikiyya wa al-mulkiyya* in thirty-seven volumes. *Ta’wilāt al-Qur‘ān* is falsely attributed to Ibn ‘Arabī and always published under his name, while it is ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī’s (d. 731/1331) magnum opus. It is a complete commentary of the Qur‘ān and it may be ranked with al-Qushayrī’s *Laṭā‘if al-ishārāt*, Rūzbihān al-Baqlī al-Shīrāzī’s *‘Arā‘is al-bayān*, and *‘Ayn al-ḥayāt* of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā/Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya completed by ‘Alā al-Dawla al-Simnānī. Al-Kashānī’s *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* is considered one of the best known and most frequently used among the more than a hundred commentaries on Ibn ‘Arabī’s famous treatise. See A. Ateş, “Ibn al-‘Arabī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:707-11; Lory Pierre, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 3 (2009):10-14.

<sup>97</sup> *Fitna*, literally means “temptation,” “trials,” or “civil war.” The Muslim chroniclers report four *fitnas* in Islam. The first *fitna* (36/656 - 41/661) is also known as “the *fitna*” *par excellence* or “the great *fitna*.” The second *fitna* (61/680 - 73/692) started with the succession of Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya and murder of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī at Karbalā in 61/680. In 62/681, Ibn al-Zubayr revolted against the Umayyads and Mukhtār asserted the rule of Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya b. ‘Alī in 66/685. During this period, there were incessant wars of the Azāriqa Khārijites and Shi‘ites against their opponents. The civil war ended in 73/692 after Ibn Zubayr was defeated and killed. During the third *fitna* (127/744 - 133/750), there were wars between the different factions of the Khārijites, i.e. Ibādiyya, Ṣufriyya and Shaybāniyya. In 128/745, Hārith b. Surayj, a Murji‘ite revolted in Khurāsān. In 130/747, Abū Muslim openly rebelled against the Umayyads in favor of the ‘Abbāsids. In 132/749, the ‘Abbāsids proclaimed al-Saffāh as caliph and finally they consolidated their power after defeating Marwān II, the last Umayyad caliph in 133/750. The fourth *fitna* (194/809 – 198/813) started after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 194/809 who had divided the empire half and half between his two sons al-Amīn and al-Mā‘mūn. They both struggled and fought in order to be supreme in the whole empire. In 198/813, al-Mā‘mūn defeated al-Amīn and became the caliph of the empire. During this *fitna*, neither Shi‘ites nor Khārijites played any major role. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 214-301, Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 109; L. Gardet, “6:I:185-906:I:185-906:I:185-90,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:930.

<sup>98</sup> According to Fazlur Rahman, “The Mu‘tazila ... are not a sect, but a theological school, which has directly influenced the formation of the ‘orthodox’ partly by being integrated into the latter and partly by being rejected and reacted against. The nearest point they approached to sectarianism was when, after their dogma was exalted into a state creed, they became intolerant and resorted to persecution. After being dethroned, however, they continued to exist as a theological school and their doctrines had an influence both on the Shi‘a dogmatics and on Sunnī Islam, on the question of the freedom and efficiency of the human will, notably through Ibn Taymīya.” See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, 167; Ignaz Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter’s Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1925), 188.

<sup>99</sup> *‘Ilm al-kalām* is defined as “a science which enables a person to procure a victory of the dogmas and actions laid down by the Legislator of the religion and to refute all opinions contradicting them.” See Abū

## 18. Shi'ite Exegesis

The Shi'ites disputed the validity of the 'Uthmānic codex of the Qur'ān and alleged that it was not complete and in some cases it had been falsified due to the absence of any explicit reference to the Shi'ites in the Qur'ān. The Shi'ite exegetes attempt to find in the Qur'ān explicit references to such themes as the *imāms'* supernatural and mystical qualities, their authority to interpret the Qur'ān and other religious scriptures or such major Shi'ite doctrines as the duty of loyalty to the *imāms* (*walāya*) and dissociation from their enemies (*barā'a*). The most important principle of the Shi'ite exegesis is that the authority to interpret the Qur'ān is reserved for 'Alī and his descendants, the *imāms*.<sup>100</sup>

The earliest Shi'ite exegesis was composed by Jābir b. Yazīd b. Ḥārith al-Ja'fī al-Kūfī (d. 128/745) in the second/eighth century but it has been lost.<sup>101</sup> The notable Shi'ite mufasssīrīn of the third/ninth century are Furāt b. Furāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī (fl. second half of third/ninth and possibly fourth/tenth centuries),<sup>102</sup> Abū al-Nadr Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-Sulamī al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320/932). However, most of the commentaries were written between the middle of the third/ninth and late fourth/tenth centuries, which roughly corresponds to the time between the Minor Occultation (*al-ghayba al-ṣughrā*), and the Major Occultation (*al-ghayba al-kubrā*).<sup>103</sup> During this

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Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Tarkhān al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣā al-'ulūm*, ed. Osmān Amine (Cairo: Librarie Anglo-Egyptienne, 1968), 131-32 and L. Gardet, "'Ilm al-kalām," *EP*, 3:1141.

<sup>100</sup> Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Shī'ism and the Qur'ān," *EQ*, 4:593.

<sup>101</sup> Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shi'a*, ed. Ḥasan al-Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-Ta'āruf lil-Maṭbū'āt, 1983), 4:51-55.

<sup>102</sup> Furāt's commentary on the Qur'ān is based upon traditions (*tafsīr bi al-ma'thūr*). These traditions usually are traced back to Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq or 'Alī's disciples, such as Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid (d. 103/721) and Aṣbagh b. Nubāta who frequently transmits *ḥadīths* in the name of 'Alī. See Meir M. Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imāmī Shi'ism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press; Leiden, Boston and Köln: Brill, 1999), 30.

<sup>103</sup> Minor Occultation took place in 260/874 or 264/878 and the Major Occultation occurred in 329/941.



period, noteworthy commentators were ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim al-Qummī (alive before 329/941) and Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Ja‘far al-Nu‘mānī (d. 360/971).

Shi‘ite tradition ascribes many works to *imāms* but they are mostly unknown except their titles.<sup>104</sup> The commentaries attributed to Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 113/731-2), Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), and Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (d. 260/874) are based on the earlier exegetical material which seems to have been edited and amended.<sup>105</sup>

Other prominent Shi‘ite exegetes are Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153), Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī (d. after 552/1157), Sharf al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Ḥusaynī al-Astarābādī (fl. tenth/sixteenth century), Muḥsin Fayḍ al-Kāshānī and Hāshim b. Sulaymān al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107/1696).<sup>106</sup>

## 19. Zaydite Exegesis

The Zaydites differ with the Shi‘ites and reject doubts about the integrity of the ‘Uthmānic Qur’ān.<sup>107</sup> Zaydite *imāms* al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 246/860) and his grandson Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911) wrote about the Zaydites hermeneutical principles. According to al-Qāsim, the classification of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* verses leads to the correct worship of God, which is divided into three parts: knowledge of God; knowledge of what pleases and displeases God; and obeying what pleases Him and avoiding which displeases Him. These three are known from “three sources by which

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<sup>104</sup> Eton Kohlberg, “Authoritative Scriptures in Early Shi‘ism,” in *Les Retours aux écritures: fondamentalismes présents et passés*, ed. E. Patlagean and A. Le Boulluec (Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 1991).

<sup>105</sup> See Bar-Asher, *Exegesis in Early Imāmī Shi‘ism*, 7-8.

<sup>106</sup> Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur’ān: Classical and Medieval,” *EQ*, 2: 99-124; Meir M. Bar-Asher, “Shi‘ism and the Qur’ān,” *EQ*, 4:593.

<sup>107</sup> See Ignaz Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, ed. and trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 175-76.

God gives evidence against His servants” (*thalāthu ḥujjatin iḥtajja bi-hā al-ma‘būdu ‘alā al-‘ibād*). The three sources of knowledge are the intellect, the Book and the Messenger. Each proof has its root (*aṣl*) and its branch (*far‘*). On the root, there is agreement; on the branches, people differ. The lack of consensus on the branches is due to the difference in rational investigation (*al-naẓar*), and “the differentiation regarding that which requires rational investigation and inference, from a known and present indicator, of that whose signification is absent and unknown” (*li-ikhtilāfi al-naẓari wa al-tamyīzi fīmā yūjibu al-naẓara wa al-istidlāla bi al-dalīli al-hādīri al-ma‘lūmi ‘alā madlūli ‘alay-hi al-ghā‘ibi al-majhūl*). It is one’s capacity for enquiry and influence that determines the degree to which one grasps the truth of things. In the case of the Book, its root is the *muḥkam*. Its branch is the *mutashābih*, which must be referred back to the *muḥkam* verses.<sup>108</sup> Yaḥyā states that the Qur’ān consists of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*, *ta‘wīl* and *tanzīl*, abrogating and abrogated, *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, and so on, all of which are mutually affirming (*wa kullu mā dhakarnā yuṣaddiqu ba‘ḍun ba‘ḍan*).<sup>109</sup>

The Zaydite exegetical works are still mainly in manuscript form. Several scholars agree that the early Zaydite exegesis was composed by Ziyād b. al-Mundhir Abū al-Jārūd (d. after 140/757-8). More than two hundred quotations of his exegesis have been preserved in the commentary of al-Qummī.<sup>110</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān compiled *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* and *Nawādir al-tafsīr*.<sup>111</sup> Other Zaydite exegetes who wrote *tafsīrs* are al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm Rassī (d. 246/860), Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr b. Zayd al-Kūfī

<sup>108</sup> Al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī, “Kitāb Uṣūl al-‘adl wa al-tawḥīd,” in *Rasā‘il al-‘Adl wa al-tawḥīd*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Imāra (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1971), 1:96-97. Madelung considered this text to be inauthentic. *Der Imām al-Qāsim*, 100.

<sup>109</sup> Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, “Kitāb fīhi ma‘rifat Allāh min al-‘adl wa al-tawḥīd,” in *Rasā‘il al-‘Adl wa al-tawḥīd*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Imāra (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1971), 2:107.

<sup>110</sup> Wilferd Madelung, *Der Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm und die Glaubenslehre der Zaiditen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Company, 1965), 44-85; Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, 46-56.

<sup>111</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm places him under Zaydites. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 641.

(d. 290/902), al-Nāṣir lil-Ḥaqq al-Uṭrūsh (d. 304/917), Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Hamadhānī Ibn ‘Uqda (d. 333/947), Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī al-Bustī al-Zaydī (d. ca. 420/1029), Abū al-Faṭḥ Nāṣir b. Ḥusayn al-Daylamī (d. 444/1052), Abū Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī (d. 488/1095),<sup>112</sup> Muḥsin b. Muḥammad b. Karāma (d. 494/1100), and Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (d. 1250/1834).<sup>113</sup>

## 20. Ismā‘īlī Exegesis

The Ismā‘īlī distinguish between the exterior (*ẓāhir*) and the interior (*bāṭin*) meanings of the Qur’ān. For them, the exoteric exegesis is not as important as the esoteric interpretation, which can be derived through *ta’wīl*. They distinguish between the “speaking Qur’ān” (*nāṭiq Qur’ān*) and the “silent Qur’ān” (*ṣāmit Qur’ān*). The Prophet (*nāṭiq*)<sup>114</sup> receives revelation (*tanzīl*) and promulgates the *sharī‘a*, while his plenipotentiary (*waṣī*) expounds the *bāṭin* through *ta’wīl*. This arrangement corresponds to the distinction between the hidden, spiritual meaning of scripture interpreted by the *Imām (ta’wīl)* and the divine message delivered by the Prophet in its literal form (*tanzīl*).<sup>115</sup>

The Ismā‘īlī exegesis differs from the mystical exegesis in the sense that the Qur’ān’s inner and true meaning could be obtained only through the *ta’wīl* derived from the legitimate *Imām*. The mystical exegesis’ emphasis is on understanding and

<sup>112</sup> Abū Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī was Zaydite Mu‘tazilite and a disciple of Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār. He was the author of a great *tafsīr* entitled *Ḥadā’iq dhāt bahja fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-karīm*. See footnote 136.

<sup>113</sup> See Claude Gilliot, “L’exégèse du Coran en Asie Centrale et au Khorasan,” *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999), 154; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 12:53, 2:279, 8:187; Meir M. Bar-Asher, “Shī‘ism and the Qur’ān,” *EQ*, 4:593.

<sup>114</sup> According to the Ismā‘īlī doctrine there are seven *nuṭaqā’* (pl. of *nāṭiq*): Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Īsā, Muḥammad and the Qā’im. See Zāhid ‘Alī, *Hamāre Ismā‘īlī madhhab kī ḥaqīqat awr uska nizām* (Hyderabad: The Academy of Islamic Studies, 1954), 129.

<sup>115</sup> Ismail K. Poonawala, “Ismā‘īlī *ta’wīl* of the Qur’ān,” in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur’ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 199-200.

experiencing the inner dimensions and the allusions in the Qur'ān which are most closely related to the human beings spiritual aspect.<sup>116</sup>

Some of the Ismā'īlī exegeses are Qāḍī Nu'mān b. Ḥayyūn Maghribī (d. 363/973)<sup>117</sup> and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī's (d. 548/1153). His *tafsīr* falls under the category of traditional commentaries and deals with the linguistic issues and exoteric exegesis. However, when necessary he interprets the mysteries (*asrār*) with Isma'īlite ideas.<sup>118</sup>

## 21. Khārijite Exegesis

The Khārijites have also contributed to exegesis but not as extensively as other groups. They interpret the text in line with their theological positions. These *tafsīrs* rely mainly on the literal meaning of the text and were written by 'Ibādīs, a moderate group among the Khārijites. Some of the Khārijites' works have been lost, such as the *tafsīr* of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Rustum al-Fārisī (d. in third/ninth century). The earliest Kharijite commentary still extant is the *Tafsīr* of Hūd b. Muḥakkam al-Hawwārī (d. ca. 280/893 or 290/902-3). He borrowed a great part of the exegetical traditions from Yaḥyā b. Sallām al-Baṣrī who preserved a large amount of exegetical materials of al-Kalbī, Mujāhid, and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in his work.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Andrew Rippin states that, "For al-Ghazālī as for most other mystics, the Qur'ān works on two levels: the practical and the cognitive. The former applies to the inner self and its purification without neglect of the outer activities, while the latter is meaning found through inner experience in light of mystical thought, and it can be reached only through firm knowledge of the practical or outer aspects." See Andrew Rippin, "Tafsīr," *ER*, 14: 236-44.

<sup>117</sup> Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Shī'ism and the Qur'ān," *EQ*, 4:593.

<sup>118</sup> See Gilliot, *L'exégèse du Coran*, 158-60; Gilliot, *Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval*, *EQ*, 2: 99-124.

<sup>119</sup> See Claude Gilliot, "Le commentaire coranique de Hūd b. Muḥakkam/Muḥkim," *Arabica* 44 (1997), 179-233.

## 22. Mu‘tazilite Exegesis

The Mu‘tazilites introduced philosophical, philological, and grammatical methodology in the Qur’ānic exegesis. They contributed to the exegesis of the Qur’ān considerably but most of their works are lost. Some of the titles of their works are preserved, and ample quotations from them have survived in the extant works of later authors.<sup>120</sup> Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ (d. 131/749), a pioneer of the Mu‘tazilite school was the first Mu‘tazilite who wrote a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān entitled *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān*. None of his writings has been preserved, not even in fragments. But several titles are mentioned, though some of them are attributed to his disciples rather than to himself.<sup>121</sup> ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd (d. ca. 144/761) a celebrated ascetic and a scholastic theologian composed a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān which is mainly derived from the teachings of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. However, most of it is lost and only a few references and fragments have been preserved in later *tafsīr* literature.<sup>122</sup>

Other Mu‘tazilite exegetes are Ḍirār b. ‘Amr (d. 180/796),<sup>123</sup> Abū ‘Alī ‘Amr b. Fā’id al-Aswārī (d. after 200/ 815),<sup>124</sup> Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Aṣamm (d. 200/816),<sup>125</sup> Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr Qutrub (d. 206/821),<sup>126</sup> Abū Sahl al-

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<sup>120</sup> Sabine Schmidkte, “Mu‘tazila,” *EQ*, 3:466-71.

<sup>121</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:560-1; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2795; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 6:7-11; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:280-1; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 8:108-9; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 13:159; Josef van Ess, “Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:164.

<sup>122</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 482-3; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:562-3; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayat al-a‘yān*, 3:460-62; Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā’rīkh Baghdād*, 12:166-88; Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 5:81; Montgomery Watt, “‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd b. Bāb,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 454; Suleiman A. Mourad, “‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2008):94-96; Josef van Ess, “Amr b. Obayd,” *Elr*, 1:991-92.

<sup>123</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 596-8; Josef van Ess, “Ḍirār b. ‘Amr, Abū ‘Amr al-Ghaṭafānī al-Kūfī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12:225. It may be pointed out that neither Ka‘bī in his *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyin*, nor Qādī ‘Abd al-Jabbār in his *Fadl al-i‘tizāl*, nor Ibn al-Murtaḍā in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila* provides biography of Ḍirār b. ‘Amr. Ibn al-Nadīm and al-Nāshī’ al-Akbar mention him among those Mu‘tazilites who did not exactly correspond to the canonical school dogma established in the *Uṣūl al-khamsa*.

<sup>124</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:568; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 35.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Aṣamm defines the *muḥkamāt* as those verses, the veracity of which can not be denied by any opponent, for instance, all statements about past events in the Qur’ān. The *mutashābihāt* are the verses, he

Hilālī Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir (d. 210/825-6),<sup>127</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘īd b. Mas‘ada al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. 215/830),<sup>128</sup> Ja‘far b. Ḥarb (d. 236/850),<sup>129</sup> Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854),<sup>130</sup> Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ishāq al-Shaḥḥām (d. after 257/870),<sup>131</sup> Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Jubbā‘ī (d. 303/915),<sup>132</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka‘bī (d. 319/931), a disciple of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d. 320/932),<sup>133</sup> ‘Abd al-Salām b. Abī ‘Alī Muḥammad Abū Hāshim al-

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states, which describe something about the future and which reveal their truth only after reflection, for instance, description about the Last Day of Judgment. There are no verses in the Qur’ān which remain permanently obscure to human reason. His views on *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* were adopted mostly by the later Mu‘tazilite exegetes who considered that there was nothing in the Qur’an that could not be grasped by the human intellect. Al-Aṣamm’s views were reproduced by al-Māturīdī in his *Ta’wīlāt ahl al-sunna* and by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his *Tafsīr al-kabīr*. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:594-5; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 32; Josef van Ess, “al-Aṣamm, Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12: 88; Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 223; ‘Abū Maṣū‘ūr al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 221-22; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:182-83.

<sup>126</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:147-9; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 4:312-13; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 1: 312-13; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 2:15-16; G. Troupeau, “Ḳutrub, the cognomen of Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 5:567.

<sup>127</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:568-70; Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 2: 55; Albert N. Nader, “Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamir,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12:88.

<sup>128</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:146-47; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 3:1374-76; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 2:380-81; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 1:590-91; Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 3:101-2; C. Brockelmann and Ch. Pellat, “al-Akhfash,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:321; Richard Weipert, “al-Akhfash,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2009):68-70.

<sup>129</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:590-1; Khaṭīb Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 7:162-3; A. N. Nader, “DJa‘far b. Ḥarb Abū al-Faḍl Dja‘far b. Ḥarb al-Hamadhānī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:373; Josef van Ess, “Ja‘far b. Moḥammad b. Ḥarb,” *EIr*, 14:347-48.

<sup>130</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:592-93; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2549; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 1:155; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 1:149-50; al-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*, 3:337; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 44-45.

<sup>131</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:606; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 40; D. Gimaret, “al-Shaḥḥām, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ishāq,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:202.

<sup>132</sup> Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān* has not been preserved, but some of its important material has been reconstructed by Daniel Gimaret from the quotations found in later works. These works include Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī’s (d. 459/1067) *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, which is to a large extent dependent on the commentary of ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā al-Rummānī, al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī’s *al-Tahdhīb fī al-tafsīr*, Abū ‘Alī al-Ṭabrisī’s *Majma‘ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān*, Sharīf al-Raḍī’s *Haqā’iq al-ta’wīl fī mutashābih al-tanzīl*, Sharīf al-Murtaḍā’s *al-Amālī*, and ‘Alī b. Mūsā b. Ṭāwūs’s *Sa‘d al-su‘ūd*. Gimaret classifies all the material under five categories: philological, historical, juridical, theological, and cosmological and brief discussion with the citation of the Qur’ānic verses. Also, many quotations and passages of *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* have been preserved in *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān* of Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī and in *Majma‘ al-bayān* of ‘Alī al-Ṭabrisī. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:606-8; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 4:267-69; Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 33; Daniel Gimaret, *Une lecture mu‘tazilite du Coran. Le Tafsīr d’Abū ‘Alī al-Djubba‘ī (m. 303/915) partiellement reconstitué à partir de ses citateurs* (Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 1994), 23-29; L. Gardet, “al-Djubba‘ī, Abū Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:569; Sabine Schmidtke, “Jobbā‘ī,” *EIr*, 14:666-72.

<sup>133</sup> Some quotations of al-Balkhī’s *Tafsīr al-kabīr li-al-Qur’ān*, also entitled *Jāmi‘ ‘ilm al-Qur’ān* have been preserved in later works, notably in Sharīf al-Raḍī’s (d. 406/1016) *Haqā’iq al-ta’wīl fī mutashābih al-tanzīl* and in ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā’s (d. 436/1044) *Amālī* which is also known as *Ghurar*

Jubbā'ī (d. 321/933) son of Abū 'Alī Jubbā'ī,<sup>134</sup> Abū Muslim Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Iṣfahānī (d. 322/934),<sup>135</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Qaffāl al-Shāshī (d. 365/975),<sup>136</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl al-Baṣrī (alive in 377/987),<sup>137</sup> Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025),<sup>138</sup> Abū Yūsuf 'Abd al-Salām al-Qazwīnī,<sup>139</sup> Abū Sa'd al-Muḥāsīn b.

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*al-fawā'id wa-durar al-qalā'id*. Ibn Ṭāwūs cites many passages from Abū al-Qāsim's *tafsīr* and in one of the passages, Abū al-Qāsim states that the Qur'an was compiled during the time of the Prophet under his supervision and he determined its grammatical inflection and the arrangement of its *sūras* and *āyās*. From the sections of al-Balkhī's *tafsīr*, as cited by Ibn Ṭāwūs in his *Sa'd al-su'ūd* and by Ṭūsī in his *al-Tibyān*, both of them conclude that like the majority of the Mu'tazilites, he preferred the intellectual over the transmitted exegesis. For instance, in his *tafsīr* of the verse: "And when your Lord brought forth from the loins the children of Adam their descendents and made them witnesses over themselves, (He said): 'Am I not your Lord?' They said: 'Yes, We bear witness.'" (*wa idh akhdha rabbuka min banī ādama min zuhūrihim dhurriyatahum wa-ashhadhum 'alā anfusihim alastu bi-rabbikum qālū balā shahinā*), al-Balkhī explains that what is meant by 'descendents' are generations of humans throughout the centuries and the witnessing of the descendents to the Lordship of God refers to the first intellect and primordial nature (*fiṭra*) that was entrusted to man.

<sup>134</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:627; al-Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 33; Moḥammad Mojtahed Shabestarī, "Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī," *Els*, 2: 68; Kohlberg, *Medieval Muslim Scholar*, 204, no. 233.

<sup>135</sup> Abū Muslim's *tafsīr* entitled *Jāmi' al-ta'wīl li-muḥkam al-tanzīl* or *Jāmi' 'ilm al-Qur'ān* is a renowned Mu'tazilite commentary. It is reported that it has fourteen or twenty or even more volumes. It is considered as being highly eloquent and surpassed other commentaries so far as the expression of subtle meanings is concerned. Many commentators both Shi'ites and Mu'tazilites made much use of it. These include Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, al-Hākim al-Jishūmī, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, al-Ṭabrisī, and Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī. In the preface of his *al-Tibyān*, al-Ṭūsī praises Abū Muslim's exegesis but criticizes unnecessary prolixity. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has quoted a great portion of it in his *Tafsīr al-kabīr*. Abū Muslim's quotations preserved in al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* have been collected and edited by Sa'id al-Anṣārī in the form of a book entitled *Muṭṭaqaṭ Jāmi' al-ta'wīl li-muḥkam al-tanzīl*. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:423-24; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2437-40; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, 5:102; Kahhalah, *Mu'jam al-muallifīn*, 9:97; 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā* (= *Ghurur al-fawā'id wa-durar al-qalā'id*), ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1954), 1:13, 367; 2:99, 234, 304-5; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Āghā Buzurg al-Tehrānī (Najaf: Maṭba'at al-'Ilmiyya, 1957), 1-2; Muḥammad 'Adnān Zarzūr, *al-Hākim al-Jishūmī wa-manhajuhu fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1972), 161-62; Sa'id Anṣārī, *Muṭṭaqaṭ Jāmi' al-ta'wīl li-muḥkam al-tanzīl* (Calcutta: Al-Balāgh Press, 1921).

<sup>136</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 4:200-1; al-Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 36-37; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3: 200-1.

<sup>137</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 627; Kohlberg, *Medieval Muslim Scholar*, 292-3, no. 457.

<sup>138</sup> Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār composed three exegetical works: *Tanzīh al-Qur'ān 'an al-maṭā'in*, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān* and *I'jāz al-Qur'ān* which is the sixteenth volume of *al-Muḥī*. In *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, he explained the ambiguous passages of the Qur'ān according to the Mu'tazilite doctrine. In his comprehensive encyclopaedic work *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-'adl*, he elaborated Mu'tazilite theological and juridical views. See Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 3:273-74; Margaret Heemskerk, "'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī," *EL*, 3 (2007):9-18.

<sup>139</sup> Abū Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī composed a very long comprehensive exegetical work on the Qur'ān entitled *Hadā'iq dhāt bahja fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, which is said to have consisted of three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, or even seven hundred volumes, depending on the report. Various sources refer to the great volume the *tafsīr*, adding that the author expressed his Mu'tazilite views throughout the work. His commentary on *Sūra al-Fātiḥa* alone is said to have been written in seven volumes, and elsewhere he devoted an entire volume to the exegesis of verse 2:102, "They follow what the Satans recited" (*wattaba 'ū ma tatlū al-shayāṭin*). Abū Yūsuf seems to have followed in the works of earlier Mu'tazilite authors of

Muḥammad b. Karāma al-Ḥākīm al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101),<sup>140</sup> and Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)<sup>141</sup> who composed the Qur’ān commentary entitled *al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-ghawāmiḍ fī wujūh al-ta’wīl*, which explains the entire text of the Qur’ān grammatically, lexicographically, and rationally. More will be discussed later.

It may be appropriate to discuss the concept of the inimitability of the Qur’ān (*i’jāz al-Qur’ān*). There are two explanations provided for this. The first was attributed to the Qur’ānic claim that its likeness could never be produced by anyone.<sup>142</sup> The second

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Qur’ānic exegesis, such as al-Aṣamm, Abū Muslim al-Isfahānī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī, Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī, Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī and Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār. Literary-historical legends are mentioned in the biographical dictionaries concerning the details of books written and their reproduction in case of loss, number of teachers and collection of books. For instance, it is reported by Ibn Subkī that books in the Library of the Niẓāmiyya College were burnt during the lifetime of Niẓām al-Mulk and he became distressed. He was told that he should not worry about it because Ibn al-Ḥaddād would dictate all those burnt books by his memory. He was summoned and he dictated all those books relating to *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl* and *naḥw* within a period of three years. Some biographers mentioned that ‘Umar b. Aḥmad b. Shāhīn (d. 385/996) composed 330 works, among them a *tafsīr* of one thousand volumes and a *musnad* of one thousand and six hundred volumes. A seller of ink told after the latter’s death that he sold him 1800 raṭl of ink (a *raṭl* is a weight measure which varies from 449.28 grams to 2.566 kilograms). According to al-Suyūfī, al-Ash‘arī composed a *tafsīr* of 600 volumes which is said to have been in the Library of the Niẓāmiyya College, Baghdād. See ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Sha‘rānī, *Laṭā’if al-minan wa-al-akhlāq* (Cairo: ‘Ālam al-Fikr, 1976), 257. In *Tā’rikh-i-guzīdā*, the number of al-Ghazālī’s works is given 999. See Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, Edward Granville and Reynold A. Nicholson, *Tā’rikh-i-guzīdā* (Leiden: Brill and London: Lucac and Co., 1910-13), 1:808. The Ṣūfī Shaqīq al-Balkhī claims that he received the knowledge of various sciences from 1,700 teachers and accumulated books which could be carried by an army of camels. See Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahābī, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* (Hyderabad Deccan: The Dā’ira al-Ma‘ārif al-Osmāina, 1956), 4:1208-9; Wilfred Madelung, “Abū Yūsuf Qazwīnī,” *EI*, 1:398-99; Hassan Ansari, “Abū Yūsuf al-Qazwīnī,” *EI*, 2:760; *Tadhkirat al-awliyā’* of Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson and Mīrzā Muḥammad b. ‘Abdul Wahhāb Qazwīnī (Leiden: Brill and London: Luzac and Co., 1905), 1:196.

<sup>140</sup> Al-Ḥākīm al-Jishumī was a student of Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Najjār (d. 433/1041-2), a student of Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār, who taught him Mu‘tazilite theology, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *ḥadīth*. After the latter’s death, he became the student of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 457/1067), a student of the Zaydī *imām* Abū Ṭālib al-Nāṭiq in Bayhaq. Al-Jishumī actively supported the Mu‘tazilite theology of the school of ‘Abd al-Jabbār and adhered to the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh*. He is said to have composed forty-two books. His *al-Tahdhīb fī al-tafsīr* has survived in several manuscripts and contains numerous quotations from earlier lost Mu‘tazilite commentaries. See Gimaret, *Une lecture*, 25-26.

<sup>141</sup> Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 11-12: 840-41.

<sup>142</sup> There are five verses in the Qur’ān which describe it and these are called as “challenge verses” (*āyāt al-taḥaddī*). These are: 2:23-24; 10:38; 11:13; 17:88 and 52:34.



was directly related to the subject of the divine essence.<sup>143</sup> *I'jāz* (inimitability) became a technical term in theological and literary discussions during the third/ninth century after the death of Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and before the death of the Mu'tazilite *mutakallim* Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Wāsiṭī (d. 307/918-9).<sup>144</sup>

Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) is the earliest *mutakallim* and literary scholar who wrote in defense of the prophethood of Muḥammad and the superior stylistic attributes of the Qur'ān. Although he did not use the term *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* in his works, other derived terms from the root '-j-z such as *a'jaza*, *'ājiz* and *mu'jiz* were used about the qualities of the Qur'ān. He argued that the Qur'ān was inimitable because of its composition (*ta'liḥ*) and its structure or organization of words (*naẓm*).<sup>145</sup>

Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥya b. Ziyād al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987) and Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Rummānī (d. 384/994) who were

<sup>143</sup> According to L. Gardet, "The Mu'tazilites denied that there was an uncreated Word subsisting in God... the Asharites ... distinguish between the Word subsisting in the divine essence, which is without speech (*qawl*), and its expression by means of letters and sounds. In itself, *kalām* is not an 'attribute of action (*ṣifāt al-af'āl*),' like the creation or decree; it is, like will, knowledge, life, an attribute that is *ma'ānī*, which 'adds a concept to the essence' but itself subsists within the essence by the very existence of God." See L. Gardet, "Kalām," *ET*, 4:468-71. Margaret Larkin states that, "[S]ince the notion of the inimitability of the Book referred to its linguistic form as well as its content, the *i'jāz* was rhetorical question as much as it was theological, and in the logocentric atmosphere of medieval Islamic scholarship, the question of the inimitability of the Qur'ān was necessarily the subject of research among scholars within the disciplines of grammar, rhetoric and theology alike. By establishing the notion that the Qur'ān would be judged to be inimitable when considered from a point of view of known standards of stylistic excellence, Muslim doctrine imposed a requirement of consistency upon scholars who dealt with the *i'jāz*: anything said about the phenomenon of speech (*kalām*) had to be consistent with the scholar's theological view of speech of God (*kalām Allāh*)." See Margaret Larkin, "The Inimitability of the Qur'ān: Two Perspectives," *Religion and Literature* 20 (1988): 32.

<sup>144</sup> Many primary sources mention that *i'jāz* as a technical term in theological and literary circles was first used by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Wāsiṭī in his work entitled *Kitāb al-i'jāz al-Qur'ān fī naẓmihi wa-ta'liḥi*. Madelung and Abrahamov suggest that the term *i'jāz* was used by Zaydite-Mu'tazilite al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860) in his book *al-Madīḥ al-kabīr* in support of the inimitability of the Qur'ān, which means that the origin of the term took place during the lifetime of al-Jāḥiẓ. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:620-21; al-Ṣafādī, *al-Wāfi bil-wafayāt*, 3:82; Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 6:132; Claude-France Audebert, *Al-Ḥaṭṭābī et l'inimitabilité du Coran. Traduction et introduction au Bayān i'jāz al-Qur'ān* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1982), 58-64; Binyamin Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism and Interpretation of the Qurān in the Theology of al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm: Kitāb al-mustarshid* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1996), 19; Madelung, *Der Imam*, 125; Johan Bouman, *Le conflit autour du Coran et la solution d'al-Bāqillānī* (Amsterdam: J. van Campen, 1959), 52, n. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:578-88; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 5:2101-22.

the prominent Mu‘tazilite philologists and grammarians elaborated the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur’ān (*i‘jāz al-Qur’ān*) and wrote about the stylistic aspects of the Qur’ān.

### 23. Conclusion

*Tafsīr* is one of the most important disciplines of the Qur’ānic sciences. The terms *tafsīr*, *ta’wīl*, *ma’ānī*, and *sharḥ* in Arabic language mean interpretation, explanation, or elucidation of something. In the first two Islamic centuries, there was no differentiation between *tafsīr*, *ta’wīl*, and *ma’ānī* when used as a technical term for the works of exegesis. At the beginning of the third Islamic century, there arose differences of opinions among the lexicographers and philologists about the precise meaning of these terms and their relationship to each other. Some scholars considered that *tafsīr*, *ta’wīl*, *ma’ānī*, and *sharḥ* were synonymous and have the same meanings, and early commentators used these terms interchangeably. However, others argued that these terms have different meanings.

There are two views regarding the Qur’ānic exegesis in early Islam: the traditional Muslims’ views and the Western views. According to the traditional Muslims’ views, Qur’ānic exegesis began quite early during the lifetime of Prophet Muḥammad, and the *tafsīr* tradition initiated by Muḥammad is referred to as “the Prophetical exegesis” (*tafsīr al-nabī*). After the death of the Prophet, the companions’ (*ṣaḥāba*) exegetical views not only gained an extraordinary authority but also were held in great esteem and accorded a special status as *marfū‘* (elevated) that is, attributed to Muḥammad. After that, the

“companions’ successors” (*tābi ‘ūn*) and the “successors’ successors” (*tab ‘ tābi ‘ūn*) interpreted the Qur’ān.

By the end of the first half of the first century of Islam, four major schools of exegesis were evolved whose views and contribution in this field significantly shaped the science of exegesis of the later generations. These schools were named after the major cities: Mecca, Medina, Kufa, and Baṣra.

*Tafsīr* is divided into two broad categories: *tafsīr bi-al-ma ‘thūr* and *tafsīr bi-al-ra ‘y*. *Tafsīr bi-al-ma ‘thūr* is exegesis that relies on those Prophetic traditions which are trustworthy in their transmission (*isnād*) and text (*matn*). It is considered by mainstream Sunnī exegesis to be authentic and reliable. *Tafsīr bi-al-ra ‘y* is exegesis that is based on personal opinion and rational analysis of the text.

According to the Western scholars’ views, the reliability and authenticity of the *isnāds* and *matns* of exegetical *ḥadīths*, reconstructing the early exegetical works and dating them at an early period of Islam is all suspect. However, exegetical *ḥadīths* are a subset of all the *ḥadīths* as a whole, and encompass the historical and legal genres in so far as they relate to the Qur’ān. In addition, most of the exegetical *ḥadīths* are immune from the sectarian and legal debates.

It is evident from the above discussion that the early period of Islamic history has been the main object of opposing views between the Muslim and Western scholars. The Muslim scholarship trusts in the early historical authenticity of exegetical *ḥadīths* and considers the interpretations of early commentators reliable and trustworthy. For Western scholars the historicity and authenticity of early exegesis is open to question. Therefore, there appears to be no resolution to this problem unless either the Western scholarship

accepts the traditional Muslim historiography or new materials are discovered to substantiate or refute the skepticism of Western scholars about the early history of Islam.

The Qur'ānic exegesis started in the early second/eighth century with the introduction of philological and grammatical sciences in the Qur'ānic exegetical works. Similarly, the refinement and codification of historiography which turned myths into history contributed to a great extent for the establishment of exegesis as a certain and exact science. In this period, the following broad categories of *tafsīr* could be distinguished: paraphrastic, narrative, legal, linguistic, philosophical, mystical, and theological. The theological *tafsīrs* were based on *'ilm al-kalām* to justify and substantiate their views and existence, and to refute the opinions of their opponents. Most of the theological exegeses were written by the Shi'ite, the Zaydite, the Isma'īlīs, the Kharijite, and the Mu'tazilites.

The earliest texts date the concept of the inimitability of the Qur'ān (*i'jāz al-Qur'ān*), from the third/ninth century. Abū Zakariyyā al-Farrā', Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Fārisī, and Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Rummānī, not only elaborated the doctrine of the inimitability of the Qur'ān but also wrote about the stylistic aspects of the Qur'ān.

## Chapter 4

### Al-Zamakhsharī's Methodology of *Tafsīr*

There is a general consensus among the traditional Muslim scholars and the Western scholars that the *tafsīr* genre in written form emerged at least in the early second/eighth century, and constituted one of the most important disciplines of the sciences of the Qur'ān (*'ulūm al-Qur'ān*) approximately from the third/ninth century.<sup>1</sup>

Andrew Rippin states that,

In most cases, a work entitled *Tafsīr* will follow the text of the Qur'ān from the beginning to the end, and will provide an interpretation (*tafsīr*) of segments of the text (word-by-word, phrase-by-phrase, or verse-by-verse) as a running commentary.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the verses are interpreted by the other verses of the Qur'ān, traditions of the Prophet, and grammar. Other elements in the interpretation include “occasions of the revelation” (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), “abrogating and the abrogated” (*al-nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*), “variant readings” (*qirā'āt*), and historical context, which are not necessarily present at the same time in one and the same exegete, but which are not mutually exclusive.

According to Feras Hamza and Sajjad Rizvi,

There has been a remarkable continuity of form and method in the production of *tafsīr* works since the beginnings of the exegetical enterprise. Such continuity, however, has not meant a uniformity of

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<sup>1</sup> The excellent introductions to the genre of *tafsīr*, its emergence, development, and disciplines of Qur'ānic sciences can be found in the following: Gilliot, “Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval, *EQ*, 2:99-124; Gilliot, *Beginnings of Qur'ānic Exegesis*, 1-27; Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:83-8; Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *ER*, 14:236-44; G.R. Hawting and A.K.A. Shareef, ed. *Approaches to the Qur'ān* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); Andrew Rippin, ed. *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Colin Turner, ed. *The Qur'ān: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Rippin, “Tafsīr,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:83-8.

opinions; varied hermeneutical approaches and interpretations have always found a place within a shared reverence for the divine text.<sup>3</sup>

One such example is of al-Zamakhsharī's exegesis *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl*. Despite the fact that his *tafsīr* follows the text of the Qur'ān from the beginning to the end, his exegetical techniques differ from the standard format of traditional exegesis. The main characteristics of his *tafsīr* are: emphasis on the *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* verses, significance of *'ilm al-ma'ānī* and *'ilm al-bayān*, question and answer format (*as'ila wa-ajwiba*), and extensive grammatical use. These components of exegesis are uniquely applied by him throughout the *Kashshāf*, which will be illustrated in the following pages.

In addition to the above mentioned techniques, al-Zamakhsharī used some of the elements of a traditional Qur'ān commentary, such as “interpretation of the Qur'ān by means of the Qur'ān” (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*), use of the *aḥādīth*, and the variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*).

### **1. Muḥkamāt wa mutashābihāt**

Al-Zamakhsharī's starting point for exegesis is generally based on the verse 3:7:

It is He who has sent down upon you the book wherein are ‘perspicuous verses’ (*āyātun muḥkamātun*) and which are the ‘mother of the Book’ (*umm al-kitāb*), and others are ‘ambiguous’ (*mutashābihātun*). As for those ‘in whose hearts is swerving’ (*fī qulūbihim zayghun*), they follow what is ambiguous in it, seeking (to create) dissension and seeking its interpretation. However, no one except God knows its interpretation. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord (*āmannā bihi kullun min 'indī rabbīnā*),’ but only those who have wisdom understand.

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<sup>3</sup> Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rizvi and Farhana Mayer, ed. *An Anthology of Qur'ānic Commentaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1:1.

Al-Zamakhsharī illustrates his interpretation of the word *muḥkamāt* on a lexical approach and interprets the word *muḥkamāt* (the *ism al-maf‘ūl* of *aḥkama*) as *ḥufiẓat min al-iḥtimāl wa-al-ishtibāh* (the verses that are preserved from speculation and doubt).<sup>4</sup> He states that the issue of the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* is not only important but also the very foundation of the Qur’ānic interpretation. He maintains that no exegesis is possible without a complete understanding of the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* verses. According to him, *muḥkamāt* verses are those whose expression (*‘ibāra*) is clear (*uḥkimat*) because they have been preserved (*ḥufiẓat*) and are free from speculation (*iḥtimāl*) and doubt (*ishtibāh*).<sup>5</sup> He interprets ‘clear verses’ (*uḥkimat āyātuhu*) as “verses arranged firmly and perfectly in which there is neither contradiction nor imperfection” (*nuzimat nazman raṣīnan muḥkaman lā yaqa‘u fihā naqḍ wa-lā khalaḥ*)<sup>6</sup> as mentioned in the verse “Alif lām rā’, A book whose verses are set clear and made distinct” (*alif lām rā kitābun uḥkimat āyātuhu thumma fuṣṣilat*).<sup>7</sup> The clarity of *muḥkam* verses can be found in their own wordings. They do not require any explanation from extraneous sources, such as other verses of the Qur’ān, Prophetic traditions or linguistic investigation in order to understand them. In addition, they are the “essence of the Book” (*umm al-kitāb*) since “they serve as a basis for interpreting *mutashābih* verses” (*tuḥmal al-mutashābihāt ‘alayhā wa-turadda ilayhā*).<sup>8</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that the Qur’ān in its entirety is not *muḥkam*. Had it been completely *muḥkam* the people would have been attached to easiness and convenience in

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Manẓūr glosses the word *aḥkama shay’an* (a verbal use of the root *muḥkam*) as *amna’ahu min al-fasād* (to protect it from imperfection). See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 12:143.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:527-9.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:181.

<sup>7</sup> Qur’ān, 11:1.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:528. See also Sabine Schmidtkte, *A Mu‘tazilite Creed of az-Zamaḥṣarī (d. 538/1144) [al-Minhāġ fī usūl al-dīn]* ed. and trans. (Stuttgart: Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 51/4, Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft – F. Steiner, 1997), 44, 82.

their approach to the Qur'ān and turned away from investigation and perception of reasoning. In this case, they would have lost their way and could not achieve the gnosis and belief in the unity of God. There is a test and trial, and a distinction has to be made between a verse firmly established with truth and a wavering *mutashābih* verses.<sup>9</sup> It is for this reason that the scholars need to investigate and consider the meaning with scrutiny and reasoning and exert great talent in deriving the exposition of a *mutashābih* verse by referring it to *muḥkam* verse. If one is successful, it results in great rewards and the attainment of higher ranks from God. It is a believer's conviction that the word of God is neither inconsistent nor contradictory. When he observes some apparent incompatibility in it, he endeavors to find out conformity and harmony and adopts the customary practice sanctioned by the traditions. Due to his reflection, God helps him in his thoughts and clarifies the *mutashābih* verses in accordance with the *muḥkam* verses. It increases peace of mind in his belief and strengthens his conviction.<sup>10</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī cites two examples explaining how a *muḥkam* verse can provide the basis for interpreting a *mutashābih* verse. He considers that “Looking upon their Lord” (*ilā rabbihā nāziratun*)<sup>11</sup> is a *mutashābih* verse which can be interpreted by a *muḥkam* verse: “Vision cannot attain Him,” (*lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār*),<sup>12</sup> Similarly, “We command its people (living a life of) luxury” (*amarnā mutrafihā*)<sup>13</sup> is a *mutashābih* verse

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<sup>9</sup> See Leah Kinberg, “*Muḥkamāt* and *Mutashābihat* (Koran 3/7): Implication of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis,” *Arabica* 35 (1988): 143-72; Michel Lagarde, “De l’Ambiguïté (*mutashābih*) dans le Coran: tentatives d’explication des exégètes musulmans,” *Quaderni di studi arabi* 3 (1985): 45-62.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:528.

<sup>11</sup> Qur’ān, 75:23.

<sup>12</sup> Qur’ān, 6:103.

<sup>13</sup> Qur’ān, 17:16.



which can be interpreted by “God does not command indecency” (*inna Allāh lā yā’uru bi al-faḥshā’i*)<sup>14</sup> which is a *muḥkam* verse.

Al-Zamakhsharī does not define the meaning of *mutashābihāt* as comprehensively as he does the meaning of *muḥkamāt*. He simply glosses *mutashābihāt* as a combination of *mushtabihāt* and *muḥtamilāt*. However, according to Ibn Manzūr and Ibn Qutayba *mutashābihāt* is synonymous with *mushkilāt* (difficult or obscure words).<sup>15</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī further states that as for those in whose hearts is swerving, they follow what is ambiguous (*mutashābih*) in it and does not conform to the *muḥkam*. He also mentions that the interpretation of these verses “does not correspond with the statements of the people of the truth, that is the Mu‘tazilites” (*ma yuṭābiqah min qawl ahl al-ḥaqq*). Thus, the non- Mu‘tazilites interpret these verses according to their desires and turn away the people from their religion and mislead them.<sup>16</sup>

This verse<sup>17</sup> can be interpreted in two different ways. In the first case, *wāw* is read as a conjunctive particle (*wāw al-‘atf*) that links the words *Allāh* and *al-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilmi*. Therefore, the verse will be interpreted that not only God knows its interpretation, but also those who are firmly grounded in knowledge who say: “We believe in it, all is from our Lord.” In the second case, *wāw* is not a conjunctive particle (*wāw al-‘atf*), rather it is read as *wāw al-isti’nāf*, indicating the beginning of the verse. Therefore, the verse will be interpreted that no one except God knows its interpretation. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: “We believe in it, all is from our Lord.” Al-

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<sup>14</sup> Qur’ān, 7:28.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Ta’wīl mushkil al-Qur’ān*, 102; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 11:358.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:528.

<sup>17</sup> Qur’ān, 3:7 reads as follows: *wa mā ya’lamu tā’wīlahu illā Allāh wa al-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihi*.

Zamakhsharī's interpretation is based upon his reading of *wāw* in the verse as a conjunctive particle. According to him, the interpretation of these verses is known not only to God, but also to those people who have sound knowledge, i.e. firmly established and deep rooted.<sup>18</sup>

For al-Zamakhsharī, the classification of the Qur'ānic verses into *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* is limited to the theological aspects of the Qur'ān. Those verses which support any or all of the five principles of the Mu'tazilite doctrines are regarded as *muḥkamāt*, while those which contradict them are considered *mutashābihāt*. The following two verses can be cited to illustrate the point. The first verse: "Whosoever wishes, let him believe; and whosoever wishes, let him disbelieve" (*fa-man shā'a fal-yu'min wa-man shā'a fal-yakfur*)<sup>19</sup> is defined by the Mu'tazilites<sup>20</sup> as *muḥkam* because it proves their argument for free will, whereas the Sunnites consider it *mutashābih*. The second verse: "And you will not desire unless God wills" (*wa-mā tashā'ūna illā an yashā' Allāh*)<sup>21</sup> is defined by the Mu'tazilites as *mutashābih* since it contradicts one of their principles, but the Sunnites consider it as *muḥkam* because it proves their concept of predestination.

It will be appropriate to discuss the concepts of predestination and free will (*al-qadā wa al-qadar*). *Al-qadā* means "God's judgment (divine decree) in all the matters

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<sup>18</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī emphasizes with the following sentence: "And they bite fiercely with sharp molar tooth" (*wa-'aqqū fihī bi-ḍirsi qāṭi*). It means that they interpret the *mutashābih* verses conclusively and unequivocally. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:527-29.

<sup>19</sup> Qur'ān, 18:29.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse as follows: "The truth has come and excuses have been taken away and there is nothing left except your choice for yourselves between the path of deliverance and the path of destruction" (*jā'a al-ḥaqq wa zāhat al-'ilal falam yabqa illā ikhtiyārikum li-anfusikum mā shi'tum min al-akhdhi fī tarīq al-najāt aw fī tarīq al-hilāk*). See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:583.

<sup>21</sup> Qur'ān, 76:30.

from eternity to the end of the world.”<sup>22</sup> *Al-qadar* means “to determine, to measure or to assign,” and “*al-qadariyya* are those who consider that every man is creator of his acts and do not perceive disobedience and sins ordained by predestination.”<sup>23</sup> According to al-Ash‘arī, the Qadariyya held the view that “man’s will was not wholly under the domination of the (divine) decree.”<sup>24</sup> In short, *qaḍā* pertains to pre-eternity, while *qadar* belongs to the present order of things” (*al-qaḍā fī al-azal wa al-qadar lā yazal*).<sup>25</sup> The Mu‘tazilites were against the doctrine of predestination and adhered to the concept of human free will. For them, therefore, an individual was responsible for his/her actions and these actions could not be attributed to God.

## 2. *‘Ilm al-ma‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān*

Al-Zamakhsharī states that knowledge of *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān* is essential for understanding the finer meanings of the Qur’ān. He mentions that “no one can understand the real meanings except a person who is proficient in two sciences pertinent to the Qur’ān, and they are the science of expression and the science of semantics and syntax” (*lā yaghūsu ‘alā shay’ min tilka al-ḥaqā’iq illā rajulun qad bar‘a fī ‘ilmayn mukhtaṣṣayn bi-al-Qur’ān wa-humā ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī wa-‘ilm al-bayān*).<sup>26</sup> He mentions these terms twice in the introduction of *al-Kashshāf*, and in his earlier works, *A‘jab al-‘ujab*.<sup>27</sup> According to Zubir,

<sup>22</sup> See ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rīfāt* (Beirut: Maktabat Lebanon, 1985), 185.

<sup>23</sup> See Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rīfāt*, 181.

<sup>24</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *Al-Ibāna ‘an usūl al-diyāna*, translated. Walter C. Klein (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940), 15.

<sup>25</sup> See Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rīfāt*, 181, 185; L. Gardet, “Al-Ḳaḍa wa ‘l-Ḳadar,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 4:365-67.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:96.

<sup>27</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *A‘jab al-‘ujab fī sharḥ lāmīyyāt al-‘Arab*. (Dār al-Warāqa, 1392), 29.

If something can be inferred from the way he uses the terms, then it is perhaps the possibility that his direct audience, the Mu‘tazilite scholars in Mecca, were already familiar with them. This is because he did not bother to introduce, nor specify what he meant by them.<sup>28</sup>

I will deal with al-Zamakhsharī later, but it would be relevant to look into the development and definitions of these terms by other scholars. Abū Ya‘qūb Sirāj al-Dīn al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229) in his *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm* describes all the linguistic disciplines, except “lexicography” (*lughā*). The book is divided into three major sections. The first section deals with “science of morphology” (*‘ilm al-ṣarf*), in which he discusses briefly “phonetics” (*makhārij al-huruf*) and “principles of root formation and semantic derivation” (*qawānīn al-ishtiqāq*). In the second section, he discusses in greater detail the “science of syntax” (*‘ilm al-naḥw*). The third section is devoted to the “science of stylistics and imagery” (*‘ilm al-ma‘ānī wa-al-bayān*), but the terms are confusing in their arrangement and obscure in their definitions. In the end of the book, al-Sakkākī defines the “science of demonstration” (*‘ilm al-istidlāl*) and the “science of poetry” (*‘ilm al-sh‘ir*) which elaborates the “science of meters” (*‘ilm al-‘arūḍ*) and the “science of rhyme” (*‘ilm al-qāfiya*).<sup>29</sup> Although, al-Sakkākī does not mention his sources, his work is based upon Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1209) *Nihāyat al-i‘jāz fī dirāyat al-i‘jāz*. Al-Rāzī acknowledges that his own work is primarily based upon ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s (d. 471/1078) *Asrār al-balāgha* and *Dalā’il al-i‘jāz*.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Badri Najib Zubir, *Balāgha as an Instrument of Qur’ān Interpretation: A Study of al-Kashshāf* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 2008), 5.

<sup>29</sup> Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1983), 5-13, 75-77, 161-62, 615, 618.

<sup>30</sup> W.P. Heinrichs, “al-Sakkākī, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī Sirādj al-Dīn,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>, 8:893.

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Badr al-Dīn b. Mālik (d. 686/1287), scholar and author of commentaries and compendia in many fields of Arabic philology abridged al-Sakkākī’s *Miftāḥ* in his book entitled *al-Miṣbāḥ fī ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī wa al-bayān wa al-badī‘*. His most important contribution is the integration and enlargement of the term *badī‘* into the theory of rhetoric. The *Miṣbāḥ* is the first treatise to establish the standard tripartite division of Arabic rhetoric, i.e. ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī, ‘ilm al-bayān and ‘ilm al-badī‘. He states that “*al-badī‘* is defined as complement to the eloquence” (*al-badī‘ huwa ma‘rifat tawābi‘ al-ḥaṣāha*).<sup>31</sup>

While the three components of rhetoric were firmly established by Badr al-Dīn, his influence on al-Sakkākī’s commentators remained limited in other aspects of the figures. More than a century later after al-Sakkākī, chief *qāḍī* Abū ‘Abd Allāh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338) composed two famous compendiums on rhetoric entitled the *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* and the *Īdāḥ fī ‘ulūm al-balāgha*. The *Talkhīṣ* is a digest of al-Sakkākī’s *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm*. The *Īdāḥ* is a large version of the *Talkhīṣ*. He borrowed from ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s *Asrār al-balāgha* and *Dalā’il al-i’jāz*, al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*, and some of his other predecessors. The two books have completely superseded the two books of al-Jurjānī and *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm* of al-Sakkākī.<sup>32</sup>

According to al-Qazwīnī, *‘ilm al-balāgha* consists of three components: ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī, ‘ilm al-bayān and ‘ilm al-badī‘. He defines ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī as “the science through which one knows the various existing patterns of Arabic speech by means of which it meets the requirements of each situation” (*huwa ‘ilmun yu‘rafu bihi aḥwālu al-*

<sup>31</sup> Al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ*, 370-73; Shawqī Dayf, *Al-Balāgha: Taṭawwur wa-tā’rīkh* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1965) 315-16; Udo Simon, “Badr al-Dīn Ibn Mālik,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 1 (2009):161-63.

<sup>32</sup> S.A. Bonebakker, “al-Ḳazwīnī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 4: 863-64; Geert Jan van Gelder, “Badī‘,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 3 (2009):142-44; A. Schaade and G.E. von Grunebaum, “Balāgha,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:981-83.

*lafzi al-‘arabiyyi al-latī bihā yuṭābiqu muqtaḍa al-ḥāli*). ‘*Ilm al-bayān* is defined as “the science through which one knows how to express one and the same concept in ways which differ as to the degree of clarity achieved in indicating this concept” (*huwa ‘ilmun yu‘rafu bihi irādu al-ma‘nā al-wāḥidi bi-ṭuruqin mukhtalifatin fī wuḍūḥi al-dalālati ‘alayhi*). ‘*Ilm al-badī‘* is defined as “the science through which one knows the possibilities of style embellishment and its clarity after its adaptation with the requirements of situation” (*‘ilmun yu‘rafu bihi wujūh taḥsīn al-kalāmi ba‘da ri‘āyati taṭbiqihu ‘ala muqtaḍa al-ḥāli wa- wuḍūḥi al-dalālati*).<sup>33</sup>

Al-Qazwīnī further elaborates that the ‘*ilm al-ma‘ānī* deals with a number of syntactical and semantic figures, while in the ‘*ilm al-bayān* all the figures that are part of imagery, such as simile (*tashbīh*, *tamthīl*), metaphor (*isti‘āra*), and metonymy (*kināya*) are incorporated. All the remaining figures are the part of the ‘*ilm al-badī‘*, which are generally subdivided into two categories: *lafzī*, pertaining to sounds or wording, and *ma‘nawī*, pertaining to meaning. These terms become more complicated because the relation between grammar, logic and rhetoric; and between literary theory and literary criticism is not clear and there is overlap between these sciences.<sup>34</sup>

The Zaydī scholar and *imām* Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza al-‘Alawī’s (d. 745/1344 or 749/1348) *Kitāb al-Ṭirāz al-mutaḍammīn li-asrār al-balāgha wa ‘ulūm ḥaqā’iq al-i‘jāz* was written as an introduction to the author’s lectures on al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*. Al-‘Alawī presents his views in great detail and cites many examples. He states that “‘*ilm-ma‘ānī* is the science regarding the conditions of the Arabic words which are in

<sup>33</sup> Aḥmad Maṭlūb, *Al-Qazwīnī wa-shūrūḥ al-talkhīs* (Baghdad: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1967), 632, 638, 640; S.A. Bonebakker, “al-Ḳazwīnī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 4: 863-64.

<sup>34</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Talkhīs fī ‘ulūm al-balāgha*, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Barqūqī (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1982), 24, 37-8, 235-8, 347-9.

agreement and conformity with the necessity of stylistic composition” ( *‘ilm-ma ‘ānī huwa al-‘ilm bi-aḥwāl al-alfāz al-‘arabiyya al-muṭābiqat li-muqtaḍā al-hāl min al-‘umūr al-inshā’iyya*). So far as *‘ilm al-bayān* is concerned, it deals with the attainment of the single meaning through diverse methods like the *isti‘āra* (metaphor), the *tashbīh* (simile), and the *kināya* (metonymy) and like that for the distinctness of the meaning” ( *‘ilm al-bayān ḥasilahu irad al-manā al-wāḥid bi-ṭuruq mukhtalifa fī wudūḥ al-dalāla ‘alyhi ka al-isti‘āra wa al-tashbīh wa al-kināya wa ghayrahā*). According to him, “figure of speech that demonstrates the word’s essential essence depending upon its composition, not from its real meaning, rather exposition of its subsequent meaning, is called *‘ilm al-badī’*” ( *kalām fīmā yu‘radu li-jawhar al-lafz min al-alqābi bi-ḥasbi ta’līfihī lā min jihat dalāla ‘alā ma’nāhu wa innamā dalālatuhu ‘alā ma’nāhu tābi‘atun li-dhālika wa hādha huwa al-lladhī yulaqqabu bi-‘ilam al-badī’*).<sup>35</sup>

According to Shawqī Ḍayf, al-Zamakhsharī was the first scholar who coined the terms *‘ilm al-ma ‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān* and drew a line between the study of the aspects of construction (*naẓm*) and the study of figures of speech.<sup>36</sup> By implication, he is suggesting that the distinction between these two sciences antedates al-Sakkākī’s *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm* and al-Qazwīnī’s *Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ* and the *Īdāḥ fī ‘ulūm al-balāgha*.

Aḥmad al-Ḥūfī and Darwīsh al-Jundī are also of the opinions that al-Zamakhsharī’s understanding of *‘ilm al-ma ‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān* is the same as that of al-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī. Al-Jundī even goes further by stating that al-Zamakhsharī was the first scholar to name the three sub-sciences of *‘ilm al-balāgha* as *‘ilm al-ma ‘ānī*,

<sup>35</sup> Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza al-‘Alawī, *Kitāb al-Ṭirāz al-mutaḍammīn li-asrār al-balāgha wa ‘ulūm ḥaqā’iq al-i’jāz* (Misr: Dār al-Kutub al-Khadīviyya, 1914), 1:11, 2: 354; Aḥmad Maṭlūb, *Al-Balāgha ‘inda al-Sakkākī* (Baghdād: Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Nahḍa, 1964), 360.

<sup>36</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *Al-Balāgha: Taṭawwur wa tā’rīkh* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1965), 221-2.

*‘ilm al-bayān* and *‘ilm al-badī‘*. But he also mentions that al-Zamakhsharī usually used *‘ilm al-bayān* as a general term for those three sub-sciences as a whole.<sup>37</sup>

Zubir is of the opinion that,

*‘Ilm al-bayān* and *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī*, according to al-Zamakhsharī, represent two sciences, but he fails to draw a rigorous dividing line between the two. He identifies the former with the study of *naẓm* (in other words, the styles of phrasing), and the latter with the study of *ma‘ānī*, as meanings of discourse and as ideas in the abstract. This has resulted in certain overlapping areas between the two sciences, in which case what is said to be a *ma‘ānī* issue might equally be considered to be a *bayān* issue.<sup>38</sup>

In general, al-Zamakhsharī identifies *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* with the study of *ma‘ānī*, as meanings of discourse and as ideas in the abstract, while *‘ilm al-bayān* with the study of *naẓm*, as styles of phrasing. However, he does not make any demarcation between the *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān* and liberally uses all the figures, i.e. *majāz*, *tashbīh*, *tamthīl*, *takhyīl*, *isti‘āra*, and *kināya*. Approximately a century later, al-Sakkākī defined *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān*, though still obscure in their meanings. It was not until two centuries after al-Zamakhsharī when al-Qazwīnī al-Khaṭīb and Yaḥyā b. Ḥamza al-‘Alawī refined these concepts and incorporated *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī*, *‘ilm al-bayān*, and *‘ilm al-badī‘* as components of *‘ilm al-balāgha*.

In the following seven verses, al-Zamakhsharī employs *‘ilm al-ma‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān*:

First verse: “He (Moses) said: ‘O Lord, reveal to me Yourself so that I may see You.’ He said: ‘You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its

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<sup>37</sup> Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥūfī, *Al-Zamakhsharī* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, 1966), 201-3; Darwīsh al-Jundī, *Al-Naẓm al-Qur‘ānī fī Kashshāf al-Zamakhsharī* (Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍa, 1969), 248-50.

<sup>38</sup> Zubir, *Balāgha as an Instrument of Qur‘ān Interpretation*, 24.



place you may then see Me.’ When his Lord revealed Himself on the mountain, He leveled it to ground, and Moses fell down unconscious. When he woke up, he said: ‘All glory to You. I turn to You in repentance, and I am the first to believe.’”<sup>39</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretation of “reveal to me [Yourself]” (*arinī anzur ilayka*) is “cause me to know Yourself specifically, openly, and clearly” (*‘arrafnī nafsaka ta ‘rīfan wāḍiḥan jaliyyan*). Al-Zamakhsharī gives the example of the signs of the Day of Judgment when people are constrained to recognize Him clearly. When God said to Moses, “you cannot see Me” (*lan tarānī*) meant “you will never have the capability to know Me in this way and your strength will never have the endurance of this constrained marvel” (*lan taḥīqa ma ‘rifatī ‘alā hādhi-hi al-ṭarīqa wa lan taḥtamil quwwataka tilka al-ayat al-muḍṭarrata*). He further elaborates that God told Moses that He would appear upon the hill to show His signs and if he could remain steadfast there he might be able see Him. However, when God manifested the power and reverberation of His command and will, the mountain was leveled to ground and Moses fell down unconscious. Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse metaphorically and proves that the vision God is not possible, a position in accordance with Mu‘tazilite principles.<sup>40</sup>

Second verse: “God has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and on their sight is a veil. For them is a great punishment.”<sup>41</sup> The sealing of the heart is one of the main issues in the Mu‘tazilite theology, since it is contrary to the principle of justice (*‘adl*).

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “seal” (*khatm*) and “conceal” (*katm*) as belonging to the same category of words, i.e. cognate which are used in conjunction with each other.

For instance, when a contract or document is finalized it is sealed with a “signet”

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<sup>39</sup> Qur’ān, 7:143.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:501-507.

<sup>41</sup> Qur’ān, 2:7.

(*khātim*) to conceal and cover so that one may not have access to its contents or alter it. He says that neither “seal” (*khatm*) nor “cover” (*taghshia*) has been used in a literal sense but “metaphorically” (*majāzan*). He further elaborates that linking God to the “sealing of their hearts” is “evil” (*qabīḥ*) and God is above doing any evil act. If someone asks what does the sealing of heart and covering of the eyes mean, al-Zamakhsharī replies that in fact, there is neither a sealing nor a covering, rather it has been used figuratively (*majāzan*), that is, as a metaphor and simile. As a metaphor (*isti ‘āra*), the truth does not enter into the hearts of the unbelievers because they turn away and reject it. Similarly, the eyes of the unbelievers are covered and veiled because they do not perceive the signs of God. Also there is a simile (*tamthīl*) in it because the unbelievers’ hearts and eyes are compared to the things which are separated through cover from the perception of the truth.<sup>42</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī quotes the following verses in support of his interpretation: “I (God) am not unjust to My servants” (*wa mā anā bi-ẓallāmin li-l- ‘abīd*),<sup>43</sup> “We never do wrong to people, but they do wrong to themselves” (*wa mā ẓalamnā hum wa lākin kānū hum al-ẓālimīn*)<sup>44</sup> and “God never enjoins indecency” (*inna Allāh lā ya ‘mur bi-l-fahshā*’).<sup>45</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī gives five reasons for his interpretation of this verse. First, it is due to the unbelievers’ persistence in denying the truth of which God informs them that their hearts have been sealed. The seal is a consequence of the unbelievers’ deeds and it is not pre-ordained. Second, the seal should be interpreted metaphorically, since their

<sup>42</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:164-65.

<sup>43</sup> Qur’ān, 50:29.

<sup>44</sup> Qur’ān, 43:76.

