IBN QUTAYBAH ON CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL *KALĀMIC* ISSUES: A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF HIS *TA'WĪL MUKHTALĪF AL-ḤADĪTH*.

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INTRODUCTION

(1.1) THE TERM *KALĀM* AND ITS HISTORICAL ROOTS.

Kalam literally means speech, talk or word.[1] It also means the word of God and the words of God means al-Qur'an.[2] Technically *kalam*, translated usually as dialectical or speculative theology, refers to the mental activity of enquiring for the truth by formulating questions. The person who discusses *kalam* is known as a *mutakallim* (theologian) or *ahl al-kalam* (people of *kalam*).[3] Ibn Khaldun (d. 809 A.H./ 1404 A.D.), commenting on *'ilm al-kalām* (the science of speculative theology), expresses the view that the reason why this name means "science of speech" was chosen because it included the disputation of innovations. It merely implies talk or no action at all.[4] Based on this premise also, Ibn Khaldun defines *kalām* as the science that applies *'aql* (rational proof) in defence of the articles of faith and refutes the ideas of innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the early Muslims and Muslim orthodoxy.[5] A *mutakallim* is a person who tries to find out how the articles of

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[1] Ibn Manzūr, Jamāl al-Din Muhammad, *Lisān al-'Arab*, ed. Yūsuf al-Khayyāṭ, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Jil, 1985), vol. 5, 290, hereafter cited as *'Arab*; Al-'Alayalā 'Abd Allāh, *Al-Sihah fī al-Lughah wa al-'Ulūm*, ed. Nadim, (Bayrūt: Dar al-Hadārah al-'Arabiyyah, n.d.) vol. 2, 406, hereafter cited as *Sihah*;

[2] *'Arab*, vol. 5, 290; *Sihah*, vol. 2, 406.

[3] Al-Farabi, *Ihsā' al-'Ulūm*, ed. 'Uthmān Amin, (Al-Qāhirah: npb., 1968), 69; hereafter cited as *Ihsā'*; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Muwāfaqah Sahih al-Manqūl li Sarih al-Ma'qul*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al'Ilmiyyah, 1985), vol. 1, 56, hereafter cited as *Muwāfaqah*; Badawi, 'Abd al-Rahman, *Madhahib al-Islamiyyin*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-'Ilm li al-Malāyin, 1983), 7; *'Arab*, vol. 5, 290; *Sihah*, vol. 2, 406.

[4] Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthall, *An Introduction to History*, (New York: Albany State University, 1958), vol. 3, 50, hereafter cited as *Muqaddimah*.

[5] *Muqaddimah*, 53. The term orthodoxy here should not be viewed as something outdated. Rather it should be understood as correct, true, exact and real i.e. the correct, true, exact

faith which the religious laws have laid down as correct, can be proven with the help of the logical arguments so that innovators may be repulsed and doubts and misgivings concerning the articles of faith be removed.[6] The above concise explanation of *kalam* speaks many things about *kalam* for example, the milieu which gave rise to *kalam*, the elements related to *kalam* and the approach towards this subject of theology.

Discussing the milieu that gave rise to the study of the science of *kalam*, al-Qushayri (d. 465 A.H./ 1072 A.D.) said that "one is surprised by those who say there is no *'ilm kalam* in al-Qur'ān, for the verses dealing with *al-aḥkām al-shar'iyyah* are limited while those that draw attention to principles of the faith far exceed them."[7] This opinion underlines the fact that *'ilm al-kalām* is part and parcel of the teaching of Islam that is embedded in al-Qur'an. Indeed, looking at the very first verse that was revealed to the Prophet, it encourages man to read and recite in the name of the Lord Who created man from one stage to another.[8] This calls for active thought and observation of the nature of man's creation, the responsibility that his creation entails and the power that takes creation from one stage to another. In another instances, al-Qur'ān reveals in detail the stages of man's creation and development, that is, from the germinal fluids through the embryo, to the foetus and the infant, the adult, degeneration in old age and death.[9] These stages are the manifestation of God's supremacy and also are the logical evidence that if God can do this, certainly He can also take a person through the further stages of resurrection after death. All of this issue

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and real teachings of the Muslims; see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 839, hereafter cited as *Oxford*.

[6] *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 63.

[7] Al-Bayadi, Kamāl al-Din, *Isharat al-Maram min 'Ibārāt al-Imām*, (Istanbūl: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmi, 1949), 33, hereafter cited as *Ishārāt*.

[8] *Surah al-'Alaq*, 96: 1-5.

