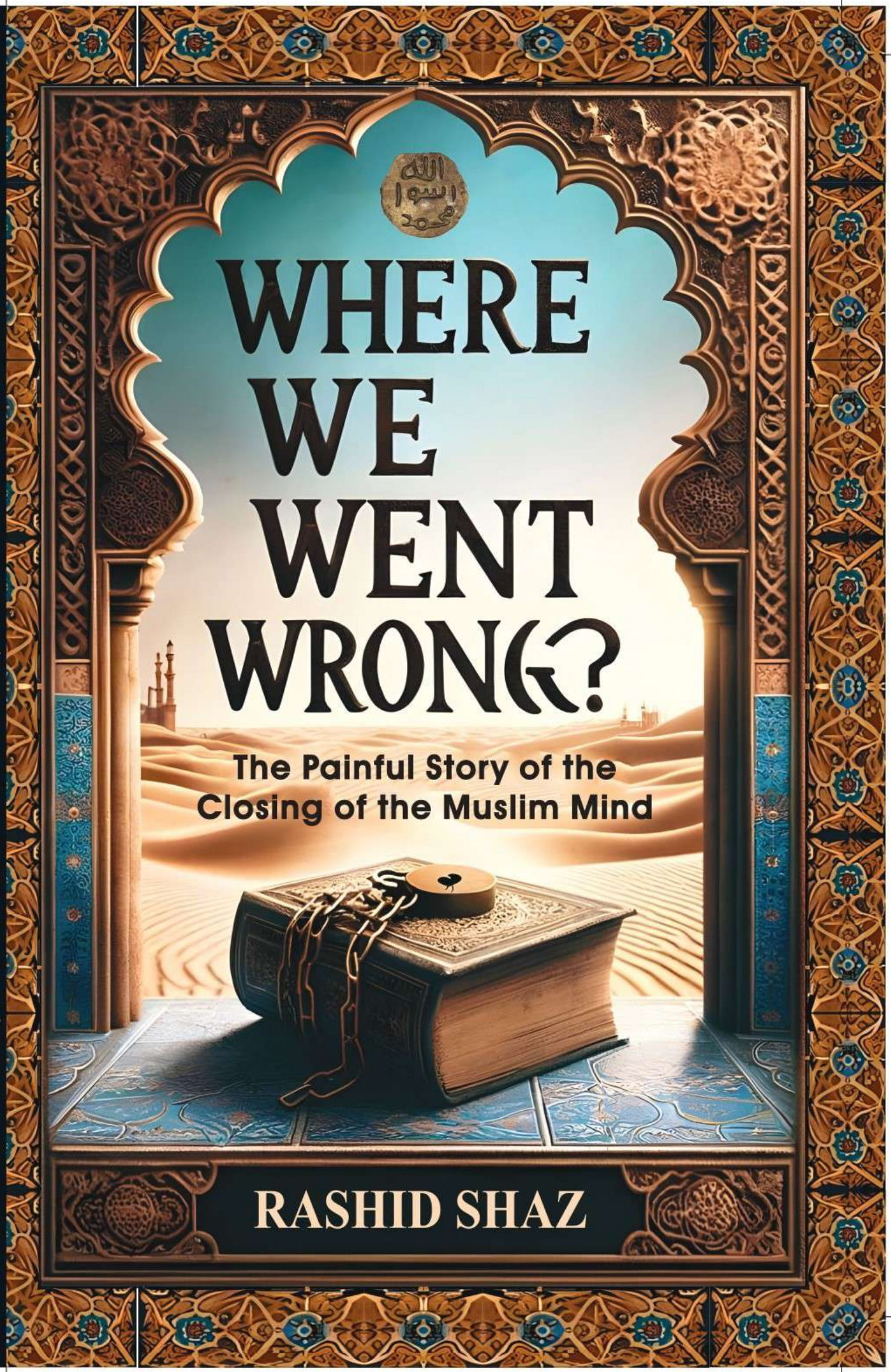
WHERE WE WENT WRONG?

RASHID SHAZ



About the book

Where We Went Wrong is an incisive critique that challenges the Muslim intellect to liberate itself from centuries of stagnation. This book is a clarion call, urging a return to the essence of prophetic Islam, as found in the Quran and the Prophet's Uswah. It bravely confronts the rigid adherence to traditional interpretations and the enticement of Western emulation, advocating for a transformative rethinking of Islamic thought.Provocative and honest, the book argues for a reawakening of the exploratory spirit within Islam. It invites readers to embark on a journey of intellectual renewal, bridging the divide between historical dogmas and the timeless truths of Islam, to reconstruct a fractured Ummah and pave the way for an enlightened Islamic identity.

About the Author

Rashid Shaz, a distinguished professor at the Centre for Promotion of Educational and Cultural Advancement of Muslims in Aligarh Muslim University, is also the head of Peace India Inter-national, a non-profit organization based in New Delhi. In addition, he serves as a Goodwill Ambassador for ISESCO, working to foster understanding and dialogue among various cultures and civilizations.

Rs. 600

ISBN 978-93-81461-38-9

9 789381 461389

Where We Went Wrong?

Where We Went Wrong?

The Painful Story of the Closing of the Muslim Mind

Rashid Shaz

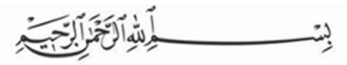
Peace India International
New Delhi

First published in English 2024

ISBN – 978-93-81461-38-9
Price: Rs. 600/-

A produce of Peace India International
Published by Milli Publications,
Milli Times Building,
Abul Fazl Enclave, Jamia Nagar
New Delhi –110025, India
Tel: +91-11-26945499
Mobile/WhatsApp: +91-7017615883
Email: millitimes@gmail.com
www.millipublications.com

Printed at Chaman Printing Press, New Delhi-2



قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِى الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ؕ
اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿۹﴾

Say, 'Can those who possess knowledge be deemed equal to those who lack it? Only the people of discernment will take this to heart.'

(Quran, 39:9)

CONTENTS

Preface

In *Where We Went Wrong:* The Painful Story of the Closing of the Muslim Mind, we delve into a critical question: What would the true essence of Islam look like today if it had not been continually interpreted and reinterpreted by various scholars and theologians over the ages? This inquiry is not an academic exercise in futility, but rather a crucial pursuit to understand the untapped potential of prophetic Islam, which has gradually slipped from our grasp over time.

In recent years, traditional and imitative modes of Islamic thought have come under significant scrutiny. Regrettably, most of these endeavors, driven more by the pressures of circumstances than by analytical dissection within the community, have adopted the same temporary and anxious approaches of the past. We are still struggling to move beyond the 'catch-on syndrome', where progress is equated with emulating the pace of Western advancements in science, technology, and civilization, in the hopes of one day surpassing them. This emulation of the West's uneven development, glorified in the name of progress, continues to wreak havoc on our environment and natural order, yet it remains an admirable model for many of our policymakers.

The Islamic world has seen a notable shift towards scientific education and an increased interest in translating Western works in recent years. Our policymakers, perhaps haunted by romanticized memories of Al-Ma'mun's House of Wisdom and the translation movement of his era, believe that establishing modern institutions and a flurry of translations can reclaim

the glory of Abbasid Baghdad. However, these innocent, albeit enchanting, notions are unlikely to herald a new renaissance. The wholesale adoption of modern Western academic institutions, whether American or European, is not a cure-all for our societal ills. These institutions, shaped by Western needs, culture, and philosophy, are effective in shaping the Western psyche but fall short in nurturing the multifaceted intellect that is intrinsic to our culture. Adopting Western academic frameworks and cultural ethos is likely to intensify the discord already present in our traditional societies. The dichotomy between religious and secular learning could precipitate a severe intellectual crisis, threatening the very fabric of our social structure. The need of the hour is for modern knowledge to spring forth from within us, deeply rooted in our religious and spiritual perspectives. This transformative journey can only begin when we critically reassess our religious understanding in the light of Allah's Book and the authenticated, perennial Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, allowing for an intellectual revival that is both authentic and progressive.