<sup>45</sup> Qur’ān, 7:28.

hearts are empty of intelligence (*fiṭan*) like the hearts of the animals. God does not want to prevent them from believing or to force them not to believe because He is above all these things. Third, the ascription of the sealing the hearts to God is metaphorical. In a real sense, Satan or the unbeliever is the one who is responsible for sealing the heart, because “God has granted him the ability and possibility to do it” (*anna Allāh huwa alladhī aqdarahu wa makanahu*). Hence, “the sealing of the heart is ascribed to him in the same sense as an act which he has caused” (*asnada ilayhi al-khatm kamā yasnad al-fi'l ilā al-musabbib*). Fourth, since there is no possibility of their being believers except by force and constraint (*al-qasr wa al-iljā'*), God expressed this “impossibility” by the word “*khatm*” due to their persistence in disbelief. Fifth, in the following two verses that have a similar context, the unbelievers say sarcastically: “Our hearts are veiled from what you call us to, and in our ears is heaviness. Between us and you there is a veil. So act (your way), we are acting (ours)” (*wa qālū qulūbunā fī akinnatin mimmā tad'ūnā ilayhi wa fī adhāninā waqrūn wa min bayninā wa baynika hijāb fa'mal innanā 'āmilūn*)<sup>46</sup> and “(God) seals his ears and heart, and covers over his eyes with a veil” (*wa khatama 'ala sam'i-hi wa-qalbi-hi wa ja'ala 'ala baṣri-hi ghishāwatan*).<sup>47</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī does not interpret the following verses literally but states that Satan’s “power” (*sulṭān*), God’s “command” (*amar*), God’s “handful” and “right hand” (*maṭwiyyātun bi-yamīnihi*), God’s “eyes” (*a'yun*), and “veiled from their Lord” (‘an rabbihim lamahjūbūn) have been used figuratively.

Third verse: “When the issue has been settled, Satan shall say: ‘Surely God made you a promise of truth and I made you a promise, but did not keep it. I had no power over

<sup>46</sup> Qur’ān, 41:5.

<sup>47</sup> Qur’ān, 45:23; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:164-69.

you except to call you, and you responded to my call. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you nor can you help me. I deny your having associated me earlier (with God).”<sup>48</sup>

In his interpretation of this verse, al-Zamakhsharī asks: “What is the nature of Satan’s power over human beings and to what extent can he lead them astray?” He answers this question with the argument that a man either chooses “the mischief” (*al-shaqāwa*) or “the felicity” (*al-sa’āda*) and gets it. God has no role in either, except “enabling” (*tamkīn*) him, nor does Satan except that he makes attractive (*taz’īn*) the choice of mischief with evil deeds. If the matter would be as the Mujbirites<sup>49</sup> claim, Satan would say: “Do not blame me and not to yourself because God decreed unbelief for you and He forcibly imposed it.”<sup>50</sup>

Fourth verse: “And when We desire to destroy a town We command its people of luxury, but as they transgress therein Our sentence against them is pronounced, and We destroy them utterly.”<sup>51</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “We command” (*amarnā*) in a figurative sense. He says that the people transgressed despite their being granted benefaction and kindness so that they may become good and grateful. They indulged in sinfulness and moral depravity. When they became transgressors they were destroyed completely because of their transgression.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Qur’ān, 14:22.

<sup>49</sup> The Mujbirites are those who hold the doctrine of *jabr* (compulsion), meaning that man does not really act but only God. The Mu‘tazilites applied the term to the Traditionalists more generally, i.e. all those who rejected free will, usually in the form of Mujbirites to the Traditionalists. Al-Zamakhsharī often uses it in his exegesis of *al-Kashshāf* against his adversaries. See Montgomery Watt, “Djabriyya or Mudjbira,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>, 2:365.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:374-75.

<sup>51</sup> Qur’ān, 17:16.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:500-1.

Fifth verse: “They do not esteem God as is rightly due to Him. The whole earth will be [in] His grip and the heavens will be rolled up in His right hand on the Day of Resurrection. Glory to Him, may He be exalted above whatever they associate [with Him].”<sup>53</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that God is addressing those people who do not recognize His greatness and eminence. He states that in this verse, the grandeur and magnificence of God has been described by means of visualization (*takhyīl*). He states that His grasping of the earth and rolling up of the heavens in His right hand on the Day of Resurrection expresses His sublimity, exaltation, and power. It is a depiction (*taṣwīr*) of His Majesty and nothing else, without taking the “handful” or the “right hand” into the realm of the literal or that of the figurative. W.P. Heinrichs elaborates,

As a Mu‘tazilī, al-Zamakhsharī could not let the stark anthropomorphism of this passage stand. So the literal understanding was out of the question, but to consider the “handful” and the “hand” metaphors would not solve the problem, either, because then the unanswerable question would arise: what do they stand for? Therefore, al-Zamakhsharī considers the image presented by the Qur’ānic verse holistically: *takhyīl* is a visualization of an abstract notion such as God’s Majesty and Omnipotence in a comprehensive picture.<sup>54</sup>

Sixth verse: “Await in patience the command (judgment) of your Lord; surely, you are before Our eyes.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Qur’ān, 39:67.

<sup>54</sup> In the Qur’ānic exegesis, the term *takhyīl* was introduced by al-Zamakhsharī. The most explicit presentation of this notion occurs in the verse [39:67] being described. See W.P. Heinrichs, “Takhyīl,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:129-32.

<sup>55</sup> Qur’ān, 52:48.

In this verse “you are before Our eyes” (*fa-innaka bi-a ‘yuninā*) is also used as visualization (*takhyīl*), and it means that “in such a manner that We see you and guard you” (*bi-ḥaythu narāka wa-nakla ‘ūka*).<sup>56</sup>

Seventh verse: “No indeed, that day they will be veiled from their Lord.”<sup>57</sup>

According to al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretation, humiliation, and disgrace of the sinners and transgressors is also an example of visualization (*takhyīl*), because in this world only honorable people are allowed to visit kings, and lowly and vile people are prevented.<sup>58</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī believed in the indispensability of comprehending the finer and deep meanings of the Qur’ān through *‘ilm al ma ‘ānī* and *‘ilm al-bayān*. In the above mentioned interpretations of the verses, al-Zamakhsharī uses this technique and illustrates his viewpoint figuratively where it does not accord with the Mu‘tazilite principles.

### 3. Questions and Answers (*as’ila wa-ajwiba*)

In Islamic history, this format of argumentation and disputation has been in practice since the medieval period and strongly influenced all fields of knowledge. H. Daiber states that,

The oldest Islamic questions-and-answer literature endeavours to solve philological and textual problems of the Qur’ān text. Mention may here be made of the answers given by ‘Umar to questions about *kirā ‘āt*, *i ‘rāb*, *tanzīl* and meanings (*ma ‘ānī*) of the Qur’ān, and of the *Masā ‘il (su ‘ālāt)* of the Khāridjī leader Nāfi‘ b. Azrak (d. 65/685) on 200 difficult words in the Qur’ān, to which ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās answered with references to ancient Arabic poetry. This philological interest, especially present in the

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<sup>56</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:631.

<sup>57</sup> Qur’ān, 83:15.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:337.

oldest Qurʾān exegesis, increasingly made way for textual interpretation as a source of Islamic law and as a starting point of Islamic theology.<sup>59</sup>

Though there is not a uniform model, two principal types can be identified. The first type is purely unilateral where an author presents successively each of the assertions of the adversary (“he says” *qāla*), and in each case gives his reply (“I say” *qultu*). This type consists of different forms such as Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Kitāb al-Radd ‘alā al-zanādiqa*, and al-Khayyāṭ’s *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*. The second type is presented in the form of an imaginary controversy (*munāzara*) with a series of questions and answers. The standard pattern consists of thesis (*madhhab*, pl. *madhāhib*) and counter-thesis (*shubha*, pl. *shubhāt*); arguments (*adilla*, sing. *dalīl*) for the thesis; objections to the arguments (*as’ila*);<sup>60</sup> replies (*ajwiba*,) to objections; pseudo-arguments for the counter-thesis; and replies in refutation of these pseudo-arguments. The best examples of this type are al-Baqillānī’s *Tahmīd* and Ibn ‘Aqīl’s *Kitāb al-Funūn*.<sup>61</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī uses the technique of “questions and answers” (*as’ila*, sing. *su’āl wa-ajwiba*, sing. *jawāb*) not only in the exegesis frequently, but also in his theology book entitled *al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*. He asks a question, preceded by ‘If you were to say’ (*in qulta*), and then answers his question, beginning with ‘I would say’ (*qultu*). The following two verses describe a conversation of hypocrites who say: “When they meet the believers they say: ‘We believe;’ but when they are alone with their evil ones they say: ‘We are really with you; we were merely joking.’” But God turns the joke against them leaving them to wander blindly in their wickedness (*wa idhā laqū al-ladhīna āmanū*

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<sup>59</sup> H. Daiber, “Masā’il wa-Adjwiba,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 6:636-9.

<sup>60</sup> Here *as’ila* is not translated as questions, but as objections.

<sup>61</sup> See H. Daiber, “Masā’il wa-Adjwiba,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 6:636-9; D. Gimaret, “Radd,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 8:362-3; George Makdisi, “The Scholastic Method in Medieval Education: An Inquiry into Its Origins in Law and Theology,” *Speculum*, 49 (1974), 652-53.

*qālū āmannā wa idhā khalaw ilā shayāṭīnihim qālū innā ma ‘akum innamā nahnu mustahzī’ūn Allāh yashzi ‘u bihim wa yamuddu hum fī tuḡhyāni him ya ‘mahūn).*<sup>62</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets these verses by asking a question about the justification of God’s helping them, even though their evil friends would like to help them to continue in error which is an act of Satan. Then, he gives three reasons. First, God prevents His “graces” (*alṭāf*) which are conferred upon the believers. Their “abandonment” (*khidhlān*) is due to their unbelief and persistence in it. The darkness increases in their hearts, whereas the believers’ hearts become “wide open” (*inshirāḥ*) and “light” (*nūr*). Second, it can be due to the prevention of constraint” (*al-qasr wa al-iljā*’).<sup>63</sup> Third, in fact it is an act of Satan but ascribed to God because He has given Satan authority to lead the people astray.<sup>64</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī’s use of questions-and-answer is intended to clarify his viewpoint and refute his opponent. He interprets the above cited verse by posing a question: What is God’s justification to help the unbelievers in continuing their error. He replies the question by providing three reasons: God’s grace, prevention of constraint and

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<sup>62</sup> Qur’ān, 2:14-15.

<sup>63</sup> The concept of “constraint” (*al-qasr wa al-iljā*’) is intended to solve the issue of the discrepancy between what God wills people to do and what they actually do. ‘Abd al-Jabbār distinguishes between what God wills of people “by way of constraint and force” (*‘alā jihat al-iljā’ wa-al-ikrāh*) and what He wills that they should do as a result of their own choice, as voluntary acts of obedience (*‘alā jihat al-ikhtiyār wa-al-ṭaw’*). Actions (“objects of power” *maqḍūr*) of the first type must necessarily come into being when He puts the constraint (*iljā*’) into effect. But if voluntary actions of the kind He wills the responsible persons (*mukallafūn*) to perform, are not performed this does not necessitate any weakness or defect on His part. Neither do voluntary actions which come about against His will infringe His omnipotence. This is so because people’s voluntary actions are their exclusive objects of power and cannot reasonably be within God’s power (*lā yaṣīḥḥ an yakūn maqḍūran lahu*). See Michael Schwarz. “Some Notes on the Notion of *iljā*’ (Constraint) in Mu’tazila Kalām,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 11 (1972): 413-27; Qāḍī ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī al-Asadabādī, *Al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-al-‘adl* (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-al-Irshād al-Qawmī, 1960-8), *Mughnī*, 6: II:257, 268.

<sup>64</sup> When Satan refused to bow down to Adam out of pride, God expelled him from the Paradise. He requested God to give him time until the Day of Resurrection. God granted his request. Satan said: “My Lord, as You have condemned me, I shall embellish for people (their evil deeds) on the earth and lead them astray.” See Qur’ān, 15:32-40; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:179-90.



Satan's authority of leading the people astray. According to Daiber, "In the search for truth and its causes, the striving for knowledge (*'ilm*) found expression in the question-answer literature, in which the didactic element often appears consciously linked to the didactic one which tried to persuade and refute."<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. Grammar

Despite being of Persian descent, al-Zamakhsharī was one of the outstanding scholars in the fields of linguistic sciences of grammar, philology and lexicography. He was against the *shu 'ūbiyya*,<sup>66</sup> and considered that Arabic is the language selected by God for the revelation. He states in his *al-Mufaṣṣal*, a compendium on Arabic grammar, that the Arabic language is eloquent and is needed in all the Islamic sciences, such as the principles of jurisprudence and the interpretation of the Qur'ān is based upon the grammar.<sup>67</sup> Having a firm command of Arabic language and its grammar, al-Zamakhsharī constantly makes use of grammar throughout his commentary, to explain the text and its multiple meanings. As mentioned above, sometimes his exegesis is based

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<sup>65</sup> H. Daiber, "Masā'il wa-Adjwiba," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 6:636-9.

<sup>66</sup> Originally, *shu 'ūbiyya* was the concept of extending the equality between the *shu 'ūb* and the *qabā'il* to include equality among all Muslims adhered to by the Khārijites in the early period of Islam. The *Shu 'ūbiyya* movement appeared in the second/eighth century and reached its peak in the third/ninth century. Its movement's main objective was equality between non-Arabs (*'ajam*) and Arabs, whose advocates were also known as *ahl al-taswiya*. Most of the *Shu 'ūbis* were Persians, although Armaeans, Copts and Berbers are also mentioned in the literature. Approximately, two centuries later, a new *Shu 'ūbiyya* appeared in the fifth/eleventh century in al-Andalus by the Berbers and the "Slavs" (*ṣaqāliba*) comprising Galicians, Franks, Germans, Langobards and Calabrians. See S. Enderwitz, "Al-Shu'ūbiyya." *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:513; P.B. Golden, C.E. Bosworth, P. Guichard and Mohamed Meouak, "Al-Ṣaqāliba," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 8:872-81; Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 2:362; Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 1:461.

<sup>67</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī uses the term *'ilm al-i'rāb* for grammar. According to Kinga Dévényi, "*I'rāb* is regarded as an essential characteristic of Arabic. It is dealt with by *naḥw* 'grammar' or 'syntax,' and in this sense it is contrasted with *ṣarf/taṣrīf*, which deals with morphological and phonological changes in the declension of nouns and conjugation of verbs, whereas *i'rāb* deals with syntactic changes." See: Kinga Dévényi, "I'rāb," *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, 2:401-6.

on variant readings; other times, it is explained from the different ways a single text can be understood grammatically.

In the following two verses, there are some examples of his commentary where he makes the use of grammatical principles to interpret ambiguous passages of the Qur'ān.

First verse: “God will not forgive those who associate other gods with Him, but will forgive anything less than that to whom He pleases. And he who associates other gods with God has committed a very grave sin.”<sup>68</sup>

This verse, at face value, contradicts the Mu‘tazilites’ principles of the promise and threat (*wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*), and the intermediate position between belief and unbelief (*manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*). Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse using grammatical principles. He states that God’s statement, *li man yashā* “to whom He pleases” applies to both the negative and the positive verbs. In the first case, God will not forgive the one who associates other gods with Him, which implies that the person has not repented. In the second case, God will forgive whoever does not associate other gods with Him, which implies that the person has repented. It is like a prince who does not spend a single *dīnār* but gives tremendous sums of money. He does not spend a single *dīnār* on the one he considers undeserving, while he spends fortunes on the one he considers worthy.<sup>69</sup>

Second verse: “And God has made belief more desirable to you and attractive to your hearts, and rendered disbelief and sin and disobedience repugnant. They are those who are rightly guided, by God’s grace and blessing.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Qur’ān, 4:48.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:89-90.

<sup>70</sup> Qur’ān, 49:7-8.

Al-Zamakhsharī defines belief, transgression, disobedience and guidance strictly on the basis of the Mu‘tazilites’ principles. “Unbelief” (*kufr*) is concealing God’s benefactions and blessings and being ungrateful. “Transgression” (*fusūq*) is a departure from the belief involving committing major sins. “Disobedience” (*‘iṣyān*) is renouncing the restrictions and abandoning the obligations imposed by the law-giver, that is, God. “Guidance” (*rushd*) is steadfastness and firmness on the path of the truth. There is a difference between belief (*īmān*) and submission (*islām*). Belief (*al-īmān*) is confirmation with certainty and peace of mind and agreement of heart” (*al-īmān huwa al-taṣdīq ma‘ al-thiqa wa ṭamāniya al-nafs*). An affirmation with tongue without an agreement of heart is called “submission” (*islām*). However, this verse contradicts the Mu‘tazilite principles because it says God has made belief more desirable and attractive to hearts, whereas disbelief, sin and disobedience are made repugnant, and He has rightly guided people because of His grace and blessing. Al-Zamakhsharī interprets *faḍlan min Allāhi wa ni‘ma* “by God’s grace and blessing” through grammatical means. He elaborates that “grace” (*faḍlan*) is object of verbal clause or verbal noun. If you say how its occurrence is permissible, when guidance is a function of a group and grace is an activity of God, and the condition establishes limit on Creator’s activities. I reply that when guidance takes place its expression is manifested in the form of either attraction, or embellishment, or constraint and it is ascribed to His sanctified name. He further states that grace bestowed upon the people is for their guidance, and the grace and blessing mean favor and benefaction.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:569-70.

## 5. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*

Another principle of al-Zamakhsharī's exegesis is "to interpret the Qur'ān by means of the Qur'ān" (*tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*). He states that, "some parts of the Qur'ān interpret other parts" (*al-qur'ān tufassiru ba'dahu ba'dan*).<sup>72</sup> In the *Kashshāf*, he follows this method to clarify and elucidate one verse of the Qur'ān by quoting one or several other verses of the Qur'ān. The main objective is to explain, illustrate and reinforce his viewpoint as found in other verses. He is always precise and does not repeat his arguments if he comes across the same issue later on. The following is an example where al-Zamakhsharī interprets the Qur'ān by other verses of the Qur'ān.

Al-Zamakhsharī proves the unity of God and His justice in his interpretation of the verse 3:18<sup>73</sup> by quoting the four verses of *sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*,<sup>74</sup> "Say: 'He is God the only one, God, the everlasting. He did not beget and is not begotten, there is no one comparable to Him.'" He also uses another verse<sup>75</sup> to support his viewpoint that "God, there is no God but He, the living, eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth; and who can intercede with Him except by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is behind them; and they do not comprehend of His knowledge except what He wills. His seat encompasses the heavens and the earth and protecting them does not tire Him. He is all high and supreme." Thus, al-Zamakhsharī reiterates that God, His angels and the people of knowledge are witness that He is the upholder of justice. They are those who attest God's unity and

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<sup>72</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:238.

<sup>73</sup> "God is witness there is no God but He, and so are the angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm in justice. There is no God but He, the mighty and all-wise" (*shahida Allāhu annahu lā ilāha illā huwa wa-al-malā'ikatu wa-'ulū al-'ilmi qā'imān bi-al-qisṭi lā ilāha illā huwa al-'azīz al-ḥakīm*).

<sup>74</sup> Qur'ān, 112:1-4.

<sup>75</sup> Qur'ān, 2:255.

justice with manifest proofs (*hijaj al-sāṭi‘a*) and irrefutable arguments (*burhān al-qāṭi‘a*) and they are the scholars of justice (*‘ulamā’ al-‘adl*).<sup>76</sup>

## 6. *Ḥadīth*

Al-Zamakhsharī compiled four works on *ḥadīth*: *al-Fā’iq fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*, *Mukhtaṣar al-Muwāfaqāt bayna ahl al-bayt wa al-ṣaḥāba*, *Mutashābih asmā’ al-ruwāt* and *Khaṣā’iṣ al-‘ashara al-kirām al-barara*. He studied traditions with Ibn al-Baṭīr, Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī and Abū Sa’d al-Shaqqānī. Al-Andarabānī mentions that

He [al-Zamakhsharī] was the first to revive the science of Tradition (*‘ilm al-ḥadīth*) in Khwārazm and to make it to flourish there. He brought the books of the Traditions from Iraq and “urged the people” (*hathth al-nās*) to study it. This science was spread out by him and after him by Akḥṭab al-khuṭabā’ (Abū al-Mua’yyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī).<sup>77</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī cites *ḥadīths* in his commentary which prove his Mu‘tazilite views.<sup>78</sup> He uses these traditions as long as they stand on his side, and suit him to interpret the Qur’ān in accordance with Mu‘tazilite principles. Despite the fact that he was well-versed with *ḥadīth* literature, in most cases, these traditions are cited with little regard to either their *isnāds* (chains of authorities) or fidelity to the actual transmitted text (*matn*).

*Ḥadīth* scholars adopted a method *takhrīj* for the authenticity and verification of such *ḥadīths*. A *takhrīj* of *ḥadīths* is an evaluation in which it is investigated where a

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<sup>76</sup> The Mu‘tazilite called themselves as “people of the justice and the unity” (*ahl al-‘adl wa al-tawḥīd*).

<sup>77</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sira,” 379. Abū al-Mua’yyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī was al-Zamakhsharī’s favorite student and in the year 550/1155 he wrote a commentary on al-Zamakhsharī’s *Unmūdhaj* entitled *Kifāyat al-naḥw*. See Brockelmann, *GAL.Sp*, 1:285, 513, 549, 623; Brockelmann, *GAL*, 1:350.

<sup>78</sup> Generally, the Sunnī exegetes use *ḥadīths* reported by Sunnī authorities, whereas the *Shi‘a* exegetes use only those *ḥadīths* which are transmitted by ‘Alī and the *Shi‘ī* authorities. Al-Zamakhsharī quotes the *ḥadīths* from both of these sources as long as they support his Mu‘tazilite views.

particular *ḥadīth* can be found in authoritative collections, what is its complete *isnād* and in which category of *ḥadīth* it can be placed. According to Jonathan Brown,

With the *ḥadīth* canon firmly established *ḥadīth* critics turned their attention away from *ḥadīth* collections and towards the manner in which other areas of Islamic scholarship used *ḥadīth*. In books of *takhrīj*, a rash of which appeared during the 1300s and 1400s, a *ḥadīth* scholar took a book from another genre and discussed the status of the *ḥadīths* it contained. Since few books outside *ḥadīth* collections featured *isnāds* when they quoted *ḥadīths*, *takhrīj* books first provided all the *ḥadīth* collections that provided chains of transmission for a *ḥadīth* and then discussed its reliability.<sup>79</sup>

Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Zayla‘ī (d. 762/1360), a Ḥanafī jurist and traditionist, mentions in his *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth wa-al-āthār al-wāqī‘a fī tafsīr al-Kashshāf li-al-Zamakhsharī* all the *ḥadīths* found in the *Kashshāf*. He verified and supplemented the *isnāds* of the Prophetic traditions where those had not been provided. By this process, it is known exactly who mentioned and first recorded any Prophetic tradition cited by al-Zamakhsharī in the *Kashshāf*. Al-Zayla‘ī concludes that al-Zamakhsharī used all types of *ḥadīths*, such as “sound” (*ṣaḥīḥ*), “fair” (*ḥasan*), “weak” (*da‘īf*), “forged” (*mawḍū‘*), and “abandoned” (*matrūk*).<sup>80</sup>

About a century later, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), a Shāfi‘ī, *ḥadīth* scholar, judge and historian extracted from al-Zayla‘ī’s work

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<sup>79</sup> See Jonathan Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muhammad’s Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2009), 112; Tawfīq Aḥmad Sālmān, *‘Ilm al-takhrīj wa-dirāsāt al-asānīd* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2005), 15-35; Maḥmūd al-Ṭaḥḥān, *Uṣūl al-takhrīj wa-dirāsāt al-asānīd* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Salafiyya, 1982), 9-24.

<sup>80</sup> Saleh states that, “Many of the *ḥadīths* (other than the merit-of-*sūra ḥadīths*) used by al-Zamakhsharī are only found in al-Tha‘labī and they are not even found in other *ḥadīth* works. These traditions are described as “odd” (*gharīb*) by al-Zayla‘ī, indicating that they are not found anywhere, not even in books devoted to fabricated tradition.” Saleh, *Formation of the Classical Tafsīr*, 211 n; Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Zayla‘ī, *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth wa-al-āthār al-wāqī‘a fī tafsīr al-Kashshāf li-al-Zamakhsharī*, ed. Ṣulṭān b. Fahd al-Ṭabīshī (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Khuzayma, 1993), 1:158-62.

the traditions in the *Kashshāf* and compiled the book entitled *al-Kāfī al-shāf fī takhrīj aḥādīth al-Kashshāf*. He states in the introduction of his book that,

In fact, this *takhrīj* of *aḥādīth* is from the commentary of *al-Kashshāf* which was originally extracted by Abū Muḥammad al-Zayla‘ī. I have abridged it keeping its original intent and its beneficial use. I have followed the (original) book particularly in its entirety, except where some *ḥadīths* escaped (slipped away) from him either inadvertently or intentionally. I have extracted from the original book and added some *ḥadīths* to it.<sup>81</sup>

There are traditions with praises of particular *sūras* (chapters) or *āyāt* (verses) of the Qur’ān. According to Walid Saleh, “The merit-of-*sūra ḥadīths* are prophetic traditions that promise the reader of the Qur’ān varied rewards.”<sup>82</sup> There are a large number of such reports in the form of statements and exhortations ascribed to the Companions and early Successors of the Prophet Muḥammad in the pre-canonical collections, especially in Ibn Abī Shayba’s *Muṣannaḥ. Sūrat al-Mulk* is considered to engender forgiveness from God. This tradition is attributed to Shu‘ba.<sup>83</sup> According to some traditions, the *Mu‘awwadhatayn*, as well as *Sūra al-Fātiḥa* are commonly recited for the recovery from illness.<sup>84</sup> The recitation of two verses of *Sūrat al-Baqara* is considered equivalent to spend (part of) the night in worship.<sup>85</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal asserts that

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<sup>81</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Al-Kāfī al-shāf fī takhrīj aḥādīth al-Kashshāf* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1997), 5.

<sup>82</sup> Saleh, *Formation of the Classical Tafsīr*, 104.

<sup>83</sup> Qur’ān, *Sūra*, 67. See Mizzī, *Tuḥfa*, 10: no. 13550; Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘*, 5:164.

<sup>84</sup> Qur’ān, *Sūras*, 1, 113, 114. See Mizzī, *Tuḥfa*, 3: no. 4249; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:1727.

<sup>85</sup> Qur’ān, *Sūra*, 2. See Mizzī, *Tuḥfa*, 7: no. 9999, 10000; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:555.

somewhere in the *musabbiḥāt*,<sup>86</sup> there is a verse that is more excellent than a thousand other verses of the Qur'ān.<sup>87</sup>

Reciting of *Sūrat al-Shams*<sup>88</sup> is considered to be equivalent to the act of giving the whole earth as alms to the poor. The rewards promised by these traditions include the benefits and advantages of acquiring wealth, avoiding hardships, and a guarantee of a blissful and uneventful life in this world. *Sūrat al-Tīn*<sup>89</sup> bestows on its reader good health (*'āfiyah*) and certitude in faith (*yaqīn*). The reciter of the *Sūrat al-Kāfirūn* is assured success in trade as well as that he or she will be invested with an aura of respectability (*haybah*). It can also protect against machinations of the devil and the demons.<sup>90</sup>

Walid Saleh mentions that Abū Ishāq Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Tha'labī (d. 427/1035) was the first to introduce the merit-of-*sūra ḥadīths* at the beginning of all 114 *sūras* into his exegesis entitled *al-Kashf wa-al-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Al-Zamakhsharī incorporated the same traditions into *al-Kashshāf*. “Although he copied these traditions from al-Tha'labī, al-Zamakhsharī relegated them to the very end of his commentary on each *sūra*. What came first for al-Tha'labī comes last for al-Zamakhsharī.”<sup>91</sup>

In his interpretation of the verse 2:255, al-Zamakhsharī recounts some of the traditional reports already mentioned in a number of the previous commentaries. However, with regard to the nature of “seat” or “sitting” (*kursī*), he prefers a rationalist

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<sup>86</sup> There are six *musabbiḥāt suras* (57, 59, 61, 62, 64 and 87) in the Qur'ān, which begin with the glorification of God.

<sup>87</sup> Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 4:128; Mizzī, *Tuḥfa*, 7: no. 9888. See J.H.A. Juynboll, “Ḥadīth and the Qur'ān,” *EQ*, 2:376-96.

<sup>88</sup> Qur'ān, *Sūra*, 91.

<sup>89</sup> Qur'ān, *Sūra*, 95.

<sup>90</sup> Saleh, *Formation of the Classical Tafsīr*, 104.

<sup>91</sup> Saleh, *Formation of the Classical Tafsīr*, 107-8.



approach, insisting that the *kursī* image is purely a metaphor expressing the majesty of God. It is nothing but an “imagination” (*taṣwīr*) and visualization (*takhyīl*) of God’s greatness. In reality, there is no such chair, no sitting (*qu‘ūd*) on a chair and no one seated (*qā‘id*) in it. Al-Zamakhsharī quotes the verse 39:67 to show that people cannot do justice to the true nature of His greatness and power and that it is totally inadequate to transpose the human notions of “seat” or “sitting” onto this aspect of the verse. The whole earth shall be in His grasp on the day of resurrection and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand. It is only an “imagination” (*taṣawwūr*), not an actual rolling up and actual right hand. In fact, it is a “physical simile” (*thamthīl ḥissī*) of His greatness. In two instances, al-Zamakhsharī points out the high esteem in which God holds those of judicious minds and those referred to as the *ahl al-‘adl wa-l-tawḥīd* – a reference to the Mu‘tazilites, in whose theological doctrines the affirmation of God’s justice (*‘adl*) and unity (*tawḥīd*) are fundamental principles – thereby confirming the Mu‘tazilite character of his commentary.

He is “Living” (*al-ḥayy*), i.e. the Ever-enduring (*al-bāqī*) unto whom extinction has no access. He is the one who truly has knowledge and truly possesses power. *Al-qayyūm* means “always existing for the organization of the creation and its protection” (*al-dā‘im al-qiyām bi-tadbīr al-khalq wa ḥifḍahu*). The word *al-qayyūm* can also be read as either *al-qayyām* or *al-qayyīm*. *Sina* (slumber) is the state of drowsiness (*nu‘ās*) that precedes sleep. In other words, drowsiness does not overtake Him, nor sleep (*nawm*), and it is a confirmation of His being as *al-qayyūm*, because it is inconceivable that one who can be overcome in this way by sleep be eternally watchful.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:480.

Al-Zamakhsharī substantiates his interpretation by citing the following four *ḥadīths*:

First *ḥadīth*: It is reported that Moses asked the angels, and it was a question posed by his people like the one when they demanded to see God: “Does our Lord sleep?” God revealed to Moses that they should keep awake for three nights. He said: “Take two filled vessels.” Moses took them and God made him sleep, and one vessel was struck with the other, and both the vessels were broken. Then God revealed to him: “Say to the people, I hold fast the heavens and the earth with My power. If I were to fall asleep or drowsiness were to overtake me, they would go off course (and the world come to an end).”<sup>93</sup>

Second *ḥadīth*: The Prophet said that in any place where the throne verse (*āyat al-kursī*) is recited, Satan keeps away from that place for three days, no sorcerer or sorceress enters for forty nights in that place. He said to ‘Alī, “You should teach your children, your family members, and your neighbors this great verse.”<sup>94</sup>

Third *ḥadīth*: It is narrated by ‘Alī that he heard the Prophet saying from the pulpit, “Whoever recites the throne verse (*āyat al-kursī*) after every prescribed prayer, no one will stop him entering Paradise, and no one can do it persistently except the one who

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<sup>93</sup> This *ḥadīth* has been mentioned by Abū Ya‘lā, al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr*, al-Khaṭīb in his *Tarīkh al-Baghdād* and al-Dārāqutnī in his *al-Afrād* as extracted by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. According to al-Khaṭīb, it has been reported by Mu‘ammar, who reported from al-Ḥakam, who reported from ‘Ikrama. It is reported by Ibn Ḥanbal in his *Kitāb al-Sunan* as sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*). Abū Ya‘lā considers it weak (*da‘īf*), and al-Bayhaqī reports it as suspended (*mawqūf*). Ibn Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* mentions it as very weak (*gharīb jiddan*). See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:481-82.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Zayla‘ī mentions this *ḥadīth* in his *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth*. Ibn Ḥajar states that he did not find it. See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:484.

is righteous or a true worshipper. Whoever recites it before going to sleep God will protect him, his neighbor, his neighbor's neighbor, and the houses around him.”<sup>95</sup>

Fourth *ḥadīth*: It is reported by ‘Alī that the Prophet said: “O ‘Alī! The most noble of the human beings is Adam, the most eminent of the Arabs is Muḥammad, the best of the Persians is Salmān, the best of the Romans is Ṣuhayb, the best of the Abyssinians is Bilāl, the best of the mountains is Mount Sināī, the best of the days is Friday, the most sacred speech is of the Qur’ān, the most excellent part of the Qur’ān is *sūrat al-Baqara*, and the most excellent part of the *sūrat al-Baqara* is the seat verse (*āyat al-kursī*).”<sup>96</sup>

To illustrate and enumerate the virtues and merits of the seat verse (*āyat al-kursī*), al-Zamakhsharī quotes four *ḥadīths* which fall into the categories of weak, forged, and sound by leading *ḥadīth* critics and in most cases they are weak in *isnāds*. He states that the reasons for the virtues of this verse are God’s unity, His glorification, exaltation, and sublime attributes. Nothing is more worthy than God’s power and His commemoration is one of the best commemorations. He concludes “that the noblest and highest of the approaches to knowledge in God’s eyes is that of the people who focus on the concepts of justice and unity” (*anna ashraf al-‘ulūm wa-a’lāhā ‘inda Allāhi ‘ilm ahl-‘adl wa-al-tawḥīd*).<sup>97</sup> In reality, the conclusion should have been that the knowledge of the unity of God is the best knowledge, not the knowledge of some specific theological school, or sect, as al-Zamakhsharī attributes to the Mu‘tazilites.

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<sup>95</sup> According to al-Bayhaqī, *isnāds* (chains of authority) are weak (*da‘īf*). Al-Dārāquṭnī and Abū Nu‘aym consider it weak (*da‘īf*). See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:484-86.

<sup>96</sup> Qur’ān, 2:255. Al-Zayla‘ī mentions this *ḥadīth* in his *Takhrīj al-aḥādīth*. Ibn Ḥajar states that he did not find it. There are contradictory views about its *isnāds* (chains of authority), weak (*da‘īf*) and sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*). Ibn al-Jawzī ignored it and considered it among the forged (*al-mawdū‘āt*). See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:486-87.

<sup>97</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:486.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, al-Zamakhsharī composed four books on the subject of traditions and revived the *‘ilm al-ḥadīth*, and brought the books of the Traditions from Iraq in Khwārazm. However, when he cited *ḥadīths* in his interpretation of the Qur’ān, he paid little attention for the verification of either to their *isnāds* or contents. His main objective in citing these *ḥadīths* was to prove his Mu‘tazilite views. He employed them as long as they supported the Mu‘tazilite principles and did not contradict them.

### **7. Variant Readings of the Qur’ān (*qirā’āt*)**

Traditions from the Prophet Muḥammad mention the differences in recitation of the Qur’ān (which were permitted by him) and are linked to the seven *aḥruf* (sing. *ḥarf*), according to which Gabriel is said to have recited the Qur’ān to Muḥammad. Frederick Leemhuis states that,

From early works, however, it is clear that in the second/eighth century *ḥarf* was taken to mean the same thing as *qirā’a* in its narrow sense of “variant reading.” Early commentaries on the Qur’ān, such as those of Mujāhid (d. 104/722), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 162/778), ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/812), al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822), ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-San‘ānī (d. 211/827), al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ (d. between 210/825 and 221/835) and al-Farrā’ (d. 207/822), demonstrate that these variant readings did indeed occur across the whole range of lexical issues: from simple pronunciation variants through different case endings or verbal forms, synonyms or near synonyms, to interpolation of whole phrases.<sup>98</sup>

The promulgation of the ‘Uthmānic codex was intended to limit the variant readings, but they continued to circulate. Ibn Mujāhid (d.324/936), renowned for his study of the variant readings of the Qur’ān, was very influential in persuading the authorities to proscribe the Qur’ān versions of Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ubayy b. Ka‘b, and ‘Alī b.

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<sup>98</sup> Frederik Leemhuis, “Readings of the Qur’ān,” *EQ*, 4:353.

Abī Ṭālib follow the variant readings in accordance with the ‘Uthmānic consonantal text standardized by tradition and consensus of the scholars.<sup>99</sup>

Ibn Mujāhid recognized seven “readers” belonging to the second/eighth century, who were ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir (d. 118/736), ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr (d. 120/738), ‘Āṣim b. Abī al-Najūd (d. 127/745), Abū ‘Amr b. al-‘Alā’ (d. 154/770), Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt (d. 156/773), Nāfi‘ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 169/785), and ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/804).<sup>100</sup> According to R. Paret,

To the seven “readers” recognized by Ibn Mujāhid were added later on three others, and afterwards another four, but these never attained the same standing as the first seven... After the readings had been limited to the “Seven” recognized as canonical, and to the other “Three after the Seven” and “Four after the Ten,” all the others were eliminated in the practice of recitation. The “readers” henceforward had to keep exclusively to the canonical readings. This however did not completely rule out the uncanonical “deviant” (*shawādh*) readings. They were later adduced as useful evidence in the practical interpretation of the Qur’ān and in the elucidation of linguistic problems.<sup>101</sup>

For the interpretation of the following two verses, al-Zamakhsharī uses three variant readings of the Qur’ān to prove the Mu‘tazilite principles of unity (*tawḥīd*) and justice (*‘adl*):

“God is witness there is no God but He, and so are the angels and those endowed with knowledge, standing firm in justice. There is no God but He, the mighty and all-wise. The (true) religion with God is Islam.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> J. Robson, “Ibn Mudjāhid, Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-‘Abbās Abū Bakr al-Tamīmī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:880.

<sup>100</sup> Frederik Leemhuis, “Readings of the Qur’ān,” *EQ*, 4:353.

<sup>101</sup> See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1: 81; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 2: 302; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 5:144-48; R. Paret, “Ḳirā’at,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 5:127.

<sup>102</sup> Qur’ān, 3:18-19.

Al-Zamakhsharī states that the conclusive proof of God’s unity is expressed in *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (chapter on the unity)<sup>103</sup> and *āyat al-kursī* (throne verse).<sup>104</sup> God, His angels, and people of learning are witness that He is the upholder of justice. They prove God’s unity (*waḥdāniya*) and justice (‘*adl*) with manifest proofs and irrefutable arguments and they are known as the scholars of justice.<sup>105</sup>

According to the first variant reading, al-Zamakhsharī states that in verse 3:18, *annahu* is read with an initial short vowel /a/ (*fatha*), and in verse 3:19, *inna al-dīna* is read with an initial short vowel /i/ (*kasra*),<sup>106</sup> meaning that “God is witness upon it or with it” (*shahida Allāhu ‘alā annahu aw bi-annahu*). God says that “the [true] religion with God is Islam” (*inna al-dīna ‘inda Allāhi al-islām*) which is a “definite emphatic sentence” (*jumla musta’nifa mu’akkida*) and it confirms what has been stated in the preceding sentence. He interprets that *annahu lā ilāha illā huwa* “there is no God but He” is God’s unity (*tawḥīd*) and *qā’iman bi-al-qisṭ* “standing firm in justice” is “setting right” (*ta’dīl*). When the verse *inn al-dīna ‘inda Allāhi al-islām* “the (true) religion with God is Islām” succeeds the first verse, it means that Islam is “justice” (*al-‘adl*), and “unity” (*al-tawḥīd*), and “this is the religion with God” (*huwa al-dīn ‘inda Allāh*). Anything contrary to it has nothing to do with the religion. He elaborates that anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) or anything such as vision (*ru’ya*) of God, or the idea of divine “compulsion” (*al-jabr*)

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<sup>103</sup> Qur’ān, 112:1-4.

<sup>104</sup> Qur’ān, 2:255.

<sup>105</sup> See footnote 44.

<sup>106</sup> The difference between *anna* and *inna* is that *anna* (that) is a conjunction with following subject in the accusative or as a suffix and with nominal or copulative clause, whereas *inna* (behold, verily, truly) is a particle introducing a main clause, with following subject in the accusative or as a suffix. See W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, translated from the German of Caspari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2:78-81 and J. Milton Cowan, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Urbana, Illinois: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1994), 37.

which is merely an accusation of “injustice” (*al-jawr*) are not according to the religion of God which is Islām.<sup>107</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī gives three interpretations of *qā’iman bi-al-qist* (standing firm in justice): God’s distribution to the people of their means of livelihood (*al-arzāq*), and their appointed times of death (*al-ājāl*); fulfillment of reward and punishment (*yuthīb wa-yu’āqib*); and His commandment to His servants that they do justice to one another and they act on the basis of equality in their mutual relations (*wa-mā yā’ muru bi-hi ‘ibādi-hi min inṣāf ba’duhum li-ba’d wa-al-‘amal ‘alā al-sawiyati fī-mā baynahum*). According to the second variant reading both verses are read with short vowel /a/ (*fatha*). In this case, the pronoun of the second verse reverts to the first verse and it is read: “God is witness that the religion with God is Islam” (*shahida Allāhu anna al-dīna ‘inda Allāhi al-islām*). The meanings are distinctly clear because God’s religion is unity (*al-tawhīd*) and justice (*al-‘adl*). According to the third variant reading the first verse is read with short vowel /i/ (*kasra*), and the second verse is read with short vowel /a/ (*fatha*). In this case, it will be: “Truly, He is witness that the religion of Islam is justice and unity” (*shāhida ‘alā anna dīn al-islām huwa al-‘adl wa-al-tawhīd*). Al-Zamakhsharī concludes that all three variant readings support his interpretation that Islām is the religion of unity and justice.<sup>108</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretation of all the verses quoted above under the titles of his exegetical techniques reflect the Mu‘tazilites

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<sup>107</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:537-38; Jane I. Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term ‘Islām’ as Seen in a Sequence of Qur’ān Commentaries* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1975), 93-94.

<sup>108</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:534-39.

principles. Whenever he comes across a situation where a verse's interpretation is in conflict with his viewpoint, he utilizes any of his exegetical techniques. For instance, in case of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*, if a verse supports his views then it is *muḥkam*, otherwise it is *mutashābih*. Similarly, he uses other exegetical techniques, such as variant readings of the Qur'ān, *ḥadīths*, *'ilm al-ma'ānī* and *'ilm al-bayān* and grammar to interpret the Qur'ān in consonance with the Mu'tazilite principles.



## Chapter 5

### The Five Principles (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*)

In the early period of the Mu‘tazila school (*ca.* 200-35/815-50), there was a great diversity of opinions on theological issues, but the majority of them, as all other schools of thought, believed in the absolute unity of God and His justice. They upheld and defended the doctrine of *qadariyya* “free will”, and affirmed the absolute responsibility of an individual with regard to his/her transgressions and lapses in not performing the duties incumbent upon them. Regarding the controversy of ranking the sinful Muslim, Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā introduced the doctrine of *manzila bayna manzilatayn* “intermediate position.” Similarly, Mu‘tazilites were of the view that an unrepentant sinner will be subject to eternal torment of Hell, which developed later in the doctrine of *al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd* “the promise and the threat”.

It is widely believed that Abū al-Hudhayl<sup>1</sup> of the Baṣran school was the first who created a reliable and systematic dogmatic framework in his *Kitāb al-Hujja* that defined “the five principles” (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*) of the Mu‘tazila. He considered that these

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<sup>1</sup> Abū al-Hudhayl was born in Baṣra in 131/748. In 203/818, he settled in Baghdād and died in 226/841. He was the client (*mawlā*) of ‘Abd al-Qays. He was introduced to Mu‘tazilism as a student by a number of disciples of Wāṣil. The theology which he inherited from Wāṣil was still in its early stages and not systematically articulated. He was the first to undertake scholastic theology in a systematic manner for which he was remarkably qualified due to his keen insight in philosophy, his sagacity and his eloquence. He became one of the most influential early Mu‘tazilite theologians, an able disputant employing the strongest proofs, abundant demonstrations and decisive arguments. Abū al-Hudhayl was a prolific writer and according to Ibn Nadīm, he wrote fifty-three books, none of which are extant. Most of the books were polemics or refutations and disputations against adversaries including Mu‘tazilites, Traditionalists, Shi‘ites, Murji‘ites, Predestinarians, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans, Jews and Christians. He also wrote on the ambiguous verses of the Qur’ān, motions, sound and atoms. See Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:566-67, 1:626; ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 95-102; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:49-52; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 254-64; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 44-49; ‘Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1966), 6:521; Ibn Ḥajr al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 5:468-69; Abū Farash ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī b. al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī al-tārīkh al-mulūk wa-al-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā and Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 11:234-36; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-al-a‘lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1991-2000), 17:348-49.

principles were indispensable for a Mu‘tazilite identity. They were: “God’s unity” (*al-tawhīd*), “God’s justice” (*al-‘adl*), “reward and punishment” (*al-wa‘d wa-al-wa‘īd*), “intermediate position between belief and unbelief” (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) and “enjoining good and forbidding evil” (*al-amr bi-al-ma‘rūf wa-al-naḥy ‘an al-munkar*). These principles provided an indispensable identity to the Mu‘tazila, and determined the structure of their theological works for centuries.<sup>2</sup>

Later on, Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī<sup>3</sup> of the Baghdād school, and Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/915) of the Baṣra school formulated coherent theological frameworks. Abū Hāshim (d. 321/933), the founder of the Bahshāmiyya or Bahāshima school further systematized and refined the theological doctrines. The last major intellectual move within Mu‘tazilism originated with Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī,<sup>4</sup> who developed independent

<sup>2</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, 3:221-23; Al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh*, 38-39; Maymūn b. Muḥammad al-Nasfī, *Baḥr al-kalām*, ed. Walī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Farfūr (Damascus: Maktaba Dār al-Farfūr, 2000), 227-28.

<sup>3</sup> According to Ibn Ḥajar, Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī was born at Balkh in 273/886, but it is certainly incorrect because he was a contemporary as well as friend of Abu Muslim Muhammad who was born in 254/868. Therefore, al-Balkhī must have been born long before 273/866, perhaps in the year 243/856. According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, he died in 319/913. According to Ibn Abī al-Wafā’ and Ibn Quṭlūbughā, he belonged to Ḥanafī school. However, al-Sam‘ānī states that he was strongly committed adherent of the Jahmiyyia and Mu‘tazilite schools and sought to convert people to his belief. According to Ibn Murtaḍa, a large number of people in Khurāsān were guided by Balkhī (i.e. they became Mu‘tazilites). He was the disciple of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt who was the head of the Mu‘tazilite of the Baghdād. After the death of al-Khayyāt, al-Balkhī became the head and defender of the Baghdad school. He was a prolific writer and composed many books and treatises on theology, exegesis, ḥadīth, logic and refutation of the opinions of his opponents. The most important works include *Qabūl al-akḥbār wa ma‘rifa al-rijāl*, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr li al-Qurān*, *al-Maqālāt*, *‘Uyūn al-masā’il wa al-jawābāt* and *al-jadal wa ādāb ahlihi wa taṣḥīḥ ‘ilalihi*. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:613-15; Ibn Abī al-Wafā’, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī’a*, 2: 296-97; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 23; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 4: 259-60; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā*, 4:1491-93; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 4:635; Ibn Murtaḍa, *Ṭabaqāt*, 88; Albert N. Nader, “Al-Balkhī, Abū ‘l-Qāsim,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1002; Abbas Zaryab, “Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī,” *EIs*, 2:418.

<sup>4</sup> Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ṭayyib Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044) was a Mu‘tazilite theologian and Ḥanafī jurist. He studied Mu‘tazilite theology and legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) with the famous Qāḍī al-quḍāt ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad. He had profound praise and veneration for the Qāḍī which is evidenced in the numerous references made in his work *al-Mu‘tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*. However, he did not agree with him in all the cases and opposed him in some. He also studied medicine and became attached to the Nestorian physician and philosopher Abū al-Faraj b. al-Ṭayyib. In addition, he studied Aristotelian physics with Abū ‘Alī b. al-Samḥ (d. 418/1027). He died in Baghdad on 5 Rabī‘ al-thānī 436/28 October 1044 and the renowned Ḥanafī Qāḍī Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣaymarī led the funeral prayers. Abū al-Ḥusayn has been called as the *Shaykh al-Mu‘tazila* and is considered one of their lights. He was praised as being unique in his time and for his linguistic skill, eloquence, intelligence and wide knowledge. Abū al-Ḥusayn

theological views. However, all the refinements centered within the context of the five principles of Mu‘tazila, and these principles are still considered pertinent, and constitute the basis of the Mu‘tazilite theology.<sup>5</sup>

### 1. First Principle: Unity of God (*tawhīd*)

The most fundamental tenet in Islam is *tawhīd*, the confession of divine unity. The focal point of the Qur’ānic teachings about God is the principle of absolute monotheism, such that any type of belief positing more than one deity (*shirk*) is rejected in the strongest terms.

The term *ṣifa* means an attribute ‘signifying some of the characteristics of the personality’ (*al-dāll ‘alā ba‘ḍi aḥwāl al-dhāt*).<sup>6</sup> Claude Gilliot states that,

According to an al-Ash‘arī theologian, ‘the attribute/quality (*ṣifa*) is the thing that is in (the being) to which it is attributed (or in the qualified being, *bi-l-mawṣūf*) or to which it belongs, and that lets it acquire the attribution/qualification (*yuksibuhu l-waṣf*), that is the qualitative (*na‘t*) deriving from the attribute/quality (*ṣifa*) ... The Mu‘tazilīs, on the other hand, are said to maintain that the name is not identical to the object named; for them name and naming are synonyms.<sup>7</sup>

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was the author of many works but none of them is fully preserved. His prominent works include *al-Mu‘tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, *Kitāb Taṣaffuḥ al-adilla* and *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*. The *Sharḥ* was probably a succinct teaching manual on the five basic principles of the Mu‘tazilite theology. See Al-Maḥassin b. Muḥammad al-Hākim al-Jishumī, “Al-Ṭabaqāt al-hādiyat ‘ashara wa al-thāniyat ‘ashara min Kitāb Sharḥ al-‘uyūn,” in *Faḍl al-itizāl wa ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, ed. Fu‘ād Sayyid. (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisiyya li-al-Nashr, 1986), 387; Fakhr al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Rāzī, *I‘tiqādāt firaq al-muslimīn wa al-mushrikīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kuliyāt al-Azhariyya, 1978), 42; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4:271-72; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 17:587-88; al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar*, 3:187; al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i‘tidāl*, 3:654-55; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 70-71; Wilfred Madelung, “Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ṭayyib,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12:25; Madelung, “Abū ‘l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 1 (2007):16-19; Masoud Jalali-Moqaddam, “Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī,” *EIs*, 2:130-35.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Gimaret, “Mu‘tazila,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:786-88.

<sup>6</sup> See Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta‘rīfāt*, 138.

<sup>7</sup> See Claude Gilliot, “Attributes of God,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2007):176-82; Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, ed. Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-Sharqiyya, 1957), 213, 227-30.

The term *ṣifa* (attribute) is not mentioned in the Qur’ān, nor are divine attributes identified as such; however, forms of the verbal root *w-ṣ-f* are used a number of times, primarily with respect to the act of describing (*waṣf*) God. The attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God are distinct from the divine essence (*al-dhāt*). In fact, the term *ṣifāt Allāh* was borrowed in Islamic theology from the classical grammarians of the Arabic language. In the Qur’ān, however, the attributes of God are consistently called God’s “most beautiful names” (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*).<sup>8</sup>

From the sources dating back to the first half of the second/eighth century, it appears that by that time both the term names (*asmā’*) and the term attributes (*ṣifāt*) were well established in theological discourse. Through the separation of the derived names from the source of derivation, the term ‘names’ (*asmā’*) was employed for the derived divine names, such as ‘knowing’ (*‘alīm*), ‘living’ (*ḥayy*), and so on; while the term ‘attributes’ (*ṣifāt*) was applied to the ontological source from which these names were derived, that is, the attributes of ‘knowledge’ (*‘ilm*), ‘life’ (*ḥayāt*), and so on.

A controversial important point in the debate has been whether the names (*asmā’*) and attributes (*ṣifāt*) are interchangeable or do they have separate and discrete meanings? From the point of view of the Mu‘tazila, these two terms have distinct connotations, and a name of God does not necessarily entail an exclusive attribute. For example, names like ‘the knower,’ ‘the powerful,’ and ‘the hearing’ are specific and interchangeable, for they indicate God alone.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the Mu‘tazila held that God can be called by names like

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<sup>8</sup> Qur’ān, 7:180; 20:8; 59:24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Mukhtasr al-Ṣawā‘iq al-mursala ‘alā al-Jahmiyya wa al-Mu‘aṭṭila*, abridged. Muḥammad b. al-Mawṣilī (Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Imām, 1985), 298; Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Sallum, *Mukhtaṣar Lawāmi‘ al-anwār al-bahiyya wa sawā‘i‘ al-asrār al-athariyya*, ed. Muḥammad Zahrī al-Najjār (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1983), 95-97.

“living,” “knowing,” and “powerful,” but He cannot be qualified by “life,” “knowledge,” and “power”.<sup>10</sup>

By contrast, the orthodox *ahl al-sunna* not only consider the names inseparable from the attributes, but they believe that the affirmation of names without the affirmation of attributes to be impossible and inconceivable.<sup>11</sup> From this perspective, they regard the names as identical to the attributes, and that the only distinction between these two is that attributes have a derivative quality, while names do not.<sup>12</sup>

There has also been disagreement on the question of whether or not the names of God are originated and created or eternal and uncreated. The orthodox *ahl al-sunna* consider the names of God to be eternal, and they hold that before every act God is already named by His names, not that He became named by a name after performing an act. Thus from all eternity He has been the creator and the provider, and He did not become endowed with these names after creating and giving sustenance to the world.<sup>13</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites are the proponents of the separation of the name from the named, and they regard the names to be something other than the essence of God. They say that God in His eternity has neither names nor attributes, but after He created His creation, names and attributes were ascribed to Him. Therefore, His names and attributes, in this sense, are created.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibn Sallum, *Mukhtaṣar Lawāmi‘*, 96.

<sup>11</sup> Uthmān b. Sa‘īd al-Dārimī, *Al-Radd al-Imam al-Dārimī ‘alā Bishr al-Marīsī al-‘Anīd*, ed. Muḥammad Hāmid al-Fiḳī (Cairo: Maṭba‘ Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1939), 7; Ibn Qayyim, *al-Ṣawā‘iq*, 298; Ibn Sallum, *Mukhtaṣar Lawāmi‘*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, ed. Riḍā Faraj al-Humāmī (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyya, 2005), 2:802-3.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Dārimī, *Radd ‘alā Bishr al-Marīsī*, 8; Māturīdī, *al-Tawhīd*, 65-67; Ibn Sallum, *Mukhtaṣar Lawāmi‘ al-anwār*, 96-7; Faḍlullāh Tūrpushtī, *Al-Mu‘tamad fī al-mu‘taqad* (Fatih: Hakikāt Kitābevi, 1992), 24.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Dārimī, *Radd ‘alā Bishr al-Marīsī*, 7-8; Abū Ya‘lā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Farrā’, *Al-Mu‘tamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Wadī‘ Zaydān Ḥaddād (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1974), 70-71; Ibn Sallum, *Mukhtaṣar*

The first fundamental principle of the Mu‘tazilites is the unity of God, which is the most important thesis of their doctrine because it is the source of the other principles. According to them, God is one and unique and He has no likeness and comparison with anyone. God is beyond time and place; He is not a body at all but only “something”, a being that cannot be perceived by the senses but is exclusively known through revelation or through reason. God is mentioned in the Qur’ān thus: “there is no other like Him” (*laysa ka-mithlihi shay’*),<sup>15</sup> and “there is no one comparable to Him” (*wa-lam yakun lahu kufiwan aḥad*).<sup>16</sup> The importance monotheism for the Mu‘tazilites is demonstrated in that they call themselves “the people of justice and unity” (*ahl al-‘adl wa-al-tawḥīd*).

Al-Ash‘arī gives the following account of the Mu‘tazilites:

God is one, there is nothing like him; He is not a body, nor object, nor volume, nor form, nor flesh, nor blood, nor person, nor substance, nor attributes. He has no color, taste, smell, touch, heat, cold, moistness, dryness, length, breadth, depth, union, distinction, movement, rest or partition. Neither is He provided with parts, divisions, limbs, members, with directions, with right or left hand, before or behind, above or beneath. No place encompasses Him, no time passes over Him. Contiguity, withdrawal and incarnation cannot be conceived about Him. He cannot be described by any attribute, which are applicable to creatures, in so far as they are created, neither can it be said that He is finite. He cannot be described by measure, nor by movement in a direction. He is neither circumscribed, nor begetting nor begotten; measures do not encompass Him, nor do veils cover Him. The senses do not grasp Him, nor can man describe Him by any analogy. He does not resemble the creatures in any way. Neither accidents nor detriment can touch Him. Whatever occurs to any mind or is conceived by imagination cannot resemble Him (*wa-kullu mā khaṭara bi-al-bāli wa-taṣawwara bi-al-wahmi fa-ghayra mushabbihin lahu*). He is ceaselessly the first, and the foremost, He is the one who preceded created things and existed before the creation. He has not ceased to be knowing, deciding, living, nor does He cease to be so. Eyes do not

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*Lawāmi‘ al-anwār*, 97; Ahmad Pakatchi, Najib Mayel Heravi, and Shahram Khodaverdian, “Allāh,” *EIs*, 3:614-46.

<sup>15</sup> Qur’ān, 42:11.

<sup>16</sup> Qur’ān, 112:4.

perceive Him, and vision does not penetrate Him. He cannot be conceived by imagination, nor can He be heard by ears. He is a being, but is not like other beings; knowing, deciding, living, unlike those who measure living beings by their knowledge. He is alone eternal, and there is none eternal besides Him (*innahu al-qadīmu waḥdahu wa-lā qadīmun ḡhayrihi*). There is no deity other than Him. He has no partner in His rule, and no sharing in His sovereignty. There is none who assists Him in producing what He produces and in creating what He creates. He has not created the creation on a preceding pattern. The creation of one thing is neither more easy nor more difficult to Him than the creation of any other thing (*wa laysa khalqu shayin bi-ahwan ‘alayhi min khalqi shayin ākhar wa la biaṣ‘abi ‘alyhi minhu*). There is no kind of relation between Him and what provides benefit; no harm can touch Him; neither joy nor pleasure can reach Him; neither pain nor sufferings can touch Him. There is no limit set to make Him finite. He will never cease to exist and He is not subject to any weakness and deficiency. He is exalted above touching women, and taking a companion and having children.<sup>17</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites were among the first Muslim theologians to deal with the problem of divine attributes<sup>18</sup> in detail. Their general approach sought to avoid any type of anthropomorphism and analyzed the problem of the relationship between the attributes and the essence from a strictly rationalist standpoint. They describe God by means of His “attributes” (*sifāt* sing. *ṣifa*), which are synonymous of “description” (*waṣf*) or “name”

<sup>17</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-islamiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-musallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter, (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980), 155-56. The translation of the above passage is from Wensinck’s *Creed*. At some places, I made changes which I consider convey a better understanding. See A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 73-74.

<sup>18</sup> In the beginning, the guiding principle was that any attribute not expressly indicated in the Qur’ān should not be affirmed. However, with the passage of time, there evolved a list of attributes by the scholars, enumerated in no particular order. These attributes are as follows: (1) attribute of essence (*ṣifat al-dhāt*): existence (*wujūd*); in the case of God, not distinguished from essence; (2) essential attributes (*dhātī* or *nafsī*), sometimes divided into (i) “negative” attributes which emphasize the divine transcendence: eternity (*qidam*), permanence (*baqā*), dissimilarity to the created (*al-mukhālafa li al-ḡawādith*), self-subsistence (*qiyām bi al-nafsi*); and (ii) *ma‘ānī* attributes, “adding a concept to the essence”: power (*qudra*), will (*irāda*), knowledge (‘*ilm*), life (*ḡayāt*), speech (*kalām*), hearing (*sam’*), sight (*baṣar*), perception (*idrāk*). Some denied that *idrāk* was an attribute; (3) attributes of “qualification” (*ma‘nawīyya*), the *ma‘ānī* attributes taken verbally: having power, willing, knowing, etc., and (4) attributes of action (*ṣifat al-af‘āl*), designating not an intrinsic quality but a “possibility” of God, which God may or may not do: vision of God (*ru‘yat Allāh*), creation (*khalq*), actual creation of the contingent world, command (*amr*), decree and predetermination (*qadar wa qaḡā’*), whose relations with the divine knowledge and will vary according to the school, and consent (*riḡā*). All except four of the attributes depend on the basis of intellect (*aqliyyāt*): they are mentioned in the Qur’ān and human reason can “prove” them. The four attributes: vision, speech, hearing and sight depend on the *sam‘iyyāt* and are known only because they have been revealed. See: L. Gardet, “Allāh,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 406.

*ism*, which they understand to be only words (*al-asma' wa-al-ṣifāt hiya aqwāl*), by which He is qualified when it is said that “God is knowing, God is having power, and nothing is like that” (*Allāhu ‘ālimun Allāhu qādirun wa-mā ashbah dhālika*).<sup>19</sup> The Mu‘tazilites do not make any distinction between attribute and description (*ṣifa* and *wasf*),<sup>20</sup> but they differentiate between types of attributes, namely “attributes of the essence” (*ṣifat al-dhāt* or *al-nafs*), and “attributes of the act” (*ṣifāt al-fi ‘lī*). The “attributes of the essence” (*ṣifat al-dhāt* or *al-nafs*) of God are *‘ilm* (knowledge), *qudra* (power), and *ḥayy* (life). God is knowing by His essence, powerful by His essence, and living by His essence. These attributes are eternal and unchangeable like God Himself and not separate from His essence, but are identical with the essence.<sup>21</sup> The “attributes of the act” (*ṣifāt al-fi ‘lī*) exist by the will and power of God, which are “will” (*mashī’a*), “hearing” (*sam’*), “seeing” (*baṣar*), and “perception” (*nazar*). These attributes describe God’s temporal relationship to change, for they come into being when God acts and cease when His action ceases. They do not subsist in Him.

Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ denied the attributes of God such as “knowledge, power, will and life” (*al-‘ilm wa-al-qudra wa-al-irāda wa-al-ḥayāt*). He stated that: “It is agreed that the existence of two eternal gods is impossible; so to assert the existence of an eternal entity, or an eternal attribute tantamounts to prove the existence of the duality of gods” (*wa huwa al-ittifāq ‘alā istihāla wujūdun ilāhayn qadimayn azliyyian wa-man athbata ma’ana ṣifat qadima fa-qad athbata ilāhayn*).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 172, 198.

<sup>20</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ṭayyab b. al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd*, ed. Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Sharqiyya, 1957), 217.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:44-45.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:46.



Wāṣil's position on the divine attributes was adopted by other Mu'tazilites and came to constitute their standard view in the early period, until the theory of modes (*aḥwāl*) was proposed by Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī. I will explain it later on when dealing with Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī.

Ḍirār b. 'Amr (d. ca. 200/815)<sup>23</sup> denied that the attributes have any pre-existent reality, and understood them in a negative sense, explaining such attributes as knowledge and power as being an absence of unknowing or powerlessness.<sup>24</sup> Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Najjār (d. ca. 220/835),<sup>25</sup> a contemporary of Ḍirār had a similar understanding of the pre-eternal attributes in a negative sense, and he assigned the attribute of will a special status. He explained the combination of the pre-eternality of

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<sup>23</sup> Ḍirār b. 'Amr was an important Mu'tazilite theologian and a disciple of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā. Ḍirār does not figure prominently in biographical dictionaries, and little is known for certain about his life. It is reported that he was a qāḍī, and after 170/786 he was in Baghdad and participated in the circle of the Barmakids together with Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, the Ibādī scholar 'Abd Allāh b. Yazīd, the Zaydī Sulaymān b. Ḍarīr, and others. He was a prolific writer and fifty seven titles are listed in Ibn Nadīm's *al-Fihrist*, none of which has survived. Neither Ka'bī in his *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, nor Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār in his *Faḍl al-i'tizāl*, mention his biography. Similarly, Ibn al-Murtḍa and al-Khayyāṭ did not consider him in their books. However, Ibn al-Nadīm and Nāshī' al-Akbar count Ḍirār among those numerous Mu'tazilites who did not subscribe to the canonical principles established in the *uṣūl al-khamsa*. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:596-98; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 281-82; al-Shahrestānī, *Milal*, 1:90-91; Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Milal wa al-niḥāl*, ed. Albert N. Nader (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970), 147-48; Watt, *Formative Period*, 189-95; J. van Ess, "Ḍirār b. 'Amr, Abū 'Amr al-Ghaṭafānī al-Kufī," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12:225.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Shahrestānī, *Milal*, 1:90; al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 166, 281.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Najjār, theologian was born in the city of Bamm. The sources do not provide the dates of his birth and death. If the report is accepted as true that he died of sorrow over his argument with al-Nazzām, the Mu'tazilite theologian, it is reasonable to assume that al-Najjār died after the end of the third decade of the third/ninth century. Al-Najjār was a follower and student of the Murji'a theologian Bishr al-Marīsī and was influenced by the opinions of Ḍirār b. 'Amr, although he did not follow him on all the issues. His circle of sources was broad enough to include Ibādīs and Ḥanafīs. Al-Ash'arī classifies him amongst the Murji'a, while al-Shahrestānī includes him amongst the Jabriyya. Several reports associate him decisively with the Mu'tazilites, whereas others classify him amongst the *ahl al-ithbāt* "the affirmationists," i.e. those who affirm God's *qadar*. The lack of unanimity regarding al-Najjār's views is due to his diverse opinions on the theological issues. Ibn al-Nadīm in his *al-Fihrist* mentions that he compiled twenty-four works. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:643-44; Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 283-85; al-Shahrestānī, *Milal*, 1:88-90; Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 5:355; Watt, *Formative Period*, 199-201; H.S. Nyberg and Khalīl Athāmina, "al-Nadjdjār," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:866-68.

divine knowledge with divine will as follows: “God has been willing (*murīd*) from pre-eternity that each thing that He knows will come to be in its time.”<sup>26</sup>

Abū al-Hudhayl described God as absolutely one in the perfect unity of His being, and said that God is “knowing through a knowledge”, “powerful through a power”, etc. He maintained that this knowledge by virtue of which God is knowing is nothing other than God himself. He further stated that “God is knowing through a knowledge identical to Himself (*huwa ‘ālimun bi-‘ilmīn huwa huwa*) and “powerful through a power identical to Himself (*huwa qādirun bi-qudrati hiya huwa*) and “living through a life identical to Himself (*huwa ḥayyun bi-ḥayātih hiya huwa*). “He (God) spoke in similar fashion concerning His hearing, and His seeing, and His eternity, and His honor, and His greatness, and His majesty, and His exaltedness, and all the attributes of His essence (*wakadhālika qāla fī sam‘ihī wa-baṣarīhī, wa-qīdamihī, wa-‘izzatihī wa-‘aẓmatihī wa-jalālihī wa-kibriyā‘ihī wa-fī-sā’ir ṣifātihī li-dhātihī*).”<sup>27</sup> Abū al-Hudhayl seems to have made all the divine attributes eternal perfections of God’s being, including “hearing, seeing, forgiving, mercy, beneficence, creator, provider, rewarding, retributor, protector, restorer, master and forbidding” (*samī’an, baṣīran, ghaḥfūran, raḥīman, muḥsinan, khālīqan, rāziqan, muthīban, mu‘āqiban, mawālian, ma‘ādiyan, āmiran, nāhiyan*).<sup>28</sup>

‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī Ibn Kullāb’s (d. 241/855)<sup>29</sup> chief contribution to *kalām* was his elaboration of the doctrine of the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God.