[9] *Surah al-Mu'minūn*, 23: 12-16; *Surah al-Haj*, 22: 5-7.

was heavily discussed by the *mutakallimūn* in the science of *kalām*. Therefore, the origin of *kalām* is by all means traceable to al-Qur'ān; that is to say, it began with the emergence of Islam as a religion. Here is an example from al-Qur'ān:

> "Is man not aware that We created him from a little
> germ? Yet he is flagrantly contentious. He answers
> back with arguments, and forgets his own creation. He
> asks: Who will give life to rotten bones? Say: He who
> has knowledge of every creation; He who gives you
> from the green tree a fire when you light your own fires
> with it. Has He who created the heavens and the earth
> no power to create their like? That He surely has. He is
> the all-knowing Creator. When He decrees a thing, He
> has only to say: Be and it is!"[10]

The above verses again invite man to ponder about the Creator and His creations as well to contemplate such eschatological ideas as man's life after death. The corollary to all of this is that al-Qur'ān, without being a book of dialectic theology which provides a systematic analysis, deals with all issues that were discussed in the subsequently developed *kalām*. This is why al-Qushayrī, as mentioned earlier, points out that *kalām* is derived from al-Qur'ān. This idea is further verified by al-Rāzī (d. 606 A.H./ 1209 A.D.), the great *mufassir* and *mutakallim*, who opines that the issues of *kalām* like *tawḥīd*, Prophethood and the hereafter are extensively discussed in al-Qur'ān.[11] According to al-Rāzī, the said issues were highlighted in al-Qur'ān as the source of inspiration to the Prophet who had to contend with all manners of unbelievers and atheists who denied the power and the predetermination of God, those who attributed partners to God like the pagans, those who disputed

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[10] *Surah Ya Sin*, 36: 77-82.

[11] Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din Muhammad ibn 'Umar, *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, (Al-Qāhirah: Al-Matba'ah Ilahiyyah al-Misriyyah, nd.), vol. 2, 90, hereafter cited as Razi.

the Prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad like the Jews and the Christians, those who discredited resurrection and so on. Al-Qur'ān discussed the views of such groups, refuted them and answered their claims,[12] thus practically illustrating to the reader why *kalām* is an essential tool in the understanding of the truth. To substantiate his statement, al-Rāzi affirms that the Qur'ānic verses dealing with *al-aḥkām al-shar'iyyah* are less than six hundred in number, while the rest explain questions regarding the unity of God, the Prophethood and refutations of idol-worshippers, polytheists and others.[13] He then concludes that if anyone were to examine the term *'ilm al-kalām* in al-Qur'ān *per se* he or she would find nothing in it other than discussions of these questions and refutations of doubts and counter arguments.[14] Similarly, Ibn Rushd (d. 606 A.H./ 1209 A.D.), the celebrated philosopher, verifies that the whole Qur'ān is an invitation to reflect and draw lessons and directs attention to the methods of reflection.[15] These opinions indicate that *kalām* began very early in Islam and in order to see the correlation of *kalām* to al-Qur'ān, an analysis of some of the names given to the science of *kalām* is required.

Further reading reveals that the term *kalām* itself has not been the only title given to this science as an independent discipline. According to Ḥasan Maḥmud al-Shāfi'i in his *Madhkal ilā Dirāsah 'Ilm al-Kalām*, there are some six names given to this science,[16] identified as follows:

> (i) *'Ilm a-fiqh al-akhbār*,[17] a title given by Abū
> Ḥanifah (d. 150 A.H./ 767 A.D.) to his book

[12] Rāzi, vol. 2, 90.

[13] Rāzi, vol. 2, 90.

[14] Rāzi, vol. 2, 88f.

[15] Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-Maqal*, (Bayrūt: Maktabah al-Sharqiyyah, 1986), 27 - 28.

[16] Ḥasan Maḥmud al-Shāfi'i, *Madkhal ilā Diāasah 'Ilm al-Kalām*, (Karachi: Idārah al-Qur'ān, 1988), 9-27, hereafter cited as *Madkhal*.

[17] *Madkhal*, 9.

which points out the integral relationship between science of *kalām* and science of *fiqh*.[18]

(ii) *'Ilm al-kalām*,[19] one of the oldest and common names suggested by Mālik (d. 179 A.H./ 795 A.D.) and al-Shāfi'i (d. 204 A.H./ 819 A.D.). They were reported to have discussed *kalām* and *mutakallimūn*.

(iii) *'Ilm uṣūl al-dīn*,[20] another name given by al-Baghdādi (d. 429 A.H./ 1037 A.D.) as indicated in his book. *Uṣūl al-Dīn*.[21] This book presents the division of religious knowledge into *uṣūl* (roots) and *furu'* (branches).

(iv) *'Ilm al-naẓar wa al-istidlāl*,[22] hints at the methodology of *kalām* as shown in the writing of Taftāzāni (d. 793 A.H./ 1390 A.D.), *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn wa 'Ilm al-Kalām*.[23]

(v) *'Ilm 'aqā'id*[24] presents the importance of the unity and other attributes of God which also appear in Taftāzāni's *Sharḥ*.

(vi) *'Ilm al-tawḥīd*,[25] a subject that deals with the articles of faith and what entails their attestation.

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18 Abu Hanifah. *Sharḥ Fiqh al-Akhbār*. tr. Wensinck, A.J., *The Muslim Creed*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), hereafter cited as *Fiqh*.

19 *Madkhal*. 9.

20 *Madkhal*. 24.

21 Al-Baghdādi. *Uṣūl al-Dīn*. (Bayrūt: Muassasah al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyyah. 1985), hereafter cited as *Uṣūl*.