Even well-intentioned actions, if misguided, inevitably lead to undesirable outcomes. During the Umayyad era, to curtail the proliferation of fabricated traditions, Umar bin Abdul Aziz conceived the idea of compiling an authoritative collection of hadiths under official patronage. This initiative, intended to prevent the future emergence of new fabricated narratives, was abruptly halted by his untimely demise. Although the project did not progress, it inadvertently established a precedent for the authoritative organization of traditions, which rather than dispelling theoretical ambiguities, only deepened them under the guise of false and fabricated narrations. Al-Ma'mun, a renowned scholar himself, endeavored to address the intellectual disarray within the Muslim community by attempting to unify them

under a single charter of beliefs. He viewed the belief in the Quran's eternity as potentially leading to polytheism due to the existence of multiple eternal entities. Despite his reformist zeal, many lives were lost, but the intellectual fragmentation within the Muslim community remained unresolved. In Al-Mutawakkil's era, a resolute interpretation of belief once again became a state agenda. With the symbolic involvement of Ibn Hanbal, Al-Mutawakkil was deemed a reviver of the Sunnah. This period witnessed the unintentional establishment of a symbolic seat for the Sheikh al-Islam alongside the Caliph. In contrast to Ismaili and Shi'a thought, the promotion of a Sunni orthodoxy led Nizam al-Mulk to focus on institutions of religious learning. The network of Nizamiyya madrasas played a significant role in propagating Sunni Islam, but these efforts also led to a permanent sanctification of the division between 'religious' and 'non-religious' knowledge, a mirage from which we have yet to emerge. Similarly, Sultan Baibars, viewed as a great warrior in our national history for his decisive victory over the Mongols at Ain Jalut, established alternative courts for judges from all four Sunni schools of thought to alleviate jurisprudential strife within the Muslim community. This reformative measure by Baibars may have temporarily reduced sectarian violence, but it gradually granted such sanctity and permanence to the tents of the four imams that the Ummah ended up permanently divided into four warring factions. As long as we do not undertake a proper analysis of our circumstances, every step taken to eliminate strife will further entangle us in confusions, leading us further away from our intended goals. This continuing journey of analysis and introspection is crucial for navigating the labyrinth of our history and charting a course towards a more unified and enlightened future.

At a pivotal moment in history, when the bond between traditional Islam and prophetic Islam appears profoundly severed, and after centuries of journey, we find ourselves in a metaphorical dark alley with no apparent way forward. It becomes essential, rather than resorting to frantic measures, to seek illumination from the divine revelations of God. The challenge lies in the fact that traditional Islam and prophetic Islam have, over time, become like two distinct floors of a building, with no staircase or elevator connecting them. How then can the interpreters of traditional Islam truly comprehend the different nature of prophetic Islam that resides on the higher level?

In this book, we strive to create, if not a grand corridor, then at least a small window towards prophetic Islam. This endeavor is not just an attempt to reconnect with a lost heritage but a hope that in the future, someone might succeed in installing a metaphorical lift, enabling us, as a community, to re-encounter the embrace of prophetic Islam in its purest form.

The pursuit of such a transformative journey requires us to critically reassess and rediscover the essence of our faith. It is about creating a new pathway, one that acknowledges the vast distance we have traveled from our origins, yet seeks to bridge this gap. This book aims to open a dialogue, a window of opportunity, that might eventually lead to a more profound and authentic understanding of our religious heritage, reconnecting us with the prophetic wisdom that has long guided the Ummah.

Paying mere homage to the intellectual efforts and actions of our predecessors does not guarantee a triumphant future. Instead, there is a risk that in the increasing glorification of past figures, the possibility for honest analysis and critique may diminish, trapping us in a cycle of repetition rather than

innovation. Unfortunately, for many centuries, the Muslim community has been in a state of slumber, both in heart and mind, with our aimlessness and confused thinking becoming all too common.

For a new beginning, it is crucial that our dormant collective existence is shaken by the direct impact of divine revelation. In the severity of the current circumstances, the deviation from our historical path, and the pervasive lamentation, one might have expected divine intervention in the form of a new prophet. However, it is our honor and challenge that, as followers of the last Prophet, the weight of this responsibility now rests on our shoulders. It is time to lift all human constraints surrounding divine revelation so that our generations may directly acquire its immense blessings, as did the early generations of Muslims. May we then experience the same fervor and unshakable confidence that characterizes a leading nation.

For a new beginning, it is crucial that our dormant collective existence is shaken by the direct impact of divine revelation.

This book is not an academic or scholarly endeavor and should not be read as such. Our aim is to initiate an internal dialogue. We believe it is essential to recognize and, more importantly, acknowledge the colossal mistakes made throughout our thousand-year divergence, which have been increasingly sanctified over time. This book raises more questions than it provides answers, for asking the right questions is in itself a guide to correct and insightful answers. This is not a final word from the divine but rather an opening in the long-closed door of internal discourse. The journey we embark on in these pages will undoubtedly be challenging for some, as it may feel

like the scholarly grandeur and interpretations of our forebears are being questioned. However, if we keep the higher goals of dialogue in mind, we will find ourselves not just expressing frustration but actively participating in this conversation. In my view, to accept the truth, it is sufficient that it is the truth, even if the entire world testifies against it.

Rashid Shaz
Author of *Idrak*
& ISESCO Goodwill Ambassador

Closing of the Muslim Mind

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَٰذَا بَاطِلًا

Those who remember Allah while standing or sitting
or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the
creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying],
'Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly.

The Quranic revelation was a transformative moment in human history, fostering a mindset rooted in deep thought, introspection, and reason. It established the idea that the universe is intentionally structured, dismissing any beliefs of its accidental creation. This revelation made it clear that the patterns of the sun, moon, and the alternation of night and day follow the natural laws set by Allah. From the beginning, Muslims understood their responsibility as guardians of this profound message, charged with guiding humanity throughout time. The role of correcting the course of history, once the duty of prophets through divine guidance, now rested entirely with the followers of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This shift was a monumental change, beginning with the revelation of the Noble Quran to Muhammad, a text that not only offered guidance but also encouraged exploration and understanding of the phenomenal world.

The Quranic revelation was a transformative moment in human history

The Noble Quran, in contrast to prior scriptures, is distinguished by its unique tone and approach. It actively

promotes in-depth reflection on the universe, emphasizing the importance of intellectual engagement. The Quran describes natural phenomena such as rain from the heavens, the growth of diverse fruits, and the movement of ships across oceans, while also inviting exploration into the less tangible aspects of our world and the potential they hold for the future. This highlights that the Quran goes beyond being just a set of directives; it is also a guide to understanding the natural world. Those who study it as a source of discovery will find themselves immersed in a profound sense of awe, similar to that experienced by spiritually aware scholars and scientists, and will discover a realm filled with uncharted possibilities.

This distinct element of the Quranic revelation prepares humanity for a time without new prophets following Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. With the end of prophethood, human history is meant to evolve through shared reflection and direction from this scripture of discovery. The revelation of the Noble Quran thus represents a pinnacle in human cultural and spiritual development. It becomes clear that Muhammad's prophethood introduced a major shift in the course of human history. Now, humanity must navigate its future, guided by the light of this divine revelation and the strength of human reason, independent of any prophet, whether literal or metaphorical, any saint with claims of divine inspiration, any self-declared Mahdi, or any Imam of the Age or Promised Messiah claiming celestial connections.