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<sup>26</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 283.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 165, 484; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:49-50.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:53.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī Ibn Kullāb (d. 241/855) was the most influential of the *mutakallimūn* of the period of the *miḥna*. Nothing is known about his life. Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī mentions in his *Uṣūl al-dīn* that he argued against the Mu‘tazilites at the court of al-Ma’mūn. He also states that ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Makkī al-Kattānī and Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-Junayd, the celebrated ṣūfī, were his pupils. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:645-46; Abū Manṣūr ‘Abd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad

He asserted that for each name such as ‘powerful,’ ‘knowing,’ ‘eternal,’ there was an attribute of ‘power,’ ‘knowledge’ or ‘eternity. According to him, God by His names and attributes has always been eternal, knowing, powerful, living, hearing, seeing, mighty, sublime, great, generous, majestic, one, eternal, absolute, unique, everlasting, first, sovereign, lord, beneficent, affectionate, protector, and restorer. The same must therefore be said with regard to their relationship with God’s essence: “they are not identical with Him nor they are different from Him (*lā hiya huwa wa-lā hiya ghayrahu*). He also states that God’s will is eternal, likewise His kindness (*karam*) and His generosity (*jūd*), His friendship (*walāya*) and His enmity (*‘adāwa, sakht*).<sup>30</sup>

Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbā’ī<sup>31</sup> played a crucial role in the development of Mu‘tazilite doctrine formulating a refined theological framework. His theological views underwent some modifications during his lifetime. Since, with the exception of his *Maqālāt*, none of Abū ‘Alī’s writings are extant his views can only be learned through the scattered references and quotations in later works of the Mu‘tazilites,

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al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1981), 309; Montgomery Watt, *Formative Period*, 286-87. Josef van Ess, “Ibn Kullāb,” *IE<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 12:391-92.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 173, 514, 522, 546.

<sup>31</sup> Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbā’ī was born in 235/849 at Jubba in Khuzistān, and died in 303/915. He attended the school of Baṣra and received his education from Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf al-Shahhām who was one of the most outstanding and brilliant students of Abū al-Hudhayl. Abū ‘Alī succeeded al-Shahhām and was considered to be one of the most celebrated Mu‘tazilites of his time. He had two students who later became famous. One of them was his son Abū Hāshim, and the other Abū al-Ḥasan Ash‘arī who after breaking away from him, devoted himself to refuting Mu‘tazilism and became the “founder” of the Ash‘arite school. Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī authored numerous works, none of which, with the exception of the first volume of his *Kitāb al-maqālāt* survived. Ibn Nadīm mentions seventy titles of his works, but lists only sixty-one.<sup>31</sup> He also wrote the Qur’ān exegesis which was reportedly together with the commentaries by Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm, Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Ka‘bī and Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī. It was among the most significant and unprecedented Mu‘tazilite exegesis at that time in its comprehensiveness. See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 622; Abū Mansūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 138-9; al-Shahrestānī, *Milal*, 1:78-85; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4:267-69; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 109; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 330; L. Gardet, “al-DJubbā’ī, ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb,” *IE<sup>2</sup>*, 11:569; Hasan Ansari, “Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī et son livre *al-Maqālāt*,” in Camilla Adang, Sabine Schmidtke and David Sklare, eds. *A Common Rationality: Mu‘tazilism in Islam and Judaism* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2007), 21-37; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:607-8; Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭawūs and his Library* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1992), 342.

and the *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī who was one of his outstanding students. Abū ‘Alī followed the doctrine of Abū al-Hudhayl with regard to the unity of God and refined it, yet he did not agree with all of his views. He maintained the principle of divine uniqueness and stated that “(God) is knowing by His essence, powerful, living because of His essence. The meaning of the expression by His essence is that God does not need in His knowing either an attribute which is knowledge or a mode by which He is knowing” (*‘ālimun li-dhātihi qādirun ḥayyun li-dhātihi wa ma‘na qawlihi li-dhātihi ayy lā yaqtaḍī kawnihi ‘āliman ṣifati hiya ‘ilm aw ḥāl tujibu kawnihi ‘āliman*).<sup>32</sup>

For Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, an entity (*shay‘*) or essence (*nafs, dhāt*) is an object of knowing (*ma‘lūm*) that exists (*wujida*) or does not exist (*‘udima*) and which as an object of knowing, may be directly referred to (*dhakara*) and may be made the subject of a predication (*ukhbira ‘anhū*).<sup>33</sup> According to al-Jubbā‘ī and the Baṣran Mu‘tazilites *ṣifāt* are those expressions that name the “essence” or essential entity as such or that describe it as it is in some particular way distinguished from entities essentially similar to it. In these instances, the entities whose reality is asserted in the affirmation of the propositions are termed as the “cause” (*‘illa*, pl. *‘ilal* or *ma‘nā* pl. *ma‘ānī*) of the proposition or judgment (*ḥukm*) that the thing is so, and the predicate term comes, therefore, to be called *ṣifat ma‘nan*.<sup>34</sup> By the time of al-Jubbā‘ī, the two words *‘illa* and *ma‘nā* were employed as synonyms, being used interchangeably in most contexts. According to the Baṣran

<sup>32</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:82; ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī al-Asadabādī, *Sharḥ al-Uṣul al-khamsa*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Uthmān (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 2006), 182.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 519.

<sup>34</sup> *Ṣifat ma‘nan* is a term whose affirmation of the subject implies the reality of a *ma‘nā*. *Ma‘nā* originally meant the “sense” of the predicate or judgment: *ḥukm* the “sense” or “meaning” being contextually understood by the Baṣran *mutakallimūn* as the reality of that entity the presence of which, in a given relationship to the subject, is asserted by the particular predicate. See R.M. Frank, “Ḥāl,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 12:343.

*mutakallimūn*, the *ma‘ānī* are not attributes. They are, rather, entities in the strict sense: beings that are themselves distinct objects and that as such are not predicable of something else. In al-Jubbā’ī’s analysis, since God is absolutely one and undivided, and when one says that “God knows” (*Allāhu ‘ālim*) there is no assertion of the reality of any entity other than God’s self (*nafsuḥū*) and accordingly in this sense, the predicate term is called an “essential predicate” (*ṣifat nafsin*). All terms that name or describe the self or essence of a thing as such are, when used predicatively, *ṣifāt nafs*. Thus, al-Jubbā’ī nowhere speaks of attributes, if attribute is understood in its usual sense; he has no term for such a concept and uses no formal expression that implies the reality of such a thing.<sup>35</sup>

‘Abd al-Salām Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī<sup>36</sup> son of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī held the same opinion as his father, but in the matter of divine attributes, he differed from him to a great

<sup>35</sup> See R.M. Frank, “Hāl,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 12:343.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Abd al-Salām Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī son of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī was born in Baṣra in 247/861. The most important teacher of Abū Hāshim was his father. He studied grammar with Abū al-‘Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad (d. 286/900) whose reputation as a great authority in matters of ‘*arabiyya*’ was well established. In 314/926, Abū Hāshim arrived in Baghdad and remained there until his death in 321/933. Abū Hāshim had a kind and pleasant personality with noble disposition. He was a contemporary of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī. After his father’s death, he formed and organized a distinct group of his own. Thus, there became two groups, the Jubbā’īyya who were the followers of Abū ‘Alī and the Bahshāmiyya, the followers of Abū Hāshim. Even during his father’s lifetime, his scholarly standing was such that he argued against some of his father’s views. Ṭāhir al-Isfarāyīnī mentions that there were many differences of opinions between Abū ‘Alī and Abū Hāshim and Abū Hāshim charged his father with unbelief and disassociated himself from him, even to the extent of rejecting the inheritance bequeathed to him by his father. The report seems to be credible because the disagreement between the father and the son resulted in two schools of thought: the Jubbā’īyya and the Bahshāmiyya. It is further proved by the evidence that two distinguished Mu‘tazilite scholars wrote on the issues in dispute between them. One is ‘Abd al-Jabbār who wrote the book entitled: *Khilāf bayn al-shaykhaḥayn* and the other is Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā who also wrote on the same issue. None of the works ascribed to Abū Hāshim have survived. Ibn Nadīm mentions ten titles of the books written by him, whereas Malaṭī states that he authored 160 works in disputation (*fī al-jadal*). The Mu‘tazilite ṭabaqāt does not contain any information about Abū Hāshim’s works. The theological and jurisprudential sources of the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries reveal that Abū Hāshim’s ideas were essential to the discourse of the most prominent scholars of theology and jurisprudence of this period. ‘Abd al-Jabbār, who was a student of one of Abū Hāshim’s students, often referred to Abū Hāshim’s ideas in his books and in many places accepted them and used them as a basis for his own argumentation. See: Ibn Khallikān and Ibn al-Wardī mention in their biographical notes the date of Abū Hāshim’s birth as 247/861. However, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī states that he was born in 277/890, and quotes the statement of Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Azraq, who was a contemporary of Abū Hāshim, citing that Abū Hāshim’s death occurred in Rajab or Sh‘abān 321/July or August 933. See Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 3:183-84; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rīkh*, 1:367; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā’rīkh Baghdād*, 11:55-6; ‘Abd al-

extent.<sup>37</sup> The most important contribution of Abū Hāshim is the concept of modes (*al-ahwāl* sing. *ḥāl*)<sup>38</sup> which he elaborated in relation to the divine attributes (*al-ṣifāt*). He classified the modes into five categories which he applied to God and humans. The first category of modes is the attribute of essence (*ṣifat al-dhāt* or *ṣifat al-nafs*) through which the essences (*dhawāt*) differ from each other. For instance, the atom (*al-jawhar*) is described as an atom not through its essence but through its attribute of essence. The same applies to God, who does not differ from other essences through His mere essence, but rather through His attribute of essence. The second category of modes consists of the essential attributes (*ṣifāt muqtaḍā ‘an ṣifāt al-dhāt*) which are by necessity entailed by the attribute of essence as soon as it becomes existence. The attribute of essence of being an atom that is attached to an essence entails the spatiality of the atom whenever it exists. Thus, occupying a space is an essential attribute of an atom. In regard to God, the specific divine quality of His attribute of essence entails His essential attributes. These are His being powerful, knowing, living and existing. Therefore, God must necessarily and

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Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 304, 307; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 96, 110; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:626; Abū al-Muẓaffar Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Isfārāyīnī, *Al-Tabṣīr fī al-dīn wa-tamyīz al-firqa al-nājiya ‘an al-firqa al-hālikīn*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut: ‘Ālim al-Kutub, 1983), 88; Ibn Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:627; al-Malaṭī, *Tanbīh*, 40.

<sup>37</sup> The differences of opinion between Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī were dealt with by ‘Abd al-Jabbār in his *al-Khilāf bayn al-shaykhayn*, which is lost.

<sup>38</sup> Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī adapted the concept of mode employed by the grammarians for a complement in the case of the accusative occurring in a sentence that consists of a subject and a form of *kāna* (to be) as a complete verb. In this case, the accusative cannot simply be taken as a predicate to *kāna* as it would be if *kāna* were incomplete and transitive; it must rather be understood as a *ḥāl*. He “established a compromise by going back to the original Qur’ānic statements and inserting a copula into them (which is normally absent from nontemporal statements in Arabic): *Allāhu ‘ālimun* thus became *kāna Allāhu ‘āliman*, ‘God is knowing.’ The copula was then understood as ‘complete verb,’ that is, it gained existential meaning: ‘God is;’ the assertion of God’s reality had been made explicit. The participle for ‘knowing,’ however, now put into the accusative instead of the nominative, was no longer interpreted as a predicate but as a *ḥāl*, a ‘state [mode]’ of the subject instead of an attribute. In the words of Abū Hāshim himself: ‘Since, it is true that [God] has a state [mode] in his being knowing, the knowledge that he is knowing is a knowledge of the thing itself [that is, the subject as] in this [mode] state rather than a knowledge of the act of knowing or of the thing itself.’ This theory allowed the above statements to be understood univocally of all knowers: a theological problem had been put into the general framework of grammatical analysis.” See Josef van Ess, “Mu‘tazilah,” *ER*, 10:220-29.

eternally be described by these attributes, which cannot cease as long as His eternal attribute of essence lasts. The third category of modes comprises of those attributes which gain actuality through an entitative determinant (*ma 'nā*) or cause (*'illā*) in the subject. They are accordingly termed simply *li- ma 'nā* or *li- 'illa* and are said to be “caused” (*ma 'lūla*). In this case, man’s attributes of being powerful, knowing and living differ in their quality from the corresponding attributes in God. The fourth category of modes consists of those attributes which are actualized by the action of an agent (*bi-al-fā'il*), particularly the existence of a temporal activity which is founded in its producer’s capability. This category is not applicable to God as He exists outside of time. While the existence of all created beings is considered as belonging to this category, God’s existence is as an essential attribute entailed by His attribute of essence. The fifth category comprises those modes which gain actuality neither by virtue of the essence nor by an entitative determinant (*lā li-al-nafs wa-lā li-ma 'nā*). To this category belongs the attribute of “being perceiving” (*kawnuhū mudrikan*) which is entailed by the perceiver’s being living. In regard to God, it gains actuality when the condition (*sharṭ*) of the presence of the perceptible is fulfilled. On the other hand, in order to perceive, human beings must possess senses in addition to the existence of the perceptible. This is not required for God, whose being alive is an essential attribute. Thus, He perceives without senses.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to cosmology, Abū Hāshim deals with the following issues. The first issue relates to “the solitary substances” (*al-jawāhir al-munfarida*) or “the parts which

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<sup>39</sup> See Sabine Schmidtke, “Jobbā’ī,” *EIr*, 14: 666-72; R.M. Frank, “Ḥāl,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 12:343.

cannot be further divided” (*al-ajzā’ lā yatajazzā’*) – that is, the “atom” (*juz’*)<sup>40</sup> of which all corporeal things are composed. Both Abū ‘Alī and Abū Hāshim are of the opinion that they belong to one genus, being similar to one another. The second issue was whether the atoms were of the nature of “substance” (*jawhar*) in their state of non-existence, i.e. prior to their creation by God. The purpose was to find out whether God’s knowledge and power only pertain to the existentiating of the atoms, or does the determination of what is to be “substance” (*jawhar*) and what is to be “accident” (*‘araḍ*) also devolve upon this divine knowledge and power? In other words, do the knowledge and power of God merely bestow existence (*wujūd*) or do they also determine essence (*dhāt*) as well? Both Abū ‘Alī and Abū Hāshim considered that a substance (*jawhar*) is substance prior to its coming into existence, its substantiality being immutably fixed (*thābit*); thus only God brings it into existence. The third issue concerned whether the existence of the “void” (*khalā*) was possible or impossible in the corporeal world (*‘ālam al-ajsām*). Abū Hāshim believed that such void was not only possible, but in fact necessary. His reasoning on the necessity of the void was based on common sense experience. The fourth issue relates to atoms, and Abū Hashim maintained that atoms are possessed of extension and dimensions and have “aspect” (*jiha*) and “location” (*taḥayyuz*).<sup>41</sup>

According to Abū Hāshim,

He (God) is knowing by His essence in the sense that He has a mode which is an attribute, perceived over and above His being an existing essence. The attribute can be known only with the essence, not isolatedly. The modes are attributes which are neither existent, nor non-existent, nor

<sup>40</sup> *Juz’* (pl. *ajzā’*) used in technical language of *kalām* and of *flasfa* describes the atom in the sense of ultimate (substantial) part, “that cannot be divided further” (*alladhī lā yatajazzā’*). See Al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta’rīfāt*, 78; L. Gardet, “Djuz’,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:607-8.

<sup>41</sup> Sa’īd b. Muḥammad Sa’īd Abū Rashīd al-Naysābūrī, *Al-Masā’il fī al-khilāf bayna al-Baṣriyyīn wa al-Baghdādiyyīn*, ed. Ma’ān Ziyāda and Riḍwān al-Sayyid (Tripoli: Ma’had al-Inmā al-Arabī, 1979), 29-59; Sabine Schmidtke, “Jobbā’ī,” *Elr*, 14:666-72.



known, nor unknown. This means that they are not known in themselves as attributes, but are known with the essence” (*huwa ‘ālimun li-dhātihi bi-ma ‘nā annahu dhū ḥāla hiya ṣifat ma ‘lūma warā’ kawnihi dhātan mawjūdan, wa-innamā ta‘lamu al-ṣifat ‘alā al-dhāti lā bi-infirādiḥā, fa-athbata aḥwālan hiya ṣifāt lā mawjūda wa-lā ma ‘dūma wa-lā ma ‘lūma wa-lā majhūla, ayy hiya ‘alā ḥiyāliha lā ta ‘rifu kadhālika bal ma ‘ al-dhāt*).<sup>42</sup>

Abū Hāshim differs from the rest of the Mutazilites with regard to the divine attributes. “His theory rests on the premise that the two philosophical-theological concepts of existence (*wujūd*) and nonexistence (‘*adam*) must be supplemented by a third concept, that of mode (*ḥāl*). He then identifies God’s attributes as modes that do not possess an independent existence of their own but nevertheless are real things.”<sup>43</sup>

Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī<sup>44</sup> adhered to the five principles (*usūl al-khamsa*) in his *Kitāb Uṣūl al-khamsa*. However, in *al-Mughnī fī*

<sup>42</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:82.

<sup>43</sup> Ahmad Pakatchi, Najib Mayel Heravi, and Shahram Khodaverdian, “Allāh,” *EIs*, 3:614-46.

<sup>44</sup> Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī was born about 325/937 in Asadabād near Hamadhān (Iran). As a student he adhered to the theology of al-Ash‘arī and to the jurisprudence of al-Shafī‘ī. Later, he left Ash‘arite theology and converted to the school of the Mu‘tazilite. He studied with Abū Ishāq b. ‘Ayyāsh al-Baṣrī (d. 386/996) at Baṣra, who was a pupil of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā‘ī, the son of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā‘ī, both of whom became the main sources of his writings. After sometime, ‘Abd al-Jabbār travelled to Baghdād, where he became a student of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī (d. 369/980) the leading scholar of the Bahshāmiyya at that time. After the death of Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Baṣrī, he became the leading scholar of the Bahshāmiyya. In 360/971, Ṣāhib Ismā‘īl b. Abbād (d. 385/995), vizier of the Buwayhid Sulṭān Fakhr al-Dawla (d. 387/997) appointed ‘Abd al-Jabbār the “chief judge” (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*) of Ray with jurisdiction over northern Jibāl. Later his authority was extended over other provinces, including Gorgān, Ṭabaristān, and Hamadhān. Shortly after the death of Ibn ‘Abbād, he was dismissed and his possessions were confiscated by Fakhr al-Dawla. According to some biographers, this was punishment for his remarks alleging that Ibn ‘Abbād died without repentance. Others are of the opinion that he refused to offer the funeral prayer possibly because of bad relations between himself and Ibn ‘Abbād due to the latter’s lifestyle. It seems that he was never reinstated as chief judge. He remained in Ray and devoted the rest of his life fully to teaching and writing. He taught for some time in Baghdad and Qazwīn. He died in 415/1024-25 in Ray. ‘Abd al-Jabbār was a great scholar and prolific writer of his time. He compiled or dictated more than seventy books on the Mu‘tazilī doctrine, exegesis, law and other subjects. However, most of these books have been lost. The most important books are *Al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa al-‘aql*, *Mutashābih al-Qur‘ān*, *Al-Muḥīṭ bil-taklīf* and *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-khamsa*. *Sharḥ* is an exposition of the five principles to which all the Mu‘tazilites subscribe. He was a devoted teacher and could count as his students virtually all the prominent Mu‘tazilite scholars of the following generation: Abū Rashīd Naysābūrī, Abū al-Ḥusayn Baṣrī, Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad Ibn Mattawayh, Abū Yūsuf Qazwīnī, and the Imāmīte Sharīf al-Raḍī and Sharīf al-Murtaḍā. See Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 112-13; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 1:256-8; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tā’rīkh Baghdād*, 11:113; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya*, 5:97-98; ‘Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tā’rīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir,

*abwāb al-tawhīd wa-al-‘adl* and *al-Majmū‘ fī al-muḥīṭ bi-al-taklīf*, he reduced the number from five to only two principles: unity of God (*al-tawhīd*) and justice (*al-‘adl*). In these books, he deals with the three remaining principles within the framework of these two principles – *al-tawhīd* and *al-‘adl*.

‘Abd al-Jabbār relies upon Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī’s concepts when he discusses God’s attributes. Material things consist of substance (*jawhar* pl. *jawāhir*) and accidents (*a‘rāḍ* sing. *‘araḍ*) which inhere in the substrate (*maḥall*) formed by the substance. The qualities (*ṣifāt* sing. *ṣifa*) of a material thing are determined by the accidents, some of which remain until an opposing accident occurs and some of which cease to exist of their own accord. ‘Abd al-Jabbār also adopted the concept of mode (*ḥāl*) in his discussion of some qualities of God and human beings.<sup>45</sup>

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, God is neither a substance nor a material object, nor an accident nor substrate. This means that God is imperceptible and His qualities or attributes do not inhere in a substrate. God is one, which means that He is unique and indivisible. God is existent (*mawjūd*) and His existence has no beginning and no end, He is the eternal (*al-qadīm*). God has eternal attributes that belong to His essence (*dhāt*), He is able to act (*qādir*), He is knowing (*‘ālim*) and He is living (*ḥayy*). He also states that God’s attributes cannot relate to Him as accidents relate to bodies. And since God is wholly immaterial, He is unchangeable, for only matter is subject to change in the sense of growing, deteriorating and perishing. However, because God alone is eternal, the

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1966), 9:110-11; S.M. Stern, “Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Djabbār b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Djabbār al-Hamadhānī al-Asadābādī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:59; Margareth Heemskerck, “‘Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 3 (2007):9-18.

<sup>45</sup> S.M. Stern, “‘Abd al-Djabbār b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Djabbār al-Hamadhānī al-Asadābādī, Abū ‘l-Ḥasan,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:59-60.

attributes, which characterize Him, can also be eternal notions existing beside Him in eternity. Therefore, they must be qualities, which are inseparable from His essence. So, there are two kinds of attributes: accidents with a certain level of materiality, which cause change in bodies, and divine attributes which are parts of God's immaterial and unchanging essence. This means that God acts through the qualities of what He is, and His attributes of being able to act, knowing, living, existing and perceiving subsist in His essence. Since God's essence is eternal, His attributes exist in Him in eternity. "God acts through Himself" (*li-nafsihī*) refers to the attributes which exist in the divine essence and express its qualities. In this way, he attributes different qualities to God without violating the unified nature of His essence. In contrast to human ability, God's eternal ability can accomplish everything. His knowledge circumscribes all that can be known, whether existent or nonexistent, and His perception perceives all that can be perceived.<sup>46</sup>

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī's opinions on the divine names and attributes were adopted as the definitive Sunnī orthodox view. His own views were largely inspired by that of Ibn Kullāb despite formal differences among them. Al-Ash'arī developed his views in a work dedicated to the subject, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, no longer extant, as well as generally in his other theological works.<sup>47</sup> He maintains that God has eight attributes of essence, i.e. power, knowledge, life, will, sight, hearing, speech, and subsistence (*baqā'*), from which all other attributes are derived. He divides the attributes into two categories: those that entail divine acts (*af'āl*, sing. *fi'l*), such as life, knowledge and power; and those attributes such as hearing, sight, speech and subsistence, which can

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<sup>46</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Al-Majmū' fī al-muḥīṭ bil-taklīf*, ed. J.J. Houben (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1967), 103-143.

<sup>47</sup> Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Hibat Allāh Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabayīn kadhib al-muftarī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1979), 128-29.

only be associated with the divine essence in a negative sense, that is, in the sense that their negation entails a deficiency of the essence which is inconceivable.<sup>48</sup>

With regard to God's attributes, al-Zamakhsharī follows Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā',<sup>49</sup> and does not agree with Abū al-Hudhayl, Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī.

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the following verse lexicographically, "As regards the people of 'Ād, they became arrogant on the earth unjustly, and said "Who is stronger in power than us?" Did they not see that God who created them is superior to them in power?" (*fa ammā 'Ād fa-stakbaru fī al-arḍ bi-ghayr al-ḥaqq wa qālū man ashaddu minnā quwwa awa lam yara 'u anna Allāh alladhī khalaqahum huwa ashaddu minhum quwwa*).<sup>50</sup> He defines "power" (*quwwa*) as strength in physique and its opposite is "weakness" (*du'f*). The power of human beings, by all means is right when an action is performed by an agent which is contrary to weakness. However, God is described with the power meaning His omnipotence. God is more powerful than men because His power emanates from His essence of which they are not capable.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, he interprets the verse "Do you not know that God knows whatever is in the heavens and on the earth? It is surely in a Book. It is all easy for God."<sup>52</sup> In this verse, he states that God knows by His essence and He is certainly not restrained in it. So, his interpretation of God's knowledge is in accordance with the Mu'tazilite principles.<sup>53</sup> In another verse "God, there

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<sup>48</sup> See al-Luma, 10-11; Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:95-96; Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1987), 42-43, 237; Mohammad Javad Anvari, "Al-Ash'arī," *Els*, 3:833-59.

<sup>49</sup> Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā denies the attributes of God such as "knowledge, power, will and life" (*al-'ilm wa-al-qudra wa-al-irāda wa-al-ḥayāt*). See al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:46.

<sup>50</sup> Qur'ān, 41:15.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:375-76.

<sup>52</sup> Qur'ān, 22:70.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:210.

is no god but He, the living, the eternal” (*Allāh lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm*),<sup>54</sup> al-Zamakhsharī interprets “the living” (*al-ḥayy*) as “the eternal for whom there is no possibility of cessation/the eternal for whom it is not possible to cease” (*al-bāqī alladhī lā sabīl ‘alayhi lil-fanā’*). Here, he does not say that God is living by His essence because the Mu‘tazilites do not believe in the “attribute of existentialism” (*ṣifat wujūdiyya*) and al-Zamakhsharī adheres to it.<sup>55</sup>

## 2. Createdness of the Qur’ān

Under the term *tawḥīd* (unity of God), there are a number of conceptions regarding the nature of God which are controversial in theological discussions, for example, His speech, anthropomorphic accounts about Him, and the vision of Him in the hereafter. In this section, I will deal with the first issue, that is, God’s speech.

All the Muslims throughout the centuries have agreed that the Qur’ān is God’s speech (*kalām Allāh*). The difference of opinions, however, remains upon the eternity of the Qur’ān or its createdness. According to the Sunnite, the Qur’ān is the speech of God, uncreated (*kalām Allāh ghayr makhlūq*), whereas the Mu‘tazilites’ thesis is that the Qur’ān is created (*makhlūq*).<sup>56</sup>

The biographical sources mention Ja‘d b. Dirham (d. 125/743) and Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/745) as the first proponents of the createdness of the Qur’ān. Ja‘d b. Dirham advanced the doctrines of the created Qur’ān and of free will, and professed a

<sup>54</sup> Qur’ān, 2:255.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:480.

<sup>56</sup> The Mu‘tazilites affirm that the Qur’ān is the speech of God. Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār states that “Our doctrine is that the Qur’ān is the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*) and His revelation (*wahyuhu*) is created (*makhlūq*) and temporal (*muḥdath*).” See ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 528.

radical doctrine of denial of the divine attributes (*ta'fīl*). According to him, God did not speak to Moses, nor take Abraham as His friend.<sup>57</sup>

Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/745), a contemporary of Ja'd b. Dirham also believed in the doctrine of the created Qur'ān. Jahm's view was founded on the strict assertion that God alone is eternal; all others, including heaven, hell, and even the prototype of scripture – written on “the preserved tablet” (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*), and the “heavenly original scripture” (*umm al-kitāb*) are created. Jahm held that God could not have a physical body like his creatures. Therefore God's attributes such as His speech must be unlike the speech of His creatures.<sup>58</sup>

The Mu'tazilites consider that the Qur'ān is the speech of God and it is created by Him. Their reasoning is that God, identical with His attributes, is not subject to change. Therefore, it is impossible that the Qur'ān, in the sense of an attribute, is uncreated, for it is essentially multiple and temporal. Al-Shahrasatānī states that: “They agree that His speech is temporal and created in a place. It comprises letters and sounds written in their images in the scriptures. What is found in a place is an accident which perishes instantly” (*wa ittafaqū 'alā anna kalāmahu muḥdath makhlūq fī maḥall wa huwa ḥarf wa ṣawṭ kutiba amthālahu fī al-maṣāḥif ḥikāyāt 'anhu fa immā wajada fī al-maḥall 'araḍa qad fanā fī al-ḥal*).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ja'd b. Dirham was a native of Khurāsān but spent most of his life at Damascus. He was imprisoned and executed in 125/743, on the orders of caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik. Very few facts are known on the doctrinal position of Ja'd b. Dirham. He is described as *dahrī* and appears prominently in the list of *zindīqs* in *al-Fihrist*. He is also associated with Jahm b. Ṣafwān. See G. Vajda, “Ibn Dirham Dja'd,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3: 747.

<sup>58</sup> Abū Muḥriz Jahm b. Ṣafwān, early theologian, sometimes called al-Tirmidhī or al-Samarqandī was a client of Rāsib and secretary to al-Ḥārith b. Surayj, who revolted against the Umayyads and from 116/734 to 128/746 controlled tracts of eastern Khurāsān. Jahm was captured and executed in 128/746, shortly before al-Ḥārith himself. Jahm was intellectual protagonist of al-Ḥārith's movement of revolt. See: Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 280, l. 4, 279, l. 2279-80; Montgomery Watt, “Djahm b. Ṣafwān,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:388.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Shahrasatānī, *Milal*, 1:45.

Abū al-Hudhayl asserts that “God, the Exalted, created the Qur’ān on the preserved tablet and it is an accident. The Qur’ān exists in three places: in a place where it is preserved in memory, in a place where it is written and in a place where it is recited and audible” (*inna Allāh ‘azza wa jall khalaqa al-Qur’ān fī al-lawḥ al-mahfūz wa huwa ‘araḍ wa inna al-Qur’ān yūjida fī thalāthat amākin fī makān huwa mahfūz fīhi wa fī makān huwa maktūb fīhi wa fī makān huwa fīhi matluwwun wa masmū‘un*). He further states that God’s speech is found at various places (*kalām Allāh qad yūjida fī amākin kathīra*). When God will cause all the places to perish, the Qur’ān where it is preserved, recited or audible will also not exist.<sup>60</sup>

Ibn Kullāb introduced a distinction between the speech of God (*kalām Allāh*) and its realization. God is “eternally speaking (*lam yazal mutakallim*), but He can only be *mutakallim*, addressing Himself to somebody, if this addressee exists. Speech is a permanent and unchangeable attribute (*ṣifa* or *ma‘nā*) which subsists in God; but when, in revelation, it becomes speech to somebody, it is subject to alteration: it may be represented in various languages, such as Arabic or Hebrew, and must adapt itself to various situations by taking the form of an order, a statement etc... God’s speech is eternal not by itself but by the eternity of God’s essence.”<sup>61</sup>

Abū ‘Alī Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim Jubbā’ī state that God is a speaker with a word which He creates in a substrate. For both of them, the “reality of speech” (*ḥaqīqat al-kalām*) consists essentially of fragmentary sounds (*aṣwāt muqaṭṭa‘a*) and orderly arrangement of letters (*ḥurūf manzūma*). The speaker is the one who creates the word and not the one in whom the word subsists. However, Abū ‘Alī differs from other

<sup>60</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 598-99.

<sup>61</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 584-85; Josef van Ess, “Ibn Kullāb,” *EF<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 12:391-92.

Mu‘tazilites, especially in saying that God creates His own word in the place of recitation whenever a man himself recites the Qur’an.<sup>62</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār follows Abū ‘Alī Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim Jubbā’ī and believes in the createness of the Qur’ān and says that “the Qur’ān is the speech of God and His revelation (*wahy*), it is created (*makhlūq*), and temporal (*muḥdath*). God sent it down to his Prophet so that it could be knowledge and evidence of (Muḥammad’s) prophethood. He made it an evidentiary proof (*dalāla*) so that we could have rules and regulations to which we could refer regarding the prescribed and prohibited activities. It is incumbent upon us to praise, thank and sanctify (God). And the Qur’ān is that which we hear and recite today. If it is not created by God (at the present moment) it is attributed to Him in reality, just as we recite the poetry of Imru’ al-Qays<sup>63</sup> today in reality, even though he is not composing it now.”<sup>64</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī considers that the divine speech, like God’s attributes, subsists in His divine essence and is not subject to temporal origination. He distinguishes between the inner speech (*al-kalām al-naḥsī*) and outward or originated speech (*al-kalām al-ḥādith*). He states that eternal divine speech, like eternal divine power or knowledge remains in itself one and indivisible. Therefore, in the Qur’ān, no distinction can be made between verses that refer to events in the past and those in the future, because it constitutes an

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<sup>62</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:80-81.

<sup>63</sup> Imru’ al-Qays is a pre-Islamic poet who may have died *circa* 550 A.D. His poems were collected towards the end of second/eighth century and two definitive recensions were established during the third/ninth century. He is admired for the ingenuity of his metaphors and his concise and skillful treatment of various traditional forms and poetic themes. Also, he is considered to be the creator of the classical form of the *qaṣīda*. See S. Boustani, “Imru’ al-Qays b. Ḥudjr,” *ET*, 3:1176.

<sup>64</sup> In his supercommentary on ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Sharḥ*, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abī Hāshim, known as Mānkḏīm (d. 425/1034), says that ‘Abd al-Jabbār classified the dispute about the createdness of the Qur’ān under the principle of divine justice (*al-‘adl*), one of the five principles of the Mu‘tazilite doctrine, because the Qur’ān is one of God’s acts. See ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 527-29 and ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 7:3.



eternal act of information covering all different temporal events equally.<sup>65</sup> In his illustration of al-Ash‘arī’s concept of the unity of the divine speech, al-Shahrastānī states that the words revealed by the angels to the prophets constitute an indication (*dalāla*) of the eternal speech, with such evidence being a created and originated thing but that which is indicated (*madlūl*) is pre-existent and eternal.<sup>66</sup> To conclude, against the views of the Mu‘tazilites that the Qur’ān was created, al-Ash‘arī maintained that it was God’s speech, an eternal attribute, and therefore uncreated.

Al-Zamakhsharī, like most Mu‘tazilites, believes that the Qur’ān was created. He proves it with the interpretation of the following verse: “Say: ‘Were men and jinn to get together to produce the like of this (Qur’ān), they will never come up with the like of it, even if they back up one another.’”<sup>67</sup> Al-Zamakhshari states that the Qur’ān claims that its likeness in its eloquence, excellent composition and compilation could never be produced by anyone.<sup>68</sup> He also states that the Nawābit<sup>69</sup> claim that the Qur’ān is eternal (*qadīm*) and admit that it is miraculous (*mu‘jiz*). He argues against it and explains that “inability” (*‘ajz*) is opposite to “capability” (*qudra*). It is said that “God is powerful in His creation of substance and the human beings are not capable of this” (*Allāh qādirun ‘alā khalq al al-ajsām wa al-‘ibād ājizūna ‘anhu*). So far as the “impossibility” (*al-mahāl*) is concerned, there is neither any possibility in it for its capability nor any interference in it “like the (existence of) second eternity” (*ka-thānī al-qadīm*). It is not

<sup>65</sup> See Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 65; Mohammad Javad Anvari, “Al-Ash‘arī,” *EIs*, 3:833-59.

<sup>66</sup> See al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1: 96; Mohammad Javad Anvari, “Al-Ash‘arī,” *EIs*, 3:833-59.

<sup>67</sup> Qur’ān, 17:88.

<sup>68</sup> There are five verses in the Qur’ān which describe it and these are called as “challenge verses” (*āyāt al-tahaddī*). These are: 2:23-24; 10:38; 11:13; 17:88 and 52:34.

<sup>69</sup> *Nawābit* (sing. *nābita*) means rising generation, but acquired the pejorative sense of bad lot or rogue. Ibn Nadīm devotes in his *al-Fihrist* a section to the *mutakallimūn al-mujbira* and the *nābitat al-ḥashwiyya*, amongst whom the main exponent was Ibn Kullāb. Al-Zamakhsharī specifically mentions in his *Asās al-balāgha* that the *nābita/nawābit* are Ḥashwiyya. See Ch. Pellat, “Nābita,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 7:843.

said about a person who can perform that “he/she is unable to perform and he/she is not miraculous” (*qad ‘ajaza ‘anhu wa-lā huwa mu’jiz*). Those who are obstinate, they describe God with incapability because He does not have power over impossibility. But it is wrong because “He is powerful over impossibility” (*huwa qādirun ‘alā al-maḥāl*) and it is His attribute.<sup>70</sup> He concludes that the Qur’ān did not exist from eternity.

The Qur’ān mentions how God speaks with the human beings: “It is not to any human being that God should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil, or that He send a messenger to reveal by His permission whatsoever He pleases.”<sup>71</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that there are three methods in which God communicates with the people. First, He communicates through revelation (*wahy*) which may be in the form of inspiration (*ilhām*) or in the form of putting it in the heart of a person during his sleep or dream, as He revealed to Abrāham and the mother of Moses. Second, one may hear His speech (*kalām*) created in some form where a listener can hear without seeing Him, “because He is invisible in His essence” (*li annahu fī dhātīhi ghayr mar’ī*). He cites an example of a king who speaks from behind a veil with his special audience who can hear him but cannot see him. He says that it was in this manner that God spoke to Moses and speaks with the angels. Third, He sends messengers from amongst the angels to convey His commands to the prophets, so it is revelation through the angels. Since the first and third methods are in accord with the Mu‘tazilites principles, he elaborates on them. So far as the second method is concerned, he says that it is a figurative speech (*tamthīl*) otherwise the form of the speech is the same that God creates it in some form.<sup>72</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī’s view regarding the createdness of the Qur’ān is so emphatic that he

<sup>70</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:550-51.

<sup>71</sup> Qur’ān, 42:51.

<sup>72</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:420-22.

mentions in the preface of *al-Kashshāf* that “He (God) is far above to transmit it (the Qur’ān) from the beginning and eternity, and He marked the occurrence of everything from nonexistence (*fa-subhāna man ista’thara bi-al-awwaliya wa-al-qidam wa-wasama kulli shay’in sawāhu bi-al-hudūth ‘an al-‘adam*).<sup>73</sup> Therefore, according to al-Zamakhsharī, the Qur’ān is not God’s essence and does not exist from eternity rather it is an incident of phenomena and created.

### 3. Anthropomorphism and Transcendence

In this section, I will deal with the second issue, i.e. anthropomorphic accounts about God. Anthropomorphism (*tashbīh* literally ‘comparison’) and the affirmation of transcendence (*tanzīh* literally ‘purification’) in Islamic theology are used in the context of describing God. According to Josef van Ess,

*tanzīh* has a positive connotation whereas *tashbīh*, together with its derivatives *mushabbih* and *mushabbihā* (denoting a person or a group practising *tashbīh*), is used in polemical language, as a derogatory term. The negative equivalent of *tanzīh* is *ta’ṭīl*, divesting God of His attributes; as the positive pendant to *tashbīh*, *ithbāt* is sometimes used, the affirmation of the divine attributes by analogy.<sup>74</sup>

The Qur’ān describes God as transcendent who is different from all existing things. “There is no other like Him” (*laysa kamithlihi shay’*),<sup>75</sup> “And there is no one comparable to Him” (*wa-lam yakun lahu kufiwan aḥad*).<sup>76</sup> However, there are anthropomorphic expressions in the Qur’ān such as God’s hands, eyes, face, divine actions associated with God’s body such as seeing, hearing, speaking, coming and sitting

<sup>73</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:95.

<sup>74</sup> Josef van Ess, “Tashbīh wa Tanzīh,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 10:341.

<sup>75</sup> Qur’ān, 42:11.

<sup>76</sup> Qur’ān, 112:4.

on the throne. Also, the Qur’ān ascribes to God human feelings such as mercy, anger and satisfaction. There are also *ḥadīths* which state that “God created Adam in His image” (*inna Allāh khalaqa Ādam ‘alā ṣūratihī*) and “The believer’s heart is between two of God’s fingers” (*qalb al-mu’min bayna iṣba‘ayn min aṣābi‘ al-Raḥmān*).<sup>77</sup>

The early traditionalists’ viewpoint was to accept the anthropomorphic accounts literally. They did not interpret anthropomorphic expressions metaphorically. Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) and Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) were of the opinion that “We believe in what is mentioned in the Book and the traditions and we do not interpret the text” (*nu’minu bimā warada bihi al-kitābu wa al-sunna wa lā nata‘arraḍu lil-ta’wīl*).<sup>78</sup> Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 196/811) emphasized the prohibition on interpreting the anthropomorphic descriptions in the Qur’ān.<sup>79</sup> They called their conviction “affirmation” (*ithbāt*), and considered themselves “the people who affirm [God’s attributes]” (*ahl al-ithbāt*). Their main argument was that God has described Himself like this. If these accounts are not accepted it would tantamount to the rejection of God’s own description of Himself in the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*.<sup>80</sup>

Among the early theologians who argued against anthropomorphism were Ja‘d b. Dirham (d. 126/744) and Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746). Jahm said that: “It is not possible to describe the Creator by an attribute by which His creatures are described because this would be like comparing God to His creatures” (*lā yajūza an yūṣafa al-bārī’ ta‘āla bi-*

<sup>77</sup> Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 74-75; Montgomery Watt, “Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology,” in Montgomery Watt’s *Early Islam: Collected articles* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 94-100.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:104.

<sup>79</sup> Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-Asmā’ wa al-ṣifāt*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawtharī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1980), 314.

<sup>80</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Iṣḥāq Ibn Khuzayma, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd wa-ithbāt ṣifāt al-Rabb ‘azza wa-jalla*, ed. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Ibrāhīm al-Shahwān (Riyāḍ, Dār al-Rushd, 1988), 1: 26-27.

*ṣifati yūṣafa bihā khalqahu li-anna dhālika yaqḍī tashbīhan*).<sup>81</sup> Al-Ash‘arī quotes Jahm and some of the Zaydites saying that “the Creator cannot be described as a thing because a created thing has a similarity to other created things” (*inna al-bārī’ lā yuqāla annahu shay’ li-anna al-shay’ huwa al-makhlūq alladhī lahu mithlu*).<sup>82</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites stressed absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God and denied His description anthropomorphically in any form, such as direction, place, image, body, face, hand, eye, domain, movement, extinction, change, or feeling.<sup>83</sup> The Mu‘tazilites considered the anthropomorphic verses in the Qur’ān as allegorical or figurative expressions to symbolize God’s attributes and actions. They dealt with such verses by the method of *ta’wīl* or metaphorical interpretation. They interpreted single words in a Qur’ānic text according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur’ān.<sup>84</sup> By the “hand” (*yad*)<sup>85</sup> is meant God’s blessing (*ni‘ma*),<sup>86</sup> and by His “eye” (*‘ayn*)<sup>87</sup> is meant His knowledge (*‘ilm*).<sup>88</sup> His “face” (*wajh*)<sup>89</sup> means God’s very essence.<sup>90</sup> God’s sitting on the throne<sup>91</sup> is a symbol of His authority, power and control upon everything.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:86.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 181.

<sup>83</sup> See Schmmidkte, *Mu‘tazilite Creed of az-Zamahṣarī*, 16-18.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 224-30.

<sup>85</sup> Qur’ān, 3:26,73; 5:64; 23:88; 36:83; 38:75; 48:10; 57:29; 67:1.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 167, 218.

<sup>87</sup> Qur’ān, 11:37; 20:39; 23:27; 52:48; 54:14.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 165, 195.

<sup>89</sup> Qur’ān, 28:88; 55:27.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 521.

<sup>91</sup> Qur’ān, 7:54; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 211.

Al-Shahrastānī states that al-Ash‘arī followed *ahl al-ithbāt*, affirming divine attributes as described in the Qur’ān, without using *ta’wīl*, though later he ascribed to *ta’wīl*.<sup>93</sup> According to George Makdisi,

This makes Ash‘arī<sup>94</sup> the follower of *two middle roads*: (1) that of the Pious Ancestors who were anxious to avoid two extremes: *ta’wīl* and *tashbīh*; and (2) that of the “*kalām*-using orthodox” who wanted to uphold the divine attributes, against the Mu‘tazilites, and uphold the use of *ta’wīl* in order to avoid falling into *tashbīh*. The former attitude is regarded by the Ash‘arites as being *ṭarīq as-salāma*, the road of salvation, and the latter is regarded by them as being *ṭarīq al-ḥikma*, the road of wisdom; both of which were travelled by Ash‘arī himself.<sup>95</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī adopted the method of *bi-lā kayfa* for the literal understanding of anthropomorphic statements in the Qur’ān. Binyamin Abrahamov states that:

According to this method, one should adhere to the sacred text of the Qur’ān and believe that it is the truth without trying to explain it through figurative interpretation. Asked how God, who is incorporeal, has face and hands, man must answer ‘God has hands *bi-lā kayfa*,’ i.e., without asking how or giving commentary. Moreover, the question *kayfa* applies to corporeal characteristics, therefore the statement ‘God has hands’ with the addition of the denial of *kayfa* means to accept this statement without attributing corporeal qualities to God.<sup>96</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī stated that the literal meaning of a verse should not be replaced by a figurative meaning unless there is proof which necessitate such a change.<sup>97</sup> He denied the

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<sup>93</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1: 94-95.

<sup>94</sup> According to Georget Makdisi, Ash‘arite propagandists have presented us with an Ash‘arī who was first a thorough-going rationalist, who then became a thorough-going traditionalist, and who finally became a traditionalist keeping the rationalist method by adopting *kalām*. Georget Makdisi. See “Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites in Islamic Religious History,” *Studia Islamica* 18 (1963), 22.

<sup>95</sup> See Georget Makdisi, “Ash‘arī and the Ash‘arites in Islamic Religious History,” *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 52.

<sup>96</sup> Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism*, 6; Richard M. Frank, “Elements in the Development of the Teaching of al-Ash‘arī,” *Le Muséon* 104 (1991), 155-60.

<sup>97</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibāna*, 39.

possibility of interpreting God's hands either as His organs, or His favors or His ability and therefore affirmed God's hand without interpreting its meaning.<sup>98</sup>

The Mu'tazilites consider the anthropomorphic verses in the Qur'ān as allegorical or figurative expressions to symbolize God's attributes and actions. Al-Zamakhsharī deals with such verses by the method of *ta'wīl* or metaphorical interpretation. He interprets single words in a Qur'ānic text according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur'ān. His main emphasis is to avoid literal meanings and illustrate in conformity with the Mu'tazilites principles.

#### 4. Vision of God

In this section, I will deal with the third issue, i.e. vision of God in the Hereafter. The Qur'ān does not explicitly and specifically mention about the "vision of God" (*ru'yat Allāh*) except at one place where it states that: "On that Day, faces will be radiant, looking upon their Lord" (*wujūhun yawma'izin nāḍiratun ilā rabbihā nāẓiratun*).<sup>99</sup> However, *ḥadīth* narratives mention the Prophet Muḥammad's Night journey (*isrā'*) and Ascension (*mi'rāj*) when he had an experience of God's vision.<sup>100</sup> The Muslim theologians are divided in this matter whether the *isrā'* and *mi'rāj* happened while Muḥammad was asleep or awake and whether it was his spirit or his body in which he journeyed. The orthodox opinion is that that the journey was performed by Muḥammad

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<sup>98</sup> Al-Asha'rī, *al-Ibāna*, 37.

<sup>99</sup> Qur'ān, 75:22-23.

<sup>100</sup> Qur'ān, 17:1: "Glory to Him who who took His servant to journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque whose precincts We have blessed. Verses 53:8 to 18 mention that: When he was on the highest horizon; then, he came closer and closer; until a space of two bows or even less. Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed. His hearing did not deny what he perceived. Do you dispute with him concerning what he saw? He saw Him indeed another time by the Lotus tree beyond which none can pass; close to it is the Garden of Refuge. When the Lotus tree was covered over with what it was covered over; neither did sight falter nor exceeded the bounds. Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord."

with his body and awake. The rationalists say that it took place in a dream when he was asleep. Another verse mentioning “meeting with Lord” (*liqā’ rabbihi*) is also quoted in support of God’s vision.<sup>101</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites differ about the “vision of God” (*ru’yat Allāh*). They have nineteen conflicting opinions and the majority of them deny seeing God in this world as well as in the hereafter. Basing themselves on their cosmology and their understanding of the nature of God, they argue that in order to be seen, a thing must be either substance or accident, and God is neither a substance, nor an accident, nor a material object, nor a substrate. God cannot be perceived by the senses, i.e., He is imperceptible. They quote that: “Perception cannot grasp Him” (*lā tudrikuhu al-abṣār*).<sup>102</sup> But the Qur’ān also states that: “On that Day, faces will be radiant, looking upon their Lord” (*wujūhun yawma’izin nāḍiratun ilā rabbihā nāḍiratun*).<sup>103</sup> The Mu‘tazilites interpret *nāḍara* as “to wait” instead of “to look upon.” Furthermore, the proper complement of *nāḍiratun* is not *rabbihā*, but an implied word, *thawāb*, so they understand the real meaning of the verse to be “waiting for the reward of their Lord.”<sup>104</sup>

However, some of the Mu‘tazilites are of the view that one can attain the vision of God. Abū al-Hudhayl believed that God can be seen through heart, but al-Fuwaṭī and Ibn ‘Abbād disagreed with him. Ḍirār b. ‘Amr and Ḥafṣ al-Fard held that on the Day of Resurrection God will create in man a sixth sense capable of perceiving Him. Others said that: “We can see God in this world in dream, not when awake” (*innā nara Allāh fī al-*

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<sup>101</sup> Verse 18:110: Whosoever hopes to meet His Lord (*liqā’ rabbihi*) should do what is good and do not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord” is quoted in support of God’s vision.

<sup>102</sup> Qur’ān, 6:103.

<sup>103</sup> Qur’ān, 75: 22-23.

<sup>104</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 245; Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *Kitāb al-Luma’ fī al-radd ‘alā ahl al-zaygh wa al-bida’*, ed. Richard J. McCarthy (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), 35.



*dunyā fī al-nawm fa-ammā fī al-yaqza falā*). The companions of ‘Abd al-Wāhid b. Zayd narrated that God can be seen depending upon the good deeds, whosoever has excellent deeds can see Him the best.<sup>105</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī states that according to the Qur’ān believers will see God with their eyes. He stipulates various conditions which would necessarily invalidate the possibility of seeing God, such as the supposition that He would be confined within a particular place or time. He concludes that if a description (*wasf*) does not necessitate any of the following conditions, then the vision of God is possible from a purely rational point of view. These conditions are: if it does not imply attributing to God any temporal origination (*ḥadath*); it does not require the positing of similarity (*tashbīh*) of God; if it does not imply any fundamental alteration in His essence; and if it does not ascribe to Him any paronomasia (*tajnīs*) or injustice (*tajwīr*).<sup>106</sup> Al-Ash‘arī identifies existence (*wujūd*) as being the only essential condition for vision.<sup>107</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī acknowledges that vision entails directionality, and when God is seen, this must also apply to Him. However, according to him, such directionality must be applied figuratively in relation to God. He also examines evidence from the Qur’ān and elaborates certain verses pertaining to the vision of God, and denies that such vision is exclusively metaphorical (*majāzī*). In other words, verses which describe about seeing God are to be taken literally. He explains the verse: “Vision cannot penetrate Him, but He

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<sup>105</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 213-17.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma’*, 32-33.

<sup>107</sup> Abū al-Faḥ Tāj al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī, *Kitāb al-Nihāyat al-iqdām fī ‘ilm al-kalām*, ed. Alfred Guillaume (Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, 1980), 365.

penetrates all visions” (*lā tudrikhu al-abṣār wa huwa yudriku al-abṣār*),<sup>108</sup> as referring only to the impossibility of seeing God in this world, not the Hereafter.<sup>109</sup>

However, the majority of the Mu‘tazilites denies the “vision of God” (*ru‘yat Allāh*) in this world as well as in the hereafter. They argue that in order to be seen, a thing must be either substance or accident, and God is neither a substance, nor an accident, nor a material object, nor a substrate. God cannot be perceived by the senses, i.e., He is imperceptible. Al-Zamakhsharī maintains the same position as that of the Mu‘tazilites and justifies that the vision of God is not possible. It is demonstrated by his interpretation of the following five verses.

First verse: “Vision cannot penetrate Him, but He penetrates all visions” (*lā tudrikhu al-abṣār wa huwa yudrik al-abṣār*).<sup>110</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī defines the “vision” (*baṣar*) as “the subtle substance” (*al-jawhr al-laṭīf*) which is conveyed by God to the sense of perception (*ḥāssat al-naẓar*) by which all the perceived things can be penetrated. It means that the vision has neither any linkage with Him nor can it perceive Him because He is the Supreme Being (*muta‘āl*) who cannot be penetrated in His essence. The vision has linkage with those things which comprise sides or directions, primary or secondary, like bodies and forms. Since God is neither a body nor a form, vision cannot penetrate Him.<sup>111</sup>

Second verse: “He (Moses) said: ‘O Lord, reveal to me Yourself so that I may see You.’ He said: ‘You cannot see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place you may then see Me.’ When his Lord revealed Himself on the mountain, He

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<sup>108</sup> Qur’ān, 6:103.

<sup>109</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 34-36; Al-Asha‘rī, *al-Ibāna*, 13-21.

<sup>110</sup> Qur’ān, 6:103.

<sup>111</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:382-83.

leveled it to ground, and Moses fell down unconscious. When he woke up, he said: ‘All glory to You. I turn to You in repentance, and I am the first to believe.’<sup>112</sup>

Third verse: Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment (on Mount Sināī). When the earthquake overtook them, he (Moses) said: “O Lord, had You pleased, You would have destroyed them together with me before this time. Will You destroy us for something the foolish among us have done? This is only Your trial with which You lead astray whomever you will and guide whomever You please. You are our protector, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best forgiver of all.”<sup>113</sup>

When al-Zamakhsharī interprets the verse 7:143, he also refers to the verse 7:155. He mentions that Moses already knew the “vision” of God was impossible. He raises a question that if Moses knew that the vision was not possible, then why did he ask God to reveal Himself so that he may see Him? He responds that Moses admitted before God that his people were foolish and ignorant, but they still insisted that Moses should request God to appear before them. When Moses asked God to reveal Himself to him, He replied that he could never see Him. In this verse (*lan*) is the emphatic negative imperative for everything in the future. Al-Zamakhsharī quotes the following verse “They will never create a fly, even if they get together” (*lan yakhlūqū dhubaban wal-wijtamā ‘ū*).<sup>114</sup> In this verse also, the emphatic negative imperative (*lan*) has been used to emphasize that such a task is impossible. So, in the same manner, vision of God is also impossible forever.<sup>115</sup>

God told Moses to look at the mountain, which according to al-Zamakhsharī means that “looking towards Me is impossible” (*anna al-nazar ilayyī muḥāl*). If the

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<sup>112</sup> Qur’ān, 7:143.

<sup>113</sup> Qur’ān, 7:155.

<sup>114</sup> Qur’ān, 22:73.

<sup>115</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:211-12.

mountain remained firm in its place then he might be able to see him. When God manifested the power and reverberation of His command and will, the mountain was leveled to ground and Moses fell down unconscious. Al-Zamakhsharī quotes verses 19:90-91 that “The mountains fall to pieces, for they ascribe a son to the Compassionate” (*takādu al-samāwāt yatafaṭṭarna minhu wa tanshaqqu al-arḍ wa takhirru al-jibāl hadda an da’aw li-al-raḥmān walada*) to prove that the demand for the vision is similar to ascribing a son to God. Therefore, do not ask God for His vision, but look towards the mountain which trembled and fell down. When Moses recovered from his unconsciousness, he repented and asked God for forgiveness.<sup>116</sup>

The people said to Moses that they would not believe in him until they see God themselves. He told them that a vision of God was impossible and advised them, rebuked them and refused to do so but they insisted him to ask God to appear before them. Moses selected seventy people and took them to the Mount Sināī. He requested God to manifest Himself. They were seized by a violent earthquake and were destroyed. Al-Zamakhsharī argues that since Moses himself could not see God, the foolish and ignorant people were far from seeing Him.<sup>117</sup>

Fourth and fifth verses: “On that Day, faces will be radiant, looking upon their Lord” (*wujūhun yawmai’ dhiṅ nāḍira ilā rabbihā nāzira*).<sup>118</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī states that on the Day of Resurrection people would be looking beyond their comprehension at countless things. However, the believers having neither any fear nor any grief will be looking specifically upon their Lord. He interprets “looking upon their Lord” (*ilā rabbihā nāziratun*) as “the expectation and the hope” (*al-tawaqqu’ wa-al-rijā’*). They will expect

<sup>116</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:501-7.

<sup>117</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:515-17.

<sup>118</sup> Qur’ān, 75:22-23.

“the grace and munificence” (*al-ni‘ma wa-al-karāma*) from their Lord as they were not afraid, and hoped from anyone except their Lord in this world.<sup>119</sup>

## 5. God’s Seat (*kursī*)

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the anthropomorphic verses from the Mu‘tazilites’ point of view. Verse 2:255 states that “His seat (*kursī*)<sup>120</sup> encompasses the heavens and the earth” (*wasi‘a kursīyuhu al-samāwat wa-al-arḍ*). He describes four aspects of this verse’s interpretation. First, God’s seat is not limited to the heavens and the earth in its magnitude and spaciousness, but it is a metaphor for His Exaltedness. In support of his argument, he quotes “They do not esteem God as is rightly due to Him. The whole earth shall be in His grasp and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand on the Day of Resurrection” (*wa-mā qadaru Allāh haqqa qadrihi wa al-arḍu jamī‘an qabḍatuhu yawm al-qiyyāma wa al-samāwāt maṭwiyyātun bi-yamīnihi*).<sup>121</sup> He interprets this verse also in the figurative sense and states that His grasp of earth and rolling up of the heavens in His right hand on the Day of Resurrection expresses His sublimity and power. Second, His knowledge is extensive (*wasi‘a ‘ilmuhu*) and His knowledge is figuratively called *kursī*, meaning knowledge which encompasses the entire universe. Third, His *kursī* is a symbol of His supreme authority upon everything. Fourth, He created His *kursī*, which is in front of His ‘*arsh* (Throne)<sup>122</sup> beneath which are the heavens and the earth and in comparison to ‘*arsh* it is smaller. According to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, however, seat (*kursī*) and throne

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<sup>119</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:269-70.

<sup>120</sup> Lane defines *kursī* as throne synonymous to *sarīr* meaning a chair. See Lane, *al-Qāmūs*, 7:2605.

<sup>121</sup> Qur’ān, 39:67.

<sup>122</sup> Lane defines ‘*arsh* as booth or shed or thing constituted for shade. *Al-arsh* is applied to the ‘*Arsh* of God which is not definable. See Lane, *al-Qāmūs*, 5:2000.

(*'arsh*) are the same.<sup>123</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the seat (*kursī*) metaphorically (*takhyīl wa tamthīl*) which expresses God's sublimity, supreme authority and vast knowledge.

## 6. God's Throne (*'arsh*)

The word *'arsh* appears twenty-one times in the Qur'ān with reference to God's throne. When referring the throne to God, the verses either mention the throne itself or use it in a relational epithet to emphasize aspects of God's majesty. The latter category is mentioned referring God as the "Lord of the Throne" (*rabb al-'arsh*), "Lord of the Glorious Throne" (*rabb al-'arsh al-'azīm*), "Lord of the Noble Throne" (*rabb al-'arsh al-karīm*) and "Owner of the Throne" (*dhū al-'arsh*).<sup>124</sup>

While interpreting "the Compassionate who is seated on the Throne" (*al-rahmān 'alā al-'arsh istawā*),<sup>125</sup> al-Zamakhsharī states that in this verse *istawā* has been used metonymically (*kināya*) for God's sovereignty.<sup>126</sup> In the verse 17:42, "If there were other gods with Him, as they assert, they would surely have sought access to the Lord of the Throne" (*law kāna ma'ahu ālihatun kamā yaqūluna idhan la-abtaghaw ilā dhī al-'arsh sabīlā*), he interprets *la abtaghaw* (seeking access) in the sense of that they would have demanded His authority, as it happens in this world when kings fight with each other to subdue their opponents and take their thrones. In support of his interpretation he quotes

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<sup>123</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:481-83.

<sup>124</sup> See Jamal Elias, "Throne of God," *EQ*, 5:276.

<sup>125</sup> Qur'ān, 20:5.

<sup>126</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:67.

verse 21:22, “Had there been gods apart from God both (the heavens and the earth) would have been despoiled” (*law kāna fī-himā ālihatun illā Allāh la-fasadatā*).<sup>127</sup>

In the verse in which the queen of Sheba’s throne is described “She has a throne that is magnificent” (*lahā ‘arsh ‘aẓīm*), al-Zamakhsharī compares it with God’s Magnificent Throne (*rabb al-‘arsh al-‘aẓīm*)<sup>128</sup> and interprets that her throne may be magnificent, but there is a great difference between her throne and God’s Magnificent Throne. Her throne is among the many thrones which other kings possess, but the “description of God’s Magnificent Throne is its grandeur” (*wasf ‘arsh Allāh bi-al-‘aẓm*): glorification with reference to all that is created between the heavens and the earth.<sup>129</sup>

Finally, the following verse says that “Full of power, well-established (in position) with the Lord and Master of the Throne” (*dhī quwwatin ‘inda dhī al-‘arsh makīn*).<sup>130</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse with the verses 53:5-6 that “He (Gabriel) is mighty one, possessed of steadfastness” (*shadīd al-quwā dhū mirratin*) who is with the Lord of the Throne. It demonstrates his dignity and power. He is obedient to God and among the close and favorite angels who proceeds with His command and returns to His judgment.<sup>131</sup>

## 7. God’s Hand (*yad Allāh*)

The following verse describes that “The Jews say: ‘God’s hands are tied.’ May their own hands be tied, and cursed for what they say! Rather, both His hands are widely

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<sup>127</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:521-22.

<sup>128</sup> Qur’ān, 27:23, 26.

<sup>129</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:447-50.

<sup>130</sup> Qur’ān, 81:20.

<sup>131</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:326.

spread and He spends His bounty in any way He pleases.”<sup>132</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī states that if someone is described that his hands are “tied” (*maghlūla*) it means that he is a miser and if a person is described that his hands are “extended” (*mabsūṭatān*), it means that he is generous. Then, he interprets the above verse and states that “tied hand” (*ghal al-yad*) and “extended hand” (*baṣṭ al-yad*) are metaphorically “niggardliness” and “generosity” respectively. He quotes verse 17:29 in which God says: “Do not keep your hand tied to your neck and nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach” (*wa lā taʿjal yadaka maghlūlatan ilā ʿunuqika wa lā tabsuṭ-hā kull al-baṣṭ*). He refutes the allegation against God’s miserliness and quotes that “rather both His hands are widely spread” (*bal yadāhu mabsūṭatān*) which positively demonstrates His extreme generosity and rejection of niggardliness.<sup>133</sup>

Verse 48:10 states that “Those who swear allegiance to you in fact swear allegiance to God. God’s hand is above their hands.” This verse was revealed in the context of the negotiations between the Prophet Muḥammad’s delegation and the Quraysh of Mecca prior to the treaty of Ḥudaybīyya. When it became uncertain whether the Quraysh treated one of the delegation members well or badly, the Companions of the Prophet pledged to the Prophet by placing their hands upon his hand for an alliance against the Quraysh. Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse metaphorically (*takhyīl*) and states that the Prophet’s hand was above the hands of those who were pledging to him: that was God’s Hand (*hiya yad Allāh*). And God’s Hand is pure from the limbs of the body and substance and matter, which means that the covenant with the Prophet was like

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<sup>132</sup> Qur’ān, 5:64.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:264-67.



the covenant with God, and there is no difference between both of them.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, in the verse “And that the bounty is in the hands of God; He gives it to whoever He pleases” (*wa anna al-faḍla bi-yad Allāh yu'tīhi man yashā'*)<sup>135</sup> al-Zamakhsharī interprets the Hands of God (*yad Allāh*) figuratively meaning that all the bounties are in His possession and His disposal (*fī milkihi wa taṣarrufihi*).<sup>136</sup>

### 8. Coming of Lord (*muḥī' rabb*)

The following two verses mention that “Surely when the earth will be demolished completely, and your Lord will come together with the angels in row after row” (*kallā idhā dukkati al-arḍu dakkā wa jā' rabbuka wa al-malaku ṣaffan ṣaffā*).<sup>137</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī poses a question “What is the meaning and basis of God’s coming, His movement and motion and what is the justification of His direction?” Then he replies that: “It is a portrayal of His splendor (*ẓuhūr*) and signs of His power (*iqtidār*) and demonstration of His force (*qahr*) and authority (*sulṭān*).” He also cites an example that it is like a king who appears in person, his signs of authority become conspicuously visible in the presence of the army, ministers and elites who all accompany him. After that he interprets that the angels will come down from the heavens in the form of rows after rows, but excludes God and does not even mention Him.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:537-38.

<sup>135</sup> Qur’ān, 57:29.

<sup>136</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:54-55.

<sup>137</sup> Qur’ān, 89:21-22.

<sup>138</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:372-73.

## 9. Appearing of God (*ityān Allāh*)

In the verse, “Are they waiting for God to appear in the shadows of clouds with the angels, and the matter to be settled? But all the matters revert to God,”<sup>139</sup> al-Zamakhsharī provides two interpretations. First, “appearing of God” (*ityān Allāh*) is “His command” (*amruhu*) and quotes: “That your Lord’s command should come” (*yā ’tī amr rabbika*)<sup>140</sup> not the appearing of God Himself. Second, it is “His punishment” (*bā’suhu*) and al-Zamakhsharī supports this interpretation by quoting: “Our punishment came upon them” (*jā’ahum bā’sunā*).<sup>141</sup> He says that it means that God may bring upon them His “punishment” (*bā’s*) and “retribution” (*naqam*) because He is all-Mighty (*‘azīz*). Al-Zamakhsharī says that if it is questioned as to why the punishment may come from the clouds, the answer is that one expects “mercy” (*rahma*) from the clouds. If the punishment comes from the clouds, the matter becomes “more horrible” (*afza’*) and “shocking” (*ahwal*), because if the “evil” (*sharr*) comes from a place where one could have never expected, it would have “more grief” (*aghamm*). Likewise, if the “goodness” (*khayr*) comes from a place where one could have never expected, it would be “more delightful” (*asarr*). Therefore, lightning will be the most horrible punishment which comes from the place where one expects the “rain” (*ghayth*), and rain is a symbol of God’s generosity.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Qur’ān, 2:210.