22 *Madkhal*. 27.

23 Al-Nasafi. *Al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn wa 'Ilm al-Kalām*. ed. Salamah, K., (Karachi, n.pb., 1912); Al-Taftāzāni, *Sharḥ al-'Aqā'id al-Nasafiyyah fi Uṣūl al-Dīn wa 'Ilm al-Kalām*. tr. Earl Elder. *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam*. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1950) hereafter cited as *Sharḥ*.

24 *Madkhal*. 25.

25 *Madkhal*. 26.

This title is common among the theologians and was applied by al-Māturīdī (d. 333 A.H./ 944 A.D.) notably in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.[26]

The various names of *kalām* given by various scholars as mentioned above illustrate the development of *kalām* in the course of history and thereby points out among other things, the correlation of *kalām* to al-Qur'ān. For example, the term *fiqh* which al-Qur'ān employed in different forms of Arabic conjugation, was repeated twenty times. Despite these variations, all of them point to one single meaning - "understanding", that is the understanding of the religion,[27] so that one will gain the benefit of the guidance of God,[28] to comprehend the concept of distribution in Islam,[29] to grasp the meaning of the punishment of God[30] and so on. Reading Abū Ḥanīfah's *Al-Fiqh al-Akhbār*, one observes that the term *fiqh* conveyed in his book implies the same meaning as the one which al-Qur'ān has expressed, that is, to 'understand' or have an 'insight' into the matters related to religion.[31] In the Prophetic tradition, the term *fiqh* is also applied and it means to understand religion.[32] From this observation, it can be concluded that there is a link between the term *fiqh* as applied by Abū Ḥanīfah and the term *fiqh* that was referred to by al-Qur'ān.

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[26] Mustafa Ceric, *The Roots of the Synthetic Theology in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), hereafter cited as *Roots*. In this book the author has discussed and elaborated al-Māturīdī's opinion on *kalām* at length.

[27] *Surat al-Tawbah*, 9: 122; Al-Tabarsī, Abū 'Alī al-Fadl ibn al-Hasan, *Majma' al-Bayān*, (Bayrut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1986), vol. 5-6, 125f, hereafter cited as Tabarsī; Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl, *Tafsir al-'Aẓim*, (Bayrut: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), vol. 2, 401f; hereafter cited as Ibn Kathīr; Rāzi, vol. 16, 125.

[28] *Surat al-Kahf*, 18: 57; Ibn Kathīr, vol. 3, 92; Tabarsī, vol. 6, 739.

[29] *Surat al-Munāfiqūn*, 63: 3; Shawkānī, Muhammad ibn 'Alī, *Fath al-Qadīr, Al-Jāmi' bayna Fanni al-Riwayah wa al-Dirāyah min 'Ilm al-Tafsir*, (Al-Qāhirah: Mustafa al-Bābi al-Halabi, 1964), vol. 5, 286, hereafter cited as Shawkānī; Ibn Kathīr, vol. 4, 369.

[30] *Surat al-A'rāf*, 7: 179; Ibn Kathīr, vol. 2, 269.

[31] *Fiqh*, 104.

[32] Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bāri bisharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, (Bayrut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1970), vol. 1, 164-165; hereafter cited as *Fath al-Bāri*.

The same can be said of the second term given to *kalam*, that is *'ilm al-kalam*. The term *kalam* in al-Qur'an was cited seventeen times, three of which were in the singular form and fourteen of which in the plural form. All of them, though they differ in their mode of expression and presentation, refer to the words of God,[33] which *mufassirun* (exegetes) relate to the study of the religion of God, His attributes and His essence.[34] These meanings are exactly what al-Ash'ari in his *Istihsan Khawd fi 'Ilm al-Kalam*, refers to.[35] This again speaks for the connection between *kalam* and al-Qur'an. Similarly, for the science of *kalam* to be referred to as *'Usul al-Din* by al-Baghdadi, would seem to define *kalam* as the study of the religion and its branches, namely the *usul* matters and *furu'* matters.[36] Al-Qur'an, while not mentioning *usul* as such, highlights the term *din* ninety-one times, eleven of which were suffixed with *kum* (you - plural), twice with *hu* (he), ten times with *hum* (they) and twice with *'i '* (I - singular). The term *din* here points to the one and only religion accepted by God[37] and its principles like resurrection,[38] the performance of prayer and the payment of *zakah*.[39] These principles are among the points which al-Baghdadi deliberated on in his *Usul*.[40] Hence, these facts again would seem to indicate that *kalam* originates from the Islamic milieu.

In addition, in the name *kalam - 'ilm al-nazar wa al-istidlal* the bond between the name of *kalam* and al-Qur'an, can again be observed. To explain

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[33] *Surat Yunus*, 10: 64; *Surat al-Tawbah*, 9: 6; *Surat al-Anfal*, 8: 7; *Surat al-Shura*, 42: 24.

[34] Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir, *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, (Bayrut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1970), vol. 9, 196, hereafter cited Tabari; Tabrisi, vol. 9, 45; Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, 338; Shawkani, vol. 3, 288; Razi, vol. 15, 128.