The Quran's foundational philosophy imbued the early followers of Prophet Muhammad with a profound sense of purpose. It highlighted their responsibility to actively shape future history. As inheritors of the final prophet's legacy, they were entrusted as guardians of the universe. Guided by divine revelation (The Quran) and bolstered by the tacit unseen

support of cosmic powers, their mission was unassailable. The remarkable success of Muhammad's followers in the early centuries stemmed from this deep conviction.

The Quranic accounts about earlier nations, along with the mysteries unveiled in the Book of Nature, revealed to Muslims that the journey of human civilization, similar to the universe, is influenced by social, political, and spiritual factors. Just as stars orbit within their paths without collision, human civilization's evolution is governed by specific principles and laws.

This understanding echoes in Iqbal's verse 'ہاتھ ہے اللہ کا بندۂ مومن کا ہاتھ' ('The hand of Allah is with the hand of the faithful believer'), illustrating how discovering Allah's laws in the universe empowers believers. Similarly, comprehending and reshaping the human psyche's conceptual framework can catalyze a major global shift. Divine revelation nurtured a mindset that, despite profound devotion, is characterized by intelligence and wisdom, and adheres to moderation in worldly affairs, as advised in the Quran: 'لا تنس نصيبك من الدنيا' ('Do not forget your portion of this world'). This verse, along with the Hadith 'ان الدنيا خلقت لكم وانكم خلقتم للآخرة' ('The world is created for you, and you are created for the hereafter'), embodies the essence of a balanced society that harmonizes material existence with spiritual aspirations.

Profound changes often take root in the fertile grounds of thoughts and dreams.

Profound changes often take root in the fertile grounds of thoughts and dreams. In moments of silence and the deep stillness of late nights, the birth of a revolutionary idea marks the inception of a new epoch. This phenomenon highlights a crucial truth: when a nation loses sight of its defining ideals, it drifts towards aimlessness. In the early years following

Prophet Muhammad's teachings, his followers moved forward with remarkable vigor and clarity. Yet, barely half a century later, internal political conflicts began to cast shadows over their foundational thoughts and reflections. Such challenges are not unusual in the lifecycle of revolutionary movements. These early internal conflicts, culminating in the disintegration of the Caliphate modeled on prophetic principles, rendered attempts at ideological and intellectual reform fruitless. Despite these challenges in thought, action, and severe political upheaval, the philosophical ideology of Islam continued to resonate vibrantly, influencing the civilized world for centuries. Had the upholders of divine revelation (The Quran) managed these teachings with greater prudence in all respects, the contemporary world might have looked very different. However, this perspective remains largely theoretical, acknowledging the natural evolution of ideas when implemented in the human context. The important takeaway for us is that with the guidance of divine revelation and lessons from history, there is still an opportunity to pursue a new and more promising path.

Despite the conceptual complexities, which will be discussed in forthcoming pages, the inquisitive and discovery-oriented mindset encouraged by the Quran has the potential to substantially alter human civilization. Its impact endures despite numerous internal and external challenges. Consequently, there is no justification for the world to forgo a renewed, divinely inspired transformation, especially after rectifying ideological misdirections and revitalizing a discovery-oriented mindset. Before delving into this inspiring possibility, it is imperative to first unpack the reasons and dynamics that initially diluted this mindset of exploration and discovery in the early centuries.

Caliphate versus Arab Empire

The early chapters of Islamic history are often enshrouded in a thick mist of controversies. Amidst a tapestry of conflicting and sometimes antagonistic narratives, one aspect stands out clearly: the Muslim community's unity was irrevocably altered after the assassination of Caliph Uthman. The subsequent political transformation was dramatic — the role of rulers morphed from being 'Caliphs of the Messenger of Allah' to figures resembling usurpers or hereditary monarchs. This significant change necessitated a historical division into the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman eras.

This period marked a critical juncture in shaping Islam's ideological framework. Various groups manipulated religious traditions and narratives to reinforce their political agendas, going as far as tailoring Quranic interpretations to their advantage. Imam Muslim, in the introduction to Sahih Muslim, poignantly notes that even the devout are not immune to inadvertent falsehoods. In this tumultuous era, many who liberally interpreted traditions and Quranic narrations are today venerated as the righteous predecessors (Salaf-e-Saliheen). Their approach to understanding Islam profoundly influenced its development in the years that followed, leaving an indelible mark on the faith's trajectory.

Even the devout are not immune to inadvertent falsehoods.

The assassination of Caliph Uthman marked a crescendo of unrest, a continuation of tensions first seen in the initial Ridda Wars, or the wars against apostates. During Abu Bakr's caliphate,

some members of the Muslim community were reluctant to pay Zakat to the central government, advocating instead for its use in local welfare projects rather than its remittance to Medina. This approach was seen as an act of defiance, even rebellion, against central authority. The Companions of the Prophet, initially hesitant, grappled with the decision to wage war on these Zakat refusers.[1] However, Abu Bakr Siddiq's resolute stance to enforce Zakat payments, declaring his readiness to wage jihad against any non-compliance, no matter how minor, eventually garnered widespread support among the Companions. This pivotal decision by Caliph Abu Bakr played a crucial role in restoring the state's dignity and authority. Yet, it also ushered in an unprecedented era in Islamic history, where believers found themselves in armed conflict with each other. The group opposing the centralised Zakat system did not renounce Islam; their contention was purely with the method of its distribution. Despite initial reluctance, Abu Bakr's firm decision marked a notable departure from Prophet Muhammad's more inclusive and accommodating approach. For instance, the Prophet once welcomed a man into Islam despite his inability to commit to Zakat and jihad, believing that the man would naturally come to fulfill these duties after experiencing the faith's blessings.[2] In stark contrast, Abu Bakr faced the daunting task of ensuring the survival of the nascent Islamic state. His decision to take drastic measures was driven by the need to preserve collective order. This set a significant precedent, suggesting that when dialogue and mutual

Abu Bakr's firm decision marked a notable departure from Prophet Muhammad's more inclusive and accommodating approach.

understanding are insufficient to maintain social cohesion, resorting to state power, even against fellow Muslims, could be considered a necessary course of action.

In the era of Caliph Abu Bakr, a critical jurisprudential decision was made concerning the properties reserved by the Prophet Muhammad for the Ummah's leadership. While a part of these properties supported his family and relatives, a substantial portion funded jihad efforts, assisted new Muslims, and financed state expenditures. Abu Bakr Siddiq took over these properties for the state, asserting that prophets do not leave heirs.[3] This move deprived the Prophet's Hashemite relatives of privileges they had previously enjoyed and considered their right due to their familial ties with him. Abu Bakr's decision may have been aimed at underscoring Islam's rejection of hereditary privilege and racial superiority, but it compounded the sorrow of the Hashemite relatives after the Prophet's death. The economic repercussions of this decision were not profoundly felt during the tenures of Abu Bakr and Umar, known for their frugal lifestyles. However, under Caliph Uthman, the dynamics began to shift. Uthman, a wealthy merchant, led a more affluent life and was independent of state funds for his personal needs. He even financed state projects from his own wealth when necessary, as exemplified by his personal funding for the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque, despite general reservations about using Muslim funds for such purposes.[4] Uthman's more opulent lifestyle, in contrast to his predecessors, sparked criticism and discontent among those who felt alienated or marginalized by the changing socio-political environment.