<sup>140</sup> Qur’ān, 16:33.

<sup>141</sup> Qur’ān, 39:47.

<sup>142</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:419.

## 10. With (*ma‘iyyat*)

In the following three verses, the Qur’ān mentions that God is with those who are righteous and is hearing and seeing whatever they do openly or secretly.

First verse: “God is verily with those who are pious and perform good deeds” (*inna Allāh ma‘a al-ladhīna at-taqaw wa al-ladhīna hum muḥsinūn*).<sup>143</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the word “with” (*ma‘a*) as “friend” (*walī*) and says that God is a friend of those who avoid sins (*huwa walī alladhīna ijtānībū al-ma‘āthī*).<sup>144</sup>

Second verse: “He (God) said: “Do not fear. Surely I am with you hearing and seeing” (*qāla lā takhāfā innanī ma‘akumā asma‘u wa arā*).<sup>145</sup>

In this verse, he interprets “I am with you” (*ma‘akumā*) as “your protector” (*ḥāfiẓ kumā*) and “your helper” (*nāṣir-kumā*).<sup>146</sup>

Third verse: “Have you not seen that God knows all whatever is in the heavens and the earth? No three persons converse secretly but He is the fourth of them, and nor five but He is the sixth of them, nor even less than that or more but He is with them wherever they be. He will then inform them of their deeds on the Day of Judgment. Verily God has knowledge of everything.”<sup>147</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that “He is with them wherever they be” (*huwa ma‘ahum aynā mā kānū*) that He knows whatever they converse secretly and nothing is hidden from Him, because He is always observing them. However, he adds that God is

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<sup>143</sup> Qur’ān, 16:128.

<sup>144</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:490.

<sup>145</sup> Qur’ān, 20:56.

<sup>146</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:85.

<sup>147</sup> Qur’ān, 58:7.

above “the place” (*al-makān*) and beyond being perceptible (*al-mushāhida*), so that there should not be any doubt about God being in a place and perceptible.<sup>148</sup>

### 11. Face (*wajh*)

In the verse: “Everyone upon it (earth) will perish, but the face of your Lord will abide (forever), full of majesty and nobility,”<sup>149</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “the face of your Lord” (*wajh rabbika*) as His “essence” (*dhāt*) and “full of majesty and nobility” (*dhū al-jalāl wa al-ikrām*) as His “attribute” (*ṣifat*). He emphasizes that God is beyond comparison and ascribing any human characteristics, following the Mu‘tazilite principle of *tawḥīd*.<sup>150</sup>

### 12. Conclusion

The first fundamental principle of the Mu‘tazilites is the unity of God, which is the most important thesis of their doctrine because it is the source of all other principles. Al-Zamakhsharī not only believes in this principle, but applies it in his interpretation of the Qur’ān. With regard to God’s attributes, al-Zamakhsharī agrees with Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā, who denies the attributes of God such as “knowledge, power, will and life” (*al-‘ilm wa-al-qudra wa-al-irāda wa-al-ḥayāt*).<sup>151</sup> So far as the createdness of the Qur’ān is concerned, al-Zamakhsharī considers that the Qur’ān is the speech of God and it is created by Him. The Mu‘tazilites’ reasoning is that God, identical with His attributes, is

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<sup>148</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:62-63.

<sup>149</sup> Qur’ān, 55:26-27.

<sup>150</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:9-11.

<sup>151</sup> See al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:46.

not subject to change. Therefore, it is impossible that the Qur'ān, in the sense of an attribute, is uncreated, for it is essentially multiple and temporal.

Al-Zamakhsharī emphasizes the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God and denies His description anthropomorphically in any form, such as direction, place, vision, image, body, face, hand, eye, domain, movement, extinction, change, speaking, sitting, coming or appearing. He is of the opinion that the anthropomorphic verses in the Qur'ān are allegorical or figurative expressions to symbolize God's attributes and actions. He interprets such verses by the method of *ta'wīl* or metaphorical interpretation, and elucidates such words according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur'ān. It is evident from his interpretation of such verses in the *Kashshāf* as discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

## Chapter 6

### Second Principle: Justice (*'adl*)

The second fundamental principle of the Mu'tazilites after the unity of God (*al-tawhīd*) is God's justice (*al-'adl*). Even more than *ahl al-'adl wa-al-tawhīd*, they are and prefer to call themselves *ahl al-'adl*.<sup>1</sup> According to D. Gimaret,

God is subject... to the same laws which apply to man... This is why, from the Mu'tazilī point, the necessary justice of God is not only fact, it is for Him a permanent obligation; in the name of His justice, God is required to act in such-and-such a fashion, since otherwise He would be unjust.<sup>2</sup>

The Mu'tazilites unanimously agree that “the Creator (God) has always been just” (*al-bāri' lam yazal 'ādilan*)<sup>3</sup> and “He created humans for their benefit not to harm them” (*khalāqa li-yanfa'ahum lā li-yuḍarrāhum*).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, all divine acts are good and none of God's act is bad.

This principle is based upon the Mu'tazilites' doctrine of free will (*qadar*).<sup>5</sup> They are of the view that human beings have “free choice” (*ikhtiyār*) and “capability” (*istiṭā'a*) before the act, and “power” (*qudra*) over the act. In other words, “every capability is equally the power of an act and of its opposite” (*qudratun 'alayhi wa-'alā ḍiddih*), and “it

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:43; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6:3.

<sup>2</sup> D. Gimaret, “Mu'tazila,” *Et*<sup>2</sup>, 783-93.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 579.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 251.

<sup>5</sup> According to George Hourani, “God knows all good and evil. He wishes and commands only good for men, but He allows them to do evil and to disobey His commands. Man has power to act as well as to know values, and so he is responsible for his just and unjust acts. God rewards the just and punishes the unjust in an everlasting afterlife, and He does so justly because of man's full responsibility. See George F. Hourani, “Islamic and Non-Islamic Origins of Mu'tazilite Ethical Rationalism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 7 (1976), 61.

does not make the act necessary” (*wa-hiya ghayr mujibat lil-fi‘l*). They deny that God imposes duties (*yukallifa*) on a person which is beyond his power (*mā lā yuqdir ‘alayhī*).<sup>6</sup>

Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/796)<sup>7</sup> lists five elements in the capability (*istiṭā‘a*) to act, such as soundness of body, circumstances, duration of time, an instrument, like hand, hatchet, needle, and the cause (*sabab*) to perform an act, which usually exists at the time of the action.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Bishr b. Mu‘tamar (d. 210/825)<sup>9</sup> states that capability consists of sound physical constitution, healthy limbs, and freedom from infirmities. He introduced the concept of “engendered act” (*tawallud*)<sup>10</sup> – “an act prompted by a cause which is itself the effect of another cause. Thus in the act of opening a door with a key, there is first voluntary act, then the movement of the hand which turns the key, and lastly that of the key which turns the tongue of the lock. This last movement is an engendered act for it does not emanate directly from a voluntary decision.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 230.

<sup>7</sup> Abū Muḥammad Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, a client of the tribe of Kinda, was born in Wāsiṭ. He was the most prominent representative *Imāmī kalām* during the period of *Imāms* Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kāzim. He was among the circles of theologians who participated in disputations in the presence of Yahyā b. Khālīd al-Barmakī. Among his disciples were Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 208/823-4), Muḥammad b. Khalīl al-Sakkāk and al-Faḍl b. Shadhān Nisābūrī (d. ca. 260/874-5). Ibn Nadīm mentions of Hishām wrote twenty-six works, but none is extant. See Ibn Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:632-33; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 40, 42-43; al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār*, 81-84; W. Madelung, “Hishām b. al-Ḥakam,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 3:496-98.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 42-43; Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 235.

<sup>9</sup> Abū Sahl Bishr b. Mu‘tamar al-Hilālī, founder of Mu‘tazilite school of Baghdad was born in Baghdad. He moved to Baṣra, where he studied with Bishr b. Sa‘īd and Abu ‘Uthmān al-Za‘farānī who were the companions of Wāsiṭ b. ‘Atā’. He also studied with Mu‘ammar b. ‘Abbād al-Sulamī. Ibn Nadīm mentions in the *Fihrist*, that he compiled twenty works. He wrote against the Khārījites, heretics (*mulḥidīn*), ignorants (*juhḥāl*), Abū al-Hudhayl, al-Nazzām, Ḍirār, Ḥafṣ b. Fard, Hishām b. al-Ḥakam and al-Aṣamm. He participated in the circle of Barmakīs. Abū Mūsā al-Murdār, Thumāmā b. Ashras and Aḥmad b. Abī Du‘ād were among his disciples. See Ibn Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 1:568-70; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 401-3; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:64; Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 119-22; Balkhī, *Bāb Dhikr al-Mu‘tazila*, 72-73; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 265-67; al-Dhabībī, *Siyar*, 10:203; Ibn al-Murtadā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, 52-54; Ibn al-Murtadā, *al-Munya*, 30-31; al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār*, 53-54; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirīn*, 1:115; Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period*, 237.

<sup>10</sup> See al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 401-3; al-Shahrastānī, 1:64; Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq*, 120-21.

<sup>11</sup> Albert N. Nader, “Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar (Abū Sahl al-Hilālī),” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1243-44.

The Mu‘tazilites agree that a person has power over his good and bad deeds and is also their creator. However, they differ as to whether a man is able to act in the first moment or the second moment. According to Abū al-Hudhayl (d. 226/841), “Man is able to act in the first, and he acts in the first, and the act occurs in the second; because the first moment is the one when he acts, and the second moment is the one when he has acted” (*al-insānu qādirun an yaf‘ala fī al-awwal wa huwa yaf‘alu fī al-awwal wa al-fī l wāqi ‘u fī al-thānī li-anna al-waqt al-awwal waqt yaf‘ala wa al-waqt al-thānī waqt fa ‘ala*).<sup>12</sup> He further states that, “The moment is the division between actions and it extends through the interval from action to action; and with every moment there comes into being an act” (*al-waqt huwa al-farq bayna al-a ‘māl wa huwa madā mā bayna ‘amalin ilā ‘amalin wa annahu yuḥdithu ma ‘a kulli waqtin fa ‘lun*).<sup>13</sup>

According to Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/915) and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 321/933), “Whoever has the power of a thing can equally well do it or not do it” (*min ḥaqqi al-qādir ‘alā al-shay’ an yaṣiḥḥa an yaf‘alahu wa-an lā yaf‘alahu*).<sup>14</sup> Therefore, God creates in human beings the powers necessary for the fulfillment of acts, which His law imposes upon them. Any form of “obligation to the impossible acts” (*taḳlīf mālā yuṭāq*) is contrary to His justice. God is just, and He does not desire evil and does not ordain it for His servants. He has nothing to do with their evil deeds; all human actions result from their free will, because they have power and capability before performing their acts. They will be rewarded for their good deeds and punished for their evil ones.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 233; al-Shahrastānī, 1:52.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 443.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 10:73.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 10: 73.



‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025) considers an act (*fi’l*) as an attribute (*ṣifa*) of an act and defines an act occurring from an agent (*fā’il*) capable of exercising power over it (*qādir ‘alayhi*). He divides acts into two categories: acts that carry no attributes, i.e., they are neither good nor bad and acts that carry an attribute, such as goodness or badness. Neutral acts have no attribute over and above their existence, such as the acts of a person who is unaware (*sāhin*) or asleep (*nā’im*). He describes the value of an act (*zā’ida ‘alā wujūdi-hi*) by means of which one necessarily or intuitively knows whether or not the agent of act deserves blame (*dhamm*). Acts which have attributes are further divided into two categories: good (*ḥasan*) acts and bad (*qabīḥ*) acts. The performers of good acts do not deserve any blame while the performers of bad acts deserve blame when they do it deliberately and of their free will, such as lying (*kidhb*) and injustice (*ẓulm*) which he defines as undue harm inflicted on others.<sup>16</sup>

God’s acts fall into the categories of either gracious or obligatory which are intended for the goodness and aimed at assisting and benefitting others and consequently merit praise.<sup>17</sup> The gracious acts of God are the act of creation and the act of providing the divine law, while His obligatory acts are those which come as a consequence of His gracious acts. Creation is the most important divine act which made God known to and manifested all His essential qualities. Creation of the world can neither be the act of someone who does not know nor is it useless because God has eternal wisdom. God only does which is “good” (*ḥasan*), and He is necessarily “exempt from any act which is bad or evil” (*munazzah ‘an kull qabīḥ*). God is incapable of doing evil, by virtue of the

<sup>16</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6: I: 5-8, 18, 31; 13:298-303; Kambiz Ghaneabassiri, “The Epistemological Foundation of Conceptions of Justice in Classical Kalām: A Study of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s al-Mughnī and Ibn al-Bāqillānī’s al-Tamhīd,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19 (2008), 76-79.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 11:58-60, 68.

principle that anyone who recognizes an act as bad necessarily does not commit it.<sup>18</sup> God does not do any wrong to His people; it is people who do wrong to themselves. The Qur’ān reiterates in many places that God is not unjust to His servants and does not wrong anyone even of an atom’s weight.<sup>19</sup>

God is “wise” (*ḥakīm*) and not “foolish” (*safīh*), and He acts for a certain motive, towards a certain end, otherwise His action would be a “vain act” (*‘abath*).<sup>20</sup> The only motive, which God desires, is “the good” (*ṣalah*) for His creatures. All the Mu‘tazila agree that “God has created men for their benefit” (*khalaqa ‘ibādi-hi li-yanfa‘ahum*).<sup>21</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī states that there are limits to human free will and its relationship to God’s creative powers. His theory of acquisition (*kasb*) which was later elaborated and refined by his followers, is a reconciliation of the all-encompassing nature of the divine will with the real responsibility of human beings for actions, and thus to uphold the justice of human beings subject to reward and punishment. According to al-Ash‘arī, “all the occurrences are created by God. When it is impossible that the creator does what He does not will, then it is conceivable that there proceeds from other than Him what He does not will, since all this (that is acts of others) are acts of God” (*kulli al-muḥdathāt makhluqāt Allāh ta‘ālā fa idhā istiḥāla an yaf‘al al-bāri ta‘ālā mā lā yurīduhu istiḥāla an yaqa‘ min ghayrihi mā lā yurīduhu idh kāna dhālika ajma‘ af‘ālan li-Allāh ta‘ālā*).<sup>22</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī argues for the all-encompassing nature of the divine will on the basis of three propositions. First, His will belongs among the essential divine attributes and therefore, is not subject to any limit. Second, everything that is originated in time is

<sup>18</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 309, 315; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:45.

<sup>19</sup> Qur’ān, 4:40; 18:49; 41:46.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 11:61, 387.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 250.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 25.

created by God, and He creates nothing without specifically willing it. Third, if something occurs that was not willed by Him, then this entails one of the two invalid conclusions: He is either ignorant of that thing or weak in relation to it, i.e. unable to create it.<sup>23</sup> However, God is the true creator and doer of everything. In elaborating his views on temporal origination (*hadath*), al-Ash‘arī states that the creator and doer of each thing is one who is capable of bringing into existence in a manner wholly in conformity with His will; but human actions are frequently not in conformity with the intention behind them.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī considers human action as being both attributable to them as a result of their free choice, for which they are responsible, and as being the direct creation of God. He states this formulation in terms of acquisition (*kasb*), i.e. man acquires his own actions, created by God. Acquisition in itself is an act that comes into being by means of originated power. The only requirement for an act to be attributed to a human being is that it should be accompanied by his will and the power to perform it. Thus any act intended by a person is performed in two stages: first, he has will and power exists within him to perform it; second, God brings it about through His will and power. Al-Ash‘arī states that this acquisition by man is simultaneously the act and the creation of God, and likewise ascribes the involuntary movements of man to the creative will of God. However, he distinguishes acquisition from involuntary action in that man is aware of the difference between these two types of motion. Accordingly, the reality of the freedom of human choice (*ikhtiyār*) is proven by the very fact that human beings are aware that they possess this freedom.<sup>25</sup> So, al-Ash‘arī affirms the principle of choice, while identifying it

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<sup>23</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 24-31.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 37-39.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 41-44; Mohammad Jawad Anvari and Matthew Melvin Koushki, “Al-Ash‘arī,” *EIs*, 3:833-59.

with the freedom of the will, and arguing that it is determined by the all-encompassing nature of the divine will; hence human will and power are dependent upon divine will and creation.

However, the Mu‘tazilites have different viewpoints on almost all the issues with the exception of a few. For instance, in case of “grace” (*lutf*), they have four different opinions; and for “capability” (*istaṭā‘a*), there are also four views. Whether a man has power over an act at the first moment or at the second moment is also subject to seven contradictory opinions.<sup>26</sup> Whenever any question arose, whether it was related to God’s power or human beings’ responsibility, the Mu‘tazilites have been constantly debating, reaching no satisfactory answer. Whether the answer is affirmative or negative, in any case, either God’s omnipotence, or humans’ responsibility will be compromised. The Qur’ān maintains a balance between God’s omnipotence and man’s responsibility, but the Mu‘tazilites tend to place lesser importance to God’s omnipotence and more emphasis upon the human beings’ responsibility.

In contrast to this, al-Ash‘arī insists on God’s omnipotence; everything good and evil is willed by God and He creates the acts of men by creating in men the power to do each act. All the dimensions of al-Ash‘arī’s concept of justice are based upon the principle that the standards by which human actions are deemed to be either good or evil cannot be applied to God’s actions.

Al-Zamakhsharī believes in the principle of justice and quotes verse 3:18, “God is witness that there is no god but He and so do the angels and men of knowledge. He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but He, the mighty and all-wise.” His interpretation is

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<sup>26</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 233.

that God Himself, His angels and “people of knowledge” (*‘ulū al-‘ilm*) testify that there is no God but He and He is upholder of justice. When He is described with His being, His established attributes are His “oneness” (*waḥdāniyya*) and “justice” (*‘adl*). Those who establish His oneness and justice with “manifest” (*sāṭi* ‘) and “conclusive” (*qāṭi* ‘) proofs are the “scholars of justice” (*‘ulamā’ al-‘adl*).<sup>27</sup>

### 1. The Concept of Grace (*lutf*)

The term *lutf*<sup>28</sup> means granting of “divine grace,” while its opposite term, *khidhlān* means “abandoning or withholding of divine grace.” According to Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar (d. 210/825), if God bestows grace (*lutf*) upon all the human beings they will believe and deserve reward, but if they believe without grace, their reward will be more. However, it is not necessary for God to bestow His grace to all. And it is not necessary for God to do “the best” (*al-aṣḥ*) because there is no limit to goodness within His power; and there is always better. However, God must endow human beings with the capability and power and remove all impediments to belief through invitation and message (by the Prophets).<sup>29</sup>

Ja‘far b. Ḥarb (d. 236/850) agreed with Bishr and said that if God bestows grace upon the unbelievers they will believe in Him but they will not deserve as much reward as those who believed without the bestowal of grace. However, the majority of Mu‘tazilites did not agree with the views of Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar and Ja‘far b. Ḥarb.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:534-39.

<sup>28</sup> *Lutf* is used in the Qur’ān in two senses, as gracious and kind. See Qur’ān, 42:19, 6:103, 22:63, 31:16, 33:34 and 67:14.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 246-47, 573; Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:65.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 246-47.

Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī both are of the view that God neither withhold grace from His creation, nor anything which is “good” (*ṣalāh*) and “best” (*aṣlah*) for them, because He knows that if they were granted with grace it would lead them to their obedience and repentance. The reason for this is that God is omnipotent, omniscient, generous and wise, who suffers no loss in His treasures by giving and whose possessions are not increased by withholding them.<sup>31</sup> However, Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī differ on some issues of the grace. According to Abū ‘Alī, God knows that “if a person believes with bestowal of grace his reward will be less because of less hardship, and if a person believes without bestowal of grace his reward will be more because of more hardship” (*law āmana ma ‘a al-luṭf lakāna thawābuhu aqalla li-qillati mushaqqatuhu wa law āmana bi-lā al-luṭf lakāna thawābuhu akthara li-kathrati mushaqqatuhu*). In this case, it is not appropriate for God to impose an obligation upon him without grace. Similarly, He should not treat him like the one about whom He knows that he will not be obedient except with grace. If God were to impose an obligation on him without grace, He would be making his situation worse. Abū Hāshim disagrees with his father Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and in his view it is not befitting for God to impose an obligation on a man without granting him grace. In such a case, man has to make great efforts to achieve belief without grace and therefore, his reward would be greater.<sup>32</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār provides the most systematic treatment of *luṭf*. He states that the basis of *luṭf* is God’s justice (*‘adl*) and rationality. He does not differentiate between “the grace” (*al-luṭf*) and “the best” (*al-maṣlaḥa*). According to him, “the grace and the best are

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:81.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:83-84.

one and the same and their meanings are what a man chooses between what is obligatory upon him and abstains from evil deeds” (*wa ammā al-luṭf wa al-maṣlaḥa fa-wāḥid wa ma ‘nā humā mā yakhtāru al-mar’ indahu wājiban aw yajtanibu ‘indahu qabīḥan*). He states that at the bestowal of grace, a person is more likely to choose to perform what is obligatory upon him and abandon evil deeds.<sup>33</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār argues against Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar and the Baghdādī school, who claim that bestowing “the grace is not obligatory upon God” (*al-luṭf lā yajib ‘alā Allāh*). Their reasoning is that if granting of grace is incumbent upon God, then there will be no sinful person found in this world because of his protection due to God’s grace. However, there are both types of people obedient and non-obedient in this world. It is obvious that grace is not obligatory upon God. ‘Abd al-Jabbār responds that the fact is quite the contrary to that which Bishr claims. There are some people who choose to fulfill God’s commands and avoid the evil deeds. God also knows that there are some people who do the opposite. Therefore, if God grants grace to everyone without any distinction, some of them may not perform God’s commands and do the evil deeds.<sup>34</sup> However, he does not address the issue raised by Bishr that God cannot arbitrarily grant His grace to some and withhold it from others.

The majority of the Mu‘tazilites believes that God has an obligation to do “the best for people in their religion” (*aṣlaḥ lahum fī dīnīhim*) because it is inconceivable that He does not grant them all what they need to fulfill their obligations when He imposes obligations upon them. According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, God imposes laws upon people for their advantage to achieve happiness in the form of reward if they follow His

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 779; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 8:9.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 520.

commandments. He does for human beings what is to their greatest advantage (*al-aṣṣlah lahum*).<sup>35</sup> He is responsible to assist them in the fulfillment of His commands because humans are able to perform them with His favor (*tafaḍḍul*).<sup>36</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī’s viewpoint is that God may bestow grace (*lutf*) upon unbelievers in order to inspire belief in them. However, if He refrains from doing so it is not considered miserliness (*bukhl*) on the part of God, because no creature has a claim upon Him. It is therefore not in any way incumbent upon God to admit the believers to paradise or send the unbelievers to hell, apart from the fact that He has informed them that He will do so and He does not lie. He does not lie due to its impossibility vis-à-vis the divine essence: lying contradicts the attribute of veracity (*ṣidq*) by which He has described Himself. Neither can God be called ignorant because it contradicts the fact that He has attributed Himself knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī uses the concept of *lutf* frequently in his interpretation. He prefers Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbāī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāī’s definition of *lutf* and refers to both of them in his *tafsīr* as *shaykhayn*.

According to al-Zamakhsharī, bestowal of “grace” (*lutf*) upon the believers means “guidance” (*hudā*) while “abandoning” (*khidhlān*) of the unbelievers is synonymous to “leading astray” (*iḍlāl*). In the interpretation of “God leads astray whom He wills, and guides whom He pleases, He is all-mighty and all-wise” (*fa yuḍillu Allāh man yashā’ wa yahdi man yashā’ wa huwa al-‘azīz al-ḥakīm*)<sup>38</sup> and “It is He who created you, some of you are unbelievers and some are believers and God perceives what you do” (*huwa al-*

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 11:387, 393.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14:53.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma’*, 70-74; Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 99-100, 125-26, 142-43.

<sup>38</sup> Qur’ān, 14:4.



*ladhī khalaqakum fa minkum kāfirun wa minkum mu'minun wa Allāh bimā ta'malūna baṣīr*).<sup>39</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī says that these two verses are equivalent in their meanings because God does not lead astray anyone until He knows that he will never believe. Similarly, He does not guide except the one whom He knows that he will believe. *Iḍlāl* (leading astray) means prevention of grace and *hudā* (guidance) means granting of grace, and it is a metonymy (*kināya*) for unbelief (*kufr*) and belief (*īmān*). “He (God) does not abandon anyone except those who deserve to be abandoned and He does not grant grace except to those who deserve to be granted” (*falā yakhdhul illā ahl al-khidhlān wa lā yalṭaf illā bi ahl al-lutf*).<sup>40</sup>

When God grants grace upon a person and when he deprives him of it is mentioned in the following verse: “We have sent a messenger to every community (saying): “Worship God, and keep away from idol worship. Thus some of them God guided, and some deserved to be led astray” (*wa laqad ba'athnā fī kulli ummatin rasūlan ani 'abudū Allāh wajtanibū al-tāghūt fa minhum man hadā Allāh wa minhum man ḥaqqat alyhi al-ḍalāla*).<sup>41</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the verse that God knows that a person who is granted grace will be a believer and a person who is abandoned will be an unbeliever because that person is determined to be so and hence no good will come from him.<sup>42</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the following three verses in which he uses the concept of grace:

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<sup>39</sup> Qur'ān, 64:2.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:361-63.

<sup>41</sup> Qur'ān, 16:36.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:435-36.

First verse: “How could God guide those who disbelieved after they had believed?” (*kayfa yahdī Allāhu qawman kafarū ba‘da īmānihim*).<sup>43</sup>

He interprets it as “how can God grant them grace when they do not deserve it? God knows the determination of their disbelief. The proof of the firm disbelief is manifested in their reversion after accepting the belief, witnessing the truth of the Prophet (Muḥammad), and miracles verifying his prophethood.”<sup>44</sup>

Second verse: “Those who do not believe in the signs of God are not guided by God. For them is severe punishment” (*inna al-ladhīna la yu‘minūna bi-ayāt Allāh lā yahdīhim Allāh wa lahum ‘adhābun alīm*).<sup>45</sup>

In his interpretation of this verse he says that since God knows that they will never believe, He does not grant them any grace. They are the people who have been abandoned in this world and there will be severe punishment for them in the hereafter.<sup>46</sup>

Third verse: “And We have created for Hell many jinns and human beings. They have hearts but do not understand; and they have eyes but do not see and they have ears but do not listen. They are like cattle, or rather even more misguided. They are people unconcerned” (*wa laqd dhara‘nā li-jahannam kathīran min al-jinn wa al-ins lahum qulūbun lā yafqahūna bihā wa lahum a‘yūnun lā yubṣirūna bihā wa lahum ādhānun lā yasma‘ūna bihā ‘ulā‘ika ka al-an‘ām bal hum aḍall ‘ulā‘ika hum al-ghāfilūn*).<sup>47</sup>

He interprets that their hearts have been sealed (due to their disbelief) and God knows that there is no grace for them. They are those whose minds have no perception of the truth (*ma‘rifat al-ḥaqq*), they do not see despite their eyes with discernment what God

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<sup>43</sup> Qur’ān, 3:86.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:578.

<sup>45</sup> Qur’ān, 16:104.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:474-75.

<sup>47</sup> Qur’ān, 7:179.

has created; they do not hear despite their hearing the message of God with contemplation, as if their minds cannot comprehend, their eyes cannot perceive and their ears cannot grasp. The severity of their obstinacy (*shidda shakā'imihim*) in their disbelief has made their deeds like the ones of the people of the Fire. They are like cattle in their understanding, observation and comprehension and more misguided than them.<sup>48</sup>

## 2. The Best (*aṣlah*)

Most of the Mu'tazilites agree that God created human beings "for their own good not to harm them" (*li-yanfa'ahum lā li-yuḍarrahum*).<sup>49</sup> Similarly, it is in their best interest that He imposed obligations upon them so that by fulfilling them they may achieve the sublime form of happiness which is the reward from God for the endurance of pain.<sup>50</sup> Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Nazzām (d. ca. 226/845) was the first who introduced the concept of "best" (*ṣalah*). He considers that since "evil is an essential quality of the evil" (*al-qabīḥ ṣifa dhātia lil-qabīḥ*), therefore, the doing of it cannot be ascribed to God, and the possibility of God's doing evil is also evil hence it cannot be attributed to God who is just. "God has power to do what He knows to be is good for his servants, but no power to do in this world what is not good for them" (*innamā yaqdiru 'alā mā ya'lam anna fī-hi salāḥan li-'ibādihi wa-lā yaqdiru 'alā an yaf'al bi-'ibādihi fī al-dunyā mā laysa fī-hi salāḥa-hum*). According to him, only what God has created and brought into existence is within His power. If God knew of anything better or more perfect that was within His power to create like the order, arrangement and goodness of

<sup>48</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:533-34.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqalāt*, 251.

<sup>50</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 11:387.

things, He would have created it.<sup>51</sup> Abū al-Hudhayl was also of the opinion that God has created His servants for their benefit (*li-manfi'atihim*). Had it not been the reason then there was no need to create them because if He had created them neither for benefit nor for harm then it is frivolous (*'abath*).<sup>52</sup>

Nu'mān al-Mufīd is of the opinion that God is obliged to do for the people that which is to their greatest benefit both "in their religion and worldly life" (*fī dīnīhim wa-dunyāhum*), a principle applying to the rich as well as the poor, to the healthy as well as to the sick.<sup>53</sup>

Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī were of the view that "the best is not the most pleasant" (*laysa al-aṣlah huwa al-aladhdh*) but it is most rewarding in the hereafter and most appropriate in this world even though it may be painful and disgusting.<sup>54</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī defending his Mu'tazilite views, maintains that God does for His servants what is "the best" (*aṣlah*). His interpretation of the following four verses attests it.

First verse: "He (God) cannot be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned" (*lā yus'alu 'ammā yaf'l wa hum yus'alūn*).<sup>55</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that customarily the kings and the powerful persons are not questioned about their activities and affairs with regard to the management and administration of their kingdoms and possessions due to fear and grandeur despite their mistakes and corruption. "The King of kings and the Lord of the lords" (*malik al-mulūk*

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<sup>51</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:54.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 252.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Mufīd, *Awā'il al-maqālāt*, 25-26.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:81.

<sup>55</sup> Qur'ān, 21:23.

*wa-rabb al-arbāb*) who is their creator and provider is the one who is worthier and more entitled not to be questioned about His activities. He does everything with wisdom and neither any mistake nor any evil can occur from Him. But those who belong to Him under His subjugation and prone to making errors have been created by Him; they are to be questioned for all the activities they perform. He concludes that God’s activities are based on His wisdom and for the benefit of human beings.<sup>56</sup>

Second verse: “Of all things there We have treasures with Us, send it down in a well-known proportion (*wa in min shay’ illā ‘indanā khazā’inuhu wa mā nunazziluhu illā bi-qadarin ma’lūm*).<sup>57</sup>

He says that “treasures” (*khazā’in*) has been used figuratively and it means that everything which is beneficial to the people is in the power of God including “creation” (*ījād*), “origination” (*takwīn*) and benefaction (*in’ām*). He grants to the people according to the proportion which He knows is “good for him” (*maṣlaḥa lahu*) and He distributes His treasures according to one’s capacity and capability.<sup>58</sup>

Third verse: “And do not speak to Me concerning those who are wrong-doers, for they will certainly be drowned” (*wa lā tukhātibnī fī al-ladhina ḡalamū innahum mughraqūn*).<sup>59</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that this verse relates to Noah’s people who did not accept his message and when it became clear that they were evil-doers, God in His wisdom commanded them to be drowned. Their drowning was good in the interest of society because leaving them unpunished was to spread more corruption in the society. It was

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<sup>56</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:137.

<sup>57</sup> Qur’ān, 15:21.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:402.

<sup>59</sup> Qur’ān, 23:27.

also good for other people to be warned and learn a lesson that if they did not follow the commands of God their end would be the same. To deal with the wrong-doings of the unbelievers in the form of their punishment and creating an environment for the believers was necessary for the goodness of the people.<sup>60</sup>

Fourth verse: “To God leads the right path, though some deviate” (*wa ‘alā Allāhi qaṣḍu al-sabīl wa minhā jā’ir*).<sup>61</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī explains that the direction of the way leading His servants to the right path and truth is the purpose of God. He clarifies it by citing that “It is indeed for Us to show the guidance” (*inna ‘alaynā lal-hudā*).<sup>62</sup>

### 3. Going Astray (*iḍlāl*)

The following two verses describe a conversation of hypocrites who say: “When they meet the believers they say: ‘We believe;’ but when they are alone with their evil ones they say: ‘We are really with you; we were merely joking.’” But God turns the joke against them leaving them to wander blindly in their wickedness.<sup>63</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets these verses by asking the question what is the justification of God helping them, even though their evil friends would like to help them to continue in error which is an act of Satan? Then, he gives three reasons. First, God prevents His “graces” (*alṭāf*) which are conferred upon the believers. Their “abandonment” (*khidhlān*) is due to their unbelief and insistence upon it. The darkness increases in their hearts, whereas the believers’ hearts become “wide open” (*inshirāḥ*)

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<sup>60</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:226-28.

<sup>61</sup> Qur’ān, 16:9.

<sup>62</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:426; Qur’ān, 12:92.

<sup>63</sup> Qur’ān, 2:14-15.

and “light” (*nūr*). Second, it can be due to the prevention of constraint” (*al-qasr wa al-iljā*).<sup>64</sup> Third, in fact it is an act of Satan but ascribed to God because He has given Satan authority to lead the people astray.<sup>65</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the verses: “Whomsoever God wants to guide He opens wide his heart to Islam,”<sup>66</sup> that if God wills He grants His grace (*lutf*) and he becomes interested in Islam and his soul feels tranquility and likes to accept it. On the other hand, “Whomsoever He wants to lead astray, He makes his heart narrow and constricted,” al-Zamakhsharī says that God abandons (*yakhdhil*) and leaves him and no grace is awarded to him. Since he has no grace from God, his heart becomes so hardened that he refuses to accept the truth and “belief” (*īmān*) does not enter into his heart. He interprets “This is the straight path of your Lord,” (*hādhā ṣirāt rabbika mustaqimā*) by explaining that this path which is upright and just has been chosen by wisdom (*ḥikma*). In his interpretation, al-Zamakhsharī does not attribute “guidance” (*hudā*) and “leading astray” (*ḍalāla*) to God since it goes against the concept of human freedom. In order to be in accordance with the Mu‘tazilites principles, he uses the words “grace” (*lutf*) and

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<sup>64</sup> The concept of “constraint” (*al-qasr wa al-iljā*) is intended to solve the issue of the discrepancy between what God wills people to do and what they actually do. ‘Abd al-Jabbār distinguishes between what God wills of people “by way of constraint and force” (*‘alā jihat al-iljā’ wa-al-ikrāh*) and what He wills that they should do as a result of their own choice, as voluntary acts of obedience (*‘alā jihat al-ikhtiyār wa-al-ṭaw’*). Actions (“objects of power” *maqdūr*) of the first type must necessarily come into being when He puts the constraint (*iljā*) into effect. But if voluntary actions of the kind He wills the responsible persons (*mukallafūn*) to perform, are not performed this does not necessitate any weakness or defect on His part. Neither do voluntary actions which come about against His will infringe His omnipotence. This is so because people’s voluntary actions are their exclusive objects of power and cannot reasonably be within God’s power (*lā yaṣīḥḥ an yakūn maqdūran lahu*). See Michael Schwarz, “Some Notes on the Notion of *iljā*’ (Constraint) in Mu‘tazila Kalām,” *Israel Oriental Studies*, 11 (1972): 413-27; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6:II:257, 268.

<sup>65</sup> When Satan refused to bow down to Adam out of pride, God expelled him from the Paradise. He requested God to give him time until the Day of Resurrection. God granted his request. Satan said:”My Lord, as You have condemned me, I shall embellish for people (their evil deeds) on the earth and lead them astray.” See Qur’ān, 15:32-40; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:179-90.

<sup>66</sup> Qur’ān, 6:125-26.

“abandonment” (*khidhlān*) instead of “guidance” and “leading astray” respectively. He maintains that “faith” (*īmān*) is a man’s acquisition, not a divine gift.<sup>67</sup>

In the verse where it is mentioned that if God wishes someone to leave in trial, nothing can be done to save him from God, and for him there is disgrace in this world and severe punishment in the hereafter,<sup>68</sup> is addressed to the Prophet Muḥammad that he should not grieve on account of those people who hasten to unbelief. They claim that they believe while they do not believe in their hearts. God states that whomsoever He wills to leave in trial, nothing can be done to save him. Al-Zamakhsharī maintains that God does not will anyone to be an unbeliever; rather He wills him to be a believer. He interprets that he is an unbeliever as a result of his own deeds and responsible for it. He says that he became an unbeliever due to God’s “trial” (*fitna*) and His “abandonment” (*khidhlān*) of him. God did not directly make him an unbeliever.<sup>69</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that the verse: “Whoever is guided by God follows the right path; and he whom He leads astray, you will not find friend to direct him,”<sup>70</sup> relates to the “People of the Cave” (*aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*) who are being praised by God for the steadfastness in their belief and submission to Him. God granted them His grace and led them to the right path and to the attainment of resplendent nobility (*al-karāma al-saniyya*) as well as the privilege of being mentioned in the splendid verse (*al-ayā al-‘azīma*). He interprets the verse that whosoever adopts the path of “the rightly guided” (*al-muhtadiyyīn al-rāshidīn*) people, he will achieve “success” (*falāḥ*) and “bliss”

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<sup>67</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:393-95.

<sup>68</sup> Qur’ān, 5:41.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:235-37.

<sup>70</sup> Qur’ān, 18:17.



(*sa'āda*). On the contrary, a person who is abandoned by God would not find anyone who could guide him to the right path.<sup>71</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī's interpretation of the verse that if God had pleased He would have made you a single nation, but He leads astray whom He wills, and guides whom He pleases,<sup>72</sup> is that if God wished He could have made all the people one nation by force (*qasr*). However, God did not will to force the people to believe in Him even though He could have done so, because He preferred to endow the human beings with free will so that they could choose themselves by their own intellect whether they want to be believers or not. He states that God grants His grace to those people whom He already knows will choose belief (*īmān*). On the other hand, He abandons those people whom He already knows will choose the unbelief (*kufr*). For al-Zamakhsharī, belief or unbelief is not pre-ordained rather it is the peoples' own choice. Al-Zamakhsharī quotes the last words of the verse that “You will surely be questioned concerning that which you used to do,” as a proof of human responsibility. He mentions that if God had forced people to believe or disbelieve, then there is no rationale for questioning the people about their deeds.<sup>73</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī's interpretation of the verse: “Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve after You have guided us and bestow on us Your mercy” (*rabbānā lā tuzigh qulubānā ba'da idh hadaytanā wa hab lanā min ladunka raḥma*)<sup>74</sup> is that “Our Lord, do not test us with trials in which our hearts may deviate from the truth and guide us to your

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<sup>71</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:570-71.

<sup>72</sup> Qur'ān, 16:93.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:470.

<sup>74</sup> Qur'ān, 3:8.

religion and do not withhold the favors which have been bestowed upon us.”<sup>75</sup> It is clear from his interpretation that he emphasizes free human will. The deviation of the heart from the truth which is an evil thing is not being attributed to God because He is not directly responsible for unbelief.

#### 4. Sealing of the Hearts (*khatm al-qulūb*)

The sealing of the heart is one of the main issues in the Mu‘tazilite theology, since it is against the principle of justice (*‘adl*). The following verse states that: “God has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and on their sight is a veil.”<sup>76</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “seal” (*khatm*) and “conceal” (*katm*) belong to the same category of words which are used in conjunction with each other. For instance, when a contract or deed is finalized it is sealed with a “signet” (*khātim*) to conceal and cover so that one may not have access to its contents. He states that neither “seal” (*khatm*) nor “cover” (*taghshia*) has been used in a literal sense but “metaphorically” (*majāzan*). He further elaborates that linking of “sealing their hearts” to God is “evil” (*qabīh*) and God is above all doing any evil act. He quotes the following verses in support of his interpretation: “I (God) am not unjust to My servants” (*wa mā anā bi-ẓallāmin lil-‘abād*)<sup>77</sup> “We never do wrong to people, but they do wrong to themselves” (*wa mā ẓalamnā hum wa lākin kānū hum al-ẓālimīn*)<sup>78</sup> and “God never enjoins indecency” (*inna Allāh lā ya’mur bil-faḥshā’*).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:529.

<sup>76</sup> Qur’ān, 2:7.

<sup>77</sup> Qur’ān, 50:29.

<sup>78</sup> Qur’ān, 43:76.

<sup>79</sup> Qur’ān, 7:28.

Al-Zamakhsharī gives the following reasons in his interpretation of this verse. First, it is due to the unbelievers' persistence in denying the truth that God informs them that their hearts have been sealed. The seal is a consequence of the unbelievers' deeds and it is not pre-ordained. Second, seal should be interpreted metaphorically, since their hearts are empty of intelligence (*fitan*) like the hearts of the animals. God does not want to prevent them from believing or to force them not to believe because He is above all these things. Third, in a real sense, Satan is the one who seals the hearts of the unbelievers. God has ascribed the seal to Himself because He is the one who empowered Satan or the unbelievers to do so. Fourth, since there is no possibility of them being believers except by the force and the constraint (*al-qasr wa al-iljā'*), God expressed their "impossibility" with "*khatm*" due to persistence in their disbelief. Fifth, there is a possible meaning which involves an ironic response. The unbelievers say sarcastically that, "Our hearts are veiled from what you call us to, and in our ears is heaviness. Between us and you there is a veil. So act (your way), we are acting (ours)."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, God responds them ironically that, "The unbelievers among the 'people of the Book' and the polytheists would never desist (from false beliefs) until the clear proof come to them."<sup>81</sup>

What is the nature of Satan's power upon the human beings and to what extent can he lead them astray? Al-Zamakhsharī answers this question in his interpretation of the verse "When the issue has been settled, Satan shall say: 'Surely, God made you a promise of truth and I made you a promise, but did not keep it. I had no power over you except to call you, and you responded to my call. So do not blame me, but blame

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<sup>80</sup> Qur'ān, 41:5.

<sup>81</sup> Qur'ān, 98:1; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:164-69.

yourselves. I cannot help you nor can you help me. I deny your having associated me earlier (with God).”<sup>82</sup> His argument is that a man chooses either “mischief” (*shaqāwa*) or “felicity” (*sa’āda*) and gets it. There is neither any role of God except “enabling” (*tamkīn*) him, nor of Satan except embellishment (*taz’īn*) of evil deeds. If the matter would be as the Mujbirites<sup>83</sup> claim, Satan would say: “Do not blame me and not yourself because God decreed upon you the unbelief and He forcibly imposed it.”<sup>84</sup>

### **5. God does not Will any Evil but Good** (*anna Allāh lā yurīd sharr bal yurīd al-khayr*)

The Mu‘tazilites believe that God does not will any evil and does not command it for His creation.<sup>85</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretation of the following eight verses indicates that he follows the Mu‘tazilite doctrine.

First verse: When your Lord said to the angels: “I shall make a vicegerent on the earth,” they said: “Will you place one therein who would create disorder and shed blood, while we proclaim Your praise and glorify Your sanctity?” He said: “I know what you do not know.”<sup>86</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretation of “Will you place one therein who would create disorder” (*ataj’alu fī-hā man yufsidu fī-hā*) is that God will send human beings instead of

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<sup>82</sup> Qur’ān, 14:22.

<sup>83</sup> The Mujbirites are those who hold the doctrine of *jabr* (compulsion), meaning that man does not really act but only God. The Mu‘tazilites applied it, usually in the form of Mujbirites to the Traditionists. Al-Zamakhsharī oftenly uses it in his exegesis of *al-Kashshāf* against his adversaries. See Montgomery Watt, “DJabriyya or Mudjbira,” *ET*, 2:365.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:374-75.

<sup>85</sup> According to al-Ash‘arī, since everything comes into being through God’s will, therefore human actions, good or evil, also emanate from His will. See al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma’*, 24-31; al-Ash‘arī, *al-Ibāna*, 7-8, 46-52.

<sup>86</sup> Qur’ān, 2:30.

angels who will commit sins, but He does not do anything except which is good and He wills only the good.<sup>87</sup>

Second verse: “O God, Master of the Kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You please and You take away the kingdom (power) from whom You will. You honor whom You please and humble whom You please. All goodness is in Your hand. Indeed, You have the power over all things.”<sup>88</sup>

He interprets that the goodness (*al-khayr*) is that the believers are driven towards good things and whosoever rejects them is an unbeliever. All the goodness is in His authority and He gives it to His friends against the will of His enemies. All the acts of God whether beneficial or harmful originate from His wisdom (*ḥikma*) and goodness (*maṣlah*) and all the things He does are for the betterment of the people.<sup>89</sup>

Third verse: “And when We desire to destroy a town We command its people of luxury, but as they transgress therein Our sentence against them is pronounced, and We destroy them utterly.”<sup>90</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “We command” (*amarnā*) in figurative sense. He says that the people transgressed despite their being granted benefaction and kindness so that they may become good and grateful, but they indulged in sinfulness and moral depravity. When they became transgressors they were destroyed completely because of their transgression.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:251-53.

<sup>88</sup> Qur’ān, 3:26.

<sup>89</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:542-44.

<sup>90</sup> Qur’ān, 17:16.

<sup>91</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:500-1.

Fourth verse: “O mankind, worship your Lord who created you, as well as those before you, so that you may become righteous.”<sup>92</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “Who created you, as well as those before you, so that you may become righteous” (*al-ladhī khalaqakum wa-al-ladhīna min qablikum la'allakum tattaqūn*) that it does not mean that the believers should be righteous only in the hope of God. “Perhaps” (*la'llā*) in this verse has been used figuratively not in reality because God created human beings for the worship and performing of obligations imposed upon them. He provided them with intelligence, desires and guidance and bestowed upon them free choice. He expects from them righteousness, but they are free to make a choice between obedience and sinfulness.<sup>93</sup>

Fifth verse: “And each sign that We showed them was greater than the other. Then We seized them with punishment so that they might turn back in repentance.”<sup>94</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī says that “they might turn back in repentance” (*la'llahum yarji'ūn*) means that they may return from disbelief to belief. God does not will to force them rather it is a choice of the people to adopt either belief or unbelief.<sup>95</sup>

Sixth verse: He (Satan) said: “My Lord, since You have misguided me I will make the earth attractive to them and lead them all astray.”<sup>96</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī says that in this verse: “My Lord, since You have misguided me” (*rabbi bi-mā aghwaytanī*) has been referred to God but it is not what it means in the real sense, rather it has been used figuratively. When God commanded Satan to bow down

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<sup>92</sup> Qur'ān, 2:21.

<sup>93</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:209-14.

<sup>94</sup> Qur'ān, 43:48.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:447-48.

<sup>96</sup> Qur'ān, 15:39.

before Adam he became proud and arrogant, whereas God wanted to reward him if he had chosen humility and obedience.<sup>97</sup>

Seventh verse: Satan said: “Since You led me astray, I shall lie in wait for them along Your straight path.”<sup>98</sup>

He interprets that “Since You led me astray” (*fa-bi-mā aghwaytanī*) has been used figuratively by referring it to God. God is only the “causer” (*musabbib*) not the doer (*fā’il*).<sup>99</sup>

Eighth verse: When they commit an indecency, they say: “We found our fathers doing it, and God commanded us to do the same.” Say: “God does not command indecency. Do you attribute to God what you do not know?”<sup>100</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī defines “indecency” (*fāḥisha*) as the one which is repugnant among the sins. He interprets the verse as those who commit indecencies justify them by saying that their forefathers used to do it because God commanded it and they are following them. Both of them, i.e. they and their forefathers, are false in their allegation and fabricating lies against God. God is free from ugly things (*qabīḥ*) and He does not command His servants to perform indecencies.<sup>101</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

The Mu‘tazilites called themselves “people of the justice and the unity” (*ahl al-‘adl wa al-tawḥīd*), and emphasized God’s justice and His goodness towards human

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<sup>97</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:405-7.

<sup>98</sup> Qur’ān, 7:16.

<sup>99</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:427-31.

<sup>100</sup> Qur’ān, 7:28.

<sup>101</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:436-37.

beings. Al-Zamakhsharī states that God is just and desires good and His inherent justice prevents Him from inflicting any harm or injustice to the people. It is due to people’s own good or bad deeds that their destiny is decided by God. The Qur’ān exhorts people repeatedly to repent and turn away from evil deeds and thus work for their own salvation. He quotes from the Qur’ān that “those who fulfill their covenant with God” (*alladhīna yūfūna bi ‘ahdi Allāhi*), persevere in seeking the way of their Lord, remain steadfast in prayers and ward off evil with good (*yadra’ūna bi al-ḥasanāti al-sayyī’āt*), for them is the recompense of paradise. While “those who break their covenant with God” (*alladhīna yanquḍūna bi ‘ahdi Allāhi*), and spread corruption on the earth (*yufsidūna fī al-arḍ*), for them is an evil abode.<sup>102</sup>

In order to avoid attributing of evil to God, al-Zamakhsharī maintains that “God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.”<sup>103</sup> His view is based on the Qur’ānic verse that God is not unjust to His servants.<sup>104</sup> For al-Zamakhsharī, God’s praising Himself that He could not do evil to His servants, would have no sense if He imposed burden on a soul beyond his capacity. In addition, God is just and “enjoins justice” (*yā’muru bi al-‘adl*),<sup>105</sup> therefore, “He would impose upon them which is really below their capacity” (*fa ja‘ala mā farāḍahu ‘alayhim wāqi‘an taḥta ṭāqatahum*).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Qur’ān, 13:20-25.

<sup>103</sup> Qur’ān, 2:233, 286; 6:152; 7:42; 23:62; 65:7.

<sup>104</sup> Qur’ān, 50:29.

<sup>105</sup> Qur’ān, 16:90.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:464.



## Chapter 7

### Third Principle: The Promise and the Threat (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*) Fourth Principle: The Intermediate Position between Belief and Unbelief (*al-manzila bayna al- manzilatayn*)

In this section I will combine the Mu‘tazilites’ third principle of “the promise and the threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*) and the fourth principle of “the intermediate position between belief and unbelief” (*al-manzila bayna al- manzilatayn*) because there is strong relationship and firm link between them. These two principles are based upon their concepts of “belief” (*īmān*) and God’s justice (*‘adl al-Allāh*). First, I will discuss the concept of “belief” (*īmān*) and then God’s justice (*‘adl al-Allāh*).

#### 1. The Concept of Belief (*īmān*)

Jahm b. Ṣafwān was probably was the first person who defined the concept of belief (*īmān*). According to him, “Belief is merely the knowledge of God, and unbelief is merely the ignorance of Him” (*al-īmān huwa al-ma‘rifa bi-Allāh faqaṭ wa al-kufr huwa al-jahl bihi faqaṭ*).<sup>1</sup> He further states that “Unbelief is nothing but ignorance and there is no unbeliever except one who is ignorant of God” (*lā kufr illā al-jahl wa lā kāfir illā jāhil bi Allāh*).<sup>2</sup>

Abū Ḥanīfa<sup>3</sup> says that: “Belief is the knowledge and the acknowledgement of God (*al-ma‘rifa bi-Allāh wa al-iqrār bi-Allāh*) and the knowledge and the acknowledgement

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 279.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 477.

<sup>3</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu‘mān b. Thābit, theologian, renowned Kufan jurist and the eponym of the Ḥanafite school was born in 80/699 in Kufa. He is called by his followers as *Imām al-a‘zam* (the greatest imām) and *Sirāj al-a‘imma* (lamp of the imāms). He lived in Kufa and earned his livelihood as a manufacturer and merchant of *khazz*, a silk fabric. In theology, he was influenced by ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī (d. ca. 104/722), a Kufan traditionist and jurist. In addition to al-Sha‘bī, he studied with Nāfi‘ (d. ca. 117/735), a *mawlā* of Ibn ‘Umar; ‘Aṭa b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. ca. 114/732), a leading Meccan jurist; and Rabi‘a b. Abī al-Raḥmān (d. ca.

of the messenger of God and of what has arrived from God in its entirety, without explanation (*al-ma'rifa bi-al-rasūl wa al-iqrār bi-mā jā'a min 'indi Allāh bi-al-jumla dūna al-tafsīr*).<sup>4</sup> Al-Ash'arī mentions that “He (Abū Ḥanīfa) considered that belief is not divisible and it neither increases nor decreases and that people do not excel one another in belief (*za'ama inna al-īmān lā yataba'ad wa lā yazīd wa lā yanquṣ wa la yatafāḍal al-nās fīhi*).<sup>5</sup>

In the letter to 'Uthmān al-Battī (d. 143/760), Abū Ḥanīfa argues explicitly against the Mu'tazilite principle of “the intermediate position between belief and

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136/753), a Medinese authority. In jurisprudence, he attended the circle of the Kufan jurist Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 120/737) who taught *fiqh*. After Ḥammād's death, Abū Ḥanīfa became the leader of the circle and the foremost authority on law in Kufa and the main representative of the Kufan school of law. For the doctrines that he received from Ḥammād, the main sources are the *Āthār* of Abu Yūsuf and the *Āthār* of al-Shaybānī. Abū Ḥanīfa did not himself compose any works on religious law but discussed his opinions with and dictated them to his disciples. Several theological treatises are attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa: *Risāla ilā 'Uthmān al-Battī*, *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, *Kitāb al-'Ālim wa al-muta'allim*, and *Waṣīyyat Abī Ḥanīfa*. Of these, only *Risāla* is regarded as authentic. In theology, Abū Ḥanīfa's disciples included Abū Muṭī' al-Ḥakam b. 'Abd Allāh b. Maslama al-Balkhī (d. 199/814), and Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ b. Salm al-Samarqandī (d. 208/823), who introduced Abū Ḥanīfa's teachings to their homeland of Khurāsān, where Hanafism became predominant. In jurisprudence, his disciples included Zufar b. al-Hudhayl b. Qays al-'Anbarī (d. 158/775), Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī al-Kufī (d. 182/798), and Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805). Towards the end of the Umayyad period, Abū Ḥanīfa was flogged after refusing to accept the position of *qāḍī* of Kufa offered by Yūsuf b. 'Umar b. Hubayra, governor of Iraq (129-32/746-49). In 130/747, he left for Mecca and stayed there. During the 'Abbāsīd rule, the second caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136-58/754-75) summoned Abū Ḥanīfa to Baghdad to appoint him a *qāḍī*, which he refused and was imprisoned. It is not clear whether he died in prison or after his release in the year 150/767. Al-Ḥasan b. 'Umāra al-Bajalī offered his funeral prayers and he was buried in the Khayzurān cemetery in Baghdad. According to another report caliph Manṣūr offered the funeral prayers. Abū Ḥanīfa has been both praised and criticized very strongly. In hagiographies composed by the Hanafites such as Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣaymarī (d. 436/1045), al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī (d. 568/1172), and Ḥāfīz al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Kardārī (d. 827/1424), he is portrayed as a man of utmost piety and virtues. He was criticized as the leader of the *ahl al-rā'y* and a weak transmitter of *ḥadīths*. He was accused as being Murjī'ite, and holding the doctrine of the created Qur'ān. His theology and jurisprudence have been attacked. He was denounced as a secret unbeliever (*zindīq*), and was accused of infidelity (*kufr*). See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8:489; Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 2:15-17; al-Sam'ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:40-41; Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1992), 29:417-45; 'Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), 5:594; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5: 405-15; Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-Huffāz*, 1:168-69; Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 6: 390-403; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 47-48; Ibn Abī al-Wafā, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī'yya*, 1:49-63; al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī and Ḥāfīz al-Dīn b. Muḥammad al-Kardārī, *Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfa* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1981); Mu'allif al-majhūl, *al-'Uyūn wa al-ḥadā'iq fī akhbār al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. M.J. de Goeje. (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1964 and Brill, 1871), 260-61; Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 102-87; J. Schacht, “Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu'mān,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:123-24; Hiroyuki Yanagihashi, “Abū Ḥanīfa,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2007):43-51; Ahmad Pakatchi and Suheyl Umar, “Abū Ḥanīfa,” *EIs*, 1:818-41.

<sup>4</sup> Cornelia Schöck, “Belief and Unbelief in Classical Sunnī Theology,” *EF*<sup>3</sup>, 2 (2010):101-11.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 139.

unbelief” (*al-manzila bayna al- manzilatayn*), and distinguishes the “transgressor” (*fāsiq*) from both the “believer” (*mu’min*) and the “unbeliever” (*kāfir*). According to him, the “name belief and its sacrosanctity” (*ism al-īmān wa ḥurmatuhu*) cannot be taken away from a “believer” (*mu’min*) who commits a sin because it is connected with this name. For Abū Ḥanīfa, “belief” (*īmān*) means “knowledge” (*ma’rifa*), “acknowledgement” (*iqrār*), and “assent” (*taṣdīq*).<sup>6</sup>

Abū Muqātil Ḥafṣ b. Salm al-Samarqandī (d. 208/823), one of Abū Ḥanīfa’s disciples, does not distinguish between various terminologies such as “assent” (*taṣdīq*), “knowledge” (*ma’rifa*), “conviction” (*yaqīn*), “acknowledgement” (*iqrār*), and “submission” (*islām*) used for “belief” (*īmān*) and considers them as synonymous: “These are different names, which have one and the same meaning” (*inna hādhihi asmā’ mukhtalifa wa ma’nāhā wāḥid*).<sup>7</sup>

Majority of the Mu’tazilites differ in their definition of belief (*īmān*) and there are six opinions in this matter. First, some of them say that belief consists of all the acts of obedience: “obligatory” (*farḍ*) as well as “supererogatory” (*naḥīl*), and sins fall into two categories: “major or grave sins” (*kabā’ir*) and “minor or petty offences” (*saghā’ir*). Second, Hishām al-Fuwaṭī says that belief is an aggregation of all the acts of obedience, obligatory and supererogatory. Third, according to ‘Abbād b. Sulaymān, belief comprises God’s commandments which include obligatory acts and what He desires to be performed as supererogatory acts. Fourth, in Ibrāhīm al-Nazzām’s view, belief is to avoid grave sins; the grave sins are those for which punishment has been prescribed by God.

<sup>6</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa Nu’mān b. Thābit, *Risāla ilā ‘Uthmān al-Battī*, in *Al-‘Ālim wa al-muta’allim*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid b. al-Ḥasan al-Kawtharī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Anwār, 1939), 34-38.

<sup>7</sup> Ḥafṣ b. Salm al-Samarqandī Abū Muqātil, *al-‘Ālim wa al-muta’allim li-Abī Ḥanīfa*, ed. Muḥammad Rawwās Qalā’jī and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Hindī al-Nadwī (Ḥalab: Maṭba‘at al-Balāgha, 1972), 55-56; Cornelia Schöck, “Belief and Unbelief in Classical Sunnī Theology,” *ET*, 2 (2010):101-11.

Fifth, some are of the viewpoint that belief is to avoid that for which there is threat of punishment (*wa 'īd*) from God. So far as the minor offences are concerned they would be forgiven if major sins are avoided. Sixth, Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī considers that belief in God is all that He has made obligatory upon His servants, and supererogatory acts are not part of the belief.<sup>8</sup>

Al-Ash'arī's defines faith as affirmation of God's oneness. "To believe is to assent in the mind; it is the believer's belief in the truthfulness of the one in whom he believes" (*al-īmān huwa al-taṣḍīq bi-al-qalbi wa huwa i'tiqād al-mu'taqid ṣidqa man yu'minu bihi*).<sup>9</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī mentions that "Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī stated that belief is an assent to God and His messengers (peace be upon them) in their statements and this assent is valid only through knowledge; disbelief in his opinion is denial" (*fa qāla abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī inna al-īmān huwa taṣḍīq li-Allāh wa li-rusulihī 'alayhum al-salām fī akhbārihim wa la yakūna hadhā al-taṣḍīq ṣaḥīḥan illā bi-ma'rifatihī wa al-kufr 'indahū huwa al-takdhīb*).<sup>10</sup> For al-Ash'arī, belief comes from the heart and only verbal affirmation but denial by the heart is not faith (*īmān*).<sup>11</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī's definition of belief is reflected in his interpretation of the following six verses.

First verse: "Who believe in the Unknown and perform prayers, and spend out of what We have provided them" (*al-ladhīna yu'minūna bi al-ghaybi wa yuqīmūn al-ṣalāt wa mim mā razaqnā hum yunfiqūn*).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 266-70.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 16, 150; Al-Ash'arī, *Luma'*, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 248.

<sup>11</sup> Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 151.

<sup>12</sup> Qur'ān, 2:3.

Al-Zamakhsharī says that, “belief” (*īmān*) consists of performing “righteous deeds” (*fi’l al-ḥasanāt*), avoiding “bad deeds” (*tarak al-sayyi’āt*), especially believing in the unknown (*takhṣīṣihā lil-īmān bi-al-ghayb*), performing the prayers (*iqām al-ṣalāt*) and giving the charity (*ītā’ al-zakāt*).<sup>13</sup>

Second verse: The Bedouins say: “We believe.” Say: “You do not believe, but say: ‘We submit;’ for belief has not yet entered your hearts” (*qālati al-a’rābu āmannā qul lam tu’minū wa lākin qulū aslamnā wa lammā yadkhuli al-īmānu fī qulūbikum*).<sup>14</sup>

He says that, “the belief is confirmation with certainty and peace of mind” (*al-īmān huwa al-taṣdīq ma’ al-thiqa wa ṭamāniya al-nafs*). An affirmation with the tongue without an agreement of heart is called “submission” (*islām*), while an affirmation with the tongue with an agreement of heart is called “belief” (*īmān*).<sup>15</sup>

Third verse: “The true believers are those who believe in God and His Messenger, then are free of doubt, and strive with their wealth and souls in the cause of God. They are the truthful ones” (*innama al-mu’minūn al-ladhīna āmanū bi-Allāh wa rasūlihi thumma lam yartābū wa jāhadū bi-amwālihim wa anfusihim fī sabīl Allāh ulā’ika hum al-ṣādiqūn*).<sup>16</sup>

In his interpretation of this verse al-Zamakhsharī elaborates that there should be no doubt in one’s heart when one believes. The true characteristic of belief is that it should be free of any suspicion and have perfect peace of mind with serenity. Such persons who are firm and steadfast in their belief are true believers.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:150-55.

<sup>14</sup> Qur’ān, 49:14.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:587-88.

<sup>16</sup> Qur’ān, 49:15.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:588-89.

Fourth verse: “Surely those who believe and do the good will be guided by their Lord for their belief” (*inna al-ladhīna āmanū wa ‘amilū al-ṣālihāt yahdīhim rabbuhum bi-īmānihim*).<sup>18</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that God guides on the right path to those people whose belief is accompanied by righteous deeds due to their belief (*bi-īmānihim*).<sup>19</sup>

Fifth verse: “The day when some of your Lord’s signs come, the embracing of faith will not avail any soul which already did not accept it, or who did not perform good deeds by virtue of his faith” (*yawm yā’ti ba’d āyāt rabbika lā yanfa’u nafsan īmānuhā lam takun āmanat min qabl aw kasabat fī īmānihā khayr*).<sup>20</sup>

He states that one should believe in God before the appearance of His signs which will take place prior to the Day of Judgment. If he does not believe before it, his belief will be of no avail. Similarly, if a person believes at a time when he cannot perform good deeds it will be of no benefit for him because the one who believes and performs righteous deeds will achieve success and blessings from God otherwise sufferings and destruction. He also states that belief and good deeds are combined together.<sup>21</sup>

Sixth verse: “It is not in accordance with your desires, nor the desires of the people of the Book. Whosoever does evil will be recompensed for it, and will find no protector or friend apart from God” (*laysa bi-amāniyyikum wa lā amaniyyī ahl al-kitāb man ya’mal su’an yajza bihi wa lā yajid lahu min dūn Allāh walīyyan wa la naṣīrā*).<sup>22</sup>

He says that this verse is addressed to the Muslims and belief cannot be achieved by desire only. It has to be established in the heart and attested/confirmed by deeds.

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<sup>18</sup> Qur’ān, 10:9.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:116.

<sup>20</sup> Qur’ān, 6:158.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:415-16.

<sup>22</sup> Qur’ān, 4:123.

People of the Book are also mentioned in this verse, who desire to be forgiven despite having no good deeds. But God frustrates their desires and unequivocally states that belief is integrated with righteous deeds. Whosoever performs good deeds he will be successful and whosoever performs bad deeds he will be destroyed.<sup>23</sup>

According to al-Zamakhsharī, belief consists of three elements: confirmation by heart (*taṣdīq bi-al-qalb*), affirmation by tongue (*iqrār bi-al-lisān*) and confirmation by deeds (*taṣdīq bi-al-‘amal*).

## **2. The Promise and the Threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*)**

Majority of the Mu‘tazilites believe that it is incumbent upon God to carry His “promise and threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*) because He is just. God promises recompense to those who obey Him and threatens punishment to those who disobey Him. They are unanimous that man has power over his good and bad deeds and he is the creator of these actions. It is because of this reason that he deserves reward or punishment in the hereafter for what he does in this world.<sup>24</sup>

In support of the principle of “the promise and the threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*), the Mu‘tazilites quote the verses of the Qur’ān that “God has promised the believing men and women gardens beneath which the streams flow, where they will abide forever (*wa‘d Allāh al-mu‘minīn wa al-mu‘mīnāt jannāt tajrī min taḥtihā al-anhār khālidīna fī-hā*)”<sup>25</sup> and “God has promised the hypocritical men and women and the unbelievers, the fire of hell, where they will abide forever” (*wa‘d Allāh al-munāfiqīn wa al-munāfiqāt wa al-*

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<sup>23</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:151-52.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:45.

<sup>25</sup> Qur’ān, 9:72.

*kuffār nār jahannam khālidīna fī-hā*).<sup>26</sup> So, in these two verses God clearly states that God will reward the believers and punish the unbelievers.