[35] Al-Ash'ari, *Risalah Istihsan al-Khawd fi 'Ilm al-Kalam*, tr. McCarthy, R.J., *The Theology of al-Ash'ari*, (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953), hereafter cited as *Istihsan*; *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 34-50.

[36] *Usul*, 85.

[37] *Surah al-Ma'idah*, 5: 3; *Surah Ali 'Imran*, 3: 19, 85; *Surah al-Tawbah*, 9: 33.

[38] *Surat al-Fatihah*, 1: 4; *Surat Al-Ahzab*, 33: 5.

[39] *Surah al-Tawbah*, 9: 11.

[40] *Usul*, 801.

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the term *nazar*, al-Qur'an has used it one hundred and twenty-two times in various forms of Arabic conjugation. Among the meanings of *nazar* are: respite, seing or observing the signs of God,[41] while *istidlāl*, a derivative of *dalil*, refers to the proof of the signs of God.[42] Here, the meanings of the terms *nazar* and *istidlāl*, as given above, reflect the idea that *'ilm al-nazar wa istidlal* or *kalām*, is a subject that calls for a method of studying the signs of God through the act of observation followed by the act of vindication. Since *kalām*, as mentioned earlier, means to adduce religious matters with *'aql* and is also an activity of observation and vindication of the signs of God, Taftāzanī has certainly applied the said premises well. In other words, in his effort to explain *kalam* and the method of approaching *kalām*, that is, through *nazar* and *istidlāl*, Taftāzanī, has correctly linked these terms which he has applied and explained in his commentary of the creed of al-Nasafī, to the ones that are stipulated in al-Qur'an.[43] Likewise, a similar pattern could be observed in the application of the term *tawhid*, another name given to *kalām* by al-Māturidī. In his book *Al-Tawhid*, al-Maturidī explains that *tawhid* denotes the idea of the unity of God.[44] Al-Qur'an, however, does not mention the term *tawhid* specifically but instead cites the term *ahad* (one) thirty-three times. Nevertheless, according to Ibn Abi al-'Iz, in his commentary on the creed of Tahāwī, the whole al-Qur'an itself, expresses the idea of *tawhid*, as revealed in its affirmation and its division.[45] For example, in *Sūrah al-Fatihah*, al-Qur'an announces the whole idea of *tawhid*. Verses from one to four speak in the name of God, Most Gracious and Most Merciful; praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of

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41 *Sūrah al-An'am*, 6: 65; *Sūrah Yunus*, 10: 71.

42 *Sūrah al-Furqān*, 25: 45; Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, 144, 426; vol. 3, 321; Ibn Abi al-'Iz, 'Ali ibn 'Ali al-Dimashqi, *Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah*, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1987), vol. 1, 43, hereafter cited as *'Aqidah*.

43 *Sharh*, 7 - 14.

44 *Roots*, 107 - 226.

45 *'Aqidah*, vol. 1, 43.

the worlds and Master of the Day of Judgement. Verses from five to seven, on the other hand, deal with man's relationship to God, seeking His *hidāyah* (succour) so that man will be on the straight path: "Thee do we worship and Thine aid we seek; show us the straight path, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray."[46] Indeed the concept of *tawḥīd* is too vast a subject to be dealt with here[47] but suffice it to state that what al-Maturīdī has been discussing in his *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, affirms and makes use of the *tawḥīdic* principle as implied in al-Qur'ān to explain *kalām*. Hence, this illustrates the foundation on which *kalām* rest, that is, traditional argument, perceptual argument and rational argument.[48] *Kalām* as such, articulates what it sees as the essential and fundamental contents of what al-Qur'ān has laid out to be read by its readers. This science also constructs the form of a dialectical discourse or speculative framework according to which it understands the rational contents and coherence of the principles and elements of this belief as laid out by al-Qur'ān.

(1.2) THE SCIENCE OF *KALĀM* AND VARIOUS ATTRIBUTES TO *KALĀM*.

With regard to the elements that are contained in the science of *kalām*, Taftāzanī sees them as comprising three important facts, namely:

(i)   *kalām* in the sense of a discourse on such-and-such issues (*al- kalām fī kadhā wa kadhā*).

46   *'Aqīdah*, vol. 1, 43f.

47   For more information see *'Aqīdah*, vol. 1, 23 - 50; *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 34 - 54; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Iqtida' al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm Mukhālafah Aṣḥāb al-Jahīm*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, nd.), 459, hereafter cited as *Iqtida'*.

48   *Roots*, 109 - 141.

(ii)   *kalām* in the sense of the speech of God (*kalām Allah*) which was the most important issue to be dealt with and that gave rise to many disputes.