It is not easy to ascertain when exactly the tradition of 'leadership belongs to the Quraysh' (الأئمة من قريش) first appeared. From the historical accounts of the Saqifah Bani Sa'ida gathering,

we gather that consensus on Abu Bakr Siddiq's leadership evolved amidst the internal strife between the Aws and Khazraj tribes and the deteriorating health of Sa'ad ibn Ubadah, all under the larger narrative of safeguarding the interests of Islam. As time passed, this episode was interpreted by some as the foundational basis for Qurayshi leadership. Various statements attributed to the Prophet also surfaced in this context. For example, a report by Abu Hurairah in Tirmidhi delineated roles among the Quraysh, Ansar, and Ethiopians in governance, judicial matters, and the Adhan, respectively.[5] In another instance, a prophecy given to the Prophet's uncle, Abbas, indicated that his descendants would retain governance in Iraq, supported by the people of Khorasan and identified by their black attire, until the arrival of Jesus Christ.[6] Furthermore, the Prophet is attributed with the saying, stressing obedience in leadership: 'Listen and obey, even if an Ethiopian slave with a head like a raisin is appointed over you' (إسمعوا وأن ولي عليكم عبد حبش ذو زبيبة).[7] These diverse narratives and traditions highlight the intricate and multifaceted nature of leadership concepts in early Islamic history.

'Listen and obey, even if an Ethiopian slave with a head like a raisin is appointed over you'

The initial cornerstone for the Islamic principle of collective consultation (أمرهم شورى بينهم) was set during the pivotal gathering at Saqifah Bani Sa'ida. However, this seminal decision inadvertently led to a sense of disenfranchisement among certain Ansar groups and the Hashemite relatives of the Prophet. According to historical records, the appointments of Ansari and Hashemite leaders to key positions were notably infrequent during the reigns of the first three Caliphs.[8] It was only under

Caliph Ali's leadership that these groups began to emerge more prominently.[9] This development suggests a latent discontent within certain segments of Madinan society, stemming from economic decisions taken during Caliph Abu Bakr's era. Initially dormant, this discontent became more pronounced as the caliphate grew in attractiveness as a position of power. The caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar were characterized by notable austerity, which also extended to their family members and relatives. In contrast, Caliph Uthman's tenure marked a shift towards a more lenient and inclusive approach, allowing certain relatives to partake in the caliphate's benefits, thereby reigniting the suppressed grievances of the Ansaris and Hashemites. Furthermore, Uthman's era was marked by his gentle nature and a policy favoring general amnesty. Unlike the first two Caliphs, who used state power to buttress their stances, Uthman's approach was more conciliatory. Both Abu Bakr and Umar had implemented their personal judgments decisively, despite facing opposition. Caliph Umar, in particular, adopted distinctive stances on various issues, such as altering land tax policies, suspending the amputation punishment due to changing circumstances, halting marriages to People of the Book, implementing the enforcement of triple talaq, and establishing the communal Tarawih prayers.

The gradual shift of Madinan society towards Arab imperialism is closely linked to the establishment of the 'Diwan al-Ata' or 'Bureau of Grants' under Caliph Umar's leadership. Within the first three years of his caliphate, the Islamic state extended its reach to include the resource-abundant regions of Syria, Iraq, and Persia. Significant military successes, including the Battle of Qadisiyah in 14 AH and the conquests of Madain and Jalula by 16 AH, led to a substantial increase in war spoils deposited

in Medina's central treasury.[10] This wealth, augmented by the jizya tax and land taxes from the conquered areas, sufficiently funded jihadist activities. In response to the swelling state treasury, Caliph Umar, guided by his own discretion, founded the 'Diwan al-Ata', a formal institution for administering annual stipends. This bureau was tasked with disbursing allowances to jihad participants and their families, encompassing cash and grain support for their dependents. While this initiative ensured financial support for those who served in jihad, it raised concerns among some senior Companions. They feared this dependency on state handouts could diminish the Muslim community's engagement in commerce.[11] Caliph Umar, however, contended that the considerable increase in state revenues from the conquered territories made this system an essential measure.[12]

In its initial phase, the surge in wealth modestly raised living standards, fostering a spirit of fellowship and unity within the Muslim community. Caliph Umar's economic strategies were lauded across the Muslim world, embodying the ideals of an Islamic welfare state devoted to its citizens' welfare. Yet, this growing prosperity gradually altered societal norms and values. During the Umayyad era, the Arab Muslim society transformed, marked by a new focus on affluence and leisure. This shift became a magnet for cultural figures like poets, musicians, and storytellers, who were attracted to the prosperous milieu. By the time of Caliph Abd al-Malik's rule, the societal landscape had shifted dramatically. Long-standing institutions such as slavery and concubinage found new life, now cloaked in Islamic justifications. Jurists, aligning with monarchical tendencies, crafted intricate interpretations that lent an Islamic facade to these traditional institutions, despite their deep-seated roots in pre-Islamic practices.

The ascendancy of Caliph Ali and the subsequent rise of the Umayyad dynasty marked a pivotal shift in the Islamic caliphate's epicenter from Medina to Kufa, and later to Damascus. This geographical shift heralded significant implications, signaling the evolution of Islam from its Medinan roots into forms more reflective of Kufan and Syrian cultural contexts. The intense push for an ethnically driven caliphate among Ali's Shia adherents and the Umayyads' establishment of a racially inclined monarchy in Syria were manifestations of these regions' distinct cultural influences. It's essential in historical discourse to recognize that, from the caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar to the tumultuous eras of Uthman and Ali, these were intrinsically human societies, rife with internal conflicts, yet rooted in profound ideological beliefs. The steadfastness and loyalty to Islam demonstrated by its first-generation adherents were significantly shaped by the Prophet Muhammad's guidance. Appreciating these human dynamics offers insights into the gradual decline of the Islamic movement in the ensuing centuries, helping to trace the roots of this deceleration. The relocation of the caliphate's center to Kufa following Uthman's assassination was not a calculated jurisprudential move by Caliph Ali. Instead, it was a byproduct of his yet-to-be-consolidated leadership and the lack of a unified Muslim community at the time of his martyrdom. In Syria, proponents of Uthman's cause eventually strengthened their grip on the caliphate. While Ibn Zubayr's subsequent efforts momentarily revived hopes of shifting the caliphate back to Hejaz, his nine-year rule was ultimately quelled by Abd al-Malik. This marked the emergence of an imperial Islamic state, ingrained with foreign cultural elements and distanced from its original centers in Mecca and Medina.

The tenure of Abd al-Malik stands as a crucial juncture in our shared history, marking the period when shifts in ideological perspectives were formally entrenched. Before this, the literature of manaqib, which often portrayed individuals or clans in an exalted light, was predominantly a tool for political leverage. The full extent of how these uncorroborated stories and fervent accounts could profoundly alter the interpretation of Muhammad's teachings was not yet grasped. Abd al-Malik initiated the use of such narratives to endorse the establishment of a new pilgrimage center in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), a significant step in religious tradition. His era also heralded the formal adoption of Arabic as the official language of governance, thereby cementing the Arab cultural identity as the core representation of Islam. This linguistic shift not only consolidated Arab control over the administrative mechanisms of the state but also gradually led to Islam's revolutionary message being perceived as an extension of Arab imperialism. Under Abd al-Malik's rule, the practice of inscribing a ruler's name on coins was introduced, signaling a new governance phase. His reign also saw the end of Ibn Zubayr's governance, the final echo of a reformative era, resonating with the poignant narrative of Hussein bin Ali's martyrdom.

The era of Abd al-Malik, was pivotal in institutionalizing shifts in Islamic ideology.

The era of Abd al-Malik, spanning over twenty-two years, was pivotal in institutionalizing shifts in Islamic ideology. This period saw the burgeoning prosperity initiated by the Diwan al-Ata in Medina, which led the subsequent generation of Muslims toward more leisure-oriented lifestyles. Gradually, this prosperity began to reflect the cultural influences of Iran

and Rome, a change markedly evident in the influx of Iranian slaves and concubines who significantly impacted the Arab way of life and thought. This cultural assimilation is poignantly captured in the verse by Yazid al-Naqis Abu Khalid ibn Walid:

انا ابن کسریٰ وابی مروان وقیصر جدی و جد خاقان[13]

'I am the son of Kisra, my father is Marwan,
Caesar is my grandfather, and so is the Khan.'