To fulfill His justice, God keeps the records of all good and bad deeds, small or great, that the human beings performed in this world. According to the Qur'an, everything whether small or great is written down and whosoever has done even an atom's weight of good or bad deeds will see that on the Day of Judgment.<sup>27</sup>

Al-Ash'arī does not agree with the Mu'tazilites' principle regarding "the promise and the threat" (*al-wa'd wa al-wa'id*) and states that conclusive judgments cannot be derived from the literal meanings of the verses as quoted and interpreted by them. He contends that "One has no more right to say that the threat-verses are universal and the others particular than one has to reverse the statement and to say that the threat-verses are particular and the others universal" (*wa laysa qawl man qāla inna al-āyāt 'amma fī al-wa'id 'amma wa al-āyāt al-'ukhra khāṣṣa 'ulā min qawl qālab qalb al-qīṣṣa wa ja'ala āyāt al-wa'id khāṣṣa wa al-āyāt al-'ukhra 'amma*).<sup>28</sup>

### **3. The Intermediate Position between Belief and Unbelief** *(al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn)*

The intermediate position between belief and unbelief (*al-manzila*<sup>29</sup> *bayna al-manzilatayn*) literally means "the position between the two positions." In fact, it is the first principle formulated by Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā who defined the terminologies of "believer"

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<sup>26</sup> Qur'an, 9:68.

<sup>27</sup> Qur'an, 18:49; 54:53; 99: 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *al-Luma'*, 77-80, 107-11.

<sup>29</sup> The word *manzila* (pl. *manāzil*) means status, rank, degree or position.



(*mu'min*), “unbeliever” (*kāfir*), “hypocrite” (*munāfiq*) and “transgressor” (*fāsiq*) due to the controversy and contradictory definitions offered by different sects of Islam.<sup>30</sup>

According to Wāṣil, a sinful Muslim cannot be called either a believer or an unbeliever, but belongs to a separate category of transgressor. He wanted a sinful Muslim to remain a member of the Muslim community, with all the rights that this involved (safety of life and property, inheritance from other Muslims, etc.), but he insisted that the sinner would be condemned to eternal punishment in Hell if that person did not repent. His position was not much different from the one taken by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who called the Muslim sinner a “hypocrite” (*munāfiq*), while Wāṣil used the term “transgressor” (*fāsiq*) instead of hypocrite (*munāfiq*).

Ibn al-Rāwandī criticized Wāṣil that by his doctrine of the intermediate position he deviated from the consensus of the community which had agreed that the Muslim sinner was either a believer, or an unbeliever or a hypocrite.<sup>31</sup> Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt (d. ca. 300/913) in his response stated that Wāṣil accepted the point on which the three groups, that is, al-Baṣrī, the Murji'ites and the Khārijites were agreed, namely that the

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<sup>30</sup> Historically, it is considered that the emergence of schism in Islam started during the first civil war (*fitna*). *Fitna*, literally means “temptation,” “trials,” or “civil war.” The series of events included the assassination of the caliph ‘Uthmān, designation of ‘Alī as caliph, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, the emergence and formation of the *Shi'a* ‘t ‘Alī, the party or partisans of ‘Alī, (later known as Shi'ites), *Shi'at* ‘Uthmān, the partisans of ‘Uthmān opposed to ‘Alī and the Khārijites sects and the assassination of ‘Alī. The *Shi'at* ‘Uthmān demanded ‘Alī for the vengeance of ‘Uthmān’s killers. However, there arose differences between the *Shi'at* ‘Uthmān and the Khārijites about the status of his belief. The partisans of ‘Uthmān were of the opinion that he was a believer and killed unjustly. The Khārijites condemned ‘Uthmān’s conduct and disclaimed any intention of avenging his murder. They went to the extent that he was called a grave sinner and killed justly. The Murji'ites completely rejected all the allegations leveled against ‘Uthmān by the Khārijites and argued that the judgment about the right and wrong should be deferred to God. Similarly, after the battle of Ṣiffīn, when ‘Alī agreed to “arbitration” (*taḥkīm*)<sup>30</sup> for settling the differences arising out of the murder of ‘Uthmān, by referring it to “two arbiters” (*ḥakamayn*), the Khārijites seceded from him protesting against the human arbitrators above the divine word and quoting that “the judgment belongs to God only.” (*in al-ḥukmu illā lillāh*).<sup>30</sup> They proclaimed the invalidity of ‘Alī’s claims to the caliphate. One of their doctrines considered that a person who commits a major sin was an unbeliever and excluded from the community. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 214-301, Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 109; L. Gardet, “6:I:185-906:I:185-906:I:185-90,” *EF*, 2:930.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār*, 118.

Muslim sinner was a transgressor, and avoided the matters on which they differed. Wāṣil quotes from the Qurʾān that: “Fight those among the People of the Book who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not prohibit what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not profess the true religion from those who have been given the Book, till they pay the protective tax out of hand and in submission.”<sup>32</sup> Wāṣil states that this ruling of God is for the People of the Book and they do not fall into the category of those who commit grave sins. He quotes another verse: “When you meet the unbelievers, strike their necks until you overpower them, and hold them in bondage. Then, either set them free graciously or for a ransom.”<sup>33</sup> According to Wāṣil, it specifically refers to the Arab polytheists and all the unbelievers except the People of the Book, and they do not come under those who commit grave sins.<sup>34</sup>

So far as the hypocrite is concerned, if he conceals it, and it is not known, then apparently he is a Muslim; but if he discloses his unbelief and repents then he should be considered a Muslim, otherwise he is liable to be killed. In this situation, a grave sinner does not fall in this category. In case of a believer, God’s judgment is that He is his friend; He loves him and promises Paradise for him. Wāṣil substantiates it with the verses of the Qurʾān.<sup>35</sup> Finally, for a grave sinner, there is a curse from God and He has prepared for him severe punishment in the hereafter.<sup>36</sup>

Al-Ashʿarī also does not agree with the Muʿtazilites’ principle regarding the principle of the intermediate position between belief and unbelief (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*). He states that “regarding the belief in God, there is a consensus of those

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<sup>32</sup> Qurʾān, 9:29.

<sup>33</sup> Qurʾān, 47:4.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Khayyāṭ, *al-Intiṣār*, 118-120.

<sup>35</sup> Qurʾān, 2:57; 3:68; 9:72; 33:47; 66:8.

<sup>36</sup> Qurʾān, 11:18; 82:14.

who speak Arabic the language in which the Qurān was revealed” (*al-taṣḍīq bi-Allāh wa-‘alā dhālika ijmā‘ ahl al-lughat allatī nazala bihā al-Qurān*).<sup>37</sup> Al-Ash‘arī further says that “before the advent of Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’, the chief of the Mu‘tazila, men followed two opinions. The Khawārij among them regarded grave sinners as unbelievers, whereas the ‘People of Rectitude’ maintained the grave sinner was a believer by reason of his faith and a sinner by reason of his grave sin. But no one said that he was neither believer nor believer before the advent of Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’” (*kāna al-nās qabl ḥudūth Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’ ra’īs al-mu‘tazila ‘alā maqālatayn minhum khawārij yukaḥfirūna murtakabī al-kabā’ir wa-minhum ahl al-istiqāma yaqūlūna huwa mu‘min bi-īmānihi fāsiq bi-kabīratihī wa-lam yaqul minhum qā’il annahu laysa bi-mu‘min wa-lā kāfir qabl ḥudūth Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā’*).<sup>38</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī supports this principle and wherever is necessary provides the definitions and interpretations of “believer” (*mu‘min*), “nonbeliever” (*kāfir*) and “transgressor” (*fāsiq*). In his interpretation, most of the time he quotes other verses from the Qur’ān to emphasize his point of view.

#### 4. The Major and the Minor Sins (*al-kabā’ir wa-al-saghā’ir*)

The Mu‘tazilites differ with regard to the definition of major and minor sins.<sup>39</sup> According to Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī sins fall into two categories: minor and major. The

<sup>37</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 75, 104.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *al-Luma‘*, 76, 105.

<sup>39</sup> Many commentators consider term like *dhanb*, *ithm* and *ma‘ṣiya*, a common gloss for *ithm*. The terms like *dhanb*, *ithm* and *masia* refer to major sins while *lamam*, *sayyia* and *khatia* refer to minor sins. *Kabā’ir* are sins that have been expressly forbidden in the Qur’ān and the sunna; acts that entail the ḥadd penalties. According to a *ḥadiīth* reported by Abū Hurayra, there are seven major sins: associating anyone with God, sorcery, unlawful homicide, usurping the property of the orphans, usury, fleeing from the battlefield and slandering believing women. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīh*, *Kitāb al-waṣāya*, no. 23; *Kitāb al-ḥudūd*, no. 44; Muslim,

minor sins deserve to be forgiven if the major sins are avoided. This assertion is based upon the following verses of the Qur’ān: “If you keep away from the grave sins you have been forbidden, We shall efface your evil deeds and lead you to a place of honor,” and “Those who avoid grave sins and indecent deeds, except minor offences, verily your Lord is ample in forgiveness.”<sup>40</sup> The avoidance of the major sins nullifies the punishment of the minor sins.

Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm states that “the belief is an aggregation of all the acts of worship” (*al-īmān jamī‘u al-ṭā‘āt*). If someone commits a major sin he is neither an unbeliever (*kāfir*) nor a hypocrite (*munāfiq*), but a transgressor (*fāsiq*) and remains a believer due to his belief in the unity of God and performance of good deeds.<sup>41</sup> Some of the Mu‘tazilites are of the opinion that major sins are those for which there is God’s threat (*wa‘īd*) and others are the minor sins. According to Jafar b. Mubashshir, “all the intentionally committed sins are major.”<sup>42</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites also differ regarding the forgiveness of the minor sins. Some say that God forgives by His “grace” (*tafaḍḍul*) the minor sins if one avoids the major sins, while others say that God does not forgive the minor sins without repentance.<sup>43</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī says that “sins” consist of both major (*kabā‘ir*) and minor (*ṣaghā‘ir*) sins. Major sins are those offences that deserve punishment and it is not abolished until the repentance is made. Indecent and vile offences (*fawāḥish*) and associating others with God are also major sins. The minor sins are venial offences (*al-*

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*Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-īmān*, no. 145; Abū Dā‘ūd, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-waṣāya*, no. 2874. See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, “Sin, Major and Minor,” *EQ*, 5:19.

<sup>40</sup> Qur’ān, 4:31; 53:32.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 270; Josef van Ess, “al-Aṣamm, Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān,” *EF<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 1-2:88.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 271.

<sup>43</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 271.

*lamam*) and petty in their nature, such as “touch by the insane person” (*al-mass min al-junūn*) and “pollution or dirt” (*al-lawtha*).<sup>44</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī is also of the opinion that the prophets are infallible of committing the major sins. However, when Adam was sent down on the earth, it was a lapse on his part for forgetting what God had commanded him: not to listen to the Satan. But when he repented, he was forgiven by God. Al-Zamakhsharī says that despite the fact that it was only a minor offence, but since he was a prophet, his minor lapse was considered a big offence and repentance was necessary for him.<sup>45</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī, in accordance with the Mu‘tazilite views, does not differentiate between an unbeliever and a person who commits major sins and does not repent, because he will not be forgiven without repentance.

## **5. The Concept of Constraint (*iljā’*)**

The concept of “constraint” (*iljā’*)<sup>46</sup> is intended to solve the issue of the discrepancy between what God wills people to do and what they actually do. The Mu‘tazilites, except Abū Musā al-Murdār (d. 226/841), maintain that “it is not possible that God should will the acts of disobedience in any manner and command that which He does not will to be and forbid that which He wills to be. God sometimes wills that which is not, and things have come to be which He has not willed. However, He has power to prevent that which he does not will and to constrain humans to perform what He wills” (*innahu lā yajūza an yakūna Allāhu subḥānahu murīdan lil-ma‘āṣī ‘alā wajhi min al-*

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<sup>44</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:645.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:255-57.

<sup>46</sup> See Michael Schwarz, “Some Notes on the Notion of *iljā’* (Constraint) in Mu‘tazila Kalām,” *Israel Oriental Studies*, 11 (1972), 413-27.

*wujūh an yakūna mawjūdān wa lā yajūza an ya'mura bi-mā lā yurīdu an yakūna wa anna yanhā 'ammā yurīdu kawnuhu wa anna Allāha subḥānahu qad arāda mā lam yakun wa kāna mā lam yurid wa annahu qādirun 'alā al-man'a mimmā lā yurīdu wa an yulji'a ilā mā arāda).*<sup>47</sup>

Michael Schwarz states that,

He ('Abd al-Jabbār) distinguishes between what God wills of men "by way of constraint and force" (*'alā jihat al-iljā' wa-al-ikrāh*) and what He wills that they should do as a result of their own choice, as voluntary acts of obedience (*'alā jihat al-ikhtiyār wa-al-ṭaw'*). Actions ("objects of power" *maqḍūr*) of the first type must necessarily come into being when He puts the constraint (*iljā'*) into effect. But if voluntary actions of the kind He wills the *mukallaḥūn*<sup>48</sup> to perform are not performed, this does not necessitate any weakness or defect on His part. Neither do voluntary actions which come about against His will infringe His omnipotence.<sup>49</sup> This is so because men's voluntary actions are their exclusive "objects of power" and cannot reasonably be within God's power (*lā yaṣiḥḥ an yakūna maqḍūran lahu*)... although God theoretically has the power to do evil, He will never do it, that is, He will always choose not to do it. This is so because He knows evil for what it is and knows that He can do without it. He thus resembles a person constrained to perform a certain action. Such a person will also never choose to act differently despite the fact that it would be in his power to do so.<sup>50</sup>

'Abd al-Jabbār also points out that it is always considerations of benefit or avoidance of harm which "constrain" a person. God cannot enjoy benefit or suffer harm. Hence He is never constrained and He deserves praise even for those actions which He inevitably performs.<sup>51</sup> When God chooses to perform good actions He does so because

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 512.

<sup>48</sup> "Those obliged by the Law," that is all sane adults.

<sup>49</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6:II:257.

<sup>50</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6:II:268, 6:I:185-90. See Michael Schwarz, "Some Notes on the Notion of *iljā'* (Constraint) in Mu'tazila Kalām" *Israel Oriental Studies*, 11 (1972): 420, 426-27.

<sup>51</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6: I: 201-202; 11: 399-400.

these actions are good and not because of any benefit to Him. Hence He is not constrained and therefore He is praiseworthy.<sup>52</sup>

Al-Ash‘arī argues that according to the Mu‘tazilites, God wills that men should believe voluntarily (*taw‘an*) and if they do so then they deserve to be rewarded. However, if God were to constrain them (*alja‘ahum*) they would neither be believers nor deserving reward. Therefore, God’s omnipotence is compromised because it would not achieve what He wills, that they believe in the manner in which He wills them to believe.<sup>53</sup>

The concept of “constraint” (*iljā’*) does not resolve the issue of discrepancy between what God wills men to do and what they actually do. According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, God has power to accomplish only those acts which can possibly be in His power (*lā yaṣiḥḥ an yakūna maqdūran lahu*)<sup>54</sup> and these do not include the objects of man’s power, i.e. the action which He granted them power to accomplish. It leads into a conflict between God’s power and man’s acquired power and therefore God’s omnipotence is infringed upon and compromised.

## **6. The Concept of Nullification and Atonement (*al-iḥbāt wa al-takfīr*)**

The concept of “the nullification and the atonement” (*al-iḥbāt wa al-takfīr*)<sup>55</sup> is related to obedience (*tā‘a*) and disobedience (*ma‘ṣiya*). ‘Abd al-Jabbār defines it as a person under obligation (*mukallaḥ*) deserves to be rewarded if the act of obedience is greater than the act of disobedience, and the smaller disobedience will be removed, i.e.

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<sup>52</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6: I: 13-14.

<sup>53</sup> McCarthy, *Theology of Al-Ash‘arī*, 38.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6: II: 268.

<sup>55</sup> See Lupti Ibrahim, “The Concept of *Iḥbāt* and *Takfīr* according to az-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī,” *Die Welt des Orients*, 11 (1980): 117-21.

nullified by the greater obedience.<sup>56</sup> In other words, a person's good deeds and bad deeds are weighed. If a person's good deeds are more than his bad deeds, the punishment of the bad deeds is cancelled and he will receive eternal reward. On the other hand, if his bad deeds are more than good deeds, reward of the good deeds is cancelled and he will get eternal punishment. As for minor sins, the Mu'tazilites are of the view that such sins would be weighed against one's good deeds and cancelled out through them as long as the good deeds outweighed the bad deeds. However, 'Abbād b. Sulaymān al-Ṣumayrī is of the view that the punishment of the sins can only be forgiven by repentance.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the Mu'tazilites are of the opinion that when a believer who is obedient to God and repentant departs from this world he deserves not only reward (*thawāb*) and recompense (*'iwaḍ*) but also grace (*tafaḍḍul*) from God. However, if he departs from this world unrepentant of grave sins which he committed, he deserves eternal Hell fire, but his punishment will be lesser than that of the unbelievers.<sup>58</sup>

The majority of the Mu'tazilites denies the possibility that God will pardon an unrepentant sinner because He has informed the human beings that He will punish the sinners and it is not appropriate not to carry out His threat; rather it is necessary for Him to punish them.<sup>59</sup> However, some of them are of the view that there is no doubt that God has the ability to pardon, because the Qur'an states that: "He will pardon whom He pleases and punish whom He wills."<sup>60</sup> In fact, according to 'Abd al-Jabbār, pardon is only conceivable where there has previously been repentance on the part of the unbeliever or

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<sup>56</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 624.

<sup>57</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 625.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:45.

<sup>59</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 644.

<sup>60</sup> Qur'ān, 2:284; 3:129; 5:18, 40; 48:14.



the sinner (*inna al-maghfira bi-sharṭi al-tawba*),<sup>61</sup> and God is obliged to accept this repentance (*qabūl tawba wājib*).<sup>62</sup> If a person repents, the Prophet Muḥammad will make intercession on his behalf on the Day of Judgment at which the sinner can expect God's forgiveness.

Al-Zamakhsharī, in conformity with the Mu'tazilites view, considers that *takfīr* is the removal of a punishment from a person who deserves to be punished either by means of increasing his/her reward or due to his/her repentance which is evident by his interpretation of the following four verses.

First verse: "Announce the good news to those who believe and have done good deeds, they will have gardens under which river flow."<sup>63</sup>

In his interpretation, al-Zamakhsharī says that God gives good news to that person who combines his belief with righteous deeds from the acts of worship and avoids sins. There are two things which can deprive a person of his reward (*thawāb*): unbelief (*kufṛ*) and major sins (*kabā'ir*). Al-Zamakhsharī quotes that "If you associate (anyone with God) all your deeds will be wasted and certainly you will be one of the losers" (*la'in ashrakta la-yahḅaṭanna 'amaluka wa la-takunanna min al-khāsirīn*).<sup>64</sup> He emphasizes that this verse was addressed to the Prophet Muḥammad who is the most noble and honored amongst all the human beings, not to associate other with Him, otherwise his "deeds will be wasted" (*la-yahḅaṭanna 'amaluk*). However, this verse is a hypothetical one and it is certainly impossible for the Prophet to associate anyone with God. He interprets "and certainly you will be one of the losers" (*wa-la-takūnanna min al-khāsirīn*)

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<sup>61</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, ed. 'Adnān Muḥammad Zarzūr (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1969), 2:596.

<sup>62</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14:337-38.

<sup>63</sup> Qur'ān, 2:25.

<sup>64</sup> Qur'ān, 39:65.

as “it is possible that you may be loser due to futility of deeds”<sup>65</sup> (*yaḥtamilu wa latakūnanna min al-khāsirīn bi-sabab ḥubūt al-‘amal*).<sup>66</sup>

Second verse: “O believers, obey God and obey the Prophet and do not waste your deeds.”<sup>67</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “And do not waste your deeds” (*wa-lā tubṭilū a‘mālakum*) as “Do not nullify pious deeds by committing major sins” (*lā tuḥbiṭū al-ṭā‘āt bi-al-kabā‘ir*). God says that: “O you who believe, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loudly to him as you do with one another lest your deeds are nullified while you are unaware” (*yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū lā tarfa‘ū aṣwātakum fawqa ṣawt al-nabī wa lā tajharū lahu bi al-qawl ka-jahri ba‘ḍikum li-ba‘ḍin an taḥbaṭa a‘mālakum wa antum lā tash‘urūn*).<sup>68</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī says that “When the Prophet speaks and you speak, it is necessary that you should not raise your voice above the voice of the Prophet and avoid looking at him directly” (*idhā naṭaqa wa-naṭaqtum fa-‘alaykum an lā tablaghū aṣwātikum warā’ al-ḥadd al-ladhī yablaghahu bi-ṣawtihī wa-an taghadḏū min-hā*). Furthermore, do not call him by his name Muḥammad or Aḥmad but call him with respect keeping in mind his status as a Prophet.<sup>69</sup>

Third verse: “If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, We shall remit your evil deeds, and let you enter an honorable place.”<sup>70</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “major sins that you are forbidden” (*kabā‘ir mā tunhawna ‘an-hu*) are those sins which God and the Prophet have forbidden. He interprets

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<sup>65</sup> *ḥubūt al-‘amal* can be translated as “wasted deeds” or “deeds in vain.”

<sup>66</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:319-20.

<sup>67</sup> Qur’ān, 47:33.

<sup>68</sup> Qur’ān, 49:2.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:556-57.

<sup>70</sup> Qur’ān, 4:31.

“We shall remit your evil deeds” (*nukaffir ‘an-kum sayyi’ātikum*) as “We will efface from you the punishment of committing minor sins by enhancing the reward as a consequence of your avoiding the major sins and patience.”<sup>71</sup>

Fourth verse: “And those who believe and do the righteous deeds We will remit their sins and We will give them a reward better than their deeds.”<sup>72</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī considers that this verse is intended either for the righteous believers or for the polytheists who became believers. He interprets that if it is in the context of righteous believers who committed some minor sins and their misdeeds were covered by good deeds then their punishment of the minor sins will be compensated by the reward of the good deeds and they will be recompensed better than what they used to do. If it is for the new believers and they performed the good deeds then God will efface their previous sins, unbelief and disobedience and will compensate them with better reward since they have become the Muslims.<sup>73</sup>

## 7. Repentance (*tawba*)

The Mu‘tazilites differ regarding the forgiveness of the sins. Most of the Mu‘tazilites consider that the grave sinners are doomed to eternal damnation<sup>74</sup> and in support of their assertion, they quote many verses of the Qur’ān which emphasize that God will punish the evil-doers and those committing sins will abide in hell forever.<sup>75</sup> Some say that God forgives by His “favor” (*tafaḍḍul*) the minor sins if one avoids the

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<sup>71</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:62-64.

<sup>72</sup> Qur’ān, 29:7.

<sup>73</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:536-38.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 666; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Faḍl*, 210, 350; Schmitdke, *Mu‘tazilite Creed*, 76.

<sup>75</sup> Qur’ān, 4:14, 4:123, 12:81, 82:14.

major sins, while others say that God does not forgive the minor sins without repentance.<sup>76</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī, in conformity with the Mu‘tazilites’ doctrine states that “repentance” (*tawba*) is the only way to be forgiven by God for a person who commits major sins. If he dies unrepentant he will abide in the fire forever. His interpretation of the following five verses regarding “repentance” (*tawba*) is as follows:

First two verses: “Those who do not believe and transgress God will not forgive them, nor guide them to any path except to Hell, abiding therein forever.”<sup>77</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that this refers to the unbelievers and those who commit major sins and there is no difference between them because both of them are united between unbelief (*kufur*) and disobedience (*ma‘āṣī*) and “they would not be forgiven except with repentance” (*lā yaghfiru la-humā illā bil-tawba*). There will be no grace bestowed upon them and they will be destined to Hell forever.<sup>78</sup>

Second verse: “Say (Prophet Muḥammad): O My servants, those of you who have acted against your interests should not despair of God’s Mercy. Surely God forgives all sins. He is all-forgiving and all-merciful.”<sup>79</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “Surely God forgives all sins” (*inna Allāh yaghfiru al-dhunūba jamī’an*) “with the condition of repentance” (*bi-sharṭ al-tawba*).<sup>80</sup> He says that the condition of repentance has been mentioned in many verses of the Qur’ān, though it is not stated in this verse. He also mentions that in the reading<sup>81</sup> of Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn

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<sup>76</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 270-71.

<sup>77</sup> Qur’ān, 4:168-69.

<sup>78</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:180-81.

<sup>79</sup> Qur’ān, 39:53.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:312.

<sup>81</sup> The *qirā’a* (pl. *qirā’āt*) denotes the variant readings of the Qur’ān. Traditions from the Prophet Muhammad mention that differences in recitation were permitted by him. These differences in recitation

Mas‘ūd, they added “whomsoever He wills” (*li-man yashā’*) after “forgives all sins” (*yaghfiru al-dhunūba jamī’an*) to the original verse. He states that the purpose of “whomsoever He wills” (*bi-man yashā’*) is “whosoever repents” (*man tāba*). He gives a reason for this interpretation of *tawba* that the “will of God is dependent upon His wisdom and His justice not His dominion and His power” (*mashi’ Allāh tābi’ li-ḥikmatihī wa-‘adlihi lā li-mulkihi wa-jabrūtihi*).<sup>82</sup>

Third verse: “Your Lord forgives human beings for their wrongdoings and your Lord is truly severe in retribution.”<sup>83</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “for their wrongdoings” (*‘alā zulmihim*) as “transgressors for themselves” (*ẓālimīn li-anfusihim*). He interprets it in three different ways: First, God will forgive all the minor sins if one avoids the major sins. Second, God will forgive the major sins “subject to the condition of repentance” (*bi-sharṭ al-tawba*). Third, God’s “forgiveness” (*maghfira*) means concealment of one’s sins and delay in punishment.<sup>84</sup>

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are linked to the seven *aḥruf* (sing. *ḥarf*) according to which Gabriel recited the Qur’ān to Muḥammad. The canonical redaction of the Qur’ān by the third caliph ‘Uthmān was generally accepted as the official text with the exception of the codices of Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ubayy b. Ka‘b ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. However, with passage of time, readings based on the ‘Uthmanic text eclipsed the readings based on other codices. In the first half of the fourth/tenth century, Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid (d. 324/936) was very influential in persuading the authorities to proscribe the Qur’ān readings based on other codices. In his *Kitāb al-Saba’*, Ibn Mujāhid mentions three hierarchical criteria for the choice of seven readings. These are: (1) the reading should in accordance with the ‘Uthmānic codex, (2) it should be authoritatively transmitted and broadly authenticated and (3) it should conform to the rules of Arabic grammar. The seven readings are attributed to: ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir (d. 118/736), ‘Abd Allāh b. Kathīr (d. 120/738), Abū ‘Āmr b. al-A‘lā’ (d. 154/770), Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt (d. 156/773), Nāfi‘ b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 169/785) and ‘Alī b. Ḥamza al-Kisāī’ (d. 189/804). “Three after the seven” are Abū Ja‘far Yazīd b. al-Qa‘qa (d. 130/747), Abū Muḥammad Ya‘qūb b. Ishāq (d. 205/821) and Khalaf Abū Muḥammad al-Asadī (d. 229/844). “Four after the ten” are al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Muḥaysin (d. 123/740), Abū Muḥammad Sulaymān b. Mahrān (d. 148/765) and Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817). See R. Paret, “Ḳirā’a,” *EF*, 5:127; and Frederik Leemhuis, “Readings of the Qur’ān,” *EQ*, 4:353.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:312-13.

<sup>83</sup> Qur’ān, 13:6.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:334.

Fourth verse: “O believers, Repent to God all of you so that you may be successful.”<sup>85</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that those believers who commit minor sins and make mistakes are advised to repent and ask God for His forgiveness, with the hope of success and prosperity if their repentance is accepted and they are forgiven by God.<sup>86</sup>

Fifth verse: “He who repents and does the righteous deeds returns back to God by way of repentance.”<sup>87</sup>

According to al-Zamakhsharī, a sincere repentant should fulfill three conditions: to relinquish all the sins, to be remorseful and to perform righteous deeds. He says that God loves the repentant and loves those who purify themselves.<sup>88</sup>

## **8. Forgiveness (*ghufrān*)**

The Mu‘tazilites agree that God will not forgive a person’s major sins without repentance. Some of them are of the opinion that the minor sins will not be forgiven without repentance also. However, they consider that if someone avoids the major sins, God will forgive the minor sins. They differ about whether it is the right of a person that he should be forgiven after repentance or if it is God’s grace by which He forgives the sins. Abū Hudhayl and his followers believe that those who avoid committing major sins, their minor sins are wiped out by the grace of God, not of their right. Abū ‘Alī-Jubbāī’ differs and he says that just as the reward of good deeds is nullified by committing the major sins, avoiding the major sins results in the forgiveness of minor sins. Al-

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<sup>85</sup> Qur’ān, 24:31.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:289-94.

<sup>87</sup> Qur’ān, 25:71.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:372-73.

Zamakhsharī agrees with the majority position of the Mu‘tazilites, while regarding the minor sins, he follows Abū ‘Alī-Jubbār’.

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets the verses which deal with forgiveness, as follows:

First verse: “God accepts the repentance of those who commit evil in ignorance and then repent immediately after that. God accepts their repentance and God is all-knowing and all-wise.”<sup>89</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that whoever repents to God his repentance is accepted and he is forgiven because the acceptance of repentance and forgiveness is incumbent (*wājib*) upon God. He interprets “God accepts the repentance” (*inna-mā tawba ‘alā Allāh*) that it is as incumbent upon God in the same way as obedience (*ṭa‘āt*) is obligatory upon His servants.<sup>90</sup>

Second verse: “But repentance is not for those who commit evil deeds until when death comes to one of them, and he says: ‘I now repent;’ nor for those who die as unbelievers. For them, We have prepared a very painful punishment.”<sup>91</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that if an unbeliever dies without repentance, he will not be forgiven. Similarly, if someone repents at the time of his death, his repentance will not be accepted because approaching death is the first state of the Hereafter. It is “like that he is dying as an unbeliever who has lost the opportunity of repentance with certainty” (*fa-kamā anna al-mā’it ‘alā al-kufr qad fātāt al-tawba ‘alā al-yaqīn*).<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Qur’ān, 4:17.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:44.

<sup>91</sup> Qur’ān, 4:18.

<sup>92</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:41-44.

Third verse: “It is He who accepts repentance of His servants, and pardons the evil deeds and He knows what you do.”<sup>93</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that there are three components of repentance: remorse upon the sins, resolve not go back to commit sins and firm determination not to commit sins in future.<sup>94</sup>

Fourth verse: “O you who believe, turn to God in sincere repentance, perhaps your Lord may forgive your evil deeds.”<sup>95</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that one should make sincere and true repentance so that God may remit sins. Good advice is the distinguishing mark of the penitents who counsel themselves for repentance. They deal with it by eliminating their bad deeds and remorse upon what they have done in the past. They are severely grieved and determined not to revert back on these repulsive deeds.<sup>96</sup>

Fifth verse: “God will not forgive those who associate other gods with Him, but will forgive anything less than that to whom He pleases. And he who associates other gods with God has committed a very grave sin.”<sup>97</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that God may forgive someone who associates other gods with Him, provided that he repented (*li-man tāba*). However, He will not forgive the one who commits major sins except with repentance (*al-kabā'ir illā bi-al-tawba*). He is of the opinion that the fate of the person who commits a major sin and does not repent is the same as that of the person who associates other gods with Him. In the interpretation of this verse, his main emphasis is on “He will forgive anything less than that to whom

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<sup>93</sup> Qur'ān, 42:25.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:407-8.

<sup>95</sup> Qur'ān, 66:8.

<sup>96</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:162-63.

<sup>97</sup> Qur'ān, 4:48.



He pleases” (*wa-yaghfiru mā duna dhālika li-man yashā’*). He maintains that the first part of the verse that “God will not forgive those who associate other gods with Him” (*inna Allāh lā yaghfiru an yushraka bi-hi*) refers to the person who does not repent, whereas the second part of the verse “He will forgive anything less than that to whom He pleases” (*wa-yaghfiru mā duna dhālika li-man yashā’*) deals with the person who repents (*li-man tāba*). Al-Zamakhsharī cites an example of a ruler who does not spend even a *dīnār* for one person, but spends a whole treasure for another person if he desires. This means that the ruler does not spend even a dinar for a person whom he thinks does not deserve it, while he is prepared to spend a whole treasure for another person who is in his judgment deserving.<sup>98</sup>

### **9. Intercession (*shafa‘a*)**

The Mu‘tazilites maintain that intercession may take place in the hereafter if a person repents before his death. They also believe in it because the word intercession has been mentioned at many places in the Qur’ān. Al-Zamakhsharī also believes in intercession but differs from the orthodox point of view, who believe that it will be for all the Muslims including those who commit the major sins. His interpretation of the following verses is in accordance with the Mu‘tazilite principles.

First verse: “And guard yourselves against the day when no soul will avail any other soul, and no intercession will be accepted from it, nor ransom will be taken from it, nor they will be helped.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:89-90.

<sup>99</sup> Qur’ān, 2:48.

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets this verse in accordance with the Mu‘tazilites’ principles and states that intercession (*shafā‘a*) will not be accepted for those people who commit the major sins (*anna shafā‘a lā tuqbal li-al-‘usāt*). He states that “The day when no soul will avail any other soul” (*yawman lā tajzī nafsun ‘an nafs*) means that one soul will be not able to benefit the other soul. Also, in this verse the word “ransom” (*‘adl*) means intercession (*shafā‘a*) and therefore, he interprets “no ransom will be taken from it” (*lā yu‘khadhu min-hā ‘adl*) as “no intercession will be accepted from it” (*lā yuqbalu min-hā shafā‘a*).<sup>100</sup>

Second verse: “The sinners shall have none to help them.”<sup>101</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that there will be no helper (*nāṣir*) for the evil-doer in any form, that is, neither by intercession nor by others (*fa-lā nāṣira lahu bi-shafā‘a wa-lā ghayrahā*). For al-Zamakhsharī, since God denies any help (*nuṣra*) to the evil-doers, intercession (*shafā‘a*) which is a form of help from God is also denied to them.<sup>102</sup>

Third verse: “O believers, spend of what We have provided you before the day arrives when there will be neither commerce nor friendship nor intercession. The unbelievers are the wrong-doer.”<sup>103</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that there will be neither friends nor intercessors to intercede for the wrong-doers for the alleviation or mitigation of their punishment on the Day of Judgment. So far as the intercession is concerned, it is “enhancement of the grace,

<sup>100</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:263-66.

<sup>101</sup> Qur’ān, 3:192.

<sup>102</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:678-79.

<sup>103</sup> Qur’ān, 2:254.

no more” (*ziyādat al-faḍl lā ghayr*). In other words, there will be no intercession for the unbelievers and there will be an increase in the grace for the believers.<sup>104</sup>

Fourth verse: “The sinners will have neither friend nor intercessor whose (words) will be heeded.”<sup>105</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī says that the intercessors are “friends of God” (*awliyā’ Allāh*) and they only love and are pleased with those people whom God loves and is pleased with. God does not love the evil-doers. Therefore, they will neither help nor intercede for those who commit major sins. He adds that intercession increases grace and people endowed with increased grace become entitled to reward (*thawāb*) and he quotes verse 4:173 that “He will give more out of His favor” (*wa-yazīduhum min faḍlihi*).<sup>106</sup>

Fifth verse: “The intercession of intercessors will be of no avail to them.”<sup>107</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī states that even if all the intercessors from the angels, the prophets and others intercede for the person who commits the major sins it will not be accepted by God because they are loathsome (*maskhūṭ*). On that day, intercession will benefit those with whom God is pleased and He will elevate their ranks (*tazīd fī darajāt*).<sup>108</sup>

Sixth verse: “The day the Spirit and the angels shall stand in rows. They will not speak except whom the Compassionate has allowed and he will speak what is right.”<sup>109</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī interprets that even if all the intercessors from the angels, from the prophets and others intercede for a person who has committed the major sins, they

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<sup>104</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:477-80.

<sup>105</sup> Qur’ān, 40:18.

<sup>106</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:337-39.

<sup>107</sup> Qur’ān, 74:48.

<sup>108</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:261-63.

<sup>109</sup> Qur’ān, 78:38.

will not be accepted by God. On that day, intercession will be accepted only for those people with whom God is pleased and He will elevate their ranks. He also mentions that “the spirit” (*al-rūḥ*) and “the angels” (*al-malā’ika*) are “the best and noblest among the creation of God” (*afḍal al-khalā’iq wa-ashrafahum*) who are obedient and close to Him. However, they will not be allowed to speak unless two conditions are fulfilled. First, that they have been permitted to speak for intercession and second, they will speak the truth. No intercession can take place without God’s will.<sup>110</sup>

Seventh verse: “And they do not intercede except for him whom He is well-pleased, and they stand in awe and reverence of Him.”<sup>111</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī says that the angels do not have the courage to intercede except for those with whom God is pleased and they deserve intercession and an increase in their reward. This will take place only with fear of God.<sup>112</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī’s view is that intercession will be granted to the believers only with God’s permission and the objective of intercession is to increase the grace and elevate the ranks of the believers. Intercession for those persons who commit the major sins will be rejected because they are the wrong-doers.

## 10. Conclusion

Al-Zamakhsharī, in conformity with the Mu‘tazilites believes that it is incumbent upon God to carry His “promise and threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘īd*) because He is just. God promises recompense to those who obey Him and threatens punishment to those

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<sup>110</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:302-3.

<sup>111</sup> Qur’ān, 21:28.

<sup>112</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 4:138-40.

who disobey Him. He also follows the principle of *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*, literally meaning “the position between the two positions” or commonly referred to as “the intermediate position between belief and unbelief.” His definitions of the “believer” (*mu'min*), “non-believer” (*kāfir*) and “transgressor (*fāsiq*)” are synonymous to those of the Mu‘tazilites.

According to al-Zamakhsharī, “belief” (*īmān*) consists of performing “righteous deeds” (*fi'l al-ḥasanāt*) and avoiding “bad deeds” (*tarak al-sayyi'āt*). He elaborates that belief consists of three elements: confirmation by heart (*taṣdīq bi-al-qalb*), affirmation by tongue (*iqrār bi-al-lisān*) and confirmation by deeds (*taṣdīq bi-al-'amal*). He states that “sins” (*āthām*, sing. *ithm*) consist of two types: major (*kabā'ir*) and minor (*ṣaghā'ir*). Major sins are those offences that deserve punishment and it is not abolished until the repentance is made. Indecent and vile offences (*fawāḥish*) and associating others with God are also major sins. The minor sins are venial offences (*al-lamam*) and petty in their nature, such as “touch by the insane person” (*al-mass min al-junūn*) and “pollution or dirt” (*al-lawtha*).

Al-Zamakhsharī agrees with the Mu‘tazilites that *takfīr* is the removal of a punishment from him who deserves to be punished either by means of increasing his reward or due to his repentance. He also considers that “repentance” (*tawba*) is the only way to be forgiven by God for a person who commits major sins. If he dies unrepentant he will abide in the fire forever. Finally, he believes in intercession (*shafā'a*) but differs from the orthodox point of view, who believes that it will be for all the Muslims including those who commit the major sins.

## Chapter 8

### **Fifth Principle: Enjoining what is Right and Forbidding what is Wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*)**

The fifth principle of the Mu'tazilites is *al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar* "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong."<sup>1</sup> They justify this principle on the basis of the Qur'ān, the tradition of the Prophet and the consensus of the community (*ijmā'*).<sup>2</sup> They argue that it is in accordance with the Qur'ān: "Let there be among you a community inviting to goodness, enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong."<sup>3</sup> They also quote the tradition of the Prophet which states that: "When people see forbidden action and do not change it swiftly, God will render them blind with His punishment."<sup>4</sup> So far as the consensus of the community is concerned they say that all the Mu'tazilites agree on this issue.

The details and specifics of this principle in the early period of Mu'tazilites are scanty. Ibn Nadīm mentions that Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 201/816), and Ja'far b. Mubashshir (d. 234/848) both wrote *Kitāb al-Amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-*

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Felicitas Opwis advised me to look into Michael Cook's *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). The following discussion is mainly based on the Chapter 9 (pages 195-226) of the book which deals with the Mu'tazilites. Cook's translation of the four terms is as follows: "[C]ommanding' (*amr*) is telling someone below one in rank (*rutba*) to do something, while forbidding (*nahy*) is telling them not to; 'right' (*ma'rūf*) is any action of which the agent knows or infers the goodness (*ḥusn*), and 'wrong' (*munkar*) any action of which he knows or infers the badness (*qubḥ*)." See Cook, *Commanding Right*, 205; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 141.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 142.

<sup>3</sup> It is mentioned eight times in the Qur'ān, 3:104, 110, 114; 7:157; 9:71, 112; 22:41 and 31:17.

<sup>4</sup> I could not find the *ḥadīth* cited by 'Abd al-Jabbār in any collections of *aḥadīth*. However, I found another *ḥadīth* in the *Musnad* of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, which conveys more or less the same meaning. The *ḥadīth* quoted by 'Abd al-Jabbār is: "No eye that witnesses God being disobeyed should twinkle before changing or leaving the scene" (*laysa li-'ayn tara Allāhu yu'sa fa-taṭrif ḥattā taghyyir aw tantaqil*). Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1969), 1:2; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 142.

*munkar*. Hishām al-Fuwaṭī (d. ca. 230/844) compiled *Kitāb Usūl al-khams*.<sup>5</sup> Most probably, Hishām al-Fuwaṭī might have mentioned this principle in his book because the title suggests five principles. According to al-Ash‘arī, all the Mu‘tazilites, except al-Aṣamm considered “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong” (*al-amr bi al-ma‘rūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*) as obligatory “provided they are able to perform it with the tongue, hand, and sword, in whatever manner they are able to do it” (*ma‘a al-imbkān wa al-qudra bi al-lisān wa al-yad wa al-sayf kayfa qadarū ‘alā dhālika*).<sup>6</sup>

Al-Khayyāt (d. 320/932) defines a Mu‘tazilite who adheres to “the five principles” (*uṣūl al-khmsa*), and ranks “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong” (*al-amr bi al-ma‘rūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*) in its classical fifth place.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 346/956) mentions that whosoever believes in the “five principles” is a Mu‘tazilite, and if someone believes in more or less than these five principles then he cannot be called a Mu‘tazilite. Regarding the fifth principle “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong” (*al-amr bi al-ma‘rūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*), he states that “it is obligatory upon all the believers to perform this duty according to their capability” (*‘alā sār al-mu‘minīn wājib ‘alā ḥasbi istiṭā‘athum fī dhālika*). He further states that it is like *jihād* in which “there is no distinction between fighting the unbeliever and the transgressor” (*lā farq bayna mujāhadat al-kāfir wa al-fāsiq*).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> J.W. Fück, “Some Hitherto Unpublished Texts on the Mu‘tazilite Movement from Ibn al-Nadīm’s *al-Fihrist*,” in Fuat Sezgin’s *Islamic Philosophy: The Teachings of the Mu‘tazila* (Frankfurt: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 2000), 212, 208, 213.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 278.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Khayyāt, *al-Intiṣār*, 93.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 3:221-23.

There is a difference of opinion between Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and his son Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī whether the obligatory nature of “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong” could be known through reason or revelation. Abū ‘Alī’s view is that it is known through reason, whereas Abū Hāshim considers that it is through both reason revelation except in one situation that a person observes someone doing wrong then it is obligatory through reason to stop that wrong. Abū Hāshim also states that good (*ma’rūf*) is of two types: one is obligatory (*wājib*) and the other is supererogatory (*nāfil*). The obligatory good is essential while the supererogatory goodness is not imperative but it is over and above the obligatory goodness. On the other hand, wrong (*munkar*) is only of one type and there is no such classification as minor wrong or major wrong.<sup>9</sup>

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, the unity of the Muslim community is of paramount importance and it is recommended that if there is division among people, efforts should be made for reconciliation between them not only through negotiations but with force also. He quotes the following verses of the Qur’ān: “If two groups of the believers fight one another, promote peace between them; but if one of them rebels against the other then fight against the rebellious group until it complies with God’s command. If it does so, make peace among them with justice and equitably.”<sup>10</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār follows Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī that good (*ma’rūf*) may be either obligatory or supererogatory depending upon whether the good to be commanded is by nature obligatory or supererogatory. However, forbidding wrong is always obligatory because a wrong (*munkar*) is repugnant (*qabīḥ*). Regarding whether the

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<sup>9</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 142, 146, 742.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 144, 741; Qur’ān, 49:9.



obligation to command good and forbid wrong is known by reason or revelation, his view is that it is known only from revelation.

According to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, there are five conditions for commanding the right and forbidding the wrong. First, one should know what matters are right and what are wrong. If one cannot distinguish between the two, one will make error in one’s judgment. Second, he should know that “the wrong is going to happen” (*al-munkar ḥādir*); for instance, existence of necessary means for drinking alcohol, or musical and amusement instruments. Third, one should be aware that taking an action will not lead to a “greater harm” (*muḍarrat a’zam*). If he knows or feels that prohibiting the alcohol drinkers may result in the bloodshed of Muslims, or burning of a neighborhood, then there is no obligation to perform this act. Fourth, one knows or believes that his advice would have an “effect” (*ta’thīr*). Fifth, if he knows or feels that one’s action will not result in harm to one’s personal safety or property.<sup>11</sup>

‘Abd al-Jabbār states that since the objective of the fifth principle is to command what is right and forbid what is wrong one should not resort to difficult and unpleasant measures where the same can be accomplished by easy and convenient methods. This is known by both reason and revelation. So far as the reason is concerned, if a task can be performed easily, it is not prudent to pursue a difficult course. As far as revelation is concerned, God first commands to mediate through discourse between the two fighting groups of the believers. If they do not desist in fighting, the group at fault should be subdued by force and fighting.<sup>12</sup> He further states that if one is not persuaded by verbal warning then he should be prevented by force. He gives the example of a wine drinker.

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 142-43.

<sup>12</sup> Qur’ān, 49:9; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 144.

First, he should be forbidden gently (*bi al-qawl al-layyin*); if he continues then he should be spoken harshly (*khashshana lahu al-qawl*); if he persists then he should be beaten; and finally, if he does not stop then he should be fought.<sup>13</sup>

The Mu‘tazilites argue that a rational person knows that it is in his or her interest to acquire benefit and welfare and avoid harm. If there is oppression and harm being inflicted on the people, it is necessary to stop it. Religion also promotes peace and equity among the people and discourages injustice and violation of their rights. So, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong is justifiable from the rational and religious point of view.

There are two viewpoints for the implementation of this principle. According to the first opinion only rulers (*a’imma*) are responsible and preferable for executing the prescribed punishments (*ḥudūd*), safeguarding the territory, protecting the seaports, maintaining the army and appointing the judges and executives. People at large (*kāffat al-nās*) can take action against wine-drinking, theft, adultery, and the like. However, if there is a legitimate ruler, then it is better that he should carry out these duties.<sup>14</sup>

According to the second opinion, it is a collective duty (*farḍ kifāya*), the fulfillment of which by some individuals exempts the other individuals from fulfilling it. In this case, if a sufficient number of people assume the responsibility to implement this principle so that the people may follow the right path and resist impiety, it will excuse other members of the society to perform this duty.<sup>15</sup> Whether this principle is implemented through a ruler or by some individuals, the main purpose is that there should be a mechanism which ensures that the people are being commanded to perform good deeds and forbidden from the evil acts.

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 744-45.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 148, 750.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ*, 148.

Al-Zamakhsharī considers it a “collective duty” (*farḍ ‘alā al-kifāya*) the fulfillment of which by some persons exempts the others in the society.<sup>16</sup> His interpretation of the verses pertaining to “enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong” (*al-amr bi al-ma‘ruf wa al-nahay ‘an al-munkar*) is as follows.

Verse 3:104: “And let there be a community among you who may call to goodness and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. They are those who will be successful.”

According to al-Zamakhsharī, it is a “collective duty,” and it can be done only by a person who can distinguish between right and wrong and knows how to perform and pursue this duty. There is a possibility that an ignorant person may forbid the right and enjoin the wrong. He may become harsh in a situation where he is supposed to be lenient or may become gentle at an occasion when he is expected to be tough. If he does not know the juristic differences between the various legal schools (*madhāhib*),<sup>17</sup> it is possible that he may forbid a person from those things which are permissible in his school. Also, if he forbids an obstinate person from doing something, that person may become more strict and persistent in his wrong-doing.

Al-Zamakhsharī also says that there are some conditions which must be taken into consideration while performing this duty. First, a person who is forbidding must be

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<sup>16</sup> The verse states that there should be a “community among you” (*minkum ummatun*). The issue is the meaning of “of” (*min*). Does it mean “consisting of,” or “from among”? In the technical language of the exegetes the first will be an instance of “specification” (*tabyīn*) implying that all members of the community have the duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. The second will be an instance of “some/partition” (*tab‘īḍ*) implying that only some members are obligated. Al-Zamakhsharī in his interpretation of this verse, uses “some/partition” (*tab‘īḍ*). See Michael Cook, “Virtues and Vices, Commanding and Forbidding,” *EQ*, 5:436.

<sup>17</sup> *Madhhab* (pl. *madhāhib*) as a term of religion means “a doctrine, a tenet, or an opinion with regard to a particular case” and in law specifically, a technical term mostly translated as “school of law.” There are four legal schools recognized as orthodox by the Sunnite Muslims, viz. Ḥanafīte, Mālīkite, Shāfī’ite and Ḥanbalite. The Shi’ites’ two schools are Ja‘farite and Zaydite.

certain that it is a wrong thing. Second, the prohibited thing from which he is forbidding a person has not yet occurred, because if it has already taken place then it is in vain (*'abath*) to stop. Third, he should be certain that his forbidding will not have negative consequences, i.e. he may commit more sins as a reaction. Fourth, he should be certain that from his forbidding that person will refrain from committing bad deeds. He emphasizes that one must be certain that the person is very close to committing a sin and that he will not be assaulted and hurt from the person whom he is forbidding.<sup>18</sup>

Verse 3:110: “You are the best nation brought forth to mankind, enjoining the good, forbidding the wrong and believing in God.”

Al-Zamakhsharī states that in this verse God has compared this nation with the previous nations mentioned and found it to be the best among all the nations. God says that, “You were raised for commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong.”<sup>19</sup>

Verse 3:114: “They believe in God and the Last Day, and enjoin the good and forbid the wrong and hasten to do good things. They are among the righteous people.”

The preceding verse 3:113 describes that all the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*) are not alike. Among them is a community of “upright people” (*ummatun qā'imatun*) who recite the scripture day and night, believe in God and the Last Day. They enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong.<sup>20</sup>

So far, all the verses have commanded enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong for the unity of the community of believers. In the following verse enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong is addressed to an individual.

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<sup>18</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:604-6.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:608-10.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:611-12.

Verse 31:17: “O my son, perform the prayer, command what is right and forbid what is wrong and bear with patience whatever befalls you.”

In this verse, Luqmān<sup>21</sup> is addressing his son and giving pious counsel to command the good and forbid the wrong. Al-Zamakhsharī interprets “and bear with patience what befalls you” (*wa-ṣbir ‘alā mā aṣābaka*) that in general, one should be patient if one is afflicted with hardship, but specifically more patient in case of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong because this act is of courage and resolve.<sup>22</sup>

Verse 5:105: “O you who believe, on you rests (the responsibility) for your own selves. You follow the right path those who have gone astray will not be able to do you harm.”

Some people are of the view this verse exempts them from enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong and it is not mandatory (*wājib*). Al-Zamakhsharī differs from this interpretation and states that this verse is addressed to those believers who were concerned and sad for the unbelievers not accepting faith and prayed for them to be believers. He says that the believers are responsible for their souls and those people who have gone astray will not harm them. His interpretation of this verse is that they should not waste away themselves with grief for them and one should not abandon enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. If someone does not do it, and he is able to do it, he will not be on right path.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Luqmān appears in the Qur’ān as a monotheist and a wise man. However, his identity is by no means certain. Muslim exegetes identify him as a Nubian, as Ethiopian or an Egyptian slave who worked as a carpenter or a shepherd. The majority of the exegetes agree that he was not a prophet. Orientalists associate him with such figures as Prometheus, Lucian and Solomon. See A.H.M. Zahniser, “Luqmān,” *EQ*, 3:242 and B. Heller, “Luqmān,” *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 5:811.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:14-6.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:304-6.

## Conclusion

There are three main features of the Mutazilites' principle of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong: consistency in their views, homogeneity of the principle over space and time, and activism in varying degrees.<sup>24</sup> According to al-Zamakhsharī, it is a “collective duty” (*farḍ ‘alā al-kifāya*), the fulfillment of which by some persons exempts the others in the society. It can be done only by a person who can distinguish between right and wrong and knows how to perform and pursue this duty. He states that “enjoining the right” can be both “mandatory” (*wājib*) and “recommended” (*mandūb*); however, “forbidding the wrong” is “mandatory” (*wājib*) because abstaining from the reprehensible things (*munkarāt*) is mandatory due to their evil nature. Finally, al-Zamakhsharī elaborates in greater detail the prerequisites for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.

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<sup>24</sup> Cook, *Commanding Right*, 224-26.

## Conclusions

My hypothesis is that al-Zamakhsharī's Qur'ān commentary is squarely within the Mu'tazilite tradition. This dissertation contests Andrew Lane's study in which he argues that "al-Zamakhsharī was neither a theologian nor even a religious scholar in the more limited sense of the word,"<sup>1</sup> and concludes that,

This study, then, puts to rest the myth that the *Kashshāf* is a 'Mu'tazilite commentary' that began with *al-ḥamdu li-llāh alladhī khalaqa l-Qur'ān*, and demonstrates that it would even be difficult to define what a 'Mu'tazilite commentary' actually is. There is, in fact, so little Mu'tazilism in the *Kashshāf* and so many missed occasions to inject some, that to call it such is a misnomer; nor is there any 'special outlook' or 'distinctive approach' that can be discerned in the *Kashshāf* by which its Mu'tazilite character could be redeemed.<sup>2</sup>

In order to substantiate my hypothesis, I began with al-Zamakhsharī's methodology of *tafsīr* which comprises: *muḥkamāt wa mutashābihāt*, 'ilm al-ma'ānī wa 'ilm al-bayān, questions and answers (*as'ila wa-ajwiba*), grammar, *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth* and variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*).

Then I described the Mu'tazilites' five principles (*al-uṣūl al-khamsa*): God's unity (*al-tawḥīd*), God's justice (*al-'adl*), reward and punishment (*al-wa'd wa-al-wa'īd*), intermediate position between belief and unbelief (*al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn*) and enjoining good and forbidding evil (*al-amr bi-al-ma'rūf wa-al-nahy 'an al-munkar*).

I examined and evaluated *al-Kashshāf* within the framework of these five principles to find out whether and in what manner al-Zamakhsharī defends these

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<sup>1</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 229.

principles. I selected those verses where anthropomorphisms need clarification as well as verses that are known to be points of contention between the Mu‘tazilites and traditionists.

The following findings support my hypothesis:

The first fundamental principle of the Mu‘tazilites is the “unity of God” (*tawhīd*), which is the most important thesis of their doctrine because it is the source of all other principles. Al-Zamakhsharī not only believes in this principle, but applies it in his interpretation of the Qur’ān. With regard to God’s attributes, al-Zamakhsharī agrees with Wāṣil b. ‘Aṭā, who denies the attributes of God such as “knowledge, power, will and life” (*al-‘ilm wa-al-qudra wa-al-irāda wa-al-ḥayāt*).<sup>3</sup> So far as the createdness of the Qur’ān is concerned, al-Zamakhsharī considers that the Qur’ān is the speech of God and it is created by Him. The Mu‘tazilites’ reasoning is that God, identical with His attributes, is not subject to change. Therefore, it is impossible that the Qur’ān, in the sense of an attribute, is uncreated, for it is essentially multiple and temporal.

Al-Zamakhsharī emphasizes the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God and denies His description anthropomorphically in any form, such as direction, place, vision, image, body, face, hand, eye, domain, movement, extinction, change, speaking, sitting, coming or appearing. He is of the opinion that the anthropomorphic verses in the Qur’ān are allegorical or figurative expressions to symbolize God’s attributes and actions. He interprets such verses by the method of *ta’wīl* or metaphorical interpretation, and elucidates such words according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur’ān. It is evident from Zamakhsharī’s interpretation of such verses in the *Kashshāf*.

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<sup>3</sup> See al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1:46.



The second principle is “justice” (*‘adl*). The Mu‘tazilites called themselves “people of the justice and the unity” (*ahl al-‘adl wa al-tawhīd*), and emphasized God’s justice and His goodness towards human beings. Al-Zamakhsharī states that God is just and desires good and His inherent justice prevents Him from inflicting any harm or injustice to the people. It is due to people’s own good or bad deeds that their destiny is decided by God. The Qur’ān exhorts people repeatedly to repent and turn away from evil deeds and thus work for their own salvation. He quotes from the Qur’ān that “those who fulfill their covenant with God” (*alladhīna yūfūna bi ‘ahdi Allāhi*), persevere in seeking the way of their Lord, remain steadfast in prayers and ward off evil with good (*yadra’ūna bi al-ḥasanāti al-sayyī’āt*), for them is the recompense of paradise. While “those who break their covenant with God” (*alladhīna yanquḍūna bi ‘ahdi Allāhi*), and spread corruption on the earth (*yufsidūna fī al-ard*), for them is an evil abode.<sup>4</sup>

In order to avoid attributing of evil to God, al-Zamakhsharī maintains that “God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.”<sup>5</sup> His view is based on the Qur’ānic verse that God is not unjust to His servants.<sup>6</sup> For al-Zamakhsharī, God’s praising Himself that He could not do evil to His servants, would have no sense if He imposed burden on a soul beyond his capacity. In addition, God is just and “enjoins justice” (*yā’muru bi al-‘adl*),<sup>7</sup> therefore, “He would impose upon them which is really below their capacity” (*fa ja’ala mā faraḍahu ‘alayhim wāqi’an taḥta ṭāqatahum*).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Qur’ān, 13:20-25.

<sup>5</sup> Qur’ān, 2:233, 286; 6:152; 7:42; 23:62; 65:7.

<sup>6</sup> Qur’ān, 50:29.

<sup>7</sup> Qur’ān, 16:90.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:464.

I treated the the third principle “promise and the threat” (*al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘id*), and the fourth principle “intermediate position between belief and unbelief” (*al-manzila bayna al- manzilatayn*) by combining them together. There is a strong relationship and firm link between these two principles because they are based upon the Mu‘tazilites’ concepts of “belief” (*īmān*) and “God’s justice” (*‘adl Allāh*). Al-Zamakhsharī, in conformity with the Mu‘tazilites believes that it is incumbent upon God to carry His promise and threat because He is just. God promises recompense to those who obey Him and threatens punishment to those who disobey Him. He also follows the principle of the intermediate position between belief and unbelief. His definitions of the “believer” (*mu‘min*), “non-believer” (*kāfir*) and “transgressor (*fāsiq*)” are synonymous to those of the Mu‘tazilites, and throughout his interpretation, he adheres to it.

According to al-Zamakhsharī, “belief” (*īmān*) consists of performing “righteous deeds” (*fi‘l al-ḥasanāt*) and avoiding “bad deeds” (*tarak al-sayyi‘āt*). He elaborates that belief consists of three elements: confirmation by heart (*taṣdīq bi-al-qalb*), affirmation by tongue (*iqrār bi-al-lisān*) and confirmation by deeds (*taṣdīq bi-al-‘amal*). He states that “sins” (*āthām*, sing. *ithm*) consist of two types: major (*kabā‘ir*) and minor (*ṣaghā‘ir*). Major sins are those offences that deserve punishment and it is not abolished until the repentance is made. Indecent and vile offences and associating others with God are also major sins. The minor sins are venial offences and petty in their nature, such as touch by the insane person, and pollution or dirt.

Al-Zamakhsharī agrees with the Mu‘tazilites that *takfīr* is the removal of a punishment from him who deserves to be punished either by means of increasing his reward or due to his repentance. He also considers that “repentance” (*tawba*) is the only

way to be forgiven by God for a person who commits major sins. If he dies unrepentant he will abide in the fire forever. Finally, he believes in intercession (*shafā'a*) but differs from the orthodox point of view, who believes that it will be for all the Muslims including those who commit the major sins. Al-Zamakhsharī's view is that intercession will be granted to the believers only with God's permission and the objective of intercession is to increase the grace and elevate the ranks of the believers. Intercession for those persons who commit the major sins will be rejected because they are the wrongdoers.

The fifth principle "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). There are three main features of this principle of the Mutazilites: consistency in their views, homogeneity of the principle over space and time, and activism in varying degrees.<sup>9</sup> According to al-Zamakhsharī, it is a "collective duty" (*fard 'alā al-kifāya*), the fulfillment of which by some persons exempts the others in the society. It can be done only by a person who can distinguish between right and wrong and knows how to perform and pursue this duty. He states that "enjoining the right" can be both "mandatory" (*wājib*) and "recommended" (*mandūb*); however, "forbidding the wrong" is "mandatory" (*wājib*) because abstaining from the reprehensible things (*munkarāt*) is mandatory due to their evil nature. Finally, al-Zamakhsharī elaborates in greater detail the prerequisites for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.

Andrew Lane's study analyzes "al-Zamakhsharī's commentary on Sūrat al-Dukhān (Q44: Smoke) and Sūrat al-Qamar (Q54: The Moon), with the intention of

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<sup>9</sup> Cook, *Commanding Right*, 224-26.

discovering, first of all, what it says and then how its contents can best be described and perhaps even classified if it lends itself to such a treatment.”<sup>10</sup> According to him,

While it probably would not be correct to speak of these two *sūras* as being ‘representative’ of the Qur’ānic *sūra*, the forty-fourth and fifty-fourth *sūras* are a good choice to illustrate how al-Zamakhsharī goes about his exegetical task in the *Kashshāf*. They are of manageable size; each had approximately the same number of verses (59 and 55) and is of the same approximate length. Furthermore, they are neither early nor late *sūras*; according to Blachère and Nöldeke, they are Meccan II, although Welch says that, “we can no longer speak of ‘middle Meccan’ or ‘late Meccan’ *sūras*,” and that, while we can speak more confidently about ‘early Meccan’ *sūras*, we cannot be certain which *sūras* belonged to this group.”<sup>11</sup>

Lane states that,

While the *Kashshāf* may be a mouthpiece for Mu‘tazilism it is hardly speaking constantly on this topic nor seeking every occasion to do so. Within the framework of the traditional *tafsīr musalsal*, al-Zamakhsharī seems willing to offer up some Mu‘tazilism when the opportunity presents itself but, even then, without going into a long development of the topic. It might have been possible for him, of course, to use many passages as starting point for a presentation of his Mu‘tazilite opinions but, in fact, he does not. What distinguishes this commentary from others, then, is not an excess of Mu‘tazilism. This restrained use of the *tafsīr* for expressing Mu‘tazilite views is shown by the fact that, in Q44 and Q54, al-Zamakhsharī makes what appears to be only one reference to a Mu‘tazilite tenet.<sup>12</sup>

Lane’s choice of the two *sūras* is arbitrary without any reference to the exegetical tradition of the Mu‘tazilites. It is difficult to find out from his work how far al-Zamakhsharī’s Mu‘tazilism is muted in comparison with that of his Mu‘tazilite predecessors. He also devotes so much more effort to showing where Mu‘tazilism is absent than to where it is present that one barely gets an impression of what and where

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<sup>10</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 117.

<sup>11</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 117, footnote 42; A.T. Welch, “al-Ḳur’ān,” *EF*, 5:418.

<sup>12</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 142-43.

the Mu‘tazilite elements are. Lane finds out of the two *sūras*, only a single reference to a Mu‘tazilī tenet, viz. promise and threat, contained in the commentary on verse 54:17.

In reality, however, this is not the case. For instance, al-Zamakhsharī believed in the createdness of the Qur’ān, and he proves it with his interpretation of verse 17:88. Al-Zamakhsharī stressed absolute uniqueness and transcendence of God and denied His description anthropomorphically in any form, such as direction, place, image, body, face, hand, eye, domain, movement, extinction, change, or feeling.<sup>13</sup> He considered the anthropomorphic verses in the Qur’ān as allegorical or figurative expressions to symbolize God’s attributes and actions. He dealt with such verses by the method of *ta’wīl* or metaphorical interpretation. He interpreted single words in a Qur’ānic text according to a secondary or metaphorical meaning found elsewhere in the Qur’ān. By the “hand” (*yad*),<sup>14</sup> he meant God’s blessing (*ni‘ma*),<sup>15</sup> and by His “eye” (*‘ayn*)<sup>16</sup> he meant His knowledge (*‘ilm*).<sup>17</sup> According to him, God’s “face” (*wajh*)<sup>18</sup> means God’s very essence,<sup>19</sup> God’s sitting on the throne<sup>20</sup> indicates a symbol of His authority, power and control upon everything.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, al-Zamakhsharī interprets verse 2:7 “metaphorically” (*majāzan*) and says that neither “seal” (*khatm*) nor “cover” (*taghshia*) of the heart have been used in a literal sense. He further elaborates that linking of “sealing their hearts” to God is “evil” (*qabīḥ*) and God is above all doing any evil act.

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<sup>13</sup> See Schmiddkte, *Mu‘tazilite Creed of az-Zamahsharī*, 16-18.

<sup>14</sup> Qur’ān, 3:26,73; 5:64; 23:88; 36:83; 38:75; 48:10; 57:29; 67:1.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 167, 218.

<sup>16</sup> Qur’ān, 11:37; 20:39; 23:27; 52:48; 54:14.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 165, 195.

<sup>18</sup> Qur’ān, 28:88; 55:27.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 521.

<sup>20</sup> Qur’ān, 7:54; 10:3; 13:2; 20:5; 25:59; 32:4; 57:4.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt*, 211.