(iii)   *kalām* in the sense of a dialectic formula which begins by posing a question, in the form of disjunction: whichever choice the adversary makes, he loses and is trapped in a position which is either manifestly untenable or identical with that of the questioners.[49]

The first point which Taftazani pointed out, as indicated above, that *kalām* means discourse on such-and-such issue,[50] is demonstrated in the early writing shown in Abu Hanifah's *Al-Fiqh al-Akhbar*. In this book, the author explained and discussed many religious issues from the perspective of *fiqh*.[51] In so doing, he demonstrated to the reader the integral relationship between *fiqh* and *kalām*[52] and at the same time illustrated the method which he used to explicate his ideas which rested on *naql* and *'aql*. Such an explanation influenced his successors like al-Nasafi (d. 537 A.H./ 1142 A.D.) to emphasise the importance of *naql* and *'aql* in the study of religious matters notably those related to the study of the essence and the attributes of God.[53] This idea, therefore, justifies the second point which Tafazani mentioned in relation to the elements that are

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49   *Sharh*, 7 - 8.

50   *Sharh*, 7.

51   In commenting on Article 6 of Abū Hanifah's *Al-Fiqh al-Akhbar*, Wensick opines that the use of the term *fiqh* as shown in this work is in its original sense of "insight". This means that the term *fiqh* used by Abū Hanifah here, does not refer to jurisprudence as we understand it today, rather it means insight or keen observation or deep understanding. Indeed, it is on this premise that one should see, when Abū Hanifah says: *fiqh* in *usūl al-dīn* is better than *fiqh al-'ilm*, meaning insight into religious matters is better than insight into knowledge and *sunan*. Likewise, the term *faqih* during Abu Hanifah's time had not yet received the special sense of jurist, but it usually means theologian. As for the term *'ilm* or knowledge, it refers to religious knowledge, notably in connection with hadith literature itself, whereas theological knowledge, apart from hadith, would simply be *ra'y* (opinion or brain-work). For more information, see *Fiqh*, 110 - 112.

52   The integral relationship between *fiqh* and *kalām* is discussed in Chapter 3.

53   *Sharh*, 15 - 27.

contained in the science of *kalām*.   As for the third point, that is, *kalām* which contains logical argument, is true, for al-Qur'an itself invites its readers to reflect and draw lessons from what it has expressed and then directs their attention to the method of reflection. This method of reflection which al-Qur'an indicated, notably in its explanation on religious ideas, became an important tool for Muslims to vindicate their ideas.[54]   The use of this logical argument became excessive with the influence of the Greek philosophical works that were translated into Arabic. With this access to the Greek philosophical works, Muslims were found to make use of the Qur'ānic dialectic formula together with the logical formulation that was applied in the Greek philosophical works to explain religious matters.[55] With regard to *kalām*, the method of studying *kalām* changed in the sense that the use of *'aql* was emphasized over the use of *naql* [56] and this method could be seen in the ideas propounded by the Mu'tazilites.[57] The Mu'tazilites believed that the verses of al-Qur'an which related to God's attrributes needed to be understood through *ta'wil* (allegorical interpretation) which basically rests upon logical evidences.[58] This represented an innovation from the method used by the early Muslims who understood *kalām* as an integral part of *fiqh*, and this resulted in

54   Religious discussions, particularly the ones which employed reasoning started very early in Islam. Al-Qur'an which was revealed to the Prophet, employed this tool throughout its explanation. This is important because the Prophet had to deal with all manner of believers, atheists or those who denied the power and predetermination of God and those who attributed a partner to God, be it from the celestial spheres like the stars or the lower spheres, like the Christians and the pagans, and those who denied prophethood altogether or those who disputed the Prophethood of Prophet Muhammad, like the Jews and the Christians, together with those who denied resurrection and others. Al-Qur'an discussed the views of such groups, refuted them and answered their claims rationally. For further information, see Rāzi, vol. 1, 90.

55   See Al-Kindi, *Rasā'il al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah*, ed. Abū Ridah, (Al-Qāhirah: npb., 1950), 165-80, hereafter cited as Al-Kindi: *Ihsā'*, 70f; Spuler Bertold, *The Muslim World, The Rise of the Caliphs*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), Part 1, 56.

56   *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 63; *Muwāfaqah*, vol. 1, 459f.

57   Al-Khayyāt, 'Abd al-Rahim ibn Muhammad, *Al-Intisār wa al-Radd 'alā Ibn al-Rawandi al-Mulhid*, ed. Nyberg, *Le Livre Du Triomphe et De La Réfutation D'Ibn Er-Rawandi L'Hérétique*, (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, 1925), 4f, hereafter cited as *Intisār*.

58   Ibn Taymiyyah, *Jahd al-Qarīhah*, tr. Hallaq, Wael, *Ibn Taymiyyah Against the Greek Logicians*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 30f; *Muwāfaqah*, vol. 1, 94 - 95.