This verse mirrors the Umayyad rulers' ambitions to emulate the legendary empires of figures like Caesar and Kisra, underscoring their drive for Arab imperialism. The period was marked by significant departures from earlier Islamic practices, such as the introduction of maqsurah in mosques to isolate the caliph, the appointment of doorkeepers, and the adoption of foreign royal customs. Hisham bin Abd al-Malik's extravagance, notably his journey to Hajj with six hundred camels for his clothing,[14] and Umar bin Abdul Aziz's auction of the lavish belongings of former caliphs, including thirty thousand pairs of woolen socks,[15] highlight the opulence of this era.

The Abbasid era further amplified the luxury witnessed in previous Islamic dynasties. Al-Ma'mun's reign is particularly remembered for its lavish banquets, boasting a staggering array of some three hundred dishes.[16] The extravagance of this period was further epitomized by Al-Wathiq's golden dining table, so massive that it required eighty men to carry.[17] The lavish display of wealth at Al-Ma'mun Rashid's wedding stands as a unique event in history, unmatched both before and afterward. Reportedly, thousands of pellets filled with musk and ambergris were showered upon the state's high-ranking officials. These pellets, wrapped in papers, detailed the amounts of cash, slaves, concubines, and land holdings to be granted. Anyone who

caught a pellet was immediately awarded the listed items from the state treasury.[18] The splendor and opulence of the Abbasid era are not just captured in the stories of 'One Thousand and One Nights' but also recorded in historical documents. These accounts provide a window into the societal atmosphere of the time, which significantly influenced the universal message of Islam. Understanding this backdrop is crucial not only for accurately comprehending that era but also for addressing the pivotal question: Why did the Quranic paradigm, initially a driving force for a profound transformation in human civilization, eventually experience a decline?

From Nomadic Trails to Guardians of Grace

In Arab culture, like many others, poetry, odes, and music were deeply ingrained. From the renowned tradition of Mu'allaqat to poetry recitals at Ukaz, Hudā singing during travel, Rajaz poetry in wars, to melodies on the barbat, these were integral to Arab society. The Quran, while critiquing aimless and purposeless poetry, preserved the essence of melodies, particularly in the context of Davidic tunes often used in Quranic recitations. It promised believers that their righteous deeds would lead them to paradises where they could enjoy these melodies, as mentioned in the verse: فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ (Quran 30:15), meaning 'As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, they will be in gardens, rejoicing.'

The society of Prophet Muhammad's time was a balanced blend of dignity and beauty, warfare and festivity, where human life flourished in all its dimensions. On the one hand, Muhammad's message constantly faced challenges from adversaries, making military campaigns a key focus for the Muslims of Medina. Simultaneously, life's other vibrant activities like weddings, trade, craftsmanship, and social gatherings continued. The historical accounts of this period in Medina often mention the playing of the daff and barbat, and even the Prophet's arrival being welcomed with joyful songs like طلع البدر علينا.

There are many references to girls singing at Eid or weddings and performances by Ethiopians.[19] Some narrations even record a song suggested by the Prophet. He once asked Aisha if she

had sent a girl with someone who could sing to her new home, suggesting a song like:

> أتيناكم أتيناكم، فحيونا نحييكم، ولولا الذهب الأحمر ما حلت بواديكم، ولولا الحنطة الحمراء ما سمنت عذاريكم.[20]

Meaning, 'We have come to you, so welcome us, and we will welcome you. If not for the red gold and the red wheat, your valleys would not be settled, nor your young women plump.'

The Quran set a high standard for literature, deeply impacting listeners with its recitation in the melodious Dawudian style. It's narrated that Prophet Muhammad, upon hearing Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari recite, said, "You have been given one of the flutes of the family of David."[21] This statement (وَإِنَّا نَسْتَمِعُ لِقِرَاءَتِكَ لَقَدْ أُعْطِيتَ مِزْمَارًا مِنْ مَزَامِيرِ آلِ دَاوُدَ) highlights the importance of a harmonious recitation. Traditions emphasize beautifying the Quran with one's voice (زَيِّنُوا الْقُرْآنَ بِأَصْوَاتِكُمْ),[22] and sayings like "He is not one of us who does not chant the Quran melodiously"[23] (لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالْقُرْآنِ) underline the value of melodious recitation. These teachings cultivated in the Prophet's companions a profound appreciation for the language of melody and an ability to recite the Quran with emotional depth and musicality.

Numerous companions of Prophet Muhammad were recognized for their fondness for music

Historical records list numerous companions of Prophet Muhammad who were recognized for their fondness for music and melody. Notable among them are Abdullah bin Ja'far, Ibn Zubayr, Umar Al-Farooq, Uthman bin Affan, Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Hassan bin Thabit, Aisha, and Bilal. These individuals, along with many other companions,

are known for their engagement with and appreciation of musical and melodious expressions.[24] Among them, Abdullah bin Ja'far stood out for his creativity in composing new tunes and enjoying performances on the barbat by his maidens.[25] Ibn Zubayr also showed an affinity for music, keeping maidens who played the barbat in his household.[26] An interesting account involves Ibn Umar, who upon visiting Ibn Zubayr and seeing a barbat, initially mistook it for a Syrian scale. In response, Ibn Zubayr humorously remarked that it was indeed used for 'weighing intellects'.[27] Umar al-Farooq, despite his usual cautious stance on music, is mentioned in some accounts as enjoying melodies on special occasions.[28] Uthman Al-Ghani, renowned for his generosity, had two maidens who sang for him. Known for enjoying their melodies, he remained conscious of the time. As the pre-dawn hour neared, signaling a time for reflection and prayer, he would gently remind them to stop, emphasizing the importance of this moment for seeking forgiveness and engaging in prayer.[29] These anecdotes highlight a culturally rich and diverse aspect of the lives of the Prophet's companions, where music and artistic expression were integral to their social and personal experiences.

It's said that Hassan bin Thabit, blinded by age, attended a feast where his own poetry was sung by two girls playing the barbat. Moved by his verses set to music, he was brought to tears, which flowed continuously until the music ceased. Overwhelmed, Hassan expressed, feeling as if his hearing and sight were momentarily restored, saying, "قدراني هناك سميعا بصيرا"[30] - 'It seems as though, in this gathering, my hearing and vision have been restored.' Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan, during a visit to Abdullah bin Ja'far's house, known for its musical ambiance, experienced profound enjoyment from the music. Accompanied

by Amr bin Al-As, he was so captivated by a maiden's singing that he began rhythmically tapping his foot, reflecting the sentiment, "فان الكريم طروب" - 'Indeed, a noble person is one who delights in music and joyous activities', as recorded by Al-Mawardi.[31]

Numerous accounts in historical and traditional sources reinforce the idea that the Islamic society of the first century was a balanced amalgamation of valor and elegance, where elements of warfare and fine arts coexisted. This society, under the Rashidun Caliphate, saw Mecca and Medina evolve into centers of cultural and artistic activities. As the military campaigns of the era expanded to distant regions, these cities began to shine as hubs of the arts. In Caliph Umar's time, social entertainment, including music, did not gain significant prominence due to various reasons. However, by the end of Caliph Uthman's era, private musical events started to emerge as a notable aspect of the social life in Hejaz. One significant factor contributing to the affluence of this era was the wealth acquired by the second generation of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions. This wealth stemmed from various sources, including the Diwan al-Ata (a welfare system), inherited orchards and properties, war spoils, and profitable trade. Additionally, the Islamic message had progressed from a struggle for survival to a phase of stability and dominance. With a robust force for battle and mujahideen readily available from various regions, this time represented a relatively tranquil period for the Muslims in Mecca and Medina, whose ancestors had made substantial sacrifices for the Islamic cause. The emphasis on poetry and music became a notable aspect of the