Suleiman Mourad's review of Lane's study confirms the same conclusions about *al-Kashshāf* which I have arrived at. He states that,

Lane's study does not show sufficient familiarity with the Mu'tazilite scholarship on the Qur'ān...this book shows insufficient familiarity with what Mu'tazilism is, after all, about. Mu'tazilism is about theology. To establish whether or not *al-Kashshāf* is a Mu'tazilite commentary, one needs only to determine whether, and in what manner, al-Zamakhsharī defends some or all of the five principles of Mu'tazilite theology. For example, in verse 76:3 (*innā hadaynāhu al-sabīla immā shākiran wa-immā kafūran*), it is obvious that al-Zamakhsharī is upholding the doctrine of *al-'adl* (God's justice): a person's unbelief is the result of his own wrong choices (*bi-sū'i ikhtiyārihi*).<sup>22</sup> On another occasion, al-Zamakhsharī criticizes the predestinarians, whom he refers to as *al-Mujbira*. Moreover, he rejects anthropomorphism when he says that God's throne (*kursī*), in verse 2:255, 'is simply a metaphor and imaginary, for in reality there is no throne, or act of sitting, or one who sits' (*wa-mā huwa illā taṣwīrun li-aẓmatihi wa-takhyīlun faqaṭ, wa-lā kursīyun thamātun wa-lā qu'ūdun wa-lā qā'idun*).<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the reference to the hand of God in '*yadu 'llahi maghlūlatu*' in verse 5:64 is, according to al-Zamakhsharī, an allegory, and 'he who is not versed in the science of language (*'ilm al-bayān*) is blind to the correct meaning of verses like this one.'<sup>24</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī also asserts the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān in verse 43:3 (*innā ja'alnāhu qur'ānan 'arabiyan...*), when he says that God created it (*ay, khalaqnāhu 'arabiyan ghayra a'jamī*).<sup>25</sup> Such passages demonstrate that al-Zamakhsharī's commentary is indeed a Mu'tazilite one.<sup>26</sup>

Lane also argues that, "while al-Zamakhsharī may be well known for his 'Mu'tazilite' commentary on the Qur'ān, exegesis in general and Mu'tazilism in particular are hardly representative of his literary output... al-Zamakhsharī was neither a theologian nor even a religious scholar in the more limited sense of the word."<sup>27</sup> He

<sup>22</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 6:275.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:480-86.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 2:264-68.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 5:424-25.

<sup>26</sup> Suleiman A. Mourad, "Review of Andrew Lane's Traditional Mu'tazilite Commentary, The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 52 (2007), 409-10.

<sup>27</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 46.

mentions that “absolutely no one studied theology with him, although he had Mutazilites among his students.”<sup>28</sup>

Lane states that,

The rather limited scope of al-Zamakhsharī’s theological thinking can be seen in a comparison of the *Kashshāf* with his *Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*, a short treatise described by Madelung as “a brief summary of his theological creed,” and by Schmidtke as “a short creedal tract on theology.”<sup>29</sup> In this tract, al-Zamakhsharī cites twenty-eight quranic passages to support some of his arguments... al-Zamakhsharī refers to the Quran on only twelve occasions in the entire *Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*... A careful examination of al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary on these same twenty-eight passages in the *Kashshāf* revealed that only at ten of them does he raise the theological points for which he used them in the *Minhāj*. Of the remaining eighteen, he expresses ideas that could be attributed to the Mu‘tazilite influence at only seven of them; in the remaining eleven cases, Mu‘tazilite commentary is lacking.<sup>30</sup>

According to Sabine Schmidtke,

Lane compares *al-Kashshāf* with Zamakhsharī’s single theological treatise, *al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*, paying particular attention to the scriptural quotations adduced throughout the *Minhāj* concludes that “al-Zamakhsharī displays an overall lack of concern in the *Kashshāf* for the specific ‘Mu‘tazilite content’ of the verses that he used in the *Minhāj*.”<sup>31</sup> However, no details (not even references) are given for the ten verses that evoked theological discussions, nor for the eleven that might show Mu‘tazilite influence.<sup>32</sup>

With respect to al-Zamakhsharī’s Mu‘tazilism, a number of the biographical dictionaries mention that, when making a call on someone, al-Zamakhsharī used to have announced himself as follows: “Abū al-Qāsim the Mu‘tazilite is at the door” (*Abū al-*

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<sup>28</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 35.

<sup>29</sup> The *Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn* is divided into nine chapters in the “question-and-answer” (*masā’il wa-ajwiba*), format, and deals with the Mu‘tazilite principles. See Schmidtke, *A Mu‘tazilite Creed of al-Zamakhsharī*, 9; Madelung, *The Theology of al-Zamakhsharī*, 488.

<sup>30</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 146.

<sup>31</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān Commentary*, 147.

<sup>32</sup> Sabine Schmidtke, “Review of Andrew Lane’s *Traditional Mu‘tazilite Commentary*, The *Kashshāf* of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 17 (2007), 194.

*Qāsim al-mu‘tazilī bi al-bāb*).<sup>33</sup> Abū al-Fidā’ (d. 732/1331) and Ibn Athīr (d. 774/1373) state that al-Zamakhsharī professed Mu‘tazilism openly, and *al-Kashshāf*’s explicit theme is Mu‘tazilite theology.<sup>34</sup> It is beyond any doubt that al-Zamakhsharī was a Mu‘tazilite and affirmed it himself.

All the scholars, contemporary of al-Zamakhsharī and of the subsequent generations, are in agreement that *al-Kashshāf* is an exquisite, elegant, eloquent, lucid and sublime commentary of the Qur’ān.<sup>35</sup> However, majority of them ‘accused’ al-Zamakhsharī giving a Mu‘tazilite interpretation of the Qur’ān in *al-Kashshāf*. About a century and a half after the *Kashshāf* was finished, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca. 685/1286) composed his *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta’wīl*, a Qur’ānic commentary which Robson describes as “largely a condensed and amended edition of al-Zamakhsharī’s *Kashshāf*,” sometimes refuting the latter’s Mu‘tazilite views, and sometimes simply omitting them.<sup>36</sup> Al-Bayḍāwī’s contemporary, the Alexandrian *qāḍī* Ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683/1284),<sup>37</sup> wrote a commentary in which he criticized al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:170; al-Fāsī, *Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:141; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:120.

<sup>34</sup> Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, 3:25; Ibn Athīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 12:219.

<sup>35</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Jamra al-Andalusī, *Bahjat al-nufūs wa-taḥalliha bi-ma‘rifā mā lahā wa-‘alayhā*, ed. Bakrī Shaykh Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malā’iyyin, 1997), 1:65-6; Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fī usūl al-tafsīr*, ed. ‘Adnān Zarzūr (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1972), 85-86.

<sup>36</sup> J. Robson, “al-Bayḍāwī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1129.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn al-Munayyir intended to write against al-Ghazālī too because his writings were in accord with contemporary Mālikites. However, his mother argued with him “you just finished war against the living, and now you want to start war against the dead” (*faraghta min muḍārabat al-ahyā’ wa shara‘ta fī muḍārabat al-amwāt*). See al-Suyūfī, *al-Bughya*, 1:384; Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, 80-81.

<sup>38</sup> Ṣāliḥ b. Gharam al-Ghāmīdī compares al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf* with Ibn al-Munayyir’s *Kitāb al-Intiṣāf*. He examines 368 *āyāt* selected from 77 *sūras* and concludes that al-Zamakhsharī interpretation of *al-Kashshāf* “represents the dogmatic views of the Mu‘tazilites” (*mumaththalan li-madhhab al-mu‘tazila*), while Ibn al-Munayyir’s *al-Intiṣāf* “represents the dogmatic views of the Ash‘arites” (*mumaththalan li-madhhab al-ash‘ariyya*). See Ṣāliḥ b. Gharam Allāh al-Ghāmīdī, *Al-Masā’il al-i‘tizāliyya fī tafsīr al-Kashshāf li al-Zamakhsharī fī daw’ mā warada fī Kitāb al-Intiṣāf li Ibn al-Munayyir* (Ḥā’il: Dār al-Andalus, 1998), 2:1127-28.



‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Jamāra al-Andalusī (d. 699/1300) states that *al-Kashshāf* is an exquisite and sublime commentary of the Qur’ān. The reader of this book falls in one of the two categories: either he is an expert in his knowledge or he does not have sufficient qualifications to comprehend it. If someone is expert and knowledgeable of the intrigues (i.e., Mu‘tazilite doctrines and their views) which have been inserted in the *tafsīr*, then it will not be harmful and one can find those machinations. It may be beneficial because of its refined and eloquent use of Arabic language, logical interpretation, and things similar to that. However, if a person is not knowledgeable, then it is not permissible for him to look into it because he may slip into intrigues without realizing it.<sup>39</sup>

According to Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), the Mu‘tazilites’ interpretation of the Qur’ān can be disproved by demonstrating that their views are erroneous in two ways: either by refuting the arguments which they advance or by defending the positions which they attack. Some of them have an elegant, lucid and eloquent style of writing and introduce their erroneous beliefs so clandestinely that many readers fail to perceive them. The author of *al-Kashshāf*, for instance, has succeeded in making his commentary so attractive to a great number of people that they would hardly look for his erroneous views in it. In fact, some scholars approvingly quote passages from his *tafsīr* in their writings without realizing that they contain ideas derived from the Mu‘tazilite principles.<sup>40</sup>

Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344) is of the opinion that al-Zamakhsharī is amply endowed with the Qur’ānic knowledge and combines in his commentary innovative meanings of the words, proficiency and eloquent style. In his book there are praiseworthy

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<sup>39</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Jamra al-Andalusī, *Bahjat al-nufūs wa-taḥalliha bi-ma‘rifā mā lahā wa-‘alayhā*, ed. Bakrī Shaykh Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malā’iyyin, 1997), 1:65-66.

<sup>40</sup> Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fī usūl al-tafsīr*, ed. ‘Adnān Zarzūr (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1972), 85-86.

as well as intriguing things. He has written down his evaluation in the form of poetry in which he praises the book and mentions its merits from which a person can benefit. However, he cautions about those things which are impertinent in it and should be avoided.<sup>41</sup>

Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) is very critical in his assessment about al-Zamakhsharī. He mentions in *al-‘Ibar*, that al-Zamakhsharī was a scholar of great qualities and used to propagate for Mu‘tazilism. In *Tā’rīkh al-Islam*, he states that he expressed openly his Mu‘tazilite creed and called others to innovation. He repeats in *Siyar*, that al-Zamakhsharī used to propagate Mu‘tazilism. May God have mercy on him. Finally, in *Mīzān al-i‘tidāl*, after mentioning that he propagates Mu‘tazilism openly, al-Dhahabī states that God may protect people and warns that one should be cautious when reading *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>42</sup>

In al-Subkī’s (d. 771/1370) view *al-Kashshāf* is a great book in the field of exegesis and its author is a great scholar except that he is a heretic. It is, therefore, necessary that whatever is written in *al-Kashshāf* should be erased.<sup>43</sup>

According to Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), there are two types of Qur’ānic interpretations. The first type is traditional, based upon information received from the early Muslims. The second type is based upon the linguistic knowledge, such as lexicography and eloquence (*balāgha*) used for conveying meaning through rational means and methods. The second type of commentary is best represented by al-

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<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī, *Al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwiḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1993), 7:81.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *al-‘Ibar*, 4:106; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islam*, 36:489; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Mīzān al-i‘tidāl*, 4:78.

<sup>43</sup> Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Mu‘īd al-ni‘am wa-mubīd al-naqam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār and Abū Zayd Shelbī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kānjī, 1993), 80.

Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf*, who is a Mu'tazilite in his dogmatic views. He uses the various methods of rhetoric, arguing in favor of the pernicious doctrines of the Mu'tazila, wherever he believed they occurred in the verses of the Qur'ān. Competent orthodox scholars have, therefore, come to disregard this work and warn everyone against its pitfalls. However, they admit that he is on solid ground relating to language and eloquence. If the reader is well-versed with the orthodox dogmas and knows the arguments in their defense, he is undoubtedly safe from its fallacies. Therefore, he should take the advantage of studying it, because of its remarkable and varied linguistic information.<sup>44</sup>

Burhān al-Dīn Ḥyder (d. 830/1426) states that *al-Kashshāf* is of exquisite quality which he did not see similar to it among the works of earlier writers, and one will not find anything like it among the writings of the latter. It has precise and proficient wordings, elegant composition, and meticulous stylistic peculiarity. It does not fall short of any standards when someone examines the principles of exegesis, refinement of demonstrations and proofs, methodology, and reconstruction of points for synthesis. However, if one draws analogous conclusions from it, then one finds that its author's Mu'tazilite views are interwoven and the interpretation falls down into errors culminating into perilous mistakes. As a consequence, one finds the *tafsīr* altered from its real meaning and it is a great misfortune and immense calamity.<sup>45</sup>

According to Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, people who are enthusiastic about reading *al-Kashshāf* should be very careful. If they are thoroughly familiar and well-versed with

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<sup>44</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1996), 407-8.

<sup>45</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1482-83.

the traditions (*sunna*) and read it with extreme care they can benefit from the commentary provided they safeguard against its intrigues and secret machinations.<sup>46</sup>

Amongst the modern scholars, Nöldeke speaks of “[al-Zamakhsharī’s] most clever and over-subtle investigations of philosophical and theological matters” in the *Kashshāf*,<sup>47</sup> Nassau Lees refers to the Mu‘tazilite doctrines that “pervade the whole Preface;”<sup>48</sup> Goldziher states that in the *Kashshāf* al-Zamakhsharī “produced a concise fundamental work for Mu‘tazilite Qur’ān interpretation.”<sup>49</sup> Rashid Ahmad is of the opinion that “al-Zamakhsharī sometimes appears in his commentary more as a rigid Mu‘tazilī than as a commentator.”<sup>50</sup> Jane Smith considers that “[al-Zamakhsharī] was most definitely both, his interpretation of and commentary on the Qur’ān strongly influenced by his theological viewpoints;”<sup>51</sup> According to McAuliffe, [*al-Kashshāf*] is a “mouthpiece for the dogmas of the *ahl al-‘adl wa-al-tawhīd* (People of [Divine] Justice and Unicity) as the Mu‘tazilites preferred to style themselves.”<sup>52</sup> Rippin writes that “The Mu‘tazilī al-Zamakhsharī opts for interpretation based upon reason in his commentary [*al-Kashshāf*]. Apparent contradictions between verses of the Qur’ān are (*sic*) resolved in favour of the Mu‘tazilī doctrines of unity and justice of God.”<sup>53</sup>

I do not agree with Lane’s findings that, “This study, then, puts to rest the myth that the *Kashshāf* is a ‘Mu‘tazilite commentary.’” Since al-Zamakhsharī’s time, most of the commentators cautioned their readers to be aware of *al-Kashshāf*’s “ideas derived

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<sup>46</sup> Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:64.

<sup>47</sup> Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, xxviii.

<sup>48</sup> *Kashshāf*, 1:7 (Calcutta edition).

<sup>49</sup> Ignaz Goldziher, “Aus der Theologie des Fachr al-dīn al-Rāzī,” *Der Islam* 3 (1912), 220.

<sup>50</sup> Rashid Ahmad, “Qur’ānic Exegesis and Classical Tafsīr,” *The Islamic Quarterly* 12 (1968), 95.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *Historical and Semantic Study of the Term ‘Islām’*, 92-93.

<sup>52</sup> McAuliffe, *Qur’ānic Christians*, 53.

<sup>53</sup> A. Rippin, *ER*, 14:236-44.

from the Mu‘tazilite principles,”<sup>54</sup> “Mu‘tazilite contents and their propagation,”<sup>55</sup> “its intrigues and secret mechanitions.”<sup>56</sup> Some of them have written to the extent “that the author of *al-Kashshāf* is heretic and whatever is written in it should be erased.”<sup>57</sup> Their findings that *al-Kashshāf*’s contents are not only Mu‘tazilite, but anyone who intends to read it, must be well-versed with the orthodox dogmas and must know arguments in their defense.

In chapters six, seven and eight, I have analyzed thoroughly al-Zamakhsharī’s interpretations of the Qur’ānic verses as provided in *al-Kashshāf*. After the analysis of these verses, I have come to the conclusion that al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsīr* of *al-Kashshāf* is in accord with the Mu‘tazilites’ five principles of *al-tawḥīd*, *al-‘adl*, *al-wa‘d wa al-wa‘d*, *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* and *amr bi-al-ma‘rūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*. He elucidated his interpretation with such convincing arguments that it is the only extant and complete Mu‘tazilite *tafsīr* survived now. Finally, my thesis unequivocally establishes the fact that *al-Kashshāf* is a Mu‘tazilite commentary.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima*, 85-86.

<sup>55</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *al-‘Ibar*, 4:106; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islam*, 36:489; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Mizān al-i‘tidāl*, 4:78.

<sup>56</sup> Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī, *Al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 7:81; Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, 407-8; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, 7:64.

<sup>57</sup> Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Mu‘īd al-ni‘am wa-mubīd al-naqam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār and Abū Zayd Shelbī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kānjī, 1993), 80.

## Appendix 1

### *Al-Kashshāf*

#### 1. Introduction of *al-Kashshāf*

*Al-Kashshāf* ‘an ḥaqā’iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl is the *magnum opus* of al-Zamakhsharī in which he explains the grammatical, lexicographical, and rhetorical features, variant readings and the miraculous nature (*i’jāz*) of the Qur’ān.<sup>1</sup> In the preface to *al-Kashshāf*, al-Zamakhsharī describes the reasons for writing his exegesis of the Qur’ān. He states, “The learned Mu‘tazilite companions used to come to ask me the interpretation of a Qur’ānic verse that I would explain to them clearly and distinctively and it was acclaimed and approved by them. They expressed their desire through some eminent scholars that I should write a commentary on the entire Qur’ān, but I declined it due to my inability to embark upon such a big task.” However, they insisted upon it and considered that it was his obligation like an individual duty (*farḍ ‘ayn*), because of the deplorable conditions, inadequacy (of knowledge) of the masses, and lack of determination in those days.<sup>2</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī further states that he elaborated

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368; al-Sam‘anī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181; al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubāb*, 2:74; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; Abū al-Fidā’, *Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:25; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36:487; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:152; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rīkh*, 2:63; Yāfī’, *Mir’āt al-janān*, 3:269; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 12:219; Ibn Abī al-Wafā’, *al-Jawāhir al-mudī’a*, 3:448; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:139; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, 7:63; Ibn Taghrībardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:274; Ibn Quṭlūbugh, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 4:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā’id al-bahiyya*, 167; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faḳīr Jehlamī, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanaḥīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maḥbū’āt*, 1:974; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn*, 12:186; Agius, Some Bio-Bibliographical Notes, 113; al-Juwaynī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī*, 76; al-Ḥuḥfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 80; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123; Ibrāhīm, *Theological Questions*, 17; Raḥmān, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 158; C. Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *ET*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1205-7; Wilfred Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:840-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Farḍ ‘ayn* is an injunction or ordinance the obligation of which extends to every Muslim, such as five daily prayers and fasting during the month of Ramaḍān, etc. *Farḍ kifāya* is a collective duty in which the performance of an obligation by a sufficient number of Muslims excuses the other individuals from

and commented on the opening letters (*fawātiḥ*)<sup>3</sup> of the Qur’ānic chapters and the real meanings of the second chapter entitled “The Cow” (*al-Baqarah*) in the expectation of inculcating in his readers an appreciation of the science of exegesis. When he made the decision for return to Mecca and embarked upon his journey, he encountered people, though a few of them, enthusiastically desired to learn and benefit from his knowledge. When he reached Mecca, the distinguished *amīr* and *Zaydī Imām* of Mecca, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā b. Ḥamza b. Wahnās (d. 526/1131) insisted and urged him that he should compose his commentary. He also told him that he was planning to visit him in Khwārazm and preparing for journey to convince him for writing it. Al-Zamakhsharī states that upon such insistence and desire of people, he was left with no other choice except to comply with their request. He finished his *tafsīr* in two years despite his old age and illness, while in fact it was a job of thirty years.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Transmission of *al-Kashshāf*

The primary sources do not provide much information about the transmission of *al-Kashshāf* after its completion. The sources mention Abū Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Umar al-Tarjumānī, only one student of al-Zamakhsharī who studied *al-Kashshāf* with him over a period of seven years; however, there is no evidence that he transmitted it to others.<sup>5</sup>

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fulfilling it, such as performance of *ṣalāt* in congregation in the mosque, holy war, etc. See Th. W. Juynboll, “Fard,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 2:790; H.A.R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, “Fard,” *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 100.

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-nine *surās* of the Qur’ān begin with a group of letters which are called *fawātiḥ al-suwar*, “the openers of the *surās*,” *awā’il al-suwar*, “the beginnings of the *surās*,” *al-ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa’āt*, “the disconnected letters.” According to al-Suyūṭī, the *fawātiḥ* are simply mysterious letters or symbols known fully to God. See A.T. Welch, “al-Ḳur’ān,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 5:400-32.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:98.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 377.

Al-Fāsī states that he saw the title of *al-Kashshāf* mentioned in the *Fihris* of the jurist Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā b. Muṭayr al-Yamanī. The *Fihris* describes that Abū al-Ma‘ālī Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī al-Shaybānī, a *qāḍī* in Mecca, transmitted *al-Kashshāf* from al-Zamakhsharī to his nephew Abū al-Ma‘ālī Mājid b. Sulaymān b. al-Fihri (d. 655/1257), who then transmitted it to others. Al-Fāsī also mentions that al-Zamakhsharī granted Abū al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Silafī (d. 576/1180), Abū Ṭāhir Barakāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Khushū‘ī (d. 598/1201) and Umm al-Mu’ayyad Zaynab bint ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sha‘rī (d. 615/1218) license (*ijāza*) to transmit *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>6</sup>

According to Gilliot, Abū al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Silafī (d. 576/1180) could be another source of transmission of *al-Kashshāf*. He moved to Alexandria in 511/1117-8 where he settled and remained until his death. He states, “The choice of Alexandria was quasi-strategic, since there he could meet Muslim intellectuals of East and West ... without leaving his domicile, and this purpose was duly achieved. His renown extended far beyond that of a traditionist and a writer since it is impossible to count the number of times that he appears in certificates of audition (*sama’āt*) or of reading, or in licenses of transmission (*ijāzāt*).” He mentions hundreds of works for which al-Silafī is credited for issuing the certificates of authenticity.<sup>7</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī studied theology with Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. al-Malāḥimī (d. 536/1141) and Abū Manṣūr. They were also al-Zamakhsharī’s students who studied exegesis with him. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī (d. ca. 560/1165) studied traditions

<sup>6</sup> Al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138-9; F. Rosenthal, “al-Fāsī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:828-9.

<sup>7</sup> Claude Gilliot, “al-Silafī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:607-9.



with al-Zamakhsharī and composed his commentary on the Qur’ān. However, there is no proof in the sources that anyone of them transmitted *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Manuscripts of *al-Kashshāf*

*Al-Fihris al-shāmil* mentions 843 manuscripts of *al-Kashshāf*, out of which 443 manuscripts bear the date or century in which they were copied are available in various libraries and museums of the world.<sup>9</sup> Out of 443 dated manuscripts, Lane analyzes 250 manuscripts most of which are in Istanbul. According to his analysis, the earliest (Feyzullāh 221, dated 542/1148) was copied only four years after al-Zamakhsharī’s death and fourteen years after he had finished the commentary in Mecca. The most recent manuscript given in *al-Fihris* is in Riyāḍ which is dated 1301/1882. This indicates that there never was a time when somebody somewhere was not copying al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsīr*. Lane also describes the geographic dispersion of *al-Kashshāf*. Of the 250 manuscripts, only forty-one provide the name of the place where they were copied. The names of these places were taken directly from the actual manuscripts, not from the catalogues. All of these manuscripts have a date also, although in a few cases a definite date of a manuscript’s completion is not certain. The analysis shows that these manuscripts were copied in the great capitals of the Muslim world: Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul; as well as important centers and regional capitals: Aq Sarāy, Damaghān, Gaza, Hamāt, Iṣfahān, Jurjāniyya, Kāth, Konya, Mosul, Nicaea (Iznīq),

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<sup>8</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368, 377, 382; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda*, 2:100; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:123.

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Fihris al-shāmil li-l-turāth al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī al-makhtūṭ: ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān makhtūṭat al-tafsīr*, ed. Al-Majma‘ al-Malakī li-Buḥūth al-Haḍāra al-Islāmī (‘Ammān: Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt, 1987), 2:368-510.

Raqqā, Shīrāz, and Tabrīz. Lane concludes that from Khwārazm where the first dated manuscript was copied in 542/1148, *al-Kashshāf* spread to every region of the Muslim world: Khwārazm, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Turkey.<sup>10</sup>

According to Lane, four of the manuscripts<sup>11</sup> indicate that there were two originals of *al-Kashshāf* written by al-Zamakhsharī: the *umm al-Kashshāf* and the copy of *al-Kashshāf* bequeathed to the Abu Ḥanīfa's (d. 150/767) mausoleum. The *umm al-Kashshāf* is obviously the first autographed copy for that is what the author writes in the postscript (*hiya nuskhāt al-aṣl al-'ūlā*). There was also the second original manuscript (*nuskhāt al-aṣl al-thānī*). Both copies contained the epilogue but only the *umm al-Kashshāf* had the postscript. Regarding the second original manuscript, the tradition says that it was written by al-Zamakhsharī himself and not by a scribe working for him, whose copy al-Zamakhsharī would then have in some way authenticated. Lane poses a question as to why al-Zamakhsharī would have written two copies of the same work in the first place, the *umm al-Kashshāf* and another bequeathed to the Abū Ḥanīfa Mausoleum. According to him, the most likely reason for the second copy is the rough draft (*sawād*) to which al-Zamakhsharī explicitly refers in the postscript and from which he copied the *umm al-Kashshāf* in Mecca between 526/1132 and 528/1134. The postscript was added to the copy of *al-Kashshāf* completed in Mecca to show that it, and not the rough draft, was the first (*al-'ūlā*), the primary, main, and most important copy of *al-Kashshāf*, and not the *sawād* from which it was copied and which must have been used to make other copies. This would explain that why al-Zamakhsharī felt the need to authenticate the 528/1134

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<sup>10</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 58-61.

<sup>11</sup> These four manuscripts are: (1) Manuscript Nurosmāniye 297/406 (n.d.); (2) Manuscript Nurosmāniye 290/399 (1050 A.H.); Manuscript Veliyyudīn 244 (677 A.H.); and Manuscript Hkm 132 (716 A.H.).

Meccan copy, perhaps several years after having finished it. Whether the rough draft was in circulation throughout al-Zamakhsharī's lifetime and only later entrusted to the Abū Ḥanīfa mausoleum or whether it was already bequeathed to this sanctuary during the author's lifetime is not known.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Issue of *khalaq al-Qur'ān*

All biographical sources mention that al-Zamakhsharī was a Mu'tazilite and adhered to the Ḥanafī school of *fiqh* and expressed his theological viewpoint publicly.<sup>13</sup> He was proud to be a Mu'tazilite, and it is reported that when he used to visit his friends and seek permission to enter, when asked about his identification, he would reply that Abū al-Qāsim, the Mu'tazilite was on the door (*abū al-Qāsim al-mu'tazilī bi al-bāb*).<sup>14</sup>

According to Ibn Khallikān, when al-Zamakhsharī compiled *al-Kashshāf* the first time he wrote in the introduction, "Praise be to God who created the Qur'ān" (*alḥamdu li-llāh alladhī khalaqa al-Qur'ān*). When he was told that if he left it behind in this form, people would renounce it and nobody would desire to read it. Then he changed it with the statement, "Praise be to God who made the Qur'ān" (*alḥamdu li-llāh alladhī ja'ala al-Qur'ān*). Ibn Khallikān states that according to them (Mu'tazilites), *ja'ala* (to make) means *khalaqa* (to create) and both words have the same meaning. He further mentions

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<sup>12</sup> Lane mentions that, "At the end of his introduction (*muqaddima*) to the *Kashshāf*, al-Zamakhsharī says he has put together a short *tafsīr* that is, nevertheless, quite useful and that with God's blessing, despite age and illness, he has been able to finish in only two years what should have been the work of thirty. This statement need not be doubted but it has been understood to mean that he began to write the *Kashshāf* upon his arrival in Mecca in 526/1132, however, was not the *Kashshāf* as such, but only the final draft and it is that which he finished in 528/1134." So, according to him, the *Kashshāf* is not the work of only two years. See Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'an Commentary* 48-75.

<sup>13</sup> Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, 17:38; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2688; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:489; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:279; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:170.

that he saw in many manuscripts, “Praise be to God who revealed the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llāh alladhī anzala al-Qur’ān*); however, this amendment was made by the people and not by the author himself.<sup>15</sup> Al-Dhahābī, al-Fāsī, and Ibn al-‘Imād narrate the same account as mentioned by Ibn Khallikān.<sup>16</sup>

Abū al-Fidā’ states that *al-Kashshāf* is the commentary (of al-Zamakhsharī) and it openly deals with Mu‘tazilite creed. He started his commentary with the statement: “Praise be to God who created the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī khalaqa al-Qur’ān*). Then his companions modified it and wrote, “Praise be to God who made the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī ja‘ala al-Qur’ān*).<sup>17</sup>

Ibn al-Wardī mentions that his (al-Zamakhsharī’s) introductory statement of *al-Kashshāf* exegesis began with, “Praise be to God who created the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī khalaqa al-Qur’ān*). Then afterwards, he changed it with “Praise be to God who revealed the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī anzala al-Qur’ān*).<sup>18</sup>

Al-Yāfī describes that when he (al-Zamakhsharī) compiled the book (*al-Kashshāf*), he introduced it with the statement, “Praise be to God who created the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī khalaqa al-Qur’ān*). When he was told that if he left the book in this form, people would avoid it reading, then he changed it with the words, “Praise be to God who revealed the Qur’ān” (*alḥamdu li-llah alladhī anzala al-Qur’ān*). It is also said that it was a modification of the people, not of the writer.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:170.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36:489; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:141; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:120.

<sup>17</sup> Abū al-Fidā’, *Kitāb al-Mukhtaṣar* 3:25.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rīkh* 2:63.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Yafī, *Mir’āt al-janān* 3:270.

It can be observed that there are variations of accounts in the sources about two main issues. The first issue deals with the words *khalaqa* (created), *ja'ala* (made) and *anzala* (revealed) in the introduction of *al-Kashshāf*. According to Ibn Khallikān, al-Dhahabī, al-Fāsī, and Ibn al-‘Imād the change was made from *khalaqa* to *ja'ala* and both words are synonymous in their meanings. On the other hand, Abū al-Fidā’, Ibn al-Wardī, and al-Yafī mention that the word *khalaqa* was substituted with *anzala* which has different meanings. The second issue concerns as to who actually made the change in the text. According to Ibn Khallikān and al-Fāsī, the amendment was made by the people and not by the author himself. Al-Dhahabī does not mention who made the change. Abū al-Fidā’ says that it was al-Zamakhsharī’s companions who later modified the text, while Ibn al-Wardī states that the text was amended after his death and like al-Dhahabī does not specify who made it. Al-Yafī’s account is contradictory because he says that al-Zamakhsharī changed the word *khalaqa* with *anzala* himself. Then he adds that it was the correction made by the people not by the author.

There are some sources which indicate that al-Zamakhsharī did not write *khalaqa* in the introduction of his *tafsīr*. The author of *al-Qāmūs*, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Fīrūzābādī (d. 817/1415) says, “Some scholars are of the opinion, while commenting on *al-Kashshāf* that al-Zamakhsharī wrote in his original *tafsīr* (that God) created (*khalaqa*) the Qur’ān in place of revealed (*anzala*) the Qur’ān which was changed either by the author himself or someone else safeguarding against the ostensible negative reaction of the people. However, it is completely wrong because I presented this view to my

teacher<sup>20</sup> who denied it vehemently.” According to al-Fīrūzābādī’s teacher, this statement was far from being true due to two reasons. The first is that it was of no importance for al-Zamakhsharī to write that it (the Qur’ān) was revealed. The second reason being that he did not conceal his Mu‘tazilite position, rather he was proud of it. Furthermore, in the subsequent manuscripts (of *al-Kashshāf*) the meanings are very clear and it was not considered impertinent. Al-Fīrūzābādī also states, “I saw the manuscript in the handwriting of al-Zamakhsharī preserved in the mausoleum of Abū Ḥanīfa which was free from any sign of erasure or correction.”<sup>21</sup>

## 5. Commentaries on *al-Kashshāf*

Since its inception, *al-Kashshāf* has been subject to orthodox Sunni criticism which centered on the basic principles of Mu‘tazilite theology. In fact, no other book in the history of *tafsīr* has been commented upon in the forms of *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *mukhtaṣars* more than *al-Kashshāf*. Hājjī Khalīfa (d. 1067/1657) in his *Kashf al-zūnūn* lists approximately fifty commentaries.<sup>22</sup> *Al-Fihris al-shāmīl* mentions seventy-three *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *mukhtaṣars*; however, twelve of these commentaries have been written by unknown authors.<sup>23</sup> According to Lane, more than eighty scholars have written *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *mukhtaṣars*. Some of these commentaries have been written by well-known scholars, while other scholars are known by the names on the manuscripts of the *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *mukhtaṣars* that have survived, although some works on the

<sup>20</sup> Here, al-Fīrūzābādī is referring his teacher Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) with whom he studied in Damascus in 750/1349 and afterwards accompanied him to Jerusalem in the same year. See H. Fleisch, “al-Fīrūzābādī,” *EF*, 2: 926-7; J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth, “al-Subkī,” *EF*, 9:743-5.

<sup>21</sup> Hājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zūnūn*, 2:1482.

<sup>22</sup> Hājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zūnūn*, 2:1475-84.

<sup>23</sup> *Al-Fihris al-shāmīl*, 2:511-28.

*Kashshāf* bear no name at all. Although more than eighty commentaries have been compiled, none has been published in a critical edition, nor has been studied in a systematic manner. However, some of these works have been incorporated into the margins of different editions of *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>24</sup> With the exception of the first two printed editions of *al-Kashshāf*<sup>25</sup> all of them have two, three, or four *sharḥs*, *ḥāshiyas*, and *shawāhids* of the following authors either in the margins, or as footnotes, or at the end of al-Zamakhsharī's *tafsīr*. They are: Ibn al-Munayyir, al-Zayla'ī, al-Jurjānī, Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Muḥibb al-Dīn Afandī, and al-Marzūqī.

Nāṣir al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Munayyir (d. 683/1284) was a great scholar in grammar, literature, Arabic, jurisprudence, theology, and exegesis. He was unparalleled in rhetoric and calligraphy. He composed *al-Intiṣāf min ṣāḥib al-Kashshāf* in which he refutes the Muʿtazilite viewpoints of *al-Kashshāf* and provides Sunnī orthodox response. However, he generously praises the lexicological and grammatical knowledge and eloquent style of al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>26</sup>

Al-Sayyid al-Sharīf ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) was a Ḥanafī theologian and a great scholar in grammar, logic, law, and language of his time.

<sup>24</sup> Lane states that, "Some of the glosses in Istanbul were of a few pages each and were usually to be found in bound manuscripts containing a number of other works or fragments. The card catalogue of the Suleymaniye listed about thirty *hawāshī*, a third of which were well under 100 folios in length (the longest was 67 folios). While there were 40 to 50 copies of such well-known commentaries as those by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390) and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), many of the lesser known commentaries were limited to one or two copies. A few copies of the *Kashshāf* even had an anonymous *ḥāshiya* in the margins. For example, at the end of the fourth *rub*' of MS. Feyzullāh 223, a marginal note reads: *tammāt al-ḥāshiya* [Tuesday, 7 Ramaḍān 772 H]. There is no indication as to whose *ḥāshiya* it is. MS. Feyzullāh 223 was completed on Wednesday, 16 Rabīʿ II 777 A.H., after the gloss on the fourth *rub*' had been finished. This date is given at the end of the third *rub*', indicating that it and not the fourth *rub*' was the last to be copied; no name or date is given at the end of the fourth *rub*'. See Lane, *Traditional Muʿtazilite Qurʾān Commentary*, 86-87.

<sup>25</sup> The first edition of *al-Kashshāf* was printed by Maṭbaʿāt al-Laysī, Calcutta in 1856-59. The second edition was published by Dār al-Ṭibāʿa al-Miṣriyya – al-Maṭbaʿa al-[Amīriyya], Bulāq in 1281/1864.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:384; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1477; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:513; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam al-muʿallifīn*, 2:161-2.

According to al-Suyūṭī, he wrote more than fifty books and composed a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* which he did not finish. His *Hāshiya ‘alā tafsīr al-Kashshāf* is also an orthodox explanation of al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsīr*.<sup>27</sup>

Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf al-Zaylā‘ī (d. 762/1360) was a Ḥanafī jurist, *ḥadīth* transmitter and theologian who compiled *Risāla fī takhrīj aḥādīth al-Kashshāf wa-mā fihī qiṣaṣ wa-athār*. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) made an abridgement of the *Risāla* entitled *al-Kāff al-shāff fī taḥrīr aḥādīth al-Kashshāf*. It deals with the traditions mentioned in *al-Kashshāf*, and classifies them in *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound), *ḥasan* (fair), *ḍa‘īf* (weak), and *mawḍu‘* (spurious), and is printed in most of the *Kashshāf* editions.<sup>28</sup>

Muḥibb al-Dīn Afandī Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Taqī al-Dīn (d. 1014/1605) was a Ḥanafī jurist and expert in several sciences. He compiled a commentary on the *shawāhid* used by al-Zamakhsharī in the *Kashshāf* titled *Tanzīl al-āyāt ‘alā al-shawāhid min al-abyāt*. This work is included in some of the *Kashshāf* editions.<sup>29</sup>

Muḥammad ‘Aylān al-Marzūqī (d. 1355/1936) was a Shāfi‘ī theologian, Qur’ān commentator and scholar in several sciences. He is author of two books *Hāshiya ‘alā tafsīr al-Kashshāf* and *Mashāhid al-inṣāf ‘alā shawāhid al-Kashshāf*. Both of them are also included in most of the *Kashshāf* editions.<sup>30</sup>

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. ca. 685/1286) was a Shāfi‘ī theologian and reputed for wide learning. He wrote on a number of subjects including Qur’ān exegesis, law, jurisprudence, scholastic theology, and grammar. His famous work

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<sup>27</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1479; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:517.

<sup>28</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1481; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 6:165-6.

<sup>29</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 3:16.

<sup>30</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:73-4; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 6:310.



is the commentary on the Qur’ān entitled *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta’wīl* which he composed in response to *al-Kashshāf*. According to Robson, despite his refutation and amendments to the *Kashshāf*’s Mu‘tazilite views, on occasions he retained them, possibly without full realizing their significance.<sup>31</sup> Watt considers, “This was intended as a manual for instruction in colleges or mosque-schools, and therefore aims at giving in concise form all that was best and soundest in previous commentaries, including important variant interpretations.”<sup>32</sup> Al-Subkī and al-Suyūfī also mention al-Bayḍāwī’s dependence on al-Zamakhsharī. In addition, both of them list a summarized version of the *Kashshāf* entitled *Mukhtaṣar al-Kashshāf* by him.<sup>33</sup>

Besides al-Bayḍāwī, there are a number of commentators who wrote *ḥāshiyas* on *al-Kashshāf*. They are as follows:

1. Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū al-Baqā’ ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-‘Ukbarī (d. 616/1219) was Ḥanbalī juristprudent, grammarian, philologist, Qur’ān reciter, exegete, and transmitter of *ḥadīth*. According to Mohammed Yalaouī, his reputation as a grammarian and commentator attracted pupils from distant parts. Al-Suyūfī mentions that he was trustworthy in the transmission of *ḥadīth*, excellent and distinguished in his character, much committed to religion, modest in his disposition, and frequent visitor to those who were in charge of teaching and education. Amongst his disciples were e.g. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 655/1256), commentator on the *Nahja al-balāgha*, the biographer, al-Mundhirī (d. 656/1257), the historian, Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245) and al-Dubaythī (d. 637/1239).

<sup>31</sup> J. Robson, “al-Bayḍāwī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1129.

<sup>32</sup> Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur’ān* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 169.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya*, 8:157; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:50.

Out of some sixty titles attributed to him, most of them deal with grammatical teaching and philological glosses on texts: the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, ancient poets and poetry, Sībawayh's *shawāhid*, the sermons of Ibn Nubāta and the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī. In addition, he wrote many commentaries on well-known works. According to *al-Fihris*, he composed a gloss on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>34</sup>

2. 'Izz al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Sulamī (d. 660/1262), renowned as "Authority of the scholars," (*sultān al-'ulamā*) was Shāfi'ī jurist and a great scholar in theology and exegesis. He was expert in jurisprudence and his judicial approach centered around the concept of "the interest of the community" (*al-maṣāliḥ*). He was an *imām* at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus and professor of Shāfi'ī law at the Sāliḥiyya college, founded in Cairo by al-Malik al-Sāliḥ. His works include *al-Qawā'id al-kubrā* on jurisprudence, *al-Ghāya fī ikhtisār al-nihāya* on al-Shāfi'ī's jurisprudence, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, and *Mukhtaṣar al-Kashshāf*.<sup>35</sup>

3. Nāsir al-Dīn Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Munayyir al-Iskandarī (d. 683/1284) was a great scholar in grammar, literature, Arabic, jurisprudence, theology, and exegesis. He was unparalleled in rhetoric and calligraphy. He was Mālikī *qāḍī* in Alexandria. He composed *al-Intisāf min sāhib al-Kashshāf* which explains and criticizes the Mu'tazilite viewpoints in *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>36</sup>

4. 'Alam al-Dīn 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Anṣarī al-'Iraqī (d. 704/1304) was a Shāfi'ī Qur'ān exegete. He was jurist, theologian, man of letters, and

<sup>34</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:38-40; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 6:46-47; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:513; Mohammed Yalaoui, "al-'Ukbarī." *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:790-91.

<sup>35</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 5:249; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:527; E. Chaumont, "al-Sulamī," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:812-13.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:384; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1477; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 2:161-62; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:513.

excellent prose writer. His work *Tahdhīb al-Kashshāf ‘alā sabīl al-inṣāf* is a gloss on *al-Kashshāf* in which he defends al-Zamakhsharī against Ibn al-Munayyir’s *al-Intiṣāf*. His other books are commentary on *al-Tanbīh* of al-Shīrāzī’s *Furū‘ al-fiqh al-Shāfi‘ī* and *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-karīm*.<sup>37</sup>

5. Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas‘ūd al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) was a distinguished scholar in exegesis, jurisprudence, theology, mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, and medicine. Towards the end of his life he was devoted to the study of *ḥadīth* and wrote two critical books, *Jam‘ uṣūl* and *Sharḥ*. According to Ibn Shuhba and al-Subkī, Quṭb al-Dīn had a brilliant intelligence, combined with unusual penetration; at the same time his humor was innocent; he was known as “the scholar of the Persians”. It is evidence of his efforts to preserve his independence that, in spite of his prestige with princes and subjects, he lived far from the court. He also led the life of a Ṣūfī. He had many pupils, among them was Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī who encouraged al-Taḥṭānī (d. 766/1364) to write *Muḥākamāt* on the *Ishārāt* of Ibn Sīnā on points disputed between Naṣīr al-Dīn and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. However, he neglected his religious duties, but al-Suyūfī mentions that in Tabrīz he always performed his *ṣalāts* with the congregation. His commentary on the *Ḥikma al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī is undoubtedly connected with his religious attitude. Ḥajjī Khalīfa emphasizes that he distinguished himself in theology. He annotated the *Qur’ān* very thoroughly and in a fashion that won recognition in his *Faṭḥ al-mannān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*. In his *Fī mushkilāt al-Qur’ān*, he dealt with passages in the *Qur’ān*

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<sup>37</sup> Ḥajjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1477; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 5:319; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 4:53; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:514.

difficult to reconcile with one another. He wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf an ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl* of al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>38</sup>

6. Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas'ūd al-Sīrāfi al-Fālī al-Shuqqār (d. 712/1312) was exegete and grammarian. He wrote commentary on *al-Lubāb fī 'ilm al-i'rāb* of Isfara'inī. He also made a summary of *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Taqrīb al-tafsīr* in 698/1299.<sup>39</sup>

7. Abū 'Alī 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. al-Khalīl al-Sukūnī (d. 717/1317) was a Mālikī Qur'ān reciter, theologian, exegete, and logician. His works include *al-Manhaj al-mashriq fī al-i'tirad 'ala kathīr min ahl al-manṭiq*, and *Kitāb al-arba'in mas'ala fī uṣūl al-dīn 'alā madhhab ahl al-sunna*. In addition, he wrote *al-Tamyīz li-mā awda 'ahu al-Zamakhsharī min al-i'tizāl fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-'azīz* in which he criticizes the Mu'tazilite contents of *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>40</sup>

8. Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Azdī b. al-Bannā' (d. 721/1321) was a mathematician and great scholar in many sciences. He composed numerous books on mathematics, rational sciences, algebra, and theology. He wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>41</sup>

9. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-'Abbas Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Walī b. Jabbāra (d. 728/1328) was a Hanbali jurisprudent, theologian, grammarian, reciter of the Qur'ān, and exegete. Kaḥḥāla lists *Faṭḥ al-qadīr fī al-tafsīr*, al-Ziriklī gives the name of

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<sup>38</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1477; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 12:202-3; *Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:514; E. Wiedermann, "Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī," *ET*<sup>2</sup>, 5:547-48.

<sup>39</sup> The *Fihris al-shāmil* gives the year of his death 698/1299. Kaḥḥāla states that he was still alive in 712/1312, while al-Ziriklī writes that he died after 712/1312. Both Kaḥḥāla and al-Ziriklī mention that he finished *Sharḥ al-Lubāb fī 'ilm al-i'rāb lil-Isfarā'inī* in 712/1312. Ḥājjī Khalīfa considers that perhaps this Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas'ūd al-Sīrāfi al-Fālī al-Shuqqār is Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas'ūd al-Shīrāzī. See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1481; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 12:20; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:96; *al-Fihris al-shāmil* 2:527.

<sup>40</sup> Kaḥḥāla, al-Ziriklī and al-Fihris give the title *al-Tamyīz li-mā awda 'ahu al-Zamakhsharī min al-I'tizāl fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-'azīz*, whereas in Ḥājjī Khalīfa's *Kashf al-zunūn* the title is *Kitāb al-Tamyīz 'alā al-Kashshāf*. See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1482; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 7:309; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 5:63; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:514.

<sup>41</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1482; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 2:126-27.

*Mukhtaṣar al-Kashshāf* and *al-Fihris* mentions *Mukhtaṣar al-Kashshāf ‘an haqā’iq al-tanzīl*.<sup>42</sup>

10. ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Ḥusayn b. Abī Bakr b. Abī al-Ḥusayn al-Kindī (d. 741/1340) was an exegete, transmitter of *ḥadīth*, jurist, and *qāḍī* in Alexandria. Kaḥḥāla states that he composed a *tafsīr* in ten volumes. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a gloss entitled *al-Kaḥḥāl bi-ma ‘ānī al-tanzīl ‘alā al-Kashshāf*.<sup>43</sup>

11. Sharf al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭībī (d. 743/1342) was a great scholar in a variety of sciences. Al-Suyūṭī mentions him as an eminent and famous scholar in rational sciences, Arabic, and eloquence. He quotes Ibn Ḥajar that al-Ṭībī was exceedingly intellectual who used to go deep in extracting the meanings from the Qur’ān and the traditions, in the forefront for spreading the knowledge, pleasant personality, strongly opposed to philosophy and innovation, and vehemently in love with God and His Prophet, very modest and always supporting the students in their religious sciences. He was very rich due to inheritance and his own business, but always spent his wealth in charity until he became poor in his last days. He composed his commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Futūḥ al-ghayb fī al-kashf ‘an qinā’ al-rayb*. His other works are *al-Kāshif ‘an haqā’iq al-sunan al-nabawiyya*, *al-Tibyān fī ma ‘ānī wa-al-bayān*, *Muqaddima fī ‘ilm al-ḥisāb* and *Asmā’ al-rijāl*.<sup>44</sup>

12. Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Umar al-Fārisī al-Qazwīnī (d. 745/1344) was an exegete. He wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* with the title *al-Kashf*

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<sup>42</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 2:125-26; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 1:222-3; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:528.

<sup>43</sup> Kaḥḥāla gives 741/1340 as the year of his death, the *Fihris* mentions 720/1320. See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 3:316-17; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:514.

<sup>44</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:522-3; Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:125; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 4:53; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:515.

'*an mushkilāt al-Kashshāf*. Kaḥḥāla mentions another book *Naṣīḥat al-muslim al-mushfiq li-man ibtilā' bi-ḥubb al-manṭiq* written by him.<sup>45</sup>

13. Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Jārabardī (d. 746/1345-46) was a distinguished scholar and jurist. He was religious, munificent, venerable, and assiduous for knowledge and cared for the benefits of students. He composed a gloss on *al-Kashshāf* in ten volumes. Amongst his other works are commentary on *al-Ḥawī al-saghīr* of al-Qazwīnī dealing with Shāfi'ī's jurisprudence, entitled *al-Hādī*, but he did not complete the commentary on *Minhāj* of al-Bayḍāwī about the principles of jurisprudence and supercommentary of the commentary on *al-Mufaṣṣal* of Ibn al-Ḥājjib which deals with grammar.<sup>46</sup>

14. 'Imād al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. al-Qāsim al-'Alawī al-Fāḍil al-Yamanī (d. 750/1348/9) was a Shāfi'ī commentator of the Qur'ān, grammarian, and man of letters. According to al-Suyūṭī, he was well versed with *al-Kashshāf* and composed a gloss on it. Ḥājjī Khalīfa states that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Durar al-aṣḍāf min ḥawāshī al-Kashshāf* [*Durar al-aṣḍāf fī ḥall 'uqd al-Kashshāf*] in two volumes. Afterwards, he compiled another commentary of *al-Kashshāf* which was known as *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf fī kashf ghawāmiḍ al-Kashshāf*. Kaḥḥāla and al-Ziriklī also mention that he wrote two glosses on *al-Kashshāf*, one *Durar al-aṣḍāf fī ḥall 'uqd al-Kashshāf* and the other *Tuḥfat al-ashrāf fī kashf ghawāmiḍ al-Kashshāf*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1480; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 7:289; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* 5:49; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:515.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:303; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 1:198-99; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:515.

<sup>47</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:339; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1480; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 13:219-20; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām* 8:163; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:515.

15. Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf al-Zaylā’ī (d. 762/1360) was a Ḥanfī jurist, *ḥadīth* transmitter and theologian. His *Risāla fī takhrīj aḥādīth al-Kashshāf wa-mā fihī qiṣaṣ wa-athār* deals with the traditions mentioned in *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>48</sup>

16. Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī (d. 766/1364-5) was physician, philosopher, grammarian and expert in exegesis, eloquence and religious sciences. He wrote the commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Taqrīb*.<sup>49</sup>

17. Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. al-Aqsarā’ī (d. ca. 771/1370) was a great scholar in Arabic, religious, and rational sciences. He wrote commentary on *al-Īdāh fī al-ma‘ānī wa-al-bayān* of al-Qazwīnī, commentary on *Majma‘ al-baḥrayn wa-multaqī al-nahrayn* of Ibn al-Sā‘ātī which deals with Ḥanafī jurisprudence, commentary on *al-Ghāya al-quṣwa fī dirāyat al-fatwa* of al-Bayḍāwī, and commentary on *Mawjiz al-qānūn* of Ibn al-Nafīs on medicine. Ḥājjī Khalīfa mentions that al-Aqsarā’ī in his commentary on *al-Kashshāf* criticized Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī’s (d. 766/1364-5) *al-Taqrīb*, a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*. ‘Abd al-Karīm b. ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 830/1427) defended the objections of al-Aqsarā’ī in his book *Muḥākamāt*.<sup>50</sup>

18. Ifṭikhār al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Naṣr Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Damaghānī (d. 775/1374) was a great scholar in rational and traditional sciences. According to Kaḥḥāla, his works include *al-Kāshif fī al-tafsīr* in seven volumes, commentary on *al-Uyūn* of al-‘Aḍad al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, commentary on *al-Ishārāt* entitled *Tanqīḥ al-‘ibārāt fī*

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<sup>48</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1481; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 6:165-66.

<sup>49</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:215-16; *al-Fihris al-shāmīl*, 2:525.

<sup>50</sup> Kaḥḥāla gives al-Aqsarā’ī’s year of death 771/1370, while the *Fihris* mentions that he was alive in 780/1379. See Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:192; *al-Fihris al-shāmīl*, 2:516.

*tawdīh al-ishārāt*, and commentary on *al-Mudrik* in logic. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Kāshif al-sajāf ‘an wajh al-Kashshāf*. Most probably, *al-Kāshif fī al-tafsīr* may be an abbreviation of *Kāshif al-sajāf ‘an wajh al-Kashshāf*.<sup>51</sup>

19. Akmal al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Bābartī al-Dimashqī (d. 786/1384) was a Ḥanafī scholar, jurist, scholastic theologian, exegete, *ḥadīth* transmitter, grammarian, and an eloquent orator. He was a student of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. He wrote commentary on *al-Kashshāf*. His other works include commentary on *al-Mashāriq*, commentary on *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn Ḥājjib, commentary on *‘Aqīda al-Ṭūsī*, commentary on *al-Hidāyah* on jurisprudence, commentary on *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mu‘aṭ on grammar, commentary on *al-Manār*, and commentary on *al-Bazdawwī*.<sup>52</sup>

20. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ‘Alī al-Kirmānī (d. 786/1384) was an outstanding scholar in jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, Qur’ān commentary, eloquence, and Arabic. In addition to *Unmūdhaj al-Kashshāf* which is an abstract of *al-Kashshāf*, he composed commentaries on *Tafsīr al-Baydāwī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *al-Muwāfiq*, *Mukhtaṣar* of Ibn al-Ḥājjib entitled *al-Sab‘a al-sayyārah*, *al-Fawā’id al-Ghayāthiyya* on rhetorics and *al-Jawāhir*.<sup>53</sup>

21. Sa‘d al-Dīn Mas‘ūd b. ‘Umar al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390) known as “*al-allāma*” was a renowned scholar of grammar, rhetoric, law, theology, logic, and exegesis of the Qur’ān. He was expert in both Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī law and *uṣūl*. Faṣīḥ al-Āwāfi mentions in *Faryūmad* that al-Taftāzānī completed his commentary on *al-Taṣrīf al-‘Izzī*

<sup>51</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 12:78-9; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:516.

<sup>52</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:239-40; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:298-99.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:279-80; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 13:326.



by al-Zanjanī on Arabic morphology in 738/1338 at the age of sixteen. He became attached to the ruler of Harāt. Mu‘izz al-Dīn Kart, to whom he dedicated his *Sharḥ al-Talkhīs al-muṭawwal* in 748/1347. Then he joined Jānī Beg, Khān of the Golden Horde to whom he dedicated his *Mukhtaṣar al-ma‘ānī* in 756/1355. When Tīmūr conquered Khwārazm in 759/1379, Mu‘izz al-Dīn Kart’s son Malik Muḥammad, ruler of Sarkhs, asked his nephew Pīr Muḥammad b. Ghiyāth al-Dīn to obtain Tīmūr’s permission for al-Taftāzānī to join him in Sarkhs and he was there in 782/1380. Subsequently, due to his eminence in scholarship, Tīmūr insisted that he come to Samarqand. Al-Taftāzānī accepted the offer and stayed there until his death in 793/1390. However, during this period a scholarly rivalry took place between him and al-Sharīf ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), whom Tīmūr brought to Samarqand after his conquest of Sīrāz in 789/1387. A public debate between him and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī took place in the presence of Timūr, about al-Zamakhsharī’s exegesis of Qur’ān.<sup>54</sup> The Mu‘tazilite scholar Nu‘mān al-Dīn al-Khwārazmī judged in favor of al-Jurjānī and Timūr backed him. It is said that al-Taftāzānī’s severe grief about this defeat might have hastened his end. His body was carried to Sarkhs where he was buried. Al-Taftāzānī’s fame rests mainly on his commentaries on well-known works in various fields of learning. Later scholars wrote supercommentaries on many of them. His works are commentary on *al-Kashshāf* which was not completed, a Persian commentary on the Qur’ān entitled *Kashf al-asrār wa-*

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<sup>54</sup> It was with regard to the āya 5 of *sūra al-Baqara*: “They are guided by their Lord and they will be successful” (‘ulā’ika ‘alā hudan min rabbihim wa ‘ulā’ika hum al-muhtadūn).

*‘uddat al-abrār*, a Turkish versified translation of Sa‘dī’s *Būstān*, *al-Maqāsid* on theology, *al-Miftāh* on Shāfi‘ī law, and a collection of Ḥanafī *fatwās*.<sup>55</sup>

22. Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar b. Raslān al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1403) was the most celebrated jurist of his age, exegete, scholastic theologian, grammarian, and poet. According to Gibb, he was honored by the title of *Shaykh al-Islām*, ranked along with or above the grand *qādīs*, and regarded by some as the *mujaddid* of the eighth century. He composed a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* in three volumes. His other works are *al-Tadrīb* on Shafi‘ī’s jurisprudence which he could not complete, *Taṣḥīḥ al-minhāj* in six volumes on jurisprudence and *Mahāṣin al-iṣṭilāḥ* on *ḥadīth*.<sup>56</sup>

23. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Hādī b. Yahyā b. Hamzā (d. ca. 810/1407) was Zaydī Shī‘ite and composed a brief of *al-Kashshāf* entitled *al-Jawhar al-shaffāf al-multaqaṭ min maghāṣat al-Kashshāf*.<sup>57</sup>

24. Al-Sayyid al-Sharīf ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) was a Ḥanafī theologian, physician, and a great scholar in grammar, logic, law, and language of his time. According to al-Suyūṭī, he wrote more than fifty books and composed a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* which he did not finish. His other titles are commentary on al-Bayḍāwī’s *Tafsīr*, commentary on *al-Muwāfiq* of al-‘Uḍad, commentary on *al-Tajrīd* of al-Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, commentary on *al-Tadhkira al-Naṣiriyya* on physiognomy, *ḥāshiya*

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<sup>55</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:285; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:125; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 12:228-29; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:516; W. Madelung, “al-Taftāzānī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 10:88-89.

<sup>56</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1479; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* 5:46; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 7:284-85; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:517; H.A.R. Gibb, “al-Bulqīnī.” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:1308-9.

<sup>57</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 6:16; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:517.

on the commentary of al-Taftāzānī's *al-Tanqīh* on jurisprudence and commentary on *al-Muṭawwil* of al-Taftāzānī on rhetoric and eloquence.<sup>58</sup>

25. Majd al-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Fīrūzābādī's (d. 817/1415) works were concentrated on the subjects of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and history, but he excelled in lexicography. According to Ḥājjī Khalīfa, he wrote two commentaries on *al-Kashshāf*, the first entitled *Quṭbat al-kkashshāf li-ḥall khuṭbāt al-Kashshāf* and the second *Naghbat al-rashshāf min khuṭbāt al-Kashshāf*. He compiled more than fifty works, but his most celebrated book is *al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ wa-al-qābūs al-wasīṭ al-jāmi' li-mā dhahaba min kalām al-'Arab shamaṭīṭ*. He wished to compile a dictionary in sixty or it is said, in one hundred volumes. His other books are *al-Lāmi' al-'ilm al-'ujāb*, *al-jāmi' bayn al-muḥkam wa-al-'ubāb* which only reached the fifth volume and was not completed, *Fath al-bārī bi-al-samīḥ al-fasīḥ al-jārī* on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and many other titles.<sup>59</sup>

26. Walī al-Dīn Abū Zar'a Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-'Irāqī (d. 826/1423) was a Shāfi'ī jurist, theologian, *ḥadīth* transmitter and expert in some sciences. He was a *qāḍī* and professor. He wrote commentary on *Jam'a al-jawāmi'* of al-Subkī on jurisprudence and commentary on *al-Bahja al-wardiyya* on al-Shāfi'ī's jurisprudence. He compiled an abstract of Ibn al-Munayyir's (d. 683/1284) *al-Insāf 'alā al-Kashshāf* and 'Ilm al-Dīn 'Abd al-Karīm's (d. 704/1304) *Tahdhīb al-Kashshāf 'alā sabīl al-insāf* in two volumes.<sup>60</sup>

27. 'Abd al-Karīm b. 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. 830/1427) wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *al-Muḥākamāt 'alā al-Kashshāf* and defended the objections raised by

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<sup>58</sup> Al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:196-97; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 7:216; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:517; A.S. Tritton, "Al-Djurdjānī, 'Alī b. Muḥammad," *EF*, 2:602-3.

<sup>59</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1480; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 12:118-19; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:525. H. Fleisch, "al-Fīrūzābādī," *EF*, 2:926-27.

<sup>60</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1479-80; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 1:270-1; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:517.

al-Aqṣarā'ī (d. ca. 771/1370) in his commentary on *al-Kashshāf* in which he criticized Qutb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī's (d. 766/1364-5) *al-Taqrīb*, a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>61</sup>

28. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Hamzā b. Muhammad al-Fanārī (d. 834/1431) was a scholar in rational and traditional sciences. He wrote numerous books *Fuṣūl al-badā'i*, a compilation on the *uṣūl al-fiqh*, commentary of *Isāghujī* on logic and commentary of *al-Fawā'id al-Ghayāthia* on rhetoric and eloquence. The *Fihris* mentions a commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Ta'līq 'ala awā'il al-Kashshāf*.<sup>62</sup>

29. Jamāl al-Dīn 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Ja'far (d. 837/1433) composed an abridgement of *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Tajrīd al-Kashshāf ma'a ziyāda nukat laṭāf*.<sup>63</sup>

30. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) was a Shāfi'ī, *ḥadīth* scholar, *qāḍī*, historian and poet. He was a prolific writer and author of approximately one hundred and fifty books. His famous titles are *Fath al-bārī*, a great commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *al-Isāba fī tamayīz al-ṣaḥāba*, *Lisān al-mizān*, *Thahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina*, a commentary on *al-Irshād* which deals with al-Shāfi'ī's jurisprudence, and *Dīwān shi'r*. He compiled an abridgement of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Zaylā'ī's (d. 762/1360) *Risāla fī takhrīj aḥādīth al-Kashshāf wa-ma fīhī qiṣaṣ wa-athār* entitled *al-Kāff al-shāff fī taḥrīr aḥādīth al-Kashshāf*.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1478; *al-Fihris al-shāmil* 2:527.

<sup>62</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 9:272-73; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:511; J.R. Walsh, "Fenārī-Zāde," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:879.

<sup>63</sup> *Al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:518.

<sup>64</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1481; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 2:20-22; F. Rosenthal, "Ibn Ḥadjar al-'Asqalānī," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3:776-79.

31. ‘Ala’ al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd al-Shāhrūdī Muṣannifak (d. 875/1470) was a Ḥanafī theologian and Persian scholar. Most of his works are commentaries or supercommentaries on Arabic texts. These are *al-Aḥkām wa-al-ḥudud* on Ḥanafī jurisprudence, glosses on al-Taftāzānī’s *Sharḥ al-Muṭawwal*, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī’s *Sharḥ al-Miftāh* and *Ḥāshiya ‘alā al-Kashshāf*.<sup>65</sup>

32. Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan Chelebī b. Muḥammad Shāh b. Ḥamza al-Fanārī (d. 886/1481) was a Ḥanafī scholar in various sciences. Most of his works are supercommentaries on the commentaries. He compiled a supercommentary on al-Taftāzānī’s commentary of *al-Muṭawwal* which deals with rhetoric and eloquence and a supercommentary of al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī’s commentary of al-Ījī’s *Muwāqif* on scholastic theology. He annotated *Durar al-ḥukkām* of Mullā Khusrow on Ḥanafī jurisprudence and wrote a supercommentary on al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī’s commentary of *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>66</sup>

33. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd b. ‘Umar al-Taftāzānī Shaykh al-Islām (d. 887/1482) was a Ḥanafī exegete. He composed a supercommentary on the previous commentary written by his grandfather on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>67</sup>

34. Al-Khayālī (d. 893/1488) wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*. There is no information available about his full name. Only the *Fihris* mentions about his commentary.<sup>68</sup>

35. Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Khaṭīb (d. 901/1495) was a Ḥanafī jurist, and scholastic theologian. His works are *Risāla fī ru’ya wa-al-kalām*, and a supercommentary on al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī’s commentary of *al-Tajrīd*. He annotated *al-*

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<sup>65</sup> Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1480; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām*, 5:9; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, 7:240; J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Muṣannifak,” *IEP*, 7:663.

<sup>66</sup> Ḥājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1479; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, 3:213-14.

<sup>67</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam al-mu’allifīn*, 13:228; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:518.

<sup>68</sup> *Al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:518.

*Tawḍīḥ* which deals with jurisprudence. He also wrote a supercommentary on al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī's commentary of *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>69</sup>

36. Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā'īl al-Qaramānī (d. 920/1514) known as Qara Kamāl was exegete, jurist, and scholastic theologian. Most of his writings consist of glosses and commentaries. He annotated *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>70</sup>

37. Khayr al-Dīn Khidr b. Mahmud b. 'Umar al-'Aṭūfī al-Marzīfūnī (d. 948/1541) was a great scholar in a variety of sciences. His writings include commentary of *Isāghūjī* on logic, commentary of *Mashāriq al-anwār al-nabawiyya min ṣiḥāḥ al-akhbār al-muṣṭafawiyya* of al-Ṣaghānī, entitled *Kashf al-mashāriq* in three volumes, and commentary of *al-Burda* in praise of Prophet Muḥammad. He also compiled a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>71</sup>

38. Ghayāth al-Dīn Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī al-Dashtakī al-Shīrāzī (d. 948/1541 or 949/1542) was a scholar. In addition to his commentary on *al-Kashshāf*, he wrote a refutation of *Unmūdhaj al-'ulūm* of Jalāl al-Dīn Muhammad b. As'ad al-Dawānī.<sup>72</sup>

39. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Shirbīnī (d. 977/1570) known as al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī was a Shāfi'ī jurist, commentator of the Qur'ān, theologian and grammarian. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1479; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 8:199; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:518.

<sup>70</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1481; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 2:287; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:511.

<sup>71</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1480; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 2:307; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 4:101-2; *Al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:519.

<sup>72</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 8:43; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:519.

<sup>73</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 8:269; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:519.

40. Zakariyyā' Afandī b. Bayrām (d. 1001/1592) was a Ḥanafī jurist, exegete, and scholar in some sciences. He annotated *al-Ghurur wa-al-durar* of Molla Khusrow. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>74</sup>

41. Khidr b. 'Aṭā' Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Mawṣilī (d. 1007/1598) was a man of letters, scholar in grammar and lexicography and poetry. Hājji Khalīfa mentions that his work on *al-Kashshāf* deals with *shawāhid*. Kaḥḥāla gives the full title as *al-Is'āf fi sharḥ shawāhid al-qāḍī wa-al-Kashshāf*. The title indicates that he wrote the commentary on Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* as well.<sup>75</sup>

42. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm b. Muḥammad Akhī Zāda (d. 1013/1604-5) a Ḥanafī jurist was expert in several sciences. His works are *Riyāḍ al-sādāt fi ithbāt al-karāt lil-awliyā' ḥāl al-ḥayāt wa ba'd al-mamāt*, commentary on *al-Hidāya* of al-Marghiyānī on Ḥanafī jurisprudence, gloss on *al-Ishbāh wa-al-nazā'ir* of Ibn Najīm and commentary on *al-Durar wa-al-ghurar*. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a *ḥāshiya* of al-Zamakhsharī's commentary on *awwal Sūra al-Anbiyā'*.<sup>76</sup>

43. Muḥibb al-Dīn Afandī Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Taqī al-Dīn (d. 1014/1605) was a Ḥanafī jurist and in several sciences. He compiled a commentary on the *shawāhid* used by al-Zamakhsharī in the *Kashshāf* titled *Tanzīl al-āyāt 'alā al-shawāhid min al-abyāt*.<sup>77</sup>

44. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Maghribī (d. 1016/1607) was Mālikī, exegete, and expert in several sciences. He compiled a gloss on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Ghāyat al-ithāf fi-*

<sup>74</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 4:181-82; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:519.