the reinterpretation of the science of *fiqh* and the science of *kalām*. This new interpretation can be observed in many writings such as al-Baghdādī's *Uṣūl*,[59] in which he speaks of the disintegration between *kalām* and *fiqh*. He also categorizes religious matters into principles aspect of the religion and the branches of it. This development of *kalām*, that is the separation between the science of *kalām* and *fiqh* can further be observed in the work of al-Fārābī's (d. 339 A.H./ 950 A.D.) *Iḥṣā'*. In this book, he explains that *kalām* is a science which enables a person to support specific beliefs and actions laid down by the Legislator of the religion and to refute all opinions contradicting them. *Fiqh*, on the other hand, concentrates on the legal aspect of those specific beliefs and actions.[60] By the eighth century of Hijrah, Ibn Khaldūn defines *mutakallim* as a person who studies *kalām* by applying rational proofs in defence of the articles of faith. He goes on to assert that the difference between *fiqh* and *kalām* is that, the *faqīh* applied reason only on *furū'* matters since the *uṣūl* matters were derived from al-Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.[61] Finally, in the modern era, Muḥammad Abduh (d. 1323 A.H./ 1905 A.D.) defines *mutakalimūn* as the persons who study the Being and attributes of God, the essential and the possible affirmations about Him, as well as the negations that are necessarily related to Him. It deals with the Apostles and the authenticity of the message and treats their essential and appropriate qualities and what is incompatibly associated with them.[62]

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59   *Uṣūl*, 80f.
60   *Iḥṣā'*, 69 - 70. This therefore, indicates to the reader that *fiqh* which formally means insight has now received the special sense of jurisprudence, refer to footnote 52. See also *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 22f.
61   *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 63.
62   Abduh, Muhammad, *'Ilm al-Tawḥīd*, tr. Musa'ad and Craig, *The Theology of Unity*, (London: Luzac Company, 1960), 39.

From the above discussion on the method of *kalām*, two points are apparent: first, *kalām* and *fiqh* were naturally integrated with each other but later they became separated due to the influence of the Greek philosophical works which were accessible to the Arabs. The separation between *kalām* and *fiqh* was also a result of the fact that each science had its own mode of discussion and naturally their methods of approaching their subject matter differed. *Fiqh* focusses on the issues that are related to legal aspect of religious doctrines, while *kalām* rationalises the essence of the religious doctrines. Second, the separation between these two sciences also implies the idea of the acceptance of *kalām*. The following illustration will deliberate further on the acceptance of *kalām*, especially during the first two centuries of Islam.[63]

TABLE 1

The general acceptance of *kalām* during its inception.	
First generation	non-commital
Mu'tazilites	*kalām* - obligatory
Aḥmad b. Ḥanbāl (*Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal*)	denounces *kalām*
Al-Shāfiʻī (*Al-Risālah*)	denounces *kalām*
Ibn Qutaybah (*Taʼwil Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*)	said to denounce *kalām*[64]

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63 Quoted with some modification, see *Roots*, 72.
64 Whether Ibn Qutaybah denounces *kalām* or not, is among the issues to be treated in this study.

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Al-Ash'ari	*kalām* is
(*Istiḥsan al-Khawḍ fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*)	necessary but
&	not
Al-Māturidī	obligatory
(*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*)	

Kalām in retrospect, was first understood as, to quote Taftāzāni, "*kalām fī kadhā wa kadhā*" (speech or discussion of such-and-such an issue) and the most important issue related to this science, among other things, is the attributes of God. It is observed that the early Muslims starting with the companions of the Prophet, in relation to the study of this science, neither committed themselves to deal with nor speculate on the difficult issues related to God. They also maintained a belief in the clarity of the verses of al-Qur'ān (*muḥkamāt*).[65] For example, verse seven of *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān* explains that al-Qur'ān contains *muḥkamāt* verses related to legislation which the believers should follow, as well as the allegorical verses (*mutashābihāt*) like the issue of *qadar* (predestination), the eschatology and other unknown matters which the believers should accept verbatim,[66] as shown in Table 1. The reason for such an attitude on the part of the first generation of Muslims is understandable. Verse eight of the above-quoted *sūrah* states that only those who have deviation in their hearts and desire controversy would attempt to interpret the allegorical verses. Apart form this, the Prophetic traditions also verified that the issues related to the atrributes of God fall under the category of obscure or allegorical

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[65] *Sūrat Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 7.

[66] *Fiqh*, 190; Al-Ash'ari, 'Ali ibn Ismā'il, *Al-Ibānah 'An Uṣūl al-Diyānah*, tr. Klein, W.C., *The Elucidation of Islam's Foundation*, (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940), 50, hereafter cited as *Ibānah*.

verse.[67] Historical evidence also noted that the Prophet, although he answered all questions that were directed to him, except the questions that went beyond human knowledge like the time of the hour of judgement, did not encourage disputation over matters such as the attributes of God and *qadar*.[68] In fact, on such matters he would direct the questioner to what was more useful, like, when he was asked by a companion, "what is the hour of judgement?" he replied, "what have you prepared for it?"[69] As such, discourse on matters like *qadar*, the attributes of God, the nature of belief and unbelief, eschatology and the fate of the sinners, continued during the times of the Companions of the Prophet and their succesors. These matters were dealt with but care was taken to avoid going deeply into them or forcing the issues.[70] That is why when Mālik b. Anas (d. 179 A.H. / 795 A.D.) was asked a question concerning how God rises above the throne, he responded that God's rising above the throne is well known but how it occurs is not understandable and the belief in it is obligatory and asking questions about it is innovation.[71] Thus, as mentioned earlier, the Muslims of the first generations were encouraged to accept those issues related to *kalām* verbatim. However, the major impetus for the study of *kalām* came as the influence of Greek philosophy and logic made its way into Muslim thinking.[72] The *mutakallimūn*, particularly amongst the Mu'tazilites, believed that the verses of al-Qur'ān related to God's attributes needed to be interpreted through

67 Ibn Majah, *Sunan Ibn Majah*, ed. Muhammad Fu'ād al-Bāqi, (Bayrūt: Al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah, nd.) vol. 1, 33; hereafter cited as Ibn Majah.