A noble person is one who delights in music and joyous activities

social landscape during this period. Sukayna bint Husayn, who died in 117 AH, is a prominent example, known for her regular hosting of musical events. One such event became historically significant when Hunain, a famous Christian musician from Iraq, visited Medina to perform at her house. The gathering, open to all, attracted a large audience, filling the house and even the rooftops. Unfortunately, during his performance, a rooftop collapsed under the weight of the attendees, leading to Hunain's untimely death, while others managed to escape with their lives.[32] Among the renowned singers of Medina was 'Azza al-Mayla, celebrated for her emotive voice and for incorporating Persian styles into Arabic music. Hassan bin Thabit, a respected poet, was a great admirer of her talent.[33]

Sukayna bint Husayn known for her regular hosting of musical events

In the social life of the caliphal capital, poetry and music held such prominence that literacy in these arts, or at least the ability to enjoy them, was considered a mark of cultural refinement. Eminent jurists and scholars frequented these gatherings for mental relaxation and to appreciate the finer aspects of art. One incident involved Hussein bin Duman Ashqar reciting a poem by Zujajdn Humairi while strolling in Medina. His incorrect rendition prompted an annoyed response from a man, who then sang the verses himself with remarkable grace. It turned out to be Malik bin Anas, the esteemed scholar, whose childhood music training was still apparent.[34]

Another notable event took place at Zaid bin Thabit's home, attended by many prominent Medina residents and companions. In the presence of Hassan bin Thabit, Azza al-Mayla, known for her emotive voice, captivated everyone by singing Hassan's

poetry accompanied by the lute. Hassan himself was deeply moved, his emotions visibly stirred by the performance.[35] At a similar gathering at Ata bin Abi Rabah's house, renowned singers Ghurayz and Ibn Surayj were invited. Ibn Surayj, performing with a lute, sang these verses by Ibn Kuthiir:

بليلاء وجارات لليلاء كانها

نعاج الملا تحدي بهن الأبعار

Translated as:

"In my nights and those of Layla, like

The flocks of Mala, challenging the herds."

The attendees at this gathering were so entranced by the performance that a state of rapture seemed to engulf them. Ata himself, part of this mesmerized audience, subtly expressed his enjoyment. His gentle nods and the slight movements of his lips reflected his appreciation and approval of the melodious performance.[36]

It is said that Sa'id ibn Musayyib, who passed away in 94 AH, was once passing through a street in Mecca when he heard the voice of the renowned singer Akhdhar Harbi from the house of As ibn Wail. Akhdhar was singing:

تضوع مسك أبطن نعمان إن مشت

به زينب في نسوة خفرات

"The valley of Nauman is fragrant with musk as Zainab passes with her shy companions."

ولما رأت ركب النميري أعرضت

وكم من أن يلقنه حذرات

"When she saw the riders of Numair, she turned away, as she and her friends wanted not to face them."

Hearing this, Sa'id was deeply moved. Stamping his feet, he exclaimed, "By God, this is the delight of ears!" Then, spontaneously, these three verses flowed from his lips:

وَلَيْسَتْ كأُخرى أوسعت جيب درعها

وأبدت بَنانَ الكف بالجمرات

"Not like that woman who widened her shirt's neck to flaunt her chest and showed her henna-painted fingers while throwing pebbles at Mina."

وعالت فتات المسك وحفاً مرجلاً

على مثل بدر لاح في الظلمات

"The maiden who applied musk and adorned her dense, beautiful black hair, which enhanced her lovely face."

وقامت ترائي يوم جمع فأفتنت

بروية ثامن راح من عرفات

"The one who stood in the assembly on the day of Arafat, captivating the hearts of the pilgrims."[37]

In the early Islamic era, poetry and singing, rather than being seen as contrary to piety, were viewed as an extension of traditional Hudā (camel-driving) songs.

In the early Islamic era, poetry and singing, rather than being seen as contrary to piety, were viewed as an extension of traditional Hudā (camel-driving) songs. The jurists and hadith scholars in Iraq were cautious about music, but their counterparts in Mecca and Medina, steeped in a cultural tradition rich with poetry, odes, and music, considered these arts as integral to a well-balanced life. Their engagement with music and poetry was seen not as a compromise of their scholarly dignity but as a reflection of a refined and cultured lifestyle.

An illustrative incident involves Abdullah bin Umar's visit to Mecca for Hajj. Encountering a woman speaking indecorously, he gently admonished her for such behavior during the sacred pilgrimage. She retorted, voicing her displeasure about being the subject of disparaging verses by the poet Arji:

أماطت كساء الخز عن حروجها

وأدنت على الخدين بردًا مهللاً

"She cast aside her silken veil, revealing her beauty,

And replaced it with a shimmering shawl upon her cheeks."

من اللآء ولم يججن يبغين حسبة

ولكن ليقتلن البريء المغفل[38]

"She journeys not for spiritual merit or devotion,

But to captivate and ensnare the unwary and innocent."

In the early period of Islamic society, the resonance of swords was harmoniously complemented by the rhythms of poetry and song. Life flourished with all its exuberance. The widespread presence of poetry and music, even in excess on certain occasions, did not diminish the piety of the devout, nor was it perceived as harmful to scholarly endeavors. The playful interactions between men and women, often mirrored in poetry and music, were seen as a natural aspect of a dynamic human society. Lady Sukayna, renowned for her extraordinary beauty and spirited personality, and respected for her lineage to Fatimah's family, was known to host public musical gatherings. During this time, the enjoyment of poetry and music was not considered antithetical to religious devotion. However, following the death of Caliph Muawiya,

The widespread presence of poetry and music did not diminish the piety of the devout

significant political shifts profoundly unsettled the societal fabric, leading to a gradual disintegration of this lively and multifaceted human community.

During Yazid bin Muawiya's rule, the caliphate underwent significant shifts in its practices and displays. In authoritarian regimes, open criticism of rulers' missteps or rational arguments for reform are seldom tolerated. Instead, preference is given to scholars adept at conforming religious interpretations to suit the ruler's wishes. Among various accusations against Yazid was alcohol consumption. The conflicting accounts in historical records make it challenging to determine the exact truth. However, references to the consumption of Nabidh (a non-intoxicating drink) during the Umayyad period and rose sugar syrup in the Abbasid era are frequent in historical texts. Abdul Malik, it is said, indulged in alcohol at least once a month. Yazid II and Walid II were often reportedly inebriated. Iraqi scholars' lenient fatwas legalized drinks like Nabidh for those who sought pleasure. This leniency was further reinforced by narratives from Shahab Zahri, which justified the sexual exploitation of female slaves, interpreted as aligning with the Quranic concept of "what your right hands possess." These developments marked a departure from earlier Islamic practices and reflected the changing ethos of the society under different rulers. The Umayyad era marked a profound distortion of the Islamic societal ideal, tarnishing the sacred harmony of valor and refinement that a healthy Islamic culture had once fostered. This period saw a significant resurgence in the institutions of slavery and concubinage. Eunuch armies and harems filled with beautiful concubines became a common feature in the courts of the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman Turks, often endorsed or facilitated by Islamic legal opinions. Figures like Umar bin Abdul

Aziz, revered as an early reformer within the broader Islamic community, strongly opposed the sexual exploitation of slave women.[39] His stance indicates that the prevalent interpretation of مِلک یمین "what your right hands possess," allowing owners sexual access to their slaves, was unacceptable to him. However, once this interpretation was established to justify the desires of rulers, it set off an unstoppable wave, deviating significantly from the principles of early Islam.