<sup>75</sup> Hājji Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1482; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 4:101.

<sup>76</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 5:97-98; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:520.

<sup>77</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 8:178-79.

*mā khafī min kalām al-qāḍī wa-al-Kashshāf*. According to Kaḥḥāla, he completed it in 1005/1597.<sup>78</sup>

45. Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Ardabīlī (d. 1036/1627) was exegete, jurist, and grammarian. Kaḥḥāla states that among his works are commentary on al-Bayḍāwī’s *tafsīr Anwār al-tanzīl*, *al-Anwār* which deals with al-Shāfi‘ī’s jurisprudence and commentary on al-Zamakhsharī’s *Unmudhaj*. The *Fihris* mentions that he compiled a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>79</sup>

46. Šāliḥ b. Dāwūd al-Anisī (d. 1062/1652) was a Zaydī jurist and expert in several sciences. His works are a brief commentary on *al-‘Alfī lil-Jāmi‘ al-saghīr*, commentary on *al-‘Aqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa lil-Imam al-Muwakkal ‘alā Allāh* and commentary on *al-Masā’il al-Murtaḍā fī-ma ya‘tamiduhu al-qāḍā*. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>80</sup>

47. Shams al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Muḥammad al-Siyālkūtī (d. 1067/1657) was a Ḥanafī jurist, and versatile scholar. He wrote supercommentaries on several popular books. These supercommentaries include: *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*, *al-‘Aqā’id al-Nasafīyya* of al-Taftāzānī, *al-Muṭawwal* of al-Taftāzānī, commentary of ‘Abd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī on *al-Fawā’id al-ḍiyā’īyya* which deals with grammar. The *Fihris* mentions that he wrote a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Kaḥḥāla gives three entries of Muḥammad b. al-Maghribī. In one entry, he mentions the year of his death 1005/1597 [*Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 9:22], whereas in the other two entries [*Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 8:306] which appear on the same page, he mentions him twice, in one place he gives the same year of his death, i.e. 1005/1597 and in the second place the year of his death is 1016/1607. The *Fihris* gives his year of death 1016/1607. See Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 8:306 and 9:22; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:520.

<sup>79</sup> Al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:125; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 10:178; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:521.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* 3:191; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 5:6; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:520.

<sup>81</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 5:95; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:520; Editor, “al-Siyālkūtī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 9:693.



48. Al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Jalāl al-Yamanī (d. 1084/1673) was a scholar in several sciences. His works are commentary on *al-Fuṣūl* which deals with the principles of religious science, commentary on *al-Tahdhīb* which relates to logic and *Fath al-alṭāf fī takmila al-kashf ‘alā al-Kashshāf*. The *Fihris* mentions that he composed a commentary entitled *al-Jalāl ‘alā al-Kashshāf*.<sup>82</sup>

49. Šālīḥ b. Maḥdī b. ‘Alī al-Maqbalī (d. 1108/1696) was a Zaydī scholar of exegesis, sciences of the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, Arabic lexicography, mysticism and jurisprudence. His writings consist of *al-‘Ilm al-shāmikh fī ṭihār al-ḥaqq ‘alā al-ābā’ wa-al-mashā’ikh*, commentary on *Kitāb al-baḥr al-zukhkhār* entitled *al-Manār fī al-mukhtār min jawāhir al-baḥr al-zukhkhār* and commentary on *al-Kashshāf* entitled *al-Ithāf li-ṭalabat al-Kashshāf*.<sup>83</sup>

50. Ḥāmid b. ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-‘Imādī al-Dimashqī (d. 1171/1757) was a Ḥanafī scholar, jurist, *mufī*, and poet. He was author of many books including *al-Fatāwa al-‘Imādiya al-Ḥāmidiya* entitled *Mughnī al-mufī ‘an jawāb al-mustafī* and *Ittiḥād al-qamarayn fī bayt al-raqmatayn*. He compiled a commentary of *al-Kashshāf* entitled *al-Ithāf fī sharḥ khuṭbāt al-Kashshāf*.<sup>84</sup>

51. Muḥammad Šiddīq Khān b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Luṭf Allāh (1248/1832 - 1307/1889) was a scholar of Qur’ānic exegesis, *ḥadīth* and lexicography who wrote in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. His main works written in Arabic are *Fath al-bayān fī maqāṣid al-Qur’ān – tafsīr* of the Qur’ān in ten volumes, *‘Awn al-bārī* which deals with traditions and a summary of *al-Kashshāf* entitled *Khulāṣa al-Kashshāf*.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 3:202-203; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:521.

<sup>83</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 5:14; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:512.

<sup>84</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 3:180; *al-Fihris al-shāmil*, 2:526.

<sup>85</sup> Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 7:36-37.

52. Muḥammad ‘Aylān al-Marzūqī (d. 1355/1936) was a Shāfi‘ī theologian, Qur’ān commentator and scholar in several sciences. He is author of two books on *al-Kashshāf* the first is *Mashāhid al-insāf ‘alā shawāhid al-Kashshāf* and the second one is a commentary on *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>86</sup>

## 6. Scholars’ Opinions about *al-Kashshāf*

As mentioned above, *al-Kashshāf* has been widely read and subject to numerous commentaries since it was published. Some scholars criticized its Mu‘tazilite contents and wrote against it. Others commented upon its lexicographical, grammatical, and eloquent style and praised it. However, some scholars expressed their views in a cautious manner that one should read it but be aware of its intrigues.

‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Jamāra al-Andalusī (d. 699/1300) states that *al-Kashshāf* is an exquisite and sublime commentary of the Qur’ān. The reader of this book falls in one of the two categories: either he is an expert in his knowledge or he does not have sufficient qualifications to comprehend it. If someone is expert and knowledgeable of the intrigues (i.e., Mu‘tazilite doctrines and their views) which have been inserted in the *tafsīr*, then it will not be harmful and one can find those machinations. It may be beneficial because of its refined and eloquent use of Arabic language, logical interpretation, and things similar to that. However, if a person is not knowledgeable, then it is not permissible for him to look into it because he may slip into intrigues without realizing it.<sup>87</sup>

According to Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), the Mu‘tazilites initially form some ideas and then interpret the Qur’ān to suit their purpose. Their interpretation of the

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<sup>86</sup> Al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 6:310; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:73-74.

<sup>87</sup> Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Jamra al-Andalusī, *Bahjat al-nufūs wa-taḥalliha bi-ma‘rifā mā lahā wa-‘alayhā*, ed. Bakrī Shaykh Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malā’iyyin, 1997), 1:65-66.

Qur'ān can be disproved by demonstrating that their views are erroneous in two ways: either by refuting the arguments which they advance or by defending the positions which they attack. Some of them have an elegant, lucid and eloquent style of writing and introduce their erroneous beliefs so clandestinely that many readers fail to perceive them. The author of *al-Kashshāf*, for instance, has succeeded in making his commentary so attractive to a great number of people that they would hardly look for his erroneous views in it. In fact, some scholars approvingly quote passages from his *tafsīr* in their writings without realizing that they contain ideas derived from the Mu'tazilite principles.<sup>88</sup>

Abū al-Fidā' (d. 732/1331) and Ibn Athīr (d. 774/1373) mention that al-Zamakhsharī professed Mu'tazilism openly, and *al-Kashshāf*'s explicit theme is Mu'tazilite theology.<sup>89</sup>

Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745/1344) is of the opinion that al-Zamakhsharī is amply endowed with the Qur'ānic knowledge and combines in his commentary innovative meanings of the words, proficiency and eloquent style. In his book there are praiseworthy as well as intriguing things. He has written down his evaluation in the form of poetry in which he praises the book and mentions its merits from which a person can benefit. However, he cautions about those things which are impertinent in it and should be avoided.<sup>90</sup>

Al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) is very critical in his assessment about al-Zamakhsharī. He mentions in *al-'Ibar*, that al-Zamakhsharī was a scholar of great qualities and used to propagate for Mu'tazilism. In *Tā'rīkh al-Islam*, he states that he expressed openly his

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<sup>88</sup> Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyya, *Muqaddima fī usūl al-tafsīr*, ed. 'Adnān Zarzūr (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1972), 85-86.

<sup>89</sup> Abū al-Fidā', *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, 3:25; Ibn Athīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 12:219.

<sup>90</sup> Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalūsī, *Al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, ed. 'Ādil Aḥmad 'Abd al-Mawjūd and 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiḍ (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1993), 7:81.

Mu‘tazilite creed and called others to innovation. He repeats in *Siyar*, that al-Zamakhsharī used to propagate Mu‘tazilism. May God have mercy on him. Finally, in *Mizān al-i‘tidāl*, after mentioning that he propagates Mu‘tazilism openly, al-Dhahabī states that God may protect people and warns that one should be cautious when reading *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>91</sup>

Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 749/1348) states in his commentary entitled *al-Jāmi‘ baynā al-tafsīr al-kabīr wa al-Kashshāf*, that he perused *al-Kashshāf* and found that whatever has been written by al-Zamakhsharī, he took it from al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923).<sup>92</sup>

In al-Subkī’s (d. 771/1370) view *al-Kashshāf* is a great book in the field of exegesis and its author is a great scholar except that he is a heretic. It is, therefore, necessary that whatever is written in *al-Kashshāf* should be erased.<sup>93</sup>

According to Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), there are two types of Qur’ānic interpretations. The first type is traditional, based upon information received from the early Muslims. The second type is based upon the linguistic knowledge, such as lexicography and eloquence (*balāgha*) used for conveying meaning through rational means and methods. The second type of commentary is best represented by al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*, who is a Mu‘tazilite in his dogmatic views. He uses the various methods of rhetoric, arguing in favor of the pernicious doctrines of the Mu‘tazila, wherever he believed they occurred in the verses of the Qur’ān. Competent orthodox

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<sup>91</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *al-Ibar*, 4:106; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islam*, 36:489; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Mizān al-i‘tidāl*, 4:78.

<sup>92</sup> Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī al-Zajjāj was an Arabic grammarian and an authority in the history of grammatical tradition. Among his writings are a number of lexicographical treatises. His main work *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān* deals with Qur’ānic philology. His opinions are quoted frequently by al-Rāzī in his Qur’ān commentary. See C.H.M. Versteegh, “al-Zadjjadj, Abū Ishāk, Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>, 11:377-78; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2: 1482.

<sup>93</sup> Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Subkī, *Mu‘īd al-ni‘am wa-mubīd al-naqam*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār and Abū Zayd Shelbī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kānjī, 1993), 80.

scholars have, therefore, come to disregard this work and warn everyone against its pitfalls. However, they admit that he is on solid ground relating to language and eloquence. If the reader is well-versed with the orthodox dogmas and knows the arguments in their defense, he is undoubtedly safe from its fallacies. Therefore, he should take the advantage of studying it, because of its remarkable and varied linguistic information.<sup>94</sup>

Burhān al-Dīn Ḥyder (d. 830/1426) states that *al-Kashshāf* is of exquisite quality which he did not see similar to it among the works of earlier writers, and one will not find anything like it among the writings of the latter. It has precise and proficient wordings, elegant composition, and meticulous stylistic peculiarity. It does not fall short of any standards when someone examines the principles of exegesis, refinement of demonstrations and proofs, methodology, and reconstruction of points for synthesis. However, if one draws analogous conclusions from it, then one finds that its author's Mu'tazilite views are interwoven and the interpretation falls down into errors culminating into perilous mistakes. As a consequence, one finds the *tafsīr* altered from its real meaning and it is a great misfortune and immense calamity.<sup>95</sup>

According to Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, people who are enthusiastic about reading *al-Kashshāf* should be very careful. If they are thoroughly familiar and well-versed with the traditions (*sunna*) and read it with extreme care they can benefit from the commentary provided they safeguard against its intrigues and secret machinations.<sup>96</sup>

Al-Suyūṭī considers that al-Zamakhsharī was a scholar of enormous insight in the science of eloquence and praises him generously as an authority (*sultān*) in this field. He

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<sup>94</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1996), 407-8.

<sup>95</sup> Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1482-83.

<sup>96</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:64.

elucidated and proved the inimitability of the Qur'ān in *al-Kashshāf* with such convincing arguments that his book became famous in the farthest parts of the world from East to West. When the author became aware of its eminence, he said that it occurred by the grace and blessings of God and composed the following verses:

*Inna al-tafāsīr fī al-dunyā bi-lā 'adad  
Wa laysa fī-hā la- 'umrī mithl kashshāfī  
In kunta tabghī al-hudā fa-alzam qira'tahu  
Fa al-jahl ka al-dā' wa al-Kashshāf ka al-shāfī*

Indeed, there are numerous commentaries in the world,  
By my life! However, there is none like my *Kashshāf*.  
If you desire to seek guidance then it is necessary that you read it,  
Because ignorance is like a malady and the *Kashshāf* is like a remedy.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:30; al-Zamakhsharī, *Dīwān*, 596; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1476.

## Appendix 2

### Al-Zamakhsharī's Teachers and Students

#### Al-Zamakhsharī's Teachers

Following are the teachers of al-Zamakhsharī who have been mentioned in various biographical dictionaries and *ṭabaqāt* works.

#### Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Muẓaffar al-Naysābūrī

Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Muẓaffar al-Naysābūrī (d. 442/1051) was a man of letters, poet, writer, and teacher of the people of Khawārazm in his time. Yāqūt, al-Suyūṭī, al-Dāwūdī, Ṭāshkubrīzāda and al-Khavānsārī mention that al-Zamakhsharī studied literature (*adab*) with him. Yāqūt even states that he was al-Zamakhsharī's teacher before Abū Muḍar.

It seems that there is confusion in the name of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. al-Muẓaffar al-Naysābūrī and it cannot be established conclusively that he taught al-Zamakhsharī. Abū al-Ḥasan died in 442/1051, about a quarter of a century prior to al-Zamakhsharī's birth. So he could not have been his teacher. There is a likelihood that al-Zamakhsharī might have studied with one of the descendants of Abū al-Ḥasan by the same name. The teacher of al-Zamakhsharī might be his son or grandson by the same name.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 3:1016-18, 6:2688; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:526, 2:279; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119.

### **Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Baṭīr al-Baghdādī**

Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Naṣr b. Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Baṭīr al-Baghdādī (d. 494/1100) was a famous *muḥaddith*, and transmitted *aḥādīth* from Abū Muḥammad b. al-Bay’, ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-‘Ubkarī, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. Bishrān, Abū al-Ḥusayn b. Rizqwiyya, and Abū Bakr al-Munaqqī. Al-Zamakhsharī studied *ḥadīth* with him in Baghdād and transmitted from him.<sup>2</sup>

### **Abū Muḍar Maḥmūd b. Jarīr al-Ḍabbī al-Isfahānī**

Abū Muḍar Maḥmūd b. Jarīr al-Ḍabbī al-Isfahānī (d. 507/1114) was actively responsible for introducing and spreading of Mu‘tazilism throughout Khwārazm.<sup>3</sup> He was known as *farīd al-‘aṣr* (unique in his time) and *wahīd al-dahr* (incomparable in his era), a great scholar in the fields of lexicography, grammar, and medicine and an exemplary character in his virtues and moral excellence. He lived in Khwārazm for a long time and many people obtained and benefited from his knowledge and high moral standards. Al-Zamakhsharī was one of them who not only studied literature, grammar, and lexicography with him, but also followed his school of thought.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-buldān*, 4:192; al-Dhahabī, *al-‘Ibar*, 4:106; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 19:46-8, 20:152; ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif, 1966), 12:161; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn* 7:138; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadhrāt al-dhahab*, 4:118.

<sup>3</sup> On Abū Muḍar’s introducing Mu‘tazilism to Khwārazm, see McAuliffe, *Qur’ānic Christians*, 50; Luṭṭī Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 4; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 48; Murtaḍā Ayat Allāh Zāda al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī lughwīyyan wa-mufasssīran* (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1977), 96.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2687; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:267; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168, 172; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36:489; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rīkh*, 2:63;

Ibn Taghrībardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:274; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* 2:276; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda*, 2:100; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadhrāt*, 4:119; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* 8:119.



### **‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī al-Andalusī**

‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī al-Andalusī (d. 518/1124) was born in Yābur and stayed for sometime in Seville (*Ishbiliya*). He was a grammarian, theologian (*uṣūlī*), and jurist (*faqīh*). His important works are *al-Mudkhal sharḥ Risāla ibn abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī*, *Sayf al-Islām ‘alā madhhab Mālik*, and *al-Radd ‘alā ibn Ḥazm*. Al-Fāsī states that al-Zamakhsharī traveled from Khawārazm to Mecca to study grammar with him. However, according to al-Suyūfī, while in Mecca, al-Zamakhsharī studied *Kitāb Sibawayhi* with ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭalḥa al-Yāburī.<sup>5</sup>

### **Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā b. Ḥamza b. Wahnās**

Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā b. Ḥamza b. Wahnās (d. 526/1131) was Zaydī *Imām* of Mecca. There are two reports about the date of his death. Al-Qifī says that he died in 506/1112, whereas other sources mention the year of his death 526/1131. According to al-Qifī and Ibn Taghribardī, al-Zamakhsharī studied with Ibn Wahnās, both of them do not mention what he studied with him. However, they state that it was Ibn Wahnās who encouraged al-Zamakhsharī to write Mu‘tazilite *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān. Al-Fāsī states, “Because of Ibn Wahnās, al-Zamakhsharī composed *al-Kashshāf*.” He also mentions that al-Wahnās was not only al-Zamakhsharī’s teacher, but was also his student. However, the sources do not mention what was studied. Al-Fāsī mentions that: “Because of Ibn Wahnās, al-Zamakhsharī composed the *Kashshāf*.” This indicates that his main interest might be in exegesis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:46; Maqarrī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* 2:21; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt* 8:126; al-Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 6:65.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:268; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd al-thamīn*, 6:218, 220; Ibn Taghribardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:274.

### **Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. al-Malāḥimī al-Uṣūlī**

Rukn al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. al-Malāḥimī al-Uṣūlī (d. 536/1141) was known as *farīd al-‘aṣr* (unique in his time) in the field of theology. Al-Zamakhsharī studied theology with him. Besides being al-Zamakhsharī’s teacher, Ibn al-Malāḥimī was also his student and studied with him exegesis.<sup>7</sup>

### **Abū Maṣṣūr Mawḥūb b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Khiḍr al-Jawālīqī**

Abū Maṣṣūr Mawḥūb b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Khiḍr al-Jawālīqī (d. 539/1144) was a great scholar in a variety of sciences, and an associate of al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī. He taught philology at the Niẓāmiyya after al-Tibrīzī. He learned Ḥadīth from Abū al-Qāsim b. al-Baṣrī and Abū Ṭāhir b. Abū al-Saqr, and al-Kindī and Ibn Jawzī transmitted from him. He was trustworthy, pious, virtuous, and profoundly intelligent. He was prudent in his answers to questions and admired for his beautiful calligraphy. He had enormous knowledge in lexicography and grammar. Al-‘Imād al-Khaṭīb narrated that, “At that time, there were four grammarians in Baghdād: al-Jawālīqī, Ibn al-Shajarī, Ibn al-Khashshāb, and Ibn al-Dahhān.”<sup>8</sup> Fleisch remarks that according to Ibn al-Anbārī, al-Jawālīqī was a “better lexicographer than grammarian.” Fleisch, further mentions, “His [Jawālīqī] works deservedly take their place along with those of al-Tibrīzī in raising the cultural level in the Arabic language from the depth to which it had fallen in the Saljūqī period to preserve the *faṣīḥ* language by collecting together words of foreign origin and recording them as such. This explanatory lexicon, which was highly thought of in its

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<sup>7</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368, 379, 382; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda* 2:100.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 1:587, 2:29-31, 324, 308.

time, has proved to be very useful and made Ibn al-Jawālīqī's reputation."<sup>9</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī studied lexicography with him. Abū al-Yumn Zayd b. Ḥasan al-Kindī (d. 613/1217) one of Jawālīqī's students reports that al-Zamakhsharī "came to us in Baghdād in 533/1138, and I saw him with Jawālīqī twice – first time, studying books on lexicography, and second time, seeking *ijāza* (license) for them, because prior to that, he had neither visited him nor transmitted from him."<sup>10</sup>

### **Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khwārazmī**

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khwārazmī was a student of the Zaydī exegete al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101). Madelung mentions Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khwārazmī as one of al-Zamakhsharī's teachers, though none of the biographical dictionaries lists his name. According to Madelung, al-Zamakhsharī might have visited Bayhaq, al-Jishumī's hometown after the latter's death. He might have met Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khwārazmī there and studied with him. It is through him that he could have become familiar with al-Jishumī's Qur'ānic exegesis and the Mu'tazilite doctrine of Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār. Some scholars are of the opinion that al-Zamakhsharī used al-Jishumī's *al-Taḥdhīb fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* when composing his *al-Kashshāf*. However, Madelung does not agree with it.<sup>11</sup>

Madelung's information is based upon a narrative mentioned in al-Jishumī's *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-masā'il fī 'ilm al-uṣūl*. Al-Jishumī had many students but three of them

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<sup>9</sup> Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā'*, 290; H. Fleisch, "al-Djawālīkī or Ibn al-Djawālīkī, Abū Manṣūr Mawhūb b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Khiḍr," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:490.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:270; al-Dhahābī, *Siyar* 20:153; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; H. Fleisch, "al-Djawālīkī," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2:490.

<sup>11</sup> W. Madelung, "al-Ḥākim al-Djushamī," *EF*<sup>2</sup> Supplement, 5-6:343; "al-Zamakhsharī," *EF*<sup>2</sup> Supplement, 11-12:840-1.

mentioned by name were: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khawarazmī, whose name, father's name and grandfather's name were the same; 'Alī b. Zayd b. al-Barūqanī; and al-Jishumī's son Muḥammad who transmitted from his father and receives a sama' in 452/1061. It is mentioned that al-Qāḍī al-Ḥāfiẓ was al-Zamakhsharī's teacher. However, it is not clear who al-Qāḍī al-Ḥāfiẓ was. The information provided in the *Sharḥ 'Uyūn* is not corroborated by any other source because none of the biographical dictionaries mentions his name as al-Zamakhsharī's teacher.<sup>12</sup> So far as the name of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Khwārazmī is concerned, it is confirmed that he was student of al-Jishumī, however, it does not prove that he was a teacher of al-Zamakhsharī.

### **Abū Manṣūr**

Abū Manṣūr was a theologian and preacher in Khwārazm. Al-Zamakhsharī studied theology with him and he studied Qur'ānic exegesis with al-Zamakhsharī. There is confusion of names between Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī, Abū Manṣūr al-Jawālīqī, and Abū Manṣūr. According to Yāqūt, al-Zamakhsharī studied *Hadīth* from Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī, while Ibn Khallikān states that he studied literature from him. Tashkubrīzāda mentions the name of Abū Manṣūr al-Jawālīqī al-Ḥārithī.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Fu'ād Sayyid, ed. *Faḍl al-I'tizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu'tazila* (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisiyya li-al-Nashr, 1986), 353-54.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 368, 379; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:100.

### **Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī**

Abū Manṣūr Naṣr al-Ḥārithī is known as the *Shaykh al-Islām* in all of the sources that mention him. Ibn Khallikān states that al-Zamakhsharī studied literature with al-Ḥārithī, while other sources mention that he studied *ḥadīth* with him.<sup>14</sup>

### **Abū Sa‘d al-Shaqqānī**

Abū Sa‘d al-Shaqqānī or al-Shiqqānī was a scholar and al-Zamakhsharī studied *ḥadīth* with him in Baghdād. Biographical dictionaries do not provide much information about him.<sup>15</sup>

### **Al-Zamakhsharī’s Students**

Following are the students of al-Zamakhsharī who have been mentioned in various biographical dictionaries and *ṭabaqāt* works.

### **Abū ‘Amr ‘Āmir b. al-Ḥasan al-Simsār**

Abū ‘Amr ‘Āmir b. al-Ḥasan al-Simsār was al-Zamakhsharī’s nephew. Al-Sam‘ānī mentions that he transmitted (*rawā*) from al-Zamakhsharī in his home village of Zamakhshar. However, he does not state specifically what he transmitted.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2688; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 4:254; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:279; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Tāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119.

<sup>15</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2688; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:79; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Tāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāḥ al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2688; al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 381.

### **Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-‘Imrānī al-Khwārazmī**

Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Hārūn al-‘Imrānī al-Khwārazmī (d. ca. 560/1165) was known as *ḥujjat al-afāḍil* (Proof of the Excellence) and *fakhr al-mashā’ikh* (Pride of the Scholars). He came from Khwārazm, and was a learned scholar in grammar. He was Mu‘tazilite and wrote a commentary on the Qur’ān. Al-Khavānsārī specifically mentions that he studied traditions with al-Zamakhsharī. Other sources state that he studied literature with al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>17</sup>

### **Muḥammad b. ‘Abī al-Qāsim b. Yabjūk al-Baqqālī al-Khwārazmī**

Muḥammad b. ‘Abī al-Qāsim b. Yabjūk al-Baqqālī al-Khwārazmī (d. 562/1167) was known as *zayn al-mashā’ikh* (Adornment of the Learned), *ḥujja fī lisān al-‘Arab* (Authority on the Arabic Language), and leading authority in literature. His works include *Miftāḥ al-tanzīl*, *al-i‘jāb fī al-i‘rāb*, *Taqwīm al-lisān fī al-naḥw*, *al-Bidāya’ fī al-ma‘ānī wa-al-bayān*, *Manāzil al-‘Arab*, and *Sharḥ asmā’ Allāh al-ḥusnā*. He studied lexicography, grammar and traditions with al-Zamakhsharī. He took al-Zamakhsharī’s position after his death.<sup>18</sup>

### **Abū Bakr al-Azdī Yaḥyā b. Sa‘dūn al-Qurṭūbī**

Abū Bakr al-Azdī Yaḥyā b. Sa‘dūn al-Qurṭūbī (d. 567/1171-2) was a scholar in the city of Moṣul and travelled widely in Cordova, Egypt and Baghdad to study. He was a

<sup>17</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:195; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:123.

<sup>18</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2618; Ibn Abī al-Wafā’, *al-Jawāhir al-mudi’a*, 4:392-3; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyā*, 1:215; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:124.

student of al-Zamakhsharī and excelled in Arabic and the variant readings of the Qurʾān.<sup>19</sup>

### **Abū al-Muʾayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad b. Abī Saʿīd Ishāq**

Abū al-Muʾayyad al-Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad b. Abī Saʿīd Ishāq (d. 568/1172) known as *akhṭab al-khuṭabāʾ* (one of the best orators) and *akhṭab al-Khwārazm* (the best orator of Khwārazm) was a famous and great scholar in the fields of jurisprudence, literature, traditions, oratory, and poetry. Al-Andarabānī states that he studied grammar and literature with al-Zamakhsharī, while al-Khavānsārī and al-Suyūṭī mention that he studied jurisprudence, literature, traditions, preaching, and poetry with him.<sup>20</sup>

### **Abū al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Silafī**

Abū al-Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Silafī (d. 576/1180) moved to Baghdād in 511/1117 and stayed there except for one time when he traveled to Cairo for a period of two years. In 546/1151 the Fātimid vizier al-Zafīr al-Malik al-Adī ʿAbd Allāh b. Ishāq b. al-Sallār had a *madrāsā* established for him, where he taught until his death. According to Ibn Khallikān, al-Silafī wrote to al-Zamakhsharī from Alexandria on two occasions, requesting him the license (*ijāza*) to transmit “what he had heard and what he had written,” which he granted to him. Some of the sources have preserved part of this correspondence and al-Maqarrī has full correspondence of them.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Al-Yāfī, *Mirʾāt al-janān*, 3:383.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sira,” 370-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:308; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:123-24.

<sup>21</sup> Yāqūt, *Muʾjam al-udabāʾ*, 6:2690; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʾyān*, 5:170; al-Dhahabī, *Tāʾrīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:154; al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn*, 7:139; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, 2:98; al-Maqarrī, *Azhar al-riyād*, 3:283-93; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadhrāt*, 4:120; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119.

### **‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad Abū al-Barakāt Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī**

‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad Abū al-Barakāt Kamāl al-Dīn al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181), author of the *Nuzhat al-alibbā’ fi tabaqāt al-udabā’* was one of al-Zamakhshari’s students. However, al-Suyutī does not mention al-Zamakhsharī as Ibn al-Anbārī’s teacher.<sup>22</sup>

### **Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl al-‘Umarī Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ**

Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl al-‘Umarī Rashīd al-Dīn al-Waṭwaṭ (d. 578/1182) was a famous descendent of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. He participated in al-Zamakhsharī’s *majlis*, which is corroborated by his two letters he wrote. He was one of the outstanding students of al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>23</sup>

### **Abū Ṭāhir Barakāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Khushū‘ī**

Abū Ṭāhir Barakāt b. Ibrāhīm al-Khushū‘ī (d. 598/1201) came from a family of scholars who taught *ḥadīth* at the Bayt al-Ḥadīth. Ibn Khallikān mentions that he had outstanding certificates of audition (*sam‘at*) and was unique and possessed some of the licenses of transmission he held. Al-Zamakhsharī granted him the license (*ijāza*).<sup>24</sup>

### **Abū al-Faṭḥ Nāṣir b. ‘Abd al-Sayyid b. Muṭarriz**

Abū al-Faṭḥ Nāṣir b. ‘Abd al-Sayyid b. Muṭarriz (d. 610/1213) known as al-Mutarrizī was a poet. He was a Ḥanafite and a Mu‘tazilite and according to al-Dhahabī,

<sup>22</sup> Al-Suyutī, *Bughya*, 2:86-88; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:123.

<sup>23</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2631-36; al-Suyutī, *Bughya*, 1:226; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 11:229.

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 1:269-70; al-Fāsī, *al-Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:139.



he was one of the leading Mu‘tazilites. He studied with al-Zamakhsharī but sources do not mention the field of study. Al-Khavānsārī states that due to Muṭarriz’s close friendship with al-Zamakhsharī, he received the title of “Successor of al-Zamakhsharī” (*khilāfat al-Zamakhsharī*). However, Muṭarriz was born in 538/1144, the year of al-Zamakhsharī’s death. Under these circumstances, it is not possible that either he studied with al-Zamakhsharī or received the title of *khilāfa*.<sup>25</sup>

### **Umm al-Mu‘ayyad Zaynab bt. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sha‘riyya**

Umm al-Mu‘ayyad Zaynab bt. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sha‘riyya (d. 615/1218) was an outstanding scholar and visited a number of eminent scholars and received the knowledge and license (*ijāza*) to transmit it to others. Ibn Khallikan specifically mentions that al-Zamakhsharī granted her a general license (*ijāza ‘amma*) to transmit all of his works.<sup>26</sup>

### **Abū al-Ma‘ālī Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī al-Shaybānī**

Al-Fāsī mentions that Abū al-Ma‘ālī Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī al-Shaybānī was a judge (*qāḍī*) in Mecca who transmitted to his nephew Abū al-Ma‘ālī Mājīd b. Sulaymān al-Fihrī (d. 655/1257) the *Kashshāf*. He heard it from al-Zamakhsharī in Mecca. Subsequently, Mājīd b. Sulaymān al-Fihrī transmitted (*rawā ‘an*) the *Kashshāf* from his uncle Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī al-Shaybānī.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 22:28; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:124; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:195.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 2:344, 5:171; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rikh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:154, 22:85; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:139; al-Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:112-13.

### **Sadīd b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭī ‘Alā al-Dīn**

Sadīd b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāṭī ‘Alā al-Dīn, known as *Shaykh al-Islām* was a great scholar in jurisprudence and theology. He transmitted from (*rawā ‘an*) ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-‘Imrānī, *fakhr al-mashā’ikh* (Pride of the Learned) who was one of al-Zamakhsharī’s students. Al-Lucknawī mentions that al-Khayyāṭī was an expert in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*kalām*) and he studied under al-‘Imrānī al-Khwārazmī who was one of al-Zamakhsharī’s students. However, the source does not mention the field of study.<sup>28</sup>

### **Ya‘qūb b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far Abū Yusūf al-Balkhī al-Jandalī**

Ya‘qūb b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far Abū Yusūf al-Balkhī al-Jandalī is mentioned by al-Suyūṭī and Yāqūt in their biographical dictionaries. Al-Suyūṭī says that al-Balkhī was one of the leading scholars in literature (*aḥad min al-a’imma fī al-adab*) and studied with al-Zamakhsharī. Yāqūt reports that he was an expert in grammar and disciple of al-Zamakhsharī but does not mention what he studied with al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>29</sup>

### **Abū al-Maḥāsīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Bazzāz**

Al-Sam‘ānī mentions in his *Kitāb al-Ansāb* that Abū al-Maḥāsīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Bazzāz transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī in Abīward.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Al-Tamīmī, *Ṭabaqāt al-saniyya*, 4:7; al-Lucknawī, *Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 66.

<sup>29</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2844; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:351.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, 3:181.

### **Abū Ṭāhir Sāmān b. ‘Abd al-Malik**

According to al-Sam‘ānī, Abū Ṭāhir Sāmān b. ‘Abd al-Malik was a jurist (*faqīh*) and transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī in Khawārazm. However, the report does not mention what was transmitted.<sup>31</sup>

### **Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭawīl**

Abū al-Maḥāsīn Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭawīl “transmitted from” (*rawā ‘anhu*) al-Zamakhsharī in Ṭabristān and to al-Sam‘ānī himself.<sup>32</sup>

### **Abū Sa‘d Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Shāshī**

According to al-Sam‘ānī, Abū Sa‘d Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Shāshī transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī in Samarqand. However, it is not known what was transmitted from him.<sup>33</sup>

### **Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd**

Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd was a *qāḍī* in Samarqand who transmitted poetry from al-Zamakhsharī. According to Ibn Khallikān, he also transmitted poetry from al-Zamakhsharī to al-Sam‘ānī or his son, Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Dhahabī in Samarqand.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181-82.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181; Ibn al-Athīr, *Lubāb*, 2:74; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn* 7:138.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181; Ibn al-Athīr, *Lubāb*, 2:74; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:154; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:171-2; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:155.

## **Ibn Shahrāshūb**

Al-Khavānsārī mentions that Ibn Shahrāshūb transmitted from al-Zamakhsharī, but does not state what specifically he transmitted.<sup>35</sup>

## **Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khawārmī**

Al-Dhahabī mentions that Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khawārmī transmitted poetry (*rawa ‘anhu anāshīd*) from al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>36</sup>

## **‘Atīq b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Naysābūrī**

Al-Andarabānī states that ‘Atīq b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Naysābūrī was one of al-Zamakhsharī’s students. He participated in al-Zamakhsharī’s *majlis* and studied the *Asās al-balāgha* with him.<sup>37</sup>

## **Abū al-Faraj al-Makkī**

Abū al-Faraj al-Makkī, known as “Light of the Scholars” (*shams al-a’imma*) and “Leader of the Scholars” (*ra’īs al-a’imma*) was a student of al-Zamakhsharī. He studied exegesis with al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>38</sup>

## **Abū Šāliḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Umar al-Tarjumānī**

According to al-Andarabānī, al-Zamakhsharī corrected an error in Abū Šāliḥ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. ‘Umar al-Tarjumānī’s grammar course using Sībawayh’s *Kitāb*. He

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:123.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:154.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 377.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 379.

also mentions that al-Tarjumānī studied *al-Kashshāf* from al-Zamakhsharī over a period of seven years.<sup>39</sup>

**Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Jalālī al-Mu‘abbar**

According to al-Andarabānī, al-Zamakhsharī corrected an error in Sa‘īd b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Jalālī al-Mu‘abbar’s grammar.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 377, 379.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 377.

## Appendix 3

### Al-Zamakhsharī's Scholarly Contribution

Al-Zamakhsharī's scholarly contribution covers a wide variety of fields: exegesis, traditions, jurisprudence, literature, grammar, and lexicography. All the biographical dictionaries mention his important books, which he wrote during his lifetime. Al-Zamakhsharī compiled approximately fifty works during his lifetime. There is a substantial difference regarding the number of the books reported by the primary and secondary sources. In case of primary sources the range is between 9 and 50, whereas in secondary sources it is between 6 and 73. However, most of the sources agree that al-Zamakhsharī produced some fifty books, out of which about twenty titles are available in print form and probably the same number of manuscripts is preserved in various libraries of the world. It appears that that the remaining works are not extant.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Yāqūt gives a list of forty-nine titles produced by al-Zamakhsharī, and Ibn Khallikān gives the number of thirty-one works. Al-Fāsī and Ibn al-‘Imād both provide in their biographical notes twenty-nine titles. Al-Dāwūdī in his *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, gives thirty-three works. Ibn Quṭlūbughā and Ṭāshkubrīzāda, mention twenty-seven and twenty-six titles respectively. Al-Suyūfī gives nine titles in *Ṭabaqāt*, and sixteen titles in *Bughya*. Yāfī provides thirty titles of al-Zamakhsharī, while al-Dhahabī mentions only eleven works. Al-Ḥasanī also gives fifty-six titles and states the sources of these titles. Since her main research relates to al-Zamakhsharī's *Muhajāt*, she does not provide any other information. Al-Juwaynī mentions the titles of forty books. He is of the opinion that after 512/1118 when al-Zamakhsharī made a covenant with God after encountering the serious illness, his books are mostly influenced by ascetic, mystic, and religious tones. Al-Ḥufī gives the names of forty-seven books. He provides short summary of twenty-five books, while he considers that the remaining twenty-two books are unknown and no information is available. Dayf states that the sources describe approximately fifty works of al-Zamakhsharī. However, only some of them have been printed, while others are in manuscript form or lost. He gives the names of twenty-three books with brief description. He classifies these books into eleven categories: exegesis, traditions, religious sciences, jurisprudence, grammar, lexicography, rhetoric, prosody, logic, poetry, and prose. Al-Shīrāzī mentions that not all the books of al-Zamakhsharī have survived and some books in the manuscript form are scattered all over the world. He gives a list of twenty books with a brief description of each which are in print form and available. According to Ibrahim, there are fifty books, which are divided into two categories. The first category deals with books that have survived which are thirty. For these books, he gives their titles, and whether these have been published or are in the form of manuscripts. The second category consists of twenty books, which are missing. Rahman provides seventy-three titles of the books authored by al-Zamakhsharī, out of which seventeen are available in print form; eighteen are in manuscript form, which are preserved in various libraries of the world, while the remaining thirty-eight are lost. Sarkis and Kaḥḥāla mention twelve and six titles of the books respectively. Al-Ziriklī gives the number of books twenty-one. Faqir Jehlami provides the titles of thirty-one books. Agius' bibliography provides a list of fifty-six books

I have divided al-Zamakhsharī's works into eight categories. These categories in most of the cases have been determined by the titles of the books but there are some titles which are not definitive in identifying the subject matter of the book. This division, however, facilitates to understand al-Zamakhsharī's interests his scholarly works. These eight categories are: exegesis, traditions, theology, jurisprudence, grammar, lexicography, and literature. There are some titles about which it is difficult to determine as to what category they belong because their contents are unknown.

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and gives brief descriptions of twenty-seven books, while for the remaining twenty-nine books he only mentions their sources of information. Brockelmann mentions twenty titles of al-Zamakhsharī. He provides the names of publishers, and their dates and places of publication, as well the listing of manuscripts. Wherever possible, he gives a summary of the titles. Madelung gives fifteen titles of the books. He provides brief descriptions of *al-Kashshāf*, *al-Minhāj fī usul al-dīn*, *Rabi' al-abrār wa-nusus al-akhbār*, *Maqāmāt*, also known as *al-Naşā'ih al-kibar*, and *Aṭwāq al-dhahab* or *al-Naşā'ih al-sighar*. Lane provides a list of forty-eight books with short descriptions under five categories: grammar, lexicography, belles-lettres (*adab*), religious sciences and unknown. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168-9; al-Fāsī, *al-'Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:139-40; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 4:119; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315-6; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; Tāshkubrīzādā, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98-9; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Yāf'ī, *Mir'āt al-janān*, 3:269; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:487-89; al-Zamakhsharī, *Muḥājāt bi-al-masā'il al-naḥwīyya*, ed. Bahija al-Hasanī (Baghdad: Dār al-Tarbiyya Maṭba'āt Asad, 1974), 21-39; al-Juwaynī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī*, 53-54; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58-63; 'Abd al-Sattār Ḍayf, *Jār Allāh Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī: Ḥayatuḥu wa-shi'ruḥu* (Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1994), 80-101; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123-31; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 17-26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 157-77; Sarkis, *Mu'jam al-maṭbu'āt*, 1:973-6; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 12:186; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Faqir Muhammad Jehlami, *Hadā'iq al-Hanaḥīyya*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad (Lahore: Maktaba Hasan Suhayl, n.d.), 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 108-30; Carl Brockelmann, "al-Zamakhsharī," *El*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1205-7; Madelung, "al-Zamakhsharī," *El*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:840-1; Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 267-98.

## I. Exegesis

### 1. *Al-Kashshāf ‘an ḥaqā’iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl wa ‘uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta’wīl*

*Al-Kashshāf* is the magnum opus of al-Zamakhsharī. He explains the Qur’ān’s grammatical, lexicographical and rhetorical features, variant readings and the miraculous nature (*i’jāz*) of it. I will deal with greater details about it in Appendix 1.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. *Risāla fī al-tafsīr*

This book is also known as *Kashf fī al-qirā’āt* and *Kashf fī al-qirā’āt al-‘ashr*. It deals with the the ten canonical variant readings (*al-qirā’āt al-‘ashr*) instead of the widely accepted and recognized seven readings (*al-qirā’āt al-sab’*). This is the second book that al-Zamakhsharī composed on the Qur’ān, other than *al-Kashshāf*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Andarabānī, “Sīra,” 368; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181-82; al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubāb*, 2:74; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 3:25; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rikh al-Islām*, 36:487; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:152; Ibn al-Wardī, *Tā’rikh*, 2:63; Yāfī’, *Mir’āt al-janān*, 3:269; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 12:219; Ibn Abī al-Wafā’, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī’a*, 3:448; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:139; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:63; Ibn Taghrībardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:274; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa’āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawi, *al-Fawā’id al-bahiyya*, 167; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawdāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafiyya*, 246; Sarkīs, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū’āt*, 1:974; al-Ziriklī, *al-A’lām* 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn*, 12:186; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113; al-Juwaynī, *Manhaj al-Zamakhsharī*, 76; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 80; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 17; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 158; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *ET*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1205; Madelung, *al-Zamakhsharī*, *ET*<sup>2</sup> Supplement, 11-12:840-1.

<sup>3</sup> Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Brockelmann, *al-Zamakhsharī*, *ET*<sup>1</sup> 8:1206; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *ET*<sup>2</sup> Supplement, 11-12:840-1; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur Supplementbände* (Leiden: Brill, 1937–42), 1:511.



## II. Tradition

### 1. *Al-Fā'iq fī gharīb al-ḥadīth*

Yāqūt and Ibn Khallikān are the two primary sources who list *al-Fā'iq fī gharīb al-ḥadīth* in their biographical dictionaries. Most secondary sources rely upon them and there is a great number of other biographical works that mention *al-Fā'iq*. According to Agius, *al-Fā'iq* is a lexicon of rare words used in the *ḥadīth* and divided into 28 parts. It was completed in 516/1122. It has excellent indexes containing subject, philological terms, proverbs, phonetic terms, distinguished personalities, poets and historical refernces. Madelung describes the book as “a large, alphabetically arranged dictionary of unusual word (in the *ḥadīth*),” where the relevant traditions are quoted and explained in detail. He is of the opinion that it is a collection of traditions with a variety of explanations and grammatical analyses. Brokelmann considers it a work in which al-Zamakhsharī “collected the peculiarities of the language of the traditions.” Versteegh states that it is “a list of expressions used in *ḥadīth*.” There is one of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts in Baghdad, copied in 56/1168, and another manuscript copied by Jāsīm Muḥammad al-Rajab in Baghdād, no date is given. This book was first printed in Hyderabad in two volumes in 1324/1906. Later, it was edited by ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī and Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm and published in four volumes in Cairo in 1392/1971. In a long critical philological study, G. Weil discusses some phonetic and morphological structures in *al-Fā'iq*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā'*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:155; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; Ibn Abi Wafā, 3:448; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:63; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawi, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167;

## 2. *Mukhtaṣar al-Muwāfaqāt bayna ahl al-bayt wa al-ṣaḥāba*

According to Ṭāshkubrīzāda, the title of the book is *al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Muwāfaqāt al-ṣaḥāba*, while Brockleemann gives the title as *Mukhtaṣar al-Muwāfaqa bayn Āl-bayt*. However, Madelung considers that the original work is that of the Mu‘tazilite Zaydite traditionist Abū Sa‘īd Ismā‘īl b. Alī al-Sammān al-Rāzī (d. 443/1051), and al-Zamakhsharī abridged it. In his preface, al-Zamakhsharī remarks that he has removed chains of authorities (*asnāds*) and describes only the narrative parts of the traditions. According to Ḥājjī Khalīfa, this book was written to demonstrate the harmony between the family of the Prophet Muḥammad and his major companions. It consists of a number of traditions in which Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān praise ‘Alī and *ahl al-bayt*, and ‘Alī praises Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān.<sup>5</sup>

## 3. *Mutashābih asmā’ al-ruwāt*

There are many variations of the title of this book which have been reported in the primary sources. These are: *Kitab Tashabuh asma’ al-ruwat*, *Mutashabih al-asma’ fi ‘ilm al-hadith*, *Mutashabih al-asma’* and *Mushtabih asami al-ruwat*. The title suggests that it deals with *‘ilm al-rijāl*,<sup>6</sup> specifically with those whose names appear to be similar and create doubts in the names. This book is not extant.<sup>7</sup>

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Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:974; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘ām* 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn* 12:186; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112-13; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 83; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 23; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 159; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>5</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:99; Ḥājjī Khalīfa, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2:1890; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 173; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 115; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:513; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841.

<sup>6</sup> *‘Ilm al-rijāl* is the science devoted to the study of persons figuring in isnads of *ḥadīths* to establish their moral qualities and ascertain their truthfulness. The bibliographical information provides the necessary

#### 4. *Khaṣā'is al-‘ashara al-kirām al-barara*

Brockelmann considers it as one of the works in the field of traditions. Madelung states that al-Zamakhsharī assembled in this book biographical information and reports about the virtues and exemplary qualities of the ten companions of the Prophet Muhammad whom he had promised paradise.<sup>8</sup> In this book, al-Zamakhsharī narrates each of the ten companions' lives and their virtues (*khaṣā'is*) as exemplary models to be followed by the readers. According to Agius, "It is a treatise on the manifestation of high qualities of moral values in Islam represented by ten people chosen by God." It was edited by Bahīja Bāqir al-Ḥasanī in Baghdad in 1968. She has included a short biography of al-Zamakhsharī and a bibliography.<sup>9</sup>

### III. Theology

#### 1. *Al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*

This book has been widely mentioned by all the primary and secondary sources. However, some sources give different titles of the book such as *al-Minhāj fī uṣūl al-dīn*.

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accuracy of the isnads and materials transmitted as well as exact identification of the names to prevent confusion between the persons of the same name. See B. Scarcia Amoretti, "Ilm al-riḍjāl," *EF*<sup>2</sup> 3:1150-2.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 379; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:155-6; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36: 488; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315-6; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:99; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqīr Jehlami, *Hadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>8</sup> The ten companions known as al-‘ashara al-mubashshara are: Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 13/634), ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (d. 35/656), ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh (d. 36/656), al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām (d. 36/656), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (d. 32/652), Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqās (d. 55/675), Sa‘īd b. Zayd (d. 56/677) and Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāh (d. 18/639). See Wensinck, "al-‘Ashara al-mubashshara," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 1:693.

<sup>9</sup> Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 114; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 22; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Brockelmann, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Madelung, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EF*<sup>2</sup> Supplement, 11-12:841.

A-Zamakhsharī in his Mu‘tazilite creed was largely influenced by the doctrine of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, which is supported by the text. Throughout the book, he usually refrains from expressing his own preference with regard to the conflicting views of various schools on a question without ever entering the controversies. However, at some places he indicates his opinion. He mentions frequently the names of Abū ‘Alī al-Jubbā’ī (d. 303/915) and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 321/933) – “the two *shaykhs*” (*al-shaykhān*), while Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār is referred only once. This book is extant in at least two manuscripts of Yemenite origin.<sup>10</sup> The final section dealing with the imamate is lacking in both manuscripts, because it does not agree with the Zaydite doctrine. However, the chapter on the Imamate from *Kitāb al-Murshid* composed by Sayyid Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī al-Futūh al-‘Alawī al-Ḥasanī has been added. It is written in the form of questions and answers (*masā’il wa-ajwiba*) and covers the fundamentals of Mu‘tazilite *kalām*. This book has been edited and translated into English by Sabine Schmidtke.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Oscar Löfgren and Renato Traini, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1981), 2:363; P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1980), 214.

<sup>11</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Hadā’iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 114; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 20; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 173; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:513; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF<sup>2</sup> Supplement*, 11-12:841.

## IV. Jurisprudence

### 1. *Al-Rā'id fī al-farā'id*

This book is also known as *al-Rā'id fī 'ilm al-farā'id* and *Farā'id al-fawā'id*. According to Ibn Khallikān's editors the title is *Dāllat al-nāshid wa-al-rā'id fī 'ilm al-farā'id*. The book has not survived. The title indicates that it deals with jurisprudence.<sup>12</sup>

### 2. *Ru'ūs al-masā'il fī al-fiqh*

Many primary and secondary sources mention this book. Yāqūt gives the title of the book as *Rūḥ al-masā'il*. Agius mentions both the titles, *Rūḥ al-masā'il* and *Ru'ūs al-masā'il* and considers that it deals with some principles of *al-fiqh*. The book edited by 'Abd Allāh Nadhīr Aḥmad is based on a microfilm copy from Umm al-Qurā University of Mecca of a unique original manuscript held by the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. The subtitle of this edition is *al-masā'il al-khilāfiyya bayna al-Ḥanafīyya wa-al-Shāfi'īyya*.<sup>13</sup> The book describes the principles of jurisprudence and the differences between the Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī schools. It consists of 404 questions and is divided into forty-two books.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahābī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-'Imad, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya* 167; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya* 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 83; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 20; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 173.

<sup>13</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 293.

<sup>14</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; Ibn al-Qutlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-'Imad, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 83; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 21; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 173.

### 3. *Shāfi' al-'ayī min kalām al-Shāfi'ī*

This is another book that has not survived. According to al-Ḥūfī, the title of the book might be *Shāfi' al-'ayī min kalām al-Shāfi'ī* or *Shāfi' al-'ayīyī*. The title suggests that it was written in response to either the scholastic theology or some legal principles (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) of Shāfi'ī school. It may be pointed out that al-Zamakhsharī was a Ḥanafī Mu'tazilite.<sup>15</sup>

### 4. *Shaqā'iq al-Nu'mān fī haqā'iq al-Nu'mān*

This book has some variations in the title such as, *Shaqā'iq al-Nu'mān fī manāqib al-Imām al-Nu'mān* and *Shaqā'iq al-Nu'mān fī manāqib Abū Ḥanīfa*. Most probably, the original title is *Shaqā'iq al-Nu'mān fī haqā'iq al-Nu'mān*, however, the book has not survived. It praises the virtues and outstanding qualities of Nu'mān b. Thābit Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), founder of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence. As mentioned above, al-Zamakhsharī was a Ḥanafī Mu'tazilite.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-'Imad, *Shadhrat*, 3:119; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 127; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>16</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-'Imad, *Shadhrat*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya* 167; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya* 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 174.

## V. Grammar

### 1. *Al-Aḥājī al-naḥwīyya*

Some primary sources give other titles of the book. Yāqūt gives the title of *al-Muḥājījāt wa-mutammim mahāmm arbāb al-ḥājāt fī al-aḥājī wa-al-alghāz*. The title given by Ibn Khallikan is *al-Muḥājījāt bi al-masā'il al-naḥwīyya*. This book is published with both titles: *al-Muḥajjat bi-al-masail al-naḥwiyya*, edited by Bahīja al-Ḥasanī and *al-Aḥājī al-naḥwīyya*, edited by Muṣṭafā al-Ḥadrī.<sup>17</sup> According to Agius, *al-Ahaji al-nahwiyya*, is a philological treatise that discusses some grammatical problems found in the Qur'ān, ḥadīth, and classical poetry; [it has] excellent indexes of Qur'ānic verses, hadith, poetic lines, authors and subject. Versteegh states that it deals with the issues involving grammatical controversies.<sup>18</sup>

### 2. *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan'at al-i'rāb*

According to Brockelmann, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī ṣan'at al-i'rāb* is one of al-Zamakhsharī's best known, most important and popular grammatical treatise which was written in 513-515/1119-1121. He lists 24 commentaries, of which the best-known is of Ibn Ya'īsh. He describes it as a work "celebrated for its succinct yet exhaustive and lucid exposition," and as "textbook [for the teaching] of grammar, classic due to its terse and

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<sup>17</sup> Lane, *Traditional Mu'tazilite Qur'ān Commentary*, 267.

<sup>18</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufaṣṣirīn*, 2:315; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafiyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 84; Al-Shūrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 127; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 19; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 171; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; C.H.M. Versteegh, "al-Zamakhsharī, Abū al-Ḳāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar," *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:431.

clear formulation of the material.” Versteegh states that the most obvious difference between this highly popular work and other grammatical writings, starting with the *Kitāb Sībawayhi*, is the arrangement of material. Instead of classic arrangement in syntax, morphology and phonology, al-Zamakhsharī divided the material into four sections: nouns, verbs, particles and derived words (*mushtarak*). This book, though elementary, has considerably influenced the Western grammars of Arabic. It formed the basis for Caspari’s grammar and through its English translation by Wright, for all subsequent grammars of Arabic.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. *Al-Mufrad wa-al-mu’allaf*

It is also known as *al-Mufrad wa-al-murakkab* and deals with compound terms. According to Brockelmann and Versteegh, it is a treatise on syntax. There are two editions of this book: one in *Risālatān li-al-Zamakhsharī* which is an offprint of Bahīja al-Ḥasanī and published by Matba‘at al-Majma‘ al-‘Ilmī al-‘Irāqī, Baghdād in 1967, and the other published by Dār al-Hānī, Cairo in 1990.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:152; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rikh al-Islām*, 36:487; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mizān*, 7:63; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadhrat*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā’id al-bahīyya*, 167; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:975; al-Ziriklī, *al-‘Alām* 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu’allifīn*, 12:186; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 114; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 84; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 24; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 160; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:509; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:431.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:99; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadhrat*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā’id al-bahīyya*, 167; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 115; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 18; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.



#### 4. *Nukat al-a'rāb fī gharīb al-i'rāb*

This book is listed only by Yāqūt and it deals with peculiarities in Qur'ānic grammatical analysis. This book was edited by Muḥammad Abū al-Futūḥ Sharīf and published by the Dār al-Ma'ārif, Cairo in 1985. In this edition, each chapter is titled as *fī gharīb i'rāb sūra* followed by the name of the *sūra* under discussion. In addition, the text is arranged in the form of questions and answers (*masā'il wa-ajwiba*).<sup>21</sup>

#### 5. *Risāla fī kalimat al-shahāda*

According to Agius, it is also known as *Mas'ala fī kalimat shahāda*. It is not mentioned in any biographical dictionaries. It was edited by Bahīja al-Ḥasanī and published in *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī*. According to her, it is not a treatise on doctrine (*'aqīda*) but rather on grammar. In this *Risāla*, al-Zamakhsharī deals with the grammatical analysis of the first phrase of *shahāda*, that is, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*.<sup>22</sup>

#### 6. *Sharḥ abyāt al-Kitāb*

This book also has variant titles in the biographical dictionaries. Yāqūt gives the title *Sharḥ Kitāb Sībawayh*, Ibn Khallikān as *Sharḥ abyāt Kitāb Sībawayh* and Ibn al-'Imād as *Sharḥ abyāt Sībawayh*. This book is a commentary on some of the lines of

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<sup>21</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; al-Ziriklī, *A'lam* 7:178 Lucknawi, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 20; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:509.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, "Risalatan li al-Zamakhsharī," ed. Bahija al-Ḥasanī, *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Irāqī* 15 (1387/1967), 121-28; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 83; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 19; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172.

poetry (*shawāhid*) used by Sībawayh in his *Kitāb*, however, it is not a commentary on the entire book of Sībawayh.<sup>23</sup>

### 7. *Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*

This book has been mentioned in a number of biographical dictionaries. Other than *Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, there are three more titles of this book. Agius and al-Ḥuḍfī give the title as *Sharḥ ba'd mushkilāt al-Mufaṣṣal*, while al-Khavansari gives *Sharḥ mushkilāt al-Mufaṣṣal*. Yāqūt mentions two titles the *Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal* and a *Hāshiya 'ala al-Mufaṣṣal*. Al-Zamakhsharī wrote a *ḥāshiya* (gloss) as well as a *sharḥ* (commentary) on *al-Mufaṣṣal*. There are many commentaries on *al-Mufaṣṣal* available, but the one written by the author is not extant.<sup>24</sup>

### 8. *Al-Unmudhaj*

Almost all the primary sources and secondary works mention that *al-Unmudhaj* is an abstract or abridgement of al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Mufaṣṣal*. Brokelmann describes it as a “shorter grammar, an extract from the *Mufaṣṣal*” and a “short handbook” that was very popular. Agius is also of the same opinion that this book being “an abstract of al-

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<sup>23</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafiyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥuḍfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 84; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 19; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>24</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafiyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113; al-Ḥuḍfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

Mufaṣṣal attained great popularity.” It was edited and published by J. Broch, Christiana in 1867 and reviewed and corrected by A. Fischer in 1910.<sup>25</sup>

## VI. Lexicography

### 1. *Asās al-balāgha*

*Asās al-balāgha* is a dictionary of the classical language remarkable for its methodical arrangement. It gives special consideration to the metaphorical meanings of the words. Al-Zamakhsharī elaborates the meaning of some vocabulary by citing synonyms with examples and lines of poetry, the variant usages of simple and derived nouns and verbs. The book is divided into sections arranged in alphabetical order and the vocabulary stemming from the different roots is given. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī writes that, “al-Zamakhsharī’s book *Asās al-balāgha* is one of the finest books in which he expressed and distinguished between the real and metaphorical meanings of the words used singularly or compositely in an unprecedented manner.”<sup>26</sup>

It was first printed in two volumes in Cairo by Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya in 1299/1882 and 1341/1922. Then it was published in 1311/1893 in Lucknow and in 1385/1965 in Beirut and in Cairo in 1398/1977. An abstract of *al-Asās* entitled *Gharās al-Asās* was composed by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) and a critique of *al-Asās*

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<sup>25</sup> Al-Andarasbānī, “Sira,” 379; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā‘id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā‘iq al-Ḥanaḥiyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:973; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 119; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 84; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 127; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 18; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 162; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:510; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:63.

was written by Ḥusayn ‘Alī Maḥfūz. In a long critical philological study, G. Weil discusses some phonetic and morphological structures in *al-Asās*.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. *Al-Jibāl wa-al-amkina wa-al-miyāh*

The title of *al-Jibāl wa-al-amkina wa-al-miyāh* is known by five different variations in its name. According to Yāqūt, the title is *Kitāb al-Jibāl wa al-amkina*. Ṭāshkubrīzāda gives the title as *Kitāb Asmā’ al-awdiya wa-al-jibāl*, while al-Shirāzi and Ibrāhīm give the title as *Kitāb al-Amkina wa al-jibāl wa al-miyāh*. Brockelmann gives two titles of the book: *Kitāb al-Amkina wa-al-jibāl wa al-miyāh* and *Kitāb al-Amkina wa-al-jibāl wa-al-miyāh wa-al-biqā’ al-mashhūra fī ash’ār al-‘arab*. Madelung gives the title as *Kitāb al-Amkina wa al-jibāl*. According to Madelung, this book is “a small dictionary of Arabic geographical names.” Ḍayf states that it contains the names of well-known places referred to in the Arab poetry. Ibrāhīm al-Sāmara’ī, in the preface of his edition suggests that al-Zamakhsharī drew on the pre-Islamic *mukhḍaram*<sup>28</sup> and Islamic poets and his main source were Ibn Wahhās and al-Aṣma‘ī. According to Brockelmann

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<sup>27</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Tā’rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-mīzān*, 7:63; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imad, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Lucknawi, *al-Fawā’id al-bahīyya*, 167; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:973; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* 7:178. Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 85; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 128; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 18; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 163; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>28</sup> *Mukhḍaram* is a class of poets whose lives spanned both the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. Born and raised in pre-Islamic (*jāhilīyya*) and after the rise of Islam, *mukhḍaram* poets responded the new religion in a variety of ways. Some greeted it with hostility and others with genuine acceptance. See R. Jacobi, “Mukhḍaram,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 7:516.

and Agius, it was first published in Leiden by M. Salverda de Grave in 1856. Recently, it was edited by al-Sāmara’ī and printed by Dār ‘Ammār, ‘Ammān in 1999.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. *Mu‘jam al-ḥudūd*

Almost all biographical dictionaries include *Mu‘jam al-ḥudūd* in the works of al-Zamakhsharī, but it has not survived. Brockelmann and al-Shīrāzī do not mention this book in their listings. Al-Ḥufī and Ḍayf are of the opinion that this book deals with jurisprudence based on the juridical meaning of *ḥudūd* which seems to be not correct.

The word *ḥadd* also means “case” for a noun (*raf‘, naṣb, jar*) and “class, category” for a word, as when a verb is said to be “of the class of *ḍaraba (min ḥadd ḍaraba)*.”<sup>30</sup> In this case, *Mu‘jam al-ḥudūd* appears to be a dictionary of words categories which was the main field of al-Zamakhsharī. It may be mentioned that the grammarians, al-Farrā’ and al-Rummānī composed works entitled *Kitāb al-ḥudūd*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:99; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:974; al-Ziriklī, *A‘lām* 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113; al-Ḥufī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 85; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 123; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 18; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 164; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:510; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>30</sup> Lane, *Lexicon*, 2:525, at the root *ḥ-d-d*.

<sup>31</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 4:1827; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 115; al-Ḥufī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 84; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176. See R. Blachere, “al-Farrā’,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 2: 807; M. Bernard and G. Troupeau, “Ḳiyās,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 5: 242; and B. Carra de Vaux, J. Schacht and A.M. Goichon, “Ḥadd,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 3: 20-22.

#### 4. *Muqaddimat al-adab*

*Muqaddimat al-adab* is an Arabic-Persian dictionary and Arabic grammar dedicated to the Sipāsālār Atsiz b. Khwārizmshāh (d. 551/1156). According to Brokelmann, al-Zamakhsharī made the Arabic vocabulary available to his countrymen with explanations in Persian. Agius states that there are seven manuscripts of this book at various places. The first European edition of the book entitled *Samachsharii Lexicon Arabicum Persicum* was edited by Godfrey Wetzstein and published in Paris in 1850. The University of Tehran published it in 1963 under the title of *Pishrow-e Adab (Muqaddimat al-adab)* which was edited with an index of Arabic and Persian words by Moḥammad Kāzem Emām. A facsimile of an interlinear translation of *Muqaddimat al-adab* into old Khorezmian language as well as Persian and Turkish entitled *Horezmce Tercümelî Muqaddimat al-adab* (part two) was published by A.Z. Velidi in Istanbul in 1951. The work is divided into five sections: nouns, verbs, particles, inflexion of nouns and inflexion of verbs, however, in Wetzstein's edition, it consists only of the first two sections. J. Benzing wrote in *Das Chwaresmische Sprachmaterial einer Handschrift der Muqaddimat al-adab von Zamaxsari* about the Khorezmian language which was published in Wiesbaden in 1968. Benzing gives a detailed survey of the number of translations and interpretations of *Muqaddimat al-adab*. A translation into Turkish under the title *Aksá al-Ereb fî Tercümet-i Muqaddimat il-Edeb* by Aḥmad Ishāq was published in Istanbul in 1313/1895 and it also includes marginal notes by the editor about the Turkish gloss in *al-Muqaddima*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 379; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:99; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu'jam al-maṭbū'āt*, 1:976; Zirīklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 115-16; al-Ḥūfī, *al-*

## 5. *Nuzhat al-muta'annis wa nuzhat al-muqtabis*

Among the biographical authors, Yāqūt and al-Qiftī mention this title. According to Brokelmann, it belongs to *adab* literature and it is kind of “lexikographische Bellettristik,” preserved in the Aya Sofia.<sup>33</sup>

## VII. Literature

### 1. *A'jab al-'ajab fī sharḥ Lāmiyyat al-'Arab*

*A'jab al-'ajab fī sharḥ Lāmiyyat al-'Arab* is a commentary by al-Zamakhsharī on the pre-Islamic poet al-Shanfarah's *qaṣida Lāmiyyat al-'Arab*.<sup>34</sup> Brockelmann states that it was printed with the commentary of Mubarrad alone in 1324/1906 and together with a series of other commentaries in 1328/1910 in Cairo. Agius mentions a unique manuscript of Shanfara's *qaṣida Lāmiyyat al-'Arab* found in Baghdad, but it is undated. Also, there are printed editions in Istanbul (1300/1882) and Damascus (1392/1972). Al-Ḥufī concurs with Agius and adds that the first edition was published in Istanbul (Qusṭanṭīniyya), by

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Zamakhsharī, 61; Dayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 85; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 128; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 22; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 163; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>33</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥufī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 20; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:512; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207.