68 Farghal, Y.H., *Nash'at al-Ārā' wa al-Madhāhib wa al-Firāq al-Kalāmiyyah*, (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'rifah,1972), 37 - 43, hereafter cited as *Nash'at*.

69 *Nash'at*, 37 - 43.

70 *Ishārāt*, 33.

71 *Tamhid*, 266.

72 Al-Kindi, 165-80; Badawi 'Abd al-Rahman, "New Philosophical Texts Lost in Greek and Preserved in Arabic Translations", *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, (Albany: State University Press, 1979), 3 - 13; Yegane Shayegan, "The Transmission of Greek Philosophy to the Muslim World", *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Nasr, (London: Routledge, 1996), Part 1, 89 - 104; Peters F.E., "The Origins of Muslim Platonism: The School Tradition", *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge, (Albany: State University Press, 1979), 14 - 45.

argument based on logical proofs.[73] This view took the form of upholding the denial of a reality for the attributes of God and certainly contradicted the one held by the earlier Muslims, as mentioned above. The Mu'tazilites idea gained momentum during the reign of the 'Abbāsid Caliph, al-Ma'mūn (d. 220 A.H./ 833 A.D.), who openly supported their dogma which was later accepted as the religion of the state.[74] Any ideas other than the Mu'tazilites dogma were considered heretical.[75] A strong reaction arose amongst the Muslim scholars against this "man-made" imposition. They refuted the methods of *kalām* and many of the conclusions reached by the *mutakallimūn*. At the forefront of this opposition, notably to the reaction against the interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* verses, which the Muslim scholars viewed as a denial of God's attrributes, were Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 245 A.H./ 855 A.D.), Muhammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhāri (d. 256 A.H./ 870 A.D.) and Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shāfi'i. Ibn Hanbal led the attack against the claim of the Mu'tazilites that al-Qur'ān was created and not the eternal attribute of God.[76] He opined that God has an eternal attribute of speech and that al-Qur'ān was a part of this attribute. His evidence was the verses in which al-Qur'ān states that God spoke to Mūsā. He argued that the words of al-Qur'ān which people utter or write are not eternal, but that al-Qur'ān is part of God's eternal attribute of Speech.[77] This opposition marked the era of an official struggle between tradition and reason, and was continued by al-Bukhāri, the student of Ibn Hanbal. Al-Bukhāri refuted the claims of the Mu'tazilites by collecting the authentic *ahadith* of the Prophet concerning the

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[73] *Iqtidā'*, 459.

[74] *Muqaddimah*, vol. 3, 53f; Ibn al-Jawzi, 'Abd al-Rahman, *Manāqib al-Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, ed. 'Ali Muhammad 'Umar, (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabah al-Khānji, 1979), 385 - 386, hereafter cited as *Manāqib*.

[75] *Manāqib*, 385.

[76] Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal wa bihāmishihi Muntakhab Kanz al-'Amāl fi Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, nd.) vol. 1, 335f, hereafter cited as Ibn Hanbal; *Manāqib*, 236 - 241.

[77] Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, 335; *Manāqib*, 385 - 393.

attributes of God. This is known as *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*.[78] Ibn Hajar al-'Asqālānī (d. 852 A.H./ 1456 A.D.), in his commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* states that the main purpose of this book was to refute the Mu'tazilites' ideas using verses of al-Qur'ān and authentic *aḥādīth*.[79] In this way, al-Bukhārī maintained the reality of God's names and attributes without questioning how they existed. This later became known as the principle of *bilā kayfa* or *balkafiyyah*.[80] Hence almost a complete set of creed on the nature of God was formulated. For example, it is confirmed that God has an essence (*dhāt*) and self (*nafs*),[81] that He has ninety-nine beautiful names,[82] that He interacts with His creation through actions and words,[83] that He knows all things[84] and wills all things into existence[85] and that He is beyond comprehension and is only known by the descriptions He has revealed.[86] For the Muslims of the early generation, this idea of God was accepted based on the "abstinence" of asking how God's attributes exist. However the *mutakallimūn*, particularly those of the Mu'tazilites continued to speculate about the nature of God's attributes.[87] To varying degrees, Muslim scholars rose up to defend the real teachings of Islam and in the process many borrowed arguments from *kalām* to uphold the reality of the divine attributes. Such scholars who sought to use the weapon of *kalām*, that is logic, as a means of defending the reality of the divine attributes were, as

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[78] Al-Bukhārī, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, (Istanbūl: al-Maktabah al-Islāmiyyah, 1315), vol. 8, 163 - 219, hereafter cited as Bukhārī.