Foreign Influences on the Muslim Mind

The societal scenario that unfolded was a direct consequence of the turmoil and gradual decline of the political system. The shift of the caliphate's center from Medina, as discussed earlier, led to a profound ideological transformation. A major factor in this change was the demographic distribution in the larger cities, where Muslims initially made up just three to four percent of the population. As per the Umayyad governor Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, by the year 64 AH, the proportion of new Muslim converts in Iraq was no more than three percent,[40] which increased to about forty percent by the time of Harun al-Rashid.[41] Naturally, the influence of non-Muslims and new converts on Islam's social, cultural, and even intellectual and ideological fabric was significant. Cities like Kufa, Damascus, and Baghdad weren't merely political capitals; they swiftly became cultural epicenters of the emerging civilization. This relocation of the caliphate's center eventually facilitated a range of intellectual ambiguities and complexities. Over time, the cultural opulence and splendor of Damascus and Baghdad began to eclipse the Medina-centric model of Islam, marking a significant shift in the Muslim world.

The shift of the caliphate's center from Medina led to a profound ideological transformation.

In this period, Muslims in Syria faced a pivotal encounter with the intellectualism of the Church, prompting them to

not only study but also devise ways to articulate the truth of Islam. During the Umayyad era, especially under Abdul Malik, significant efforts were made to translate various technical works from foreign origins. Hisham bin Abdul Malik's reign furthered this pursuit with the translation of Aristotle's treatises and notable Persian literary works.[42] The Abbasid era marked a turning point, transforming translation into a scholarly movement. Beginning with Persian (Pahlavi) and Syriac sources, and eventually incorporating Greek texts, a flood of translations ensued.[43] This influx of diverse knowledge significantly enriched the Islamic world's scholarly landscape, broadening its intellectual and cultural horizons. The translation movement, spanning around one and a half to two centuries, witnessed an enthusiastic engagement with diverse sources, including Persian, Syriac, Greek, and Indian. Everything accessible, significant or trivial, was translated. This openness to foreign sources stemmed partly from the Islamic message's embracing attitude towards knowledge. Muslims were encouraged to learn without hesitation, regardless of the origin of knowledge. An illustrative instance occurred in 16 AH when Amr bin Al-As conquered Egypt. He was deeply impressed by the monotheistic scholarly discourse of the head of the Alexandrian academy.[44]

From its inception, the Islamic world displayed a deep respect for knowledge and intellectuals, irrespective of their cultural or civilizational origins. Examples like Amir Muawiya's Christian personal physician, Abu al-Hakam, and Umar bin Abdul Aziz's renowned court physician, Ibn al-Jabr al-Kana'ani, illustrate this admiration for scholarly expertise beyond religious lines. This appreciation of knowledge, including from foreign sources, held the potential to significantly advance the Islamic message. However, this promise was undercut by the influence

of monarchical governance and the internal turmoil stirred by monaqib literature, which weakened Islamic foundational principles.

The political system's crises led to shifts in perspective, fostering a climate of division and conflict. This atmosphere largely sidestepped the genuine integration and analysis of foreign knowledge. Instead, these external sciences were appropriated by various Islamic factions as tools in intellectual conflicts. Debates on topics like predestination and divine decree expanded to include discussions on the creation of the Quran. In this period marked by intellectual fragmentation among Muslims, foreign thought systems opportunistically emerged as arbiters of truth and falsehood, complicating the Islamic intellectual landscape.

The early period of Islamic history, as recounted by various historians, is often interpreted through sectarian biases, presenting either a predominantly Shia or Sunni perspective. This approach has led to a superficial understanding of history, where complex issues are glossed over with generalizations like 'الصحابة كالنجوم' (the Companions are like stars) and 'كلهم عدول' (all are just). To truly comprehend this era, it's important to see the Companions and their successors as real people, living through the challenging times following the Prophet Muhammad's death.

One pivotal moment that epitomizes these challenges is the incident of 'Uthman's shirt.' After the assassination of Caliph Uthman, his blood-stained shirt became a symbol of injustice and martyrdom, igniting deep-seated divisions among Muslims. This shirt, paraded to galvanize support against the alleged perpetrators, marked a significant shift in the Islamic political landscape, leading to the First Fitna (Islamic civil war).

It symbolized the profound grievances and competing claims of legitimacy that fractured the Muslim community.

Likewise, Abdullah bin Zubair's caliphate, which spanned about nine and a half years and included control over a substantial portion of the Islamic world, including Hejaz, is frequently underrepresented in mainstream historical accounts. This neglect occurs because the Sunni interpretation of history views the Umayyad and Abbasid rulers as successors to the first four caliphs, while Shia thought regards Ali as the immediate successor, weaving various interpretations of Imamate into the fabric of religion. Blending belief with history or reading history through a doctrinal lens can lead to misleading, sometimes catastrophic, interpretations.

Abdullah bin Zubair's caliphate, which spanned about nine and a half years is frequently underrepresented in mainstream historical accounts.

This period was marked by significant political turmoil, starting with the assassination of Uthman and leading to deep divisions among the Companions. The political landscape was so fragmented that it gave rise to distinct factions. To understand the tumultuous era accurately, we must learn to read between the lines of historical accounts, recognizing the personal biases and loyalties of the historians. Such a nuanced understanding is crucial for addressing the pivotal question: how did the Islamic message, once a powerful and unifying force, undergo such profound changes in direction and pace in the years that followed?

Our historians generally view the first century of Islam as a society where, firstly, the Arabs prior to the Quran's revelation seem unfamiliar with basic concepts of civilization and culture.

Secondly, it is a common belief that society became sanctified with the advent of Islam, leading to the era being referred to as the Golden Age. Thirdly, it's often overlooked that this initial period, while revolutionary due to the divine revelation, was a transitional phase marked by intense ideological clashes. Fourthly, the rapid expansion of the Muslim state during the Companions' era brought it into full-blown confrontation with the Sassanian and Byzantine cultural influences. Fifthly, there were those who joined the Islamic community perceiving the new system as merely a political change, whose continuous intellectual interventions gave rise to fresh debates in understanding and interpretation. Sixthly, there was no shortage of scholars in this era who either, due to their affinity for traditional methods of interpretation or deliberately, sought to alter the Quranic framework of the pristine religion through their scholarly meddling. This society of the righteous predecessors also had a notable number of emerging scholars who inadvertently or deliberately gave rise to theological debates and did not shy away from attributing misleading narratives to the Prophet Muhammad. This period of early Islam was tumultuous for the followers of Muhammad, characterized by upheavals. Whether it was the Wars of Apostasy during Abu Bakr's era, the tragic assassination of Uthman, or the battles of Siffin and Jamal leading to Ali's martyrdom - events that became the markers of directionless in our civilizational journey - all these incidents should be viewed within this socio-historical context.

The early Islamic society witnessed considerable mental turmoil and intellectual uncertainty among some of its members. This is exemplified by the incident at Siffin, where numerous individuals departed from Caliph Ali's camp, expressing their disapproval of his decision to accept arbitration, which

they perceived as a significant transgression. This reaction was largely influenced by the philosophical and theological discussions prevalent at the time. The Kharijites, in particular, were significantly impacted by these debates. They adopted rigid stances based on the philosophical and theological discourses that, while not widespread, were definitely present during that period. This episode reflects the intricate and often challenging intellectual landscape of early Islam, where burgeoning philosophical thoughts intersected with deep-seated religious beliefs, leading to complex and contentious outcomes.