<sup>34</sup> Thābit ('Amr) b. Mālik al-Shanfarā was one of the pre-Islamic poets; however, details relating to his life are sparse and contradictory and marked by anecdotes. His *qaṣida*, *Lāmiyyat al-'Arab* is “the most accomplished specimen of the poetry of the *ṣa'ālik*,” which has aroused great interest since the first decades of the third/ninth century, and numerous *sharḥs* have been written about it. Noldeke, Krenkow, F. Gabrieli and Blachere expressed serious doubts about its authenticity, whereas G. Jacob, Brockelmann and S. Stetkevych are convinced about its authenticity. *Ṣa'ālik* (sing. *ṣu'luk*) were brigands, brigand-poets and mercenaries in time of need. The *ṣa'ālik* owe their place in history mainly to their poetic talents which were without equal at the time of the *Jāhiliyya* and until the end of the Umayyad regime. A *lāmiyya* is a poem in the rhyme of the letter *lām*. See A. Arazi, “al-Shanfarā,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 9: 301-3; A. Arazi, “*ṣu'luk*,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 9: 863-8; F. Gabrieli, “Adjam,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 1: 206.

the Matba‘at al-Jawā’ib. In addition, Shanfarā’s and al-Ṭughrā’ī’s *al-Lāmiyyatān* commented by al-Zamakhsharī was edited and printed by ‘Abd al-Mu‘īn al-Malūhī at Damascus in 1966. The two *qaṣidas* are individually Shanfarā’s *Lāmiyyat al-‘Arab* and al-Ṭughrā’ī’s *Lāmiyyat al-‘Ajam*. However, biographical sources do not mention that al-Zamakhsharī composed a *sharḥ* on al-Ṭughrā’ī’s *Lāmiyyat al-‘Ajam*.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. *Dīwān al-shi‘r*

*Dīwan al-shi‘r* is a collection of al-Zamakhsharī’s poems. Agius says that it is also known as *Dīwān al-Zamakhsharī*. According to Ḍayf, it is a collection of five thousand verses that al-Zamakhsharī called as *Dīwān al-adab*. It is listed in most of the biographical dictionaries. Madelung states that the *Dīwān* “reflects his technical skill and understanding of the classical tradition of Arabic poetry more than an original poetical talent.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:974; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 96-7; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 129; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 22; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 169; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841; Versteegh, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup>, 11:433.

<sup>36</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; Ibn Abi Wafa, 3:448; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifīn*, 12:186; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 62; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 100-1; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 130; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 20; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EF*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:840-41.



### 3. Marthiyya

It is not mentioned in any of the primary sources. However, modern research indicates that al-Zamakhsharī composed an elegy on the death of his teacher Abū Muḍar al-Ḍabbī (d. 507/1114).<sup>37</sup>

### 4. Al-Qaṣīda al-ba‘ūdiyya

*Al-Qaṣīda al-ba‘ūdiyya* consists of only three verses. Al-Zamakhsharī refers it in his commentary with regard to verse 26 of chapter two of the Qur’ān. Ibn Khallikān states that al-Zamakhsharī expressed his desire that these verses be written on his tombstone.<sup>38</sup>

### 5. Al-Qusṭās al-mustaqīm fī al-‘arūḍ

*Al-Qusṭās al-mustaqīm fī al-‘arūḍ* deals with the metrical structure of verses. Agius mentions that its manuscripts were found in Leiden and Patna. Bahīja al-Ḥasanī edited it and it was published in Baghdad in 1969. Ḍayf states that it was published in Najaf in 1970 entitled *al-Qusṭās al-mustaqīm fī ‘ilm al-‘arūḍ*.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 114; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 169; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:512; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207.

<sup>38</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:243; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:173; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 62; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 127; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 24; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 172.

<sup>39</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā‘iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 86; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 21; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 170; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511.

## 6. *Maqāmāt* and *Sharḥ al-Maqāmāt*

Al-Zamakhsharī composed a series of aphorisms addressing to himself, as *yā abā al-Qāsim* (O Abū al-Qāsim!) which were known as *Maqāmāt*.<sup>40</sup> It is a collection of fifty moral discourses. Later, al-Zamakhsharī wrote a *Sharḥ al-Maqāmāt* which is a commentary on each of these fifty *maqāmāt*. This work is also known as *al-Nasā'ih al-kibār*. According to Brockelmann, al-Zamakhsharī added five *maqāmas* after recovering from his severe illness in 512/1118. They are *maqāmas* from 46 to 50. *Maqāmas* 46 and 47 deal with grammar (*naḥw*) and prosody (*al-'arūḍ*) respectively. *Maqāmas* 48 “*al-qawāfi'*” and 49 “*al-dīwān*” are puns.<sup>41</sup> *Maqāma* 50's theme is *Ayyām al-'Arab*.<sup>42</sup> Agius mentions that this work was completed in 525/1130. A valuable manuscript was found in Baghdad, while another in Madrid entitled *al-Maqāmāt al-khamsūn fī al-zuhd. Sharḥ al-Maqāmāt* was first printed in 1313/1895 and then in 1325/1907 in Cairo. It was translated into German by Oskar Rescher entitled *Beiträge zur Maqāmen-litteratur* and printed by Greifswald in 1913.<sup>43</sup>

## 7. *Aṭwāq al-dhahab*

Most of the biographical dictionaries mention this work either as *Aṭwāq al-dhahab* or as *al-Nṣā'ih al-ṣiḡhār*. Yāqūt gives both titles. It is one of the three collections

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<sup>40</sup> See footnote 98 on page 46 of Chapter 1 for the definition and evolution of *maqāmāt*.

<sup>41</sup> Pun is a play of words in different sense of the same word.

<sup>42</sup> Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EL*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511.

<sup>43</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; Ibn al-Quṭlūbugha, *Tāj al-tarājim* 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Tabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315-6; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawdāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 91-4; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 126; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 23; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 166; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511.

of apophthegms (the others: *Nawābiḡh al-kalim* and *Rabī‘ al-abrār*). Brockelmann says that *Aṭwāq al-dhahab* is referred to as *al-Naṣā’ih al-ṣiḡhār* by al-Zamakhsharī in the *Kashshāf*. Madelung states that the book consists of one hundred pious maxims with allusions to the Qur’ān, Sunna and proverbial expressions. It was dedicated to Ibn Wahhās and the people of Mecca. An edition of the *Aṭwāq* was printed in Cairo in 1950. It was first edited in Arabic and translated into German by J.V. Hammer entitled *Samachsharis Goldene Halsbänder Arabisch und Deutsch* and printed in Vienna in 1835. A new translation into German with notes by H.L. Fleischer was printed in Leipzig in 1835, and also another translation into German by G. Weil was published in Stuttgart in 1863. Both translations superseded that of Hammer and proved to be excellent. It was also translated into French by C. Barbier de Meynard and published in Paris in 1876. Two Turkish translations were printed in Istanbul in 1869 and 1872. There is a translation into Persian by Vaysal of Shīrāz (d. 1262/1846). Worth mentioning are imitations entitled *Die Aṭbāq ed-dhahab* by ‘Abd al-Mu’min b. Hibat Allāh al-Maghribī al-Iṣfahānī Shufurwa (d. 600/1203) and Abū al-Faraj b. al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) which were published by Greifswald in 1914.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; Ibn al-Quṭlūbugha, *Tāj al-tarājim* 53; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Suyūṭī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Mifāḡh al-sa‘āda*, 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Khavānsārī, *Rawḡāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanaḡfiyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu‘jam al-maṭbū‘āt*, 1:973; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 62; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 94-7; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 126; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 21; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 167; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *El*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206-7; Madelung, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *El*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841.

## 8. *Dīwān al-khuṭab*

Yāqūt and al-Qifṭī mention this work in their biographical dictionaries and there are a few references in the secondary sources. It is a collection of al-Zamakhsharī's sermons or his exhortations. It has not survived.<sup>45</sup>

## 9. *Dīwān al-tamthīl*

All the primary sources mention about this work. However, Yāqūt, Ibn al-Qutlūbughā and Ibn al-ʿImād give a different title as *Dīwān al-tamaththul*. It is a collection of proverbial maxims.<sup>46</sup>

## 10. *Al-Durr al-dā'ir al-muntakhab fī al-kināyāt wa al-isti'ārāt wa al-tashbīhāt*

This book is not listed in any of the biographical dictionaries. Only Brockelmann, Agius and Ḍayf mention about it with variant titles, one as mentioned above and the other as *al-Durr al-dā'ir al-muntakhab fī al-kināyāt wa al-isti'ārāt wa al-tashbīhāt al-'Arab*. It deals with a small list of similes, metaphors and allegories drawn from the usage of Arabic and its classical poetry. The only extant fragment manuscript was found in Karl Marx library at the University of Leipzig, edited by Bahīja al-Ḥasanī and printed in Baghdad in 1968.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafṣīr*, 175.

<sup>46</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; Ibn Qutlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 24; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafṣīr*, 176.

<sup>47</sup> Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 85-6; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 21; Rahman, *al-Zamakhsharī's Commentary on the Qur'ān*, 172; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511; Brockelmann, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206.

## 11. *Rabī' al-abrār wa-fuṣūṣ al-akhbār*

*Rabī' al-abrār wa-fuṣūṣ al-akhbār* is one of the three collections of apophthegms (the others: *Nawābigh al-kalim* and *Aṭwāq al-dhahab*). Some primary sources mention *Rabī' al-abrār* and *Fuṣūṣ al-akhbār* as two independent titles.<sup>48</sup> According to Agius, *Rabī' al-abrār* and *Fuṣūṣ al-akhbār* are the titles of two independent books. He describes that the *Rabī' al-abrār* is an excellent methodological collection of diverse anecdotes in one hundred chapters. About the *Fuṣūṣ al-akhbār*, he says that it has edifying and literary anecdotes. Brockelmann gives the title as *Rabī' al-abrār fī mā yasurrū al-khawāṭir wa-al-afkār* and states that it is a collection of apophthegms. Madelung gives the title of this book as *Rabī' al-abrār wa-nuṣūṣ al-akhbār*. He states that it contains extracts from literary and historical works arranged according to ninety-two topics and was written as a companion to *al-Kashshāf*. Agius mentions that according to W.M. de Slane, it is an excellent methodological collection of diverse anecdotes in one hundred chapters. A summary of *Rabī' al-abrār wa-fuṣūṣ al-akhbār* with additions from other sources was compiled by Ibn Khaṭīb al-Qāsim (d. 940/1533) and entitled *Rawḍ al-akhyār* which was published by Būlāq in Cairo in 1270/1853 and 1288/1871. It was translated into Turkish by 'Āshiq Chelebī (d. 979/1571).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> In five biographical dictionaries it is mentioned as one book entitled *Rabī' al-abrār wa-fuṣūṣ al-akhbār*, while in six biographical dictionaries, *Fuṣūṣ al-akhbār* and *Rabī' al-abrār* are listed independently. Ṭāshkubrīzāda and al-Andarabānī list them separately, however, but both of them add another title as *al-Ziyādāt 'alā al-fuṣūṣ*, over and above *Fuṣūṣ al-akhbār*.

<sup>49</sup> Al-Andarabānī, "Sīra," 379; al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā'*, 391; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; al-Dhahabī, *Tā'rīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98-9; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 3:119; Lucknawī, *al-Fawā'id al-bahiyya*, 167; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifīn*, 12:186; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 62; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 130; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions* 19; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 170; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:512; Brockelmann, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207; Madelung, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EI*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841.

## 12. *Al-Nawābigh al-kalim*

*Al-Nawābigh al-kalim* is one of the three collections of apophthegms (the others: *Rabi' al-abrār* and *Aṭwāq al-dhahab*). Agius considers *Nawābigh al-kalim* and *al-Kalim al-nawābigh* two separate books. According to him *al-Nawābigh al-kalim* is a collection of apophthegms while *al-Kalim al-nawābigh* a collection of sermons. Brockelmann lists the book as *Nawābigh al-kalim* and considers it as a collection of maxims. Ḍayf is of the opinion that that this book is a series of brief maxims in rhymed prose. There is a translation into Ottoman Turkish but the author is unknown. It was translated into Latin and edited by H. Albert Schultens entitled *Anthologia Sententiarum Arabicarum* and published in Leiden in 1772. According to Barbier de Meynard, translation was done in a very elegant style and the edition was enriched with good references and notes. Barbier de Meynard translated it into French, under the title *Les Pensées de Zamakhcharī*. In his preface, he claims that Schultens' translation, though elegant in style, has failed at times to grasp the proper meaning of the text. Of the commentaries, the best known is that of al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1389) entitled *al-Ni'am al-sawābigh*, lithographed in Istanbul in 1866, and in Cairo in 1287/1870 with glosses by Muḥammad al-Bayrūtī in Beirut in 1306/1888. A recent work on proverbs by Y.T. al-Bustānī (d. 1372/1952), under the title *Amthāl al-sharq wa-al-gharb* includes a section of *Nawābigh al-kalim* which was published in Cairo in 1960-61.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:98; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Hadā'iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Sarkis, *Mu'jam al-maṭbū'āt*, 1:976; al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 90-1; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 127; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 22; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kā tafsīr*, 168; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:512; Brockelmann, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EF*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1207; Madelung, "al-Zamakhsharī," *EF*<sup>2</sup> *Supplement*, 11-12:841.

### 13 *Al-Mustaṣṣā fī al-amthāl*

*Al-Mustaṣṣā fī al-amthāl* is an extensive dictionary of Arabic proverbs which al-Zamakhsharī completed in 499/1106. According to Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Mu‘īd Khān, Madelung and al-Ḥūfī, there are 3,461 proverbs arranged alphabetically according to their beginnings with explanation of their origin and use. Versteegh says that it has 3,500 proverbs. Al-Zamakhsharī’s contemporary Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maydānī’s (d. 518/1124) *Majma‘ al-amthāl* consists of 2,763 proverbs. Ziriklī mentions one manuscript in the library of Ḥasan Ḥusnī ‘Abd al-Wahhāb in Tunis. The first edition of *al-Mustaṣṣā fī al-amthāl* was published by Dā’irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyya, Hyderabad Deccan in 1381/1962.<sup>51</sup>

### 14. *Risālat al-nāṣiḥa*

Most of the biographical dictionaries mention the *Risālat al-nāṣiḥa*. This book deals with ethics and good counsels.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanaḥiyya*, 246; al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 7:178; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 117; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 59; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 124; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 18; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 160; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 1:511-12; Brockelmann, “al-Zamakhsharī,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 8:1206.

<sup>52</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; Ibn al-Qutlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Ḥanaḥiyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 174.

## VIII. Unknown

### 1. *Şamīm al-‘Arabiyya*

Most of the biographical dictionaries mention the *Şamīm al-‘Arabiyya*. According to Agius, it is also known as *Himam al-‘Arabiyya*. It is not clear in which category this book could be treated, i.e., literature, grammar or lexicography.<sup>53</sup>

### 2. *Sawā’ir al-amthāl*

Most of the biographical dictionaries mention the *Sawā’ir al-amthāl*. According to Agius, it is also known as *Sawā’ir al-Islām*. This book is missing.<sup>54</sup>

### 3. *Tasliyat al-ḍarīr*

Yāqūt, al-Qifī and Ṭāshkubrīzāda mention this title in their biographical dictionaries. There is no information available about the subject matter of this book.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:280; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāh al-sa‘āda* 2:98; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; al-Khavānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 8:119; Faqīr Jehlami, *Ḥadā’iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 26; Rahman, *al-Zamakhsharī’s Commentary on the Qur’ān*, 174.

<sup>54</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a‘yān*, 5:168; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:315; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176.

<sup>55</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāh al-sa‘āda*, 2:99; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 119; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 174.



#### 4. *Al-Ajnās*

Yāqūt and al-Qifī mention this title in their biographical dictionaries. Ḍayf states that the title of the book is *al-Ajnās fī al-manṭiq*. According to al-Ḥūfī and Ḍayf, this book is on logic.<sup>56</sup>

#### 5. *Al-Amālī*

Yāqūt, Ibn Khallikān and al-Dāwūdī mention this title in their biographical dictionaries. However, two different titles of this book are given. Yāqūt, al-Ḥūfī and Ibrāhīm give the title as *al-Amālī fī al-naḥw*, which means that it deals with grammar. Ibn Khallikān and al-Dāwūdī provide the title of *al-Amālī fī kull funn*, which means that it deals with topics of general nature.<sup>57</sup>

#### 6. *'Aql al-kull*

This title is mentioned only by Yāqūt. According to al-Ḥūfī, this book deals with either logic or diction. However, Ḍayf is of the opinion that the subject matter of the book is logic.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 86; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 24; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>57</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Hanafīyya*, 246; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 61; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>58</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 86; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176.

## 7. *Risālat al-mas'ama*

This book is listed by Yāqūt and al-Qiftī, and its contents are unknown. There are variations in the title of this book. Ibrāhīm refers to it as *Risālat al-mas'ama*, while Agius mentions it as *Risālat al-musa'ama*.<sup>59</sup>

## 8. *Kitāb al-asmā' fī al-lughat*

This title is mentioned only by Yāqūt in primary sources. Rahman quotes the same title as mentioned by Yāqūt, but Agius gives the title as *al-Asmā'*.<sup>60</sup>

## 9. *Dāllat al-nāshid*

This title is mentioned in many primary as well as secondary sources, but it has not survived.<sup>61</sup>

## 10. *Dīwān al-rasā'il*

This book is listed in many primary as well as secondary sources, but it has not survived either.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176.

<sup>60</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 111; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>61</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 36:488; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, 20:156; Ibn al-Qutlubugha, *Taj al-tarājim* 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Faqir Jehlami, *Ḥadā'iq al-Ḥanafīyya*, 246; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 58; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176.

<sup>62</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, 6:2691; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, 5:168; Ibn Qutlubughā, *Taj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 2:316; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 3:119; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 112; al-Ḥūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ḍayf, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 97; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

## 11. *Jawāhir al-lughā*

This work is mentioned by Yāqūt and al-Qifī only, as well as by some secondary sources. It deals with the Arabic language.<sup>63</sup>

## 12. *Risālat al-asrār*

This title is also listed by Yāqūt and al-Qifī only and by some secondary sources. However, it has not survived.<sup>64</sup>

### **Al-Zamakhsharī as a Mu‘tazilite Scholar**

Al-Zamakhsharī was a pious person and well known for his asceticism and irreproachable private and public life. He was considered by his contemporary and subsequent scholars as one of the outstanding intellectuals and men of learning of his age. He was famous as ‘pride of Khwarazm,’ a great scholar of the world in many sciences. His works including *al-Kashshāf* are proof of his well established knowledge and manifestation of his excellence. Ibn Quṭlūbugha states that al-Zamakhsharī wrote unprecedented and unparalleled books, amongst them is *al-Kashshāf*, a commentary of the Qur’ān which none composed similar to it, prior to him.

Al-Andarasbanī mentions that al-Zamakhsharī reached such a level of knowledge in lexicography, grammar, rhetoric, eloquence, and poetry that he did not consider anyone equivalent to him. Al-Zamakhsharī claimed that there was no issue in the *Kitāb*

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<sup>63</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 113; al-Hūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 60; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 25; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 175.

<sup>64</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:266; Agius, *Bibliographical Notes*, 118; al-Hūfī, *al-Zamakhsharī*, 63; Ibrahim, *Theological Questions*, 26; Rahman, *Zamakhsharī kī tafsīr*, 176.

*Sibawayh*, which had not been resolved by him. However, some scholars did not agree with him.

Al-Zamakhsharī was known for his Mu‘tazilite theological position, which he professed publicly and proudly. He traveled in Khurāsān and Iraq, and in any city where he went, many people gathered around him and acquired knowledge and benefited from him. He was an erudite scholar of literature, and had close affinity with the Arabs.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbā’*, 391-2; Yāf’ī, *Mir’āt al-janān*, 3:269; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:279; al-Andarāsbānī, “Sīra,” 368; al-Sam‘ānī, *al-Ansāb*, 3:181-82; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubāb*, 2:74; Ibn Abī al-Wafā’, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī’a*, 3:447; Yāqūt, *Mu‘jam al-udabā’*, 6:2691; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt*, 3:265-6; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 5:168; al-Suyūfī, *Bughya*, 2:279; al-Suyūfī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 41; al-Fāsī, *al-‘Iqd al-thamīn*, 7:138; Ibn Quṭlūbughā, *Tāj al-tarājim*, 53; al-Taghrībardī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 5:274; Ṭāshkubrīzāda, *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*, 2:97.

## Appendix 4

### *Muḥkamāt wa mutashābihāt*

The Qur'ānic exegetes focus on the three verses of the Qur'ān when they discuss the issue of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* verses.

In one verse, the Qur'ān describes itself as clear and distinct, “A book whose verses are set clear and made distinct.”<sup>1</sup> In a second verse, it indicates that all the Qur'ānic verses are similar and resembling, “God has sent down the very best discourse as a book conformable repetition.”<sup>2</sup> However, in a third verse, the Qur'ān states that it comprises of both clear and similar as well as ambiguous verses, “It is He who has sent down upon you the book wherein are clear verses and which are the mother of the Book, and others are ambiguous. As for those in whose hearts is swerving, they follow what is ambiguous in it, seeking (to create) dissension and seeking its interpretation. However, no one except God knows its interpretation. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord.’ but only those who have wisdom understand.”<sup>3</sup>

Al-Zarkashī (d. 794/1392) and al-Suyūfī (d. 911/1505) quoting Ibn Habīb al-Naysābūrī (d. 406/1015) state that these verses provide three different accounts regarding the nature of the Qur'ān: the Qur'an as clear (*muḥkam*), as ambiguous (*mutashābih*), and as a combination the two. However, verse 3:7 which describes that the Qur'an consists of both the clear and ambiguous verses is preferable because it is correct (*ṣaḥīḥ*).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'ān, 11:1.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān, 39:23.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān, 3:7.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:68; al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān*, 2:3.

The definition of the term *muḥkamāt* as clear verses is based on the meaning inherent in the root *h.k.m.* ‘to be firm and solid,’ ‘to prevent, restrain or withhold, and ‘to secure from falling to pieces.’<sup>5</sup> *Muḥkam* means a passage or a verse of the Qur’ān whose meanings are secured from change and alteration such as the specification (*takhṣīṣ*), interpretation (*ta’wīl*) and abrogation (*naskh*).<sup>6</sup> *Muḥkam* is also defined as a verse of the Qur’ān which is elaborate (*mufaṣṣal*) because nothing is abrogated from it (*lam yunsikh minhu*) and it is not ambiguous (*mā lam yakun mutashābihan*) because it is unequivocal in its manifestation and it requires nothing to elucidate it.<sup>7</sup>

The exegetical literature provides a variety of definitions and viewpoints regarding the terms of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1200) describes eight different opinions regarding the *muḥkamāt* verses. First, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/652-3), Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687), Qatāda b. Di‘āma al-Sadūsī (d. 117/735), Ismā‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī (d. 127/745), and others are of the opinion that the *muḥkamāt* are defined as the abrogating verses (*al-nāsikhāt*). Second, Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722) narrate that *muḥkam* verses are those in which God’s commandments are clearly expressed about the permitted and prohibited things. Third, Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697) considers that the scholars (*‘ulamā’*) know the interpretation of *muḥkam* verses. Fourth, according to al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim (d. 102/720) *muḥkam* verses are never abrogated (*lam yunsikh*). Fifth, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd (d. 182/798) is of the opinion that the words of the *muḥkam* verses are never repeated elsewhere in the Qur’ān (*mā takarrar/lam tatakarrar alfāzuḥum*). Sixth, Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ (d.

<sup>5</sup> Lane, *Lexicon*, 2:618.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Jurjānī, *Ta’rīfāt*, 218.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 31:516; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 12:143; Ibn al-Manāwī, *al-Tawqīf*, 299.

458/1066) on the authority of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) mentions that a *muḥkam* verse cannot be translated by itself with a new meaning and it does not require any elucidation. Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) and Abū al-Barakāt b. al-Anbārī (d. 577/1181) state that a *muḥkam* verse has only one interpretation. Seventh, the whole Qur’ān consists of *muḥkam* verses except the mysterious letters (*al-hurūf al-muqaṭṭa‘āt*).<sup>8</sup> Eighth, according to most exegetes, *muḥkam* verses are comprised of command and prohibitions, promises and threats, and allowed and forbidden matters. Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ mentions that these are the real mother of the Book (*umm al-kitāb aṣl*). Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Jubayr state that they are like the original book in which all the commandments have been provided and permissible and prohibited acts have been collected.

Ibn al-Jawzī also describes seven different opinions regarding the *mutashābihāt* verses. First, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatāda b. Di‘āma al-Sadūsī, Isma‘īl b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Suddī, and others are of the opinion that the *mutashābihāt* verses are the abrogated verses (*al-mansukh*). Second, according to Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh, it is not possible for the scholars to know the interpretation of *mutashābih* verses, such as the appearance of the Day of Resurrection. Third, Ibn ‘Abbās is of the opinion that the

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<sup>8</sup> Twenty-nine *sūras* of the Qur’ān begin with ‘the isolated/disconnected’ (*al-hurūf al-muqaṭṭa‘āt*) or ‘the opening letters’ (*al-hurūf al-fawātiḥ*). According to Muslim tradition, these letters are part of the divine revelation of the Qur’ān itself. In the recitation of the Qur’ān, these ‘openers of the *sūras*’ (*fawātiḥ al-suwar*) or ‘beginnings of the *sūras*’ (*awā’il al-suwar*) are recited as letters of the alphabet, i.e. the beginning of *sūra* 2 is read *alif lām mīm*. Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the full significance and meaning of these letters is known to God. Western scholars’ theories fall into two categories: abbreviationist and redactional. Proponents of abbreviationist consider the mysterious letters as independent of the original Qur’ānic text. The redactional theorists examine the mysterious letters as a means for ordering the Qur’ānic text and tend to see these opening letters as part of the original text of the Qur’ān. However, none of these theories is definitive. See Keith Massey, “Mysterious Letters,” *EQ*, 3:471; A. Welch, “al-Ḳur’ān: The Mysterious Letters,” *ET*, 5:412-14; Arthur Jeffery, “The Mystic Letters of the Qur’ān,” *The Muslim World* 14 (1924): 247-60; Alan Jones, “The Mysterious Letters of the Qur’ān,” *Studia Islamica* 16 (1962): 5-11; Keith Massey, “A New Investigation into the Mystery Letters of the Qur’an,” *Arabica* 43 (1996): 497-501.

mysterious letters like *alif lām mīm* are *mutashābihāt*. Fourth, according to Mujāhid b. Jabr, the *mutashābih* verses resemble in their meanings. Fifth, Ibn Zayd states that the *mutashābih* verses have been repeated elsewhere in the Qur’ān. Sixth, according to Ibn al-Anbarī, *mutashābihāt* verses can be interpreted in many ways. Seventh, Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā b. al-Farrā’ mentions that the *mutashābihāt* verses are the stories (*qaṣas*) and parables (*amthāl*) described in the Qur’ān.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fī ‘ilm al-tafsīr* (Damascus and Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī lil Ṭabā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1964), 350-1. Al-Ṭabarī gives five variant opinions, al-Māwardī provides eight different opinions and Abū Ḥayyān gives twenty opinions regarding the characteristics of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*. All the exegetes in their *tafsīr* have discussed the interpretation of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*, some in a comprehensive manner while others briefly. See Majd al-Dīn Abū al-Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Firūzābādī, *Tanwīr al-miqbās min tafsīr ibn Abbas* (Cairo: Dār al-‘Ilm li-l-Jamī‘, 1962), 34-5; Al-Qāsim b. Sallām Abū ‘Ubayd, *Kitāb al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh*, ed. John Burton (Cambridge: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1987), 3-4; Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Yūsuf Najātī and Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Najjār (Cairo: Maṭba‘a Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 2001), 1:190-1; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, Abū al-Ḥasan, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shahāt (Cairo: Al-Haya’a lil-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1979), 1:263-64; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, Abū al-Ḥasan, *Tafsīr al-khams mi‘at āya min al-Qur’ān al-karīm*, ed. Isaiah Goldfeld (Shfaram: Al-Mashriq Press, 1980), 275; Rāshid ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Rajāl, (ed.) *Ṣaḥīfa ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa ‘an Ibn ‘Abbās fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-karīm* (Cairo: Maktaba al-Sunna, 1991), 124-25; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnawarī Ibn Qutayba, *Ta’wīl mushkil al-Qur’ān*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣāqar (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1973), 98-102; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim al-Dīnawarī Ibn Qutayba, *Tafsīr gharīb al-Qur’ān*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣāqar (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya, 2007), 101; al-Ṭabarī, *Jamī‘ al-bayān*, 3:113-24; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:45-83; Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Rāzī al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahiyya al-Miṣriyya, 1928), 2:2-10; Abū al-Layth Naṣr b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Samarqandī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-karīm Baḥr al-‘ulūm*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rahīm Aḥmad al-Zaqqa (Baghdad: Maṭba‘ al-Irshād, 1985), 2:11-15; ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Mutashābih al-Qur’ān*, 1:1-39; Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Māwardī, *Al-Nukat wa-al-‘uyūn: tafsīr al-Māwardī*, ed. Sayyid b. ‘Abd al-Manṣūr b. ‘Abd al-Rahīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992), 1:368-72; Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Tūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. Aḥmad Shawqī al-Amīn and Aḥmad Ḥabīb Qaṣīr (Najaf: Maktabat al-Amīn, 1957), 2:388-402; Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Wāhidī, *Al-Wasīṭ fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-majīd*, ed. ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd, ‘Alī Muḥammad Mu‘awwiḍ, Aḥmad Muḥammad Ṣīra and Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Jamāl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1994), 1:413-15; Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas‘ūd al-Farrā’ al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī al-musammā Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, ed. Khālīd ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-‘Akk and Marwān Suwār (Multan: Idāra-i-Ta’lifāt-i-Ashrafīyya, 1988), 1:278-80; Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Ibn ‘Atīyya al-Andalusī, *Al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-‘azīz* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2002), 2:332-43; Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma‘ al-bayān li-‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1958), 2:296-301; Fakhr al-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr aw Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, ed. ‘Abd al-Rahmān Muḥammad (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘at al-Bahiyya al-Miṣriyya, 1934-62), 7:178-91; Ibn ‘Arabī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 1:166-68; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li-ahkām al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī, 1967), 4:8-19; ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-jalīl al-musammā bi Madārik al-tanzīl wa-haqā‘iq al-ta’wīl* (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Umawayya, 1973), 1:197-98; Nizām al-Dīn al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī, *Tafsīr gharā‘ib al-Qur’ān wa-raqhā‘ib al-furqān*, ed. Ibrāhīm ‘Aṭwa ‘Iwaḍ (Miṣr: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1962), 3:117-33; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Juzayy’, *Al-Tashīl li-‘ulūm al-tanzīl*, ed. Raḍa Faraj al-Hamāmī (Beirut: Al-



The *muḥkamāt* verses are those verses of the Qur'an which are consolidated by elucidation (*bayān*) and elaboration (*tafṣīl*) and provide strong arguments and proofs for the issues relating to what is permitted and prohibited (*ḥalāl wa-ḥarām*), promise and threat (*wa'd wa-wa'īd*), reward and punishment (*thawāb wa-'iqāb*), command and reprimand (*amr wa-zajr*), information and parable (*khābar wa-mathal*), exhortation and admonition (*'iẓa wa-'ibar*), and matters like that.<sup>10</sup>

The *muḥkam* verses support themselves, i.e. self-evident and do not need proof (*al-muḥkam mā qāmā bi-nafsihi wa lam yaḥtaj ilā istidlāl*). In other words, they are clear verses that do not require interpretation in order to be comprehended. The *mutashābih* verses cannot be supported on their own but require other verses' interpretation to be understood (*wa al-mutashābih mā lā yastaqillu bi-nafsihi illā bi-raddihi ilā ghayrihi*).<sup>11</sup>

The basic meanings of the *muḥkam* verses are so clear and evident that “they are not subject to alteration and distortion” (*laysa lahunna taṣrīf wa taḥrīf*).<sup>12</sup> The *muḥkam* verses are those that deal with essential matters whereas *mutashābih* verses deal with secondary matters. There are two types of divine commandments. The *muḥkam* verses

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Maktabat al-‘Aṣriyya, 2003), 1:234-36; ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khāzin, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-jalīl al-musammā Lubāb al-ta’wīl fī ma’ānī al-tanzīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifā, 1970), 1:216-19; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 2:396-402; Abū al-Fidā Ismā‘īl Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm* (Cairo: Maktaba Dār-al-Turāth, 1980), 1:344-48; al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, 2:68-71; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr bi-al-ma’thūr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifā, n.d.), 2:4-5; Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1987), 2:3-25; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Tāmir (Cairo: Mu’assassa al-Mukhtār, 2004), 68; Ismā‘īl Ḥaqqī b. Muṣṭafā al-Brūsawī, *Rūḥ al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥasan ‘Abd al-Rahmān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2003), 2:6-7; ‘Abd al-Rahmān Al-Tha‘ālabī, *Al-Jawāhir al-hisān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, ed. ‘Ammār al-Tālabī (Algiers: al-Mu’assassa al-Waṭaniyya lil-Kitāb, 1985), 1:292-96; Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), 1:455-58; Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma’ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm wa-al-sab‘ al-mathānī* (Miṣr: Idāra al-Ṭibā‘a al-Muniriyya, 1927), 3:69-78; Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Tafsīr al-Qāsimī al-musammā Maḥāsīn al-ta’wīl*, ed. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī and Ḥamdī Ṣubḥ (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2003), 2:302-30.

<sup>10</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:113.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Māwardī, *Nukat al-‘uyūn*, 1:369; Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, 1:217; Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 2:397; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:4.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 1:401; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr al-manthūr*, 2:4.

contain the commandments that are universal and permanent, while *mutashābih* verses contain those commandments which are subject to change. The *muḥkam* verses deal with the basic commandments which are common to all religions, such as obeying God, performing good deeds and avoiding falsehood and injustice. The *mutashābih* verses deal with the practical aspects of these commandments and may vary from one religion to another, such as prayers, almsgiving, marriage.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the *muḥkam* verses are those which have only one interpretation, while the *mutashābih* verses may be interpreted in more than one way.<sup>14</sup>

The *muḥkam* verses are called as ‘mother of the book’ (*umm al-kitāb*) because they are the origin of the book and comprise all the pillars of the religion and obligations and commandments (*hunna aṣl al-kitāb alladhī fīhī ‘imād al-dīn wa-l-farā’id wa-l-ḥudūd*). These verses also constitute the majority of the Qur’ān (*mu’zam al-kitāb*) and therefore are identified as *muḥkam*.<sup>15</sup> The *muḥkam* verses are found in all the previous revealed scriptures. Al-Suyūṭī narrates that *muḥkamāt* are the foundation of the book because they were recorded in all the books (*annahunna maktūbāt fī aṣl al-kitāb li jamī’i al-kutub*).<sup>16</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān mentions that the *muḥkamāt* are called the basics of the book because they were recorded in a preserved tablet and in all the books (*wa innamā summina aṣl al-kitāb li annahunna maktūbāt fī al-lawḥ al-mḥfūz wa fī jamī’i al-kutub*).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:182; al-Māwardī, *Nukat al-‘uyūn*, 1:369.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, 3:115-16; al-Jaṣṣās, *Ahkām*, 2:2; al-Māwardī, *Nukat al-‘uyūn*, 1:369; al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, 1:413-4; al-Baghawī, *Ma’ālim*, 1:279; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma’ al-bayān*, 2:298; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi’ li-ahkām*, 4:10; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:3.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, 3:113.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Suyūṭī, *Durr al-manthūr*, 2:4.

<sup>17</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr al-khams mi’at āya*, 275.

According to Ibn ‘Abbās,<sup>18</sup> the three verses 151-53 of the *sūra al-An‘ām* are the *muḥkam* verses which are as follows:

Say: “Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden you; that you associate nothing with Him, and be good to your parents and not kill your children because of poverty; We will provide sustenance for you and for them, and do not approach indecencies, whether open or secret, and do not kill the living soul which God has forbidden except for a just cause. This is what God commands you to do, so you may understand. Do not approach the property of the orphan, except for the betterment, until he comes of age, and give full measure and weigh justly on the balance. We do not burden any soul beyond its capacity. And whenever you speak, let it be just even if it is concerned to a relative, and fulfill God’s covenant. Thus He commands you, so that you may remember. This is indeed My straight path, so follow it and do not follow other ways, lest they scatter you from His right path. Thus, He commands you, so that you may be righteous.”<sup>19</sup>

Muqātil b. Sulaymān is of the opinion that the *muḥkam* verses consist of five hundred verses (*khamṣ mi‘at āya*) of the Qur’ān because they provide detailed meaning and treatment of these verses.<sup>20</sup>

The term *mutashābihāt* as ambiguous verses or similar and resembling verses is based on the *sh.b.h.* ‘things like or resembling one another,’ ‘equivocal or ambiguous,’ and ‘unclear or to be similar.’<sup>21</sup> Similarity and resemblance between different verses may be expressed either in the wording (*lafẓ*) or in the meaning (*ma‘nā*). The term *mutashābihāt* can be defined as one in which the same words are used to mean different things. Apparently, the words are similar and resembling but their meanings are different

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<sup>18</sup> See Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:114-15; al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘ulūm*, 1:245; al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, 1:413; al-Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 1:278; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:182; Niẓām al-Dīn al-Naysābūrī, *Gharā‘ib al-Qur’ān*, 3:126; Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 2:397; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta‘wīl*, 1:216; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘aẓīm*, 1:344; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:4.

<sup>19</sup> Qur’ān, 6:151-53.

<sup>20</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr al-khamṣ mi‘at āya*. It is a collection of legal verses and an abstract of *Tafsīr Muqātil*. See Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 2:397.

<sup>21</sup> Lane, *Lexicon*, 4:1500; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, 36:411-13; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 13:504-5; Ibn al-Munāwī, *al-Tawqīf*, 200-1; al-Jurjānī, *Ta‘rīfāt*, 60, 210, 231.

(*an yushibh al-lafz al-lafz fi al-zāhir wa-l-maniyāni mukhtaliḥān/ mutashābihāt fi al-tilawa mukhtaliḥāt fi al-ma‘nā*).<sup>22</sup> The term *mutashābihāt* also describes both possibilities together, i.e. where a narrative is in agreement with the wordings but differs in meaning and a narrative different in wordings but the same in meaning (*fa-qišṣata bi-ittifāq al-alfāz wa-ikhtilāf al-ma‘ānī wa-qišṣata bi-ikhtilāf al-alfāz wa-ittifāq al-ma‘ānī*).<sup>23</sup>

There are two views regarding the interpretation of ambiguous (*mutashābih*) verses. Some scholars are of the view that the *mutashābih* verses should not be interpreted and are meant to remain ambiguous. Their first argument against the interpretation of the *mutashābih* verses is that the meanings of these verses are known to God only and it is beyond the perception of human beings (*mā lā sabīl ilā ma‘rifatihi*). In support of their argument, several events and words mentioned in the Qur’an are mentioned as *mutashābih*, such as resurrection day, condition in the hereafter, reward and punishment in the hereafter, number of angels in Hell, appearance of Jesus son of Mary, rising of the sun from the West, duration of the world and its end, and others.<sup>24</sup>

The second argument against the interpretation of *mutashābih* verses is that their meanings can easily be distorted.<sup>25</sup> Verse 3:7 states that: “As for those in whose hearts is swerving, they follow what is ambiguous in it, seeking (to create) dissension and seeking its interpretation.” The exegetes who correlate the *mutashābih* and *fitna* quote a number

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Ta’wīl mushkil al-Qur’ān*, 101; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:114.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:116.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:116; al-Māwardī, *Nukat al-‘uyūn*, 1:369; al-Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim*, 1:279; Abū al-Faraj ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fi ‘ilm al-tafsīr* (Dimashq: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī lil-Ṭibā‘a wa al-Nashr, 1964), 1:354; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:183; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām*, 4:9-10; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:8-9; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, 1:217; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2:3; Ismā‘īl Haqqī al-Barūsī, *Rūḥ al-bayān*, 2:7; al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, 1:456; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 1:88.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:118; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 1:401; al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām*, 4:11; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr al-manthūr*, 2:4.

of verses of the Qur’ān in support of their position. Al-Suyūfī on the authority of Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/714) narrates that an early sect of the Khārijites, known as Ḥarūriyya, seceded from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib on the basis of *ini al-ḥukmu ill lillāh*<sup>26</sup> (Judgment is God’s alone) because he accepted the arbitration offered by Mu‘āwiya at Siffīn. They employed two verses of the Qur’ān to support their controversial doctrine: “And those who do not judge in accordance with what God has revealed are the transgressors,”<sup>27</sup> and “The unbelievers make the others equal to their Lord.”<sup>28</sup> They interpreted these two verses together and concluded that he who does not judge according to the command of God is an unbeliever. And an unbeliever is a polytheist (*mushrik*) who makes others equal to his Lord.<sup>29</sup>

Others assert that the *mutashābihāt* are verses that cannot be understood on a rational basis, nor by reference to tradition (*lā yudraku ma ‘nāhu ‘aqlan wa lā naqlan*).<sup>30</sup>

Some scholars are of the view that the *mutashābih* verses should be interpreted. The *muḥkamāt* are defined as independent verses and do not require elucidation (*mā istaqalla bi-nafsihi wa-lam yaḥtaj ilā bayān*) for their comprehension.<sup>31</sup> Conversely, the *mutashābihāt* are dependent verses that cannot be comprehended without being compared to other verses (*mā lā yastaqillu bi-nafsihi illā bi-raddihi ilā ghayrihi*).<sup>32</sup> The dependence of the *mutashābihāt* on the *muḥkamāt* is due to the clarity of the latter and the ambiguity of the former. The *muḥkam* verses are clear and lucid and there is no doubt and

<sup>26</sup> Qur’ān, 6:57; 12: 40, 67.

<sup>27</sup> Qur’ān, 5:47.

<sup>28</sup> Qur’ān, 6:1.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Suyūfī, *Durr al-manthūr*, 2:4; L. Veccia Vaglieri, “Ḥarūrā (ḥarawrā’),” *ET*, 3:235; Ahmad Pakatchi, “‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb al-Rāsibī,” *EIs*, 1:195.

<sup>30</sup> Al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma ‘ānī*, 3:71.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta ‘wīl*, 1:217.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Baghawī, *Ma ‘ālim*, 1:279; al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān*, 2:4.

misunderstanding in them while *mutashābih* verses create doubts in most or some people. Thus, when a person refers to and compares a *mutashābih* verse to a *muḥkam* verse, he understands a *mutashābih* and finds guidance.<sup>33</sup>

It is argued that the rationale behind the *mutashābih* verses is that people should ponder and scrutinize them. Had the Qur'ān consisted only *muḥkam* verses, there would be no need to develop the exegetical science to interpret and comprehend the Qur'ān. If the entire Qur'ān had been clear and unveiled to everyone, then the learned and the ignorant would have been equal in comprehension and the endeavor for precedence among the people would have become untenable (*wa law kāna al-Qur'ān kullihī zāhiran makshufan ḥattā yastawī fi ma'rifatihī al-'ālim wa-l-jāhil la-batala al-tafāḍul bayna al-nās*).<sup>34</sup> The *mutashābih* verses are intended to make people think and find out the true meanings by using their intellect and judgment.

The *mutashābih* verses enable people to understand these verses in more than one way which means that it allows many approaches to one issue. The flexibility in interpreting a verse can take into account the changing circumstances of the time. It can accommodate different perspectives of a problem and it invites people to look into all variants in the Qur'ān and everyone among them considers and finds whatever is suitable and helpful to him/her (*anna dhālika ad'ā ilā naẓr jamī' al-mukhtaliḥīn fī al-Qur'ān bi-anna yazunnu kulla wāḥidin minhum an yajid fihī mā yanṣur bihī*).<sup>35</sup>

There has been controversy regarding the interpretation of *mutashābih* verses and the majority of the exegetes discussed this issue in their exegeses. Interpretation of these

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:185; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, 1:344.

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, 86; al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 7:183.

<sup>35</sup> 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Muataṣhābih*, 1:28.

verses is closely related to the word *ta 'wīl* and the particle *wāw* between the words *Allāh* and *al-rāsikhūn* in the verse which reads as follows: “However, no one except God knows its interpretation. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord’” (*wa-mā ya 'lamu ta 'wīlahu illā Allāh wa-l-rāsikhūna fi-l- 'ilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihi kullun min 'indi rabbinā*).<sup>36</sup>

The early scholars interpreted the word *ta 'wīl* differently. According to Ibn ‘Abbās, *ta 'wīl* is interpreted in many ways such as “the end of this community” (*‘āqibat hādhihi al-umma*),<sup>37</sup> “Day of Judgment no one knows (when will it happen) except God” (*yawma al-qiyāma lā ya 'lamuhu illā Allāh*) and “interpretation of the Qur’ān” (*ta 'wīl al-Qur’ān*).<sup>38</sup> Mujāhid b. Jabr and Abū Muḥammad interpret *ta 'wīl* as “interpretation of the dreams” (*‘ibara al-ru 'yā*).<sup>39</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān interprets *ta 'wīl* as “how many years they, meaning the community of Muḥammad, would remain in power and when God would afflict them the appearance of Dajjāl” (*kam yamlikūna min al-sinīna ya 'nī umma Muḥammad yamlikūna ilā yawm al-qiyāma illā ayyāman yabtalīhum Allāh bi al-Dajjāl*).<sup>40</sup> Al-Suddī interprets it as “its consequences are when the abrogative will come to abrogate the abrogated” (*‘awāqibuhu matā yuji 'a al-nāsikh fa-yansikhu al-mansūkh*).<sup>41</sup> Muḥammad b. Ishāq narrates that *ta 'wīl* means that “God knows what they distort and interpret and He knows the secrets and deeds of human beings” (*mā ya 'lamu mā harrafū wa-ta 'walū illā Allāh alladhi ya 'lamu sarā 'ir al-ibād wa-a 'mālahum*).<sup>42</sup> Al-Ḍaḥḥāk’s

<sup>36</sup> Qur’ān, 3:7.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn ‘Abbās, *Tanwīr al-miqbās*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:69.

<sup>39</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:70.

<sup>40</sup> Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Maḥmūd Shaḥāta (Cairo: Al-Hay’at al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma lil-Kitāb, 1979), 1: 264.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:70-71.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:71.

interpretation of *ta'wīl* is “its reward” (*thawābuhu*).<sup>43</sup> ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd said that *ta'wīl* means “its reality” (*taḥqīquhu*).<sup>44</sup> Al-Ṭabarī states that “It is not appropriate that there should be such matters in the Qur’ān which are not needed by the Muslims. Similarly, it is not conceivable that there should be such verses in the Qur’ān which Muslims need but who do not know their interpretation. All those verses in the Qur’ān which the Muslims need have been clearly explained and the Qur’ān is silent in describing those verses which do not require interpretation. A *mutashābih* verse is one of which any one among the human beings has neither its knowledge nor its interpretation. It is only God with the exclusion of His creation who has knowledge of it. It is the determination of the time for future occurrences or events close to the Day of Judgment. The knowledge of such affairs and their determination does not fall in the purview of the people. It is because of this that God has concealed it from them.”<sup>45</sup>

So far as the grammatical issue of *wāw* is concerned, there are two opinions of the exegetes. The first opinion, which is attributed to ‘Ā’isha bint Abī Bakr (d. 58/678), Ibn ‘Abbās, Hishām b. ‘Urwa, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 101/720), and Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/796), is that in this verse *wāw* is not a conjunctive particle (*wāw al-‘atf*) linking the words *Allāh* and *al-rāsikhūn fi-l-‘ilm*. It is rather *wāw al-isti’nāf*, indicating the beginning of the verse. In this case, the verse will be interpreted as: “However, no one except God knows its interpretation. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord’” (*wa-mā ya‘lamu ta’wīlahu illā Allāh wa-l-rāsikhūna fi-l-‘ilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihi kullun min ‘indi rabbinā*).

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:71.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:72.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, 3:116-17.



According to the second opinion, which is attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid b. Jabr (d. 104/722), Rabī‘ b. Anas al-Bakrī (d. 139/756), and Ja‘far b. Zubayr, the *wāw* is a conjunctive particle (*wāw al-‘atf*) that links the words *Allāh* and *al-rāsikhūn fi-l-‘ilm*. In this case, the verse will be interpreted as: “However, not only God knows its interpretation, but also those who are firmly grounded in knowledge who say: ‘We believe in it, all is from our Lord’” (*wa-mā ya‘lamu ta’wīlahu illā Allāh wa-l-rāsikhūna fi-l-‘ilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihi kullun min ‘indi rabbinā*).

The majority of the exegetes prefers and supports the first opinion on the basis of the readings (*qira’āt*) of Ubayy b. Ka‘b and ‘Abd Allāh. According to them, those who are firm in knowledge say that they believe in it [the *mutashābih*] (*wa yaqūlu al-rāsikhūna fi-l-‘ilmi āmannā bihi*) and no one knows the interpretation of the *mutashābih* except God. And those who are firm in knowledge say that they believe in it. In addition, these exegetes define the word *mutashābihāt* as relating to concealed matters known only by God.<sup>46</sup>

It is evident from the preceding discussion that the Muslim commentators do not offer the definitions of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* systematically. There is a great variety of definitions and some of them are contradictory. Modern scholars’ definitions of these terms also lack consistency and the meanings of *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* rendered by them differ considerably. These are as follows:

<sup>46</sup> Ibn ‘Abbas, *Tanwīr al-miqbās*, 34; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *al-Khams mi’at āya*, 275; Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr*, 1:264; al-Farrā, *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān*, 1:191; Abū ‘Ubayd, *al-Nāsikh wa-al-mansūkh*, 4; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān*, 3:122-23; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 2:72-80; al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān*, 2:399; al-Baghawī, *Ma’ālim*, 1:280; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya, *Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 2:339-40; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma’ al-bayān*, 2:299-300; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr*, 354; al-Qurtubī, *al-Jāmi’ li-ahkām*, 4:15-16; al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-tanzīl*, 1:197-98; Ibn Juzayyī, *al-Tashīl*, 1: 235-35; Abū Ḥayyān, *Baḥr al-muḥīṭ*, 2:400-403; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta’wīl*, 1:217-18; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘azīm*, 1:346-47; al-Tha’ālibī, *al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān*, 1:294; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, 2: 4-5; al-Suyūṭī, *Durr al-manthūr*, 2: 5; Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr al-Marāghī*, 1:456; al-Ālūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma’ānī*, 3:72-73; al-Qāsimī, *Maḥāsīn al-ta’wīl*, 2:306-8.

George Sale defines *muḥkamāt* as ‘verses clear to be understood,’ and *mutashābihāt* as ‘parabohical.’ Ignaz Goldziher translates *muḥkamāt* as ‘festgefügte’ [sound and precise verses], while *mutashābihāt* as ‘zweifelhafte’ [dubious verses]. According to Richard Bell, *muḥkamāt* are ‘clearly formulated verse,’ and *mutashābihāt* are ‘ambiguous verses.’ Arthur Arberry uses the terms for *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* clear and ambiguous respectively. Abu al-Kalam Azad renders the terms *muḥkamāt* as ‘perspicuous’ and *mutashābihāt* as ‘figurative.’ Marmaduke Pickthall translates *muḥkamāt* as ‘clear revelations’ and *mutashābihāt* as ‘allegorical.’ Régis Blachère translates *muḥkamāt* as ‘āya confirmées’ (clear verses) and *mutashābihāt* as ‘équivoque’ (ambiguous). Ahmed Ali renders *the terms muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* as ‘categorical’ and ‘allegorical’ respectively. Majid Fakhry translates *muḥkamāt* as ‘precise in meaning’ and *mutashābihāt* as ‘ambiguous’.<sup>47</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī’s methodology for exegesis is also based on verse 3:7, and states that the issue of the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* is not only important but also the very foundation of the Qur’ānic interpretation. He further elaborates it that no exegesis is possible without the complete understanding of the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* verses. According to him, *muḥkamāt* verses are those whose expression (‘*ibāra*’) is affirmed

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<sup>47</sup> Leah Kinberg, “Muḥkamāt and Mutashābihāt (Koran 3/7): Implication of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis,” *Arabica*, 35 (1988), 143-72; George Sales, *The Koran* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1984), 35; Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1952), 127-8; Richard Bell, *A Commentary on the Qur’ān* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991), 1:64; Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Simon and Schuster), 73; Abul Kalam Azad, *The Tarjumān al-Qur’ān* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), 140; Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York and Toronto: Everyman’s Library, 1992), 67; Régis Blachère, *Le Coran* (Paris: Librairie Orientale et Americaine, 1950), 3:856; Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qur’ān: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 51; Majid Fakhry, *An Interpretation of the Qur’ān* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 54. See Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *Mabāhith fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāiyyin, 1965), 281-86. He provides a variety of opinions regarding the terms *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*, which are derived from al-Zarkashī’s *al-Burhān* and al-Suyūṭī’s *al-Itqān*.

(*uḥkimat*) because they have been preserved (*ḥuḥfīzat*) and are free from probability (*iḥtimāl*) and doubt (*ishtibāh*).<sup>48</sup> He interprets the word *uḥkimat āyātuhu* as “verses arranged firmly and perfectly in which there is neither contradiction nor imperfection” (*nuzimat nazman raṣīnan muḥkaman lā yaqa‘u fihā naqḍ wa-lā khalal*).<sup>49</sup> The clarity of *muḥkam* verses can be found in their own wordings. They do not require any explanation from extraneous sources, such as other verses of the Qur’an, prophetic traditions or linguistic investigation in order to understand them. In addition, they are the “essence of the Book” (*umm al-kitāb*) since they serve as a basis for interpreting *mutashābih* verses (*tuḥmal al-mutashābihāt ‘alayhā wa-turadda ilayhā*).<sup>50</sup> In this respect, al-Zamakhsharī’s view is similar to other exegetes, like al-Jaṣṣaṣ, al-Ṭūsī, al-Ṭabarsī, and Ibn Kathīr.<sup>51</sup>

Al-Zamakhsharī cites two examples explaining how a *muḥkam* verse can provide the basis for interpreting a *mutashābih* verse. He considers that “Looking upon their Lord” (*ilā rabbihā nāziratun*)<sup>52</sup> is a *mutashābih* verse which can be interpreted by a *muḥkam* verse: “Vision cannot attain Him,” (*la tudrikuhu al-abṣār*),<sup>53</sup> Similarly, “We command its people (living a life of) luxury” (*amarnā mutrafihā*)<sup>54</sup> is a *mutashābih* verse which can be interpreted by “God does not command indecency” (*inna Allāh lā yā‘muru bi-l-faḥshāi*)<sup>55</sup> which is a *muḥkam* verse.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn Manẓūr glosses the word *aḥkama shay’an* (a verbal use of the root *muḥkam*) as *amna‘ahu min al-fasād* (to protect it from imperfection). Al-Zamakhsharī bases his interpretation of the word *muḥkamāt* on lexical approach and interprets the word *muḥkamāt* (the *ism al-maf‘ūl* of *aḥkama*) as *ḥuḥfīzat min al-iḥtimāl wa-al-ishtibāh* (the verses that are preserved from probability and doubt). Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 12:143; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:527.

<sup>49</sup> “A book whose verses are set clear and made distinct.” Qur’ān, 11:1; al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 3:181.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:528. See also Schmidtke, *Mu‘tazilite Creed*, 44, 82.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Jaṣṣaṣ, *Aḥkām*, 2:2; al-Ṭūsī, al-Tibyān, 2:3945; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma‘*, 2:296-98; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘azīm*, 1:344.

<sup>52</sup> Qur’ān, 75:23.

<sup>53</sup> Qur’ān, 6:103.

<sup>54</sup> Qur’ān, 17:16.

<sup>55</sup> Qur’ān, 7:28.

The Qur'ān in its entirety is not *muḥkam*. Had it been completely *muḥkam* the people would have been attached to easiness and convenience in their approach to the Qur'ān and turned away from investigation and perception of reasoning. In this case, they would have lost their way and could not achieve the gnosis and belief in the unity of God. There is a test and trial and a distinction has to be made between a firmly established with truth and wavering *mutashābih* verse.<sup>56</sup> It is for this reason that the scholars have to reject the objectionable meaning and exert great talent in deriving the exposition of *mutashābih* verse by referring it to *muḥkam* verse. If one is successful, it results in great rewards and attainment of higher ranks from God. It is a believer's conviction that the word of God is neither inconsistent nor contradictory. When he observes some apparent incompatibility in it, he endeavors to find out conformity and harmony and adopts the customary practice sanctioned by the traditions. Due to his reflection, God helps him in his thoughts and clarifies the *mutashābih* in accordance with the *muḥkam*. It increases peace of mind in his belief and strengthens his conviction.

As for those in whose hearts is swerving, they are innovators. They follow what is ambiguous (*mutashābih*) in it and does not conform to the *muḥkam*. He also mentions that the interpretation of these verses does not correspond with the statements of the people of the truth (*qawl ahl al-haqq*), i.e. Mu'tazilites. Thus, they turn away the people from their religion and mislead them. They interpret these verses according to their desires.

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<sup>56</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī does not define the meaning of *mutashābihāt* as comprehensively as he does the meaning of *muḥkamāt*. He simply glosses *mutashābihāt* as a combination of *mushtabihāt* and *muḥtamilāt*. According to Ibn Manzūr and Ibn Qutayba *mutashābihāt* is synonymous with *mushkilāt* (difficult or obscure words). See Ibn Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, 102; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 11:358.

According to al-Zamakhsharī, the interpretation of these verses is known not only to God, but also to those people who have sound knowledge, i.e. firmly established and deep rooted.<sup>57</sup> The argument for this concept is based upon his interpretation of the particle *wāw* as a conjunctive element. He mentions the “readings” (*qirā’āt*) of Ubayy b. Ka‘b and ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd in support of his argument.<sup>58</sup>

For al-Zamakhsharī, the classification of the Qur’ānic verses into *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* is limited to the theological aspects of the Qur’ān. Those verses which support any or all of the five principles of the Mu‘tazilite doctrines are regarded *muḥkamāt*, while those which contradict them are considered *mutashābihāt*.

Long before al-Zamakhsharī, this issue was discussed by al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 370/982) and he was of the opinion that reproach against those who follow the *mutashābih* does not mean that these verses cannot be interpreted. Rather, *mutashābih* verses can be interpreted in the light of the *muḥkam* verses. He states that it is not possible that a *mutashābih* verse that needs to be interpreted should not be interpreted to understand its real meaning. However, he cautions that all of the *mutashābih* cannot be interpreted because the meanings of some of these verses are known to God only. He illustrates that those who regard the particle *wāw* as a *ḥarf al-isti’nāf* are of the view that the *mutashābih* cannot be known by human beings. On the other hand, those who consider it as a conjunctive particle (*ḥarf al-’atf*) argue that some of the *mutashābih* can be interpreted by the people in the light of the *muḥkam*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī emphasizes with the following sentence: “And they bite fiercely with sharp molar tooth” (*wa-addū fihī bi-ḍirsi qāṭi’*). It means that they interpret the *mutashābih* verses conclusively and unequivocally. Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:529.

<sup>58</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:527-29.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkām*, 2:4-5.

Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) states that there are two meanings of *ta'wīl* when it is applied to the Qur'ān. One of the meanings of *ta'wīl* is “real meaning of a thing” (*ḥaqīqa al-shay'*). The other meaning of it is “commentary, elucidation and interpretation of a thing” (*al-tafsīr wa-l-bayān wa-l-ta'bīr 'an al-shay'*). His opinion is that a *mutashābih* verse can be interpreted, but its real meaning is known only to God.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm*, 1:347.

## Appendix 5

### Mu‘tazilites’ *Ṭabaqāt*

According to Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. al-Murtaḍā, the Mu‘tazlites can be divided into twelve generations (*ṭabaqāt*).<sup>1</sup>

The first *ṭabaqa* consists of the first rightly guided caliphs (*khulafā’ rāshidūn*) in the order of ‘Alī, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. Others in this class are ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, Abū al-Dardā’, Abū Dharr al-Ghaffārī and ‘Abāda b. al-Sāmit.

The second *ṭabaqa* includes al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī, al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, Muḥammad b. Ḥanafīyya, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyab, Ṭawūs al-Yamānī, Abū al-Aswad al-Dū’lī and others.

The third *ṭabaqa* consists of al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan, ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, Zayd b. ‘Alī, Muḥammad b. Sirin b. Muḥammad, al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Abū Hāshim ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya.

Among the fourth *ṭabaqa* are Ghaylān b. Muslim al-Dimishqī, Wāṣil b. ‘Atā, ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd, Makhūl b. ‘Abd Allāh, Qatāda b. Di‘āma al-Sadūsī, Ṣāliḥ al-Dimishqī

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<sup>1</sup> The term *ṭabaqāt* (sing. *ṭabaqa*) “book of categories” when used of place means “similar, lying above one another” and with regard to time as “similar, following one another.” Specifically, with reference to time, it means “generation.” The lexicographers use *qarn* as a synonym. The well-known book of *Ṭabaqāt* is of Ibn S‘ad. According to Yāqūt’s *Mu‘jam al-udaba*, 6:2795 and Ibn Khallikān’s *Wafayāt*, 6:11, Wāṣil b. ‘Atā wrote *Ṭabaqāt ahl-‘ilm wa-al-jahl*. See W. Heffening, “Ṭabaqāt,” *EI*<sup>1</sup>, 9:214 and Claude Gilliot, “Ṭabaqāt,” *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 10:7. In general, it is defined as a “rank, attributed to a group of characters who have played a role in history in one capacity or another, classes according to criteria determined by the religious, cultural, scientific or artistic order etc.” See al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn*, 4:917-18 and Ibrahim Hafsi, “Recherches sur le genre ‘Ṭabaqāt’ dans la littérature arabe,” *Arabica*, 23 (1976), 1:229. The genre of the *ṭabaqāt* “was born within the framework of the *ḥadīth* and is inseparable from it, Hafsi, 1:227. Hafsi also discusses *Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*. See Ibrahim Hafsi, “Recherches sur le genre ‘Ṭabaqāt’ dans la littérature arabe,” *Arabica*, 23 (1977), 3:175-76.

and the companions of Ghaylān. From this *ṭabaqa*, the original school of Mu‘tazilites started.

The fifth *ṭabaqa* includes ‘Uthmān b. Khālid al-Ṭawīl, Ḥafṣ b. Sālim, al-Qāsim b. al-Sa‘dī, ‘Amr b. Ḥawshab, Qays b. ‘Āṣim, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Marrā, Khālid b. Ṣafwān, Ḥafṣ b. al-Qawām, Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Amr, al-Ḥasan b. Ḥafṣ b. Sālim, Bakr b. ‘Abd al-A‘lā, Ibn Sammāk ‘Abd al-Wārith b. Sa‘īd, Abū Ghassān, Bishr b. Khālid, ‘Uthmān b. Ḥakam, Sufyān b. Ḥabīb, Ṭalḥa b. Zayd and Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā al-Madanī.

The sixth *ṭabaqa* consists of Abū al-Hudhayl, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Sayyār al-Nazzām, Abū Sahl Bishr b. al-Mu‘tamar, Mu‘ammar b. ‘Abbād al-Sulamī, Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Kaysān al-Aṣamm, Abū Shimr al-Ḥanafī, Abū Mas‘ūd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Askarī, Abū ‘Āmir al-Anṣārī, Mūsā al-Uswārī, Hishām b. ‘Amr al-Fuwaṭī and others. This *ṭabaqa* is the greatest amongst all the *ṭabaqāt* and most conspicuous in its influence and the Mu‘tazilites reached at their apex and ideal climax.

The prominent among the seventh *ṭabaqa* are Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Abī Dā’ūd, Thumāma b. Ashras, ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiz, ‘Īsā b. Ṣubayḥ, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-‘Askarī, Abū Ya‘qūb Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ishāq al-Shaḥḥām, ‘Alī al-Uswārī, Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Ṣāliḥī, Ja‘far b. Ḥarb, Abū Muḥammad Ja‘far b. Mubashshir al-Thaqafī, Abū ‘Imrān Mūsā b. al-Raqqāshī, ‘Abbād b. Sulaymān, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Iskāfī, ‘Īsā b. al-Haytham al-Ṣūfī and Abū Sa‘īd Aḥmad b. Sa‘īd al-Asadī.

The notables among the eighth *ṭabaqa* are Abū ‘Alī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Waḥḥāb al-Jubbā’ī, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāt, Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Balkhī al-



Ka‘bī, Abū Muslim Muḥammad b. Baḥr al-Isfahānī and al-Nāshī’ ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad.

The ninth *ṭabaqa* comprises of Abū Hāshim ‘Abd al-Salām al-Jubbā’ī, Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Ṣumayrī, Abū ‘Umar Sa‘īd b. Muhammad al-Bāhilī, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās al-Rāmḥurmudzī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Ikshīd, al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī and others.

The tenth *ṭabaqa* includes Abū ‘Alī b. Khallād, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Baṣrī, Abū Ishāq b. ‘Ayyāsh, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṣirāfī, Abū ‘Imrān al-Ṣirāfī, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Azraq, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā, Muḥammad b. Zayd al-Wāsiṭī and others.<sup>2</sup>

Ḥākim al-Jishumī added two more *ṭabaqat*.<sup>3</sup> The prominent Mu‘tazilites in the eleventh *ṭabaqa* are Abū al-Ḥasan Qāḍī al-quḍāt ‘Abd al-Jabbār, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Dā’ī Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Qāsim, Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-‘Alawī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Qāḍī ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Jurjānī and others. Among the twelfth *ṭabaqa*, the most important Mu‘tazilites are Abū Rashīd Sa‘īd b. Muḥammad al-Naysāburī, al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Isfahanī, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, Maḥmūd b. al-Malaḥimī and Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Mattawayh.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9-119; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Munya*, 2-71.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥākim al-Jishumī, *Sharḥ al-‘Uyūn in Faḍl al-‘Itizāl wa-ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazila*, ed. Fu‘ād Sayyid (Tunis: al-Dār al-Tunisiyya li-al-Nashr, 1986), 365-93.

## Appendix 6

### The Retraction of Ibn ‘Aqīl

Following are the extracts of the Retraction of Ibn ‘Aqīl have been preserved by Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223), in his *Tahrīm*:

I [Ibn ‘Aqīl] purify myself, before God, of the doctrines of the heretical innovators, Mu‘tazilīs and others; of frequenting the masters of this doctrinal system; of venerating its partisans; of invoking the mercy of God on their predecessors; and of emulating them. What I have written, and what has been found written in my hand concerning their doctrines and their errors, I repent to God for having written. It is not permitted to write those things nor to say them, nor to believe them.

I believed in al-Ḥallāj as a religious man, an ascetic, and a saint; and I maintained that opinion in a fascicle (*juz’*) which I composed. But I repent to God – Exalted is He! – in renouncing him. I attest that he was put to death as a result of the consensus of the jurisconsults of the time and that they were right, and he was wrong.

I call on God, on His angels, and on the men of religious learning, to witness what I have just said voluntarily and without constraint. The sentiments of my heart are in complete accord with the expressions of my mouth – May God the Exalted, be the Judge! God has said: “For repetition God will exact from him the penalty, for God is Exalted and Lord of retribution [Qur’ān, 5:98].”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George Makdisi, *Ibn ‘Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 4; George Makdisi, *Ibn Qudāma’s Censure of Speculative Theology* (London: Luzac and Company, 1962), 3-4; Muwaffiq al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma, *Tahrīm al-nazar fī kutub al-kalām* (Riyād: Dār ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1990), 33-34; Makdisi, *Ibn Qudāma’s Censure of Speculative Theology*, 5-6; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, 16:143-44.

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