[79] *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 13, 344 - 347.

[80] Al-Jurjānī, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, (Qūm: Manshūrāt al-Sharīf al-Riḍā, 1907), vol. 1 - 2, 48.

[81] *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 27 - 28; *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112: 1 - 4.

[82] *Sūrah al-Isrā'*, 17: 110; *Sūrah al-Ḥashr*, 59: 24.

[83] *Sūrah al-Shūrā*, 42: 52; *Sūrah Luqmān*, 31: 27.

[84] *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6: 59.

[85] *Sūrah Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 26; *Sūrah al-Naḥl*, 16: 40.

[86] *Sūrah Ṭāhā*, 20: 110; *Sūrah al-An'ām*, 6: 103.

[87] Al-Ash'arī, 'Alī ibn Ismā'īl, *Maqālat al-Islāmiyyin wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallin*, ed. Hellmut Ritter, vol. 1, 202, hereafter cited as *Maqālāt*; Shahrastānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, *Al-Milal wa al-Nihal*, ed. Muḥammad Kilānī, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1961), vol. 1, 43f, hereafter cited as *Milal*.

indicated in Table 1, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah who wrote *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, Abū Ḥanīfah, the author of *Al-Fiqh al-Akhbār*, which will be discussed later and al-Shāfi'ī, the writer of *Al-Risālah*.[88] In fact, for Makdisi, the dawning of *kalām* in Islam begins with the *Risālah* of al-Shāfi'ī because his purpose for writing the book was to counter any system of religious knowledge that pretended the primacy of reason over al-Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.[89] Taking his lead from al-Shāfi'ī, a few years later, Ibn Qutaybah, the celebrated jurisconsult, *adīb*, *muḥaddith* and *mufassir*, towards the end of a tumultuous life of controversy with the rationalists of his time, devoted one of his most significant treatises to this theme, none other than his *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*. This book presents Ibn Qutaybah's criticism of the interpretation of the Prophetic traditions made by the opponents of hadith, notably among the people of *kalām*. Ibn Qutaybah even had a section in his *Ta'wīl* highlighting the nature of the people of *kalām* as well as a general caution about the method of *ta'wīl* (allegorical interpretation) presented by this group of people. In so doing, Ibn Qutaybah classified the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet which were utilised and misinterpreted by the people of *kalām* into categories. Among them are: hadīth said to contradict another hadīth and al-Qur'ān; hadīth said to have internal contradiction and suspicious *matn* (the contents or the teachings of the hadīth) and hadīth said to be invalidated by *naẓar* (speculation), *'aql* (reason), *ijmā'* (consensus) and *qiyās* (analogy). At the same time, Ibn Qutaybah determined the intrinsic quality and value of the *aḥādīth* of the Prophet which were allegorically interpreted by the *mutakkalimūn*

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88 Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Risālah*, ed. Shākir, A.M., tr. Majid Khadduri, *Islamic Jurisprudence: Shafi'i's Risala*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1961), hereafter cited as *Risālah*. See also George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West. With Special Reference to Scholasticism*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990). Hereafter cited as *Humanism*. This book also provides a summary of *Risālah* of al-Shāfi'ī, see page 2 - 15.

89 *Humanism*, 15.

according to their need and to support their denominations. Perhaps, because there were some similarities in his discussions of the issues, notably those related to *kalām*. Ibn Qutaybah is accused by Joseph Schacht of being "...influenced by Shafi'i ...his opinions mostly coincide with Maliki doctrine ...definitely eclectic ...his own legal reasoning confused and bad."[90] Watt and Ḥasan Maḥmud, on the other hand, claim that Ibn Qutaybah denounces *kalām* on the basis that the latter has a section in his *Ta'wīl* which pointed to the nature of and caution to the people of *kalām*.[91] Are these opinions correct and fully justified?

This study sets out to clarify these questions. Following the Introduction, Chapter One deals with Ibn Qutaybah's life and scholarship. Chapter Two focusses on an appraisal of Ibn Qutaybah's *Ta'wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, while Chapter Three concentrates on Ibn Qutaybah's approach to *kalām*. In these two chapters, among the many other points to be covered is that, I attempt to respond to the above quoted statements of Schacht, Watt and Ḥasan Maḥmūd. Chapter Four highlights certain issues related to *kalām* which demonstrate to the reader whether Ibn Qutaybah denounces *kalam per se* or whether it is the method of the people of *kalam* which he rejects. Indeed, Lecomte who has contributed to the study of a scholar like Ibn Qutaybah states that there are many other books written by Ibn Qutaybah which are not available to us and some which are not extant. Hence certain issues regarding Ibn Qutaybah's works are difficult to fully discuss.[92] Furthermore, Ibn Qutaybah is better known to

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90   Quoted from Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), 257, hereafter cited as *Origins*.

91   Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 186, hereafter cited as *Formative*; *Madkhal*, 30.

92   Cf. Lecomte, "Ibn Kutayba", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1982), vol. iv, 886, hereafter cited as Ibn Kutayba.