This era of political upheaval presented a complex challenge for Muslims. They encountered a civilization skilled in an analytical methodology of knowledge, contrasting with the Quran's emphasis on a holistic and reflective approach. The scholarly remnants in Alexandria, the Levant, and Jundishapur naturally intrigued Muslims as a dominant cultural force. The Arab imperialism of the Umayyad period and the Abbasid era's grandeur provided a rich field for engaging with foreign intellectual traditions. However, this influx of external knowledge led to confusion among those who mistook Umayyad and Abbasid imperialism for Islamic principles. Their perspectives were influenced, sometimes distorted, by these new ideas. The ensuing centuries saw the Islamic intellectual landscape grappling with the translation movement's complexities. While the scientific disciplines, with their emphasis on empirical observation, gradually rectified their errors, the ambiguities introduced in theological and philosophical discourses found their way into Islamic jurisprudence. This interplay of diverse intellectual traditions posed significant challenges to traditional Islamic thought, requiring a process of careful assimilation and critical engagement.

The advent of the Umayyad Empire marked a pivotal shift in the Islamic intellectual landscape, where the Quran's innovative call to explore and understand the universe was overshadowed by a reliance on ancient Greek texts. These centuries-old manuscripts, originally intended as scientific references, ended up casting a persistent cloud of confusion, overshadowing the Quran's fresh perspective on comprehending the natural world. The Greek texts, more hindering than helpful, necessitated a rigorous correction of Muslim scholarly perception. This journey began with doubt, as evidenced in the literature of shukuk (skepticism), and gradually progressed to the development of original Islamic scientific findings. Although the technical aspects of these scientific texts were eventually rectified, the philosophical and methodological approaches absorbed from Greek scholarship had already subtly infiltrated Islamic learning methodologies, a challenge that remains only partially overcome.

In the realm of Islamic jurisprudence, the influence of Greek methods, particularly in interpretation and extraction, complicated the direct engagement with the Quran, making it difficult to return to a framework centered on Quranic principles. It took several centuries to disentangle from this deep intellectual entwinement. Eventually, bold scholars emerged who effectively refuted the Ptolemaic system and Aristotelian philosophy. Yet, by that time, the Muslim intellectual domain was so deeply steeped in Greek thought that Quranic interpretations, jurisprudential principles, and even logical reasoning were perceived as extensions of

The Quran's innovative call to explore and understand the universe was overshadowed by a reliance on ancient Greek texts.

ancient Greek philosophy. This assimilation was so seamless and normalized that the alien nature of these influences largely escaped notice.

Greek philosophical works on astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and cosmology took centuries to be refuted. These sciences, being based on observation and measurement, were inherently suspect in their scholarly soundness. However, philosophical topics, not easily assessed through empirical observation, posed a significant intellectual challenge to the Muslim mind. This challenge persisted until the rise of Islamic theology (ilm al-Kalam), which was developed to counter these external logical methodologies. Ilm al-Kalam eventually became recognized as a valid branch of knowledge in its own right. Its impact was profound, permeating every facet of Islamic thought and leaving no part of the Islamic intellectual tradition unaffected by these foreign philosophical influences.

In the Shadow of Greek Wisdom

The primary impetus for embracing philosophy and theology as the touchstones of truth was the extraordinary perceived grandeur of Greek philosophers. This notion, for a variety of reasons, had deeply ingrained itself in the consciousness of Muslims during the twilight of the Umayyad era and throughout the Abbasid period. At the heart of this shift was a neglect of the intrinsic value and significance of the Muhammadan message. The emergence of religious teachings, veiled in traditions and narratives, subtly eroded the lustre of this message, a topic for later discussion. Here, it is pertinent to succinctly point out some factors that may shed light on why the followers of the Muhammadan message were so profoundly influenced by the overwhelming greatness, dignity, and awe-inspiring presence of the Greek philosophers.

After Muawiyah's passing, the political discourse within the Muslim community underwent a profound transformation. Historical narratives reveal a striking instance: In Yazid's court, during a confrontation with Ali ibn Husayn, Yazid voiced disdainful comments. He implied that the Hashemite lineage had always been beneath them, only to ironically acknowledge that their claim to prophethood had somewhat elevated their status. In a tone laced with cynicism, Yazid derided the sacred concepts of revelation and angels, portraying them as mere ploys by the Hashemites to usurp power and solidify their dominion.[45] In that era, Ibn Zubayr, having declared his caliphate in Mecca, endeavored to persuade a visiting Yazidi delegation from Syria. His arguments largely hinged on claims of his

superior genealogical and racial background. He questioned, "Considering morals, character, and contributions to jihad, am I better, or is Yazid?" Nu'man ibn Bashir al-Ansari, a prominent member of this delegation, responded affirmatively in his favor. Ibn Zubayr further inquired, "Who was superior, my father or Yazid's father?" to which Nu'man agreed it was his father. He continued, "Is my mother, Asma bint Abu Bakr, more esteemed than Yazid's mother?" and "My aunt Aisha, is she better than Yazid's?" followed by, "My aunt Khadijah, the Prophet's wife, is she superior to Yazid's aunt?" For each question, Nu'man acknowledged the superiority of Ibn Zubayr's relatives. Ibn Zubayr then posed a rhetorical question, asserting the illogicality of expecting him to pledge allegiance to Yazid and accept him as Caliph, given his own noble lineage and virtues.[46] In the ensuing debate regarding entitlement to the caliphate between Nafs al-Zakiyya and Mansur, their extensive correspondence also reflected attempts to justify their claims based on racial and hereditary grounds. Both parties staunchly proclaimed their own greater right to the caliphate, anchored in these premises.[47] This trend in political dialogue starkly contrasts with the once-held reverence for divine revelation, encapsulated in teachings like 'Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you,' which negated the concept of hereditary monarchy or leadership. The diminishing influence of these profound messages in the hearts and minds of the messengers' followers paved the way for an increased fascination with and awe of insights from external, foreign sources.

The account goes that following Egypt's conquest during Caliph Umar's tenure, Amr ibn al-As sought his approval to publicly share the residual philosophical works housed in the Library of Alexandria. Caliph Umar's reply was marked by its

succinctness and clarity. He penned: "فإن كان فيها ما يوافق كتاب الله ففي كتاب الله عنه غنى. وإن كان فيها ما يخالف كتاب الله، فلا حاجة إليها. فتقدم بإعدامها."[48] This translates to: "If what is within them aligns with the Book of Allah, then the Book of Allah alone suffices us. And if they contradict the Book of Allah, then we have no need for them. Therefore, proceed with their elimination."

During Mansur's rule, the reverence and significance of the prophetic message had significantly waned among its custodians. Mansur initiated the acquisition of works by Greek philosophers from the Roman Emperor.[49] This trend escalated under Mamun's reign, who exchanged valuable gifts for the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, among others, from the Roman leaders, and established a team of skilled translators for these texts.[50] Mamun was so captivated by the intellectual prestige of these Greek scholars that he envisioned Aristotle in his dreams and used Aristotle's scholarly principles to discern virtue.[51]

It is noted that in Mutassim's era, the Arabic summary of Plotinus' 'Enneads' was first published by a Lebanese Christian, sparking significant interest in Baghdad's scholarly circles. Despite questions about its fidelity to Aristotle's original ideas, the book gained immense respect, to the extent that it overshadowed the Quran's central significance in academic discussions. Subsequently, theological debates often centered on this book.[52]

The fascination with the intellectual majesty of the Greek philosophers had so profoundly permeated people's consciousness that they seldom exerted effort to evaluate the scholarly value or distinguish between the original and derivative works from foreign sources. Shahabuddin Maqtul noted an extraordinary

fervor for translating any text authored by names echoing those of Greek origin.[53] The leading Islamic scholars of that period esteemed the Greek philosophers as the most exalted among intellectuals, viewing their academic methodologies as the apex of enlightenment. They confidently stated: "إن الفلاسفة اليونانيين من أرفع الناس طبقة وأجل أهل العلم مرتبة لما ظهر منهم من الاعتناء الصحيح بفنون الحكمة من العلوم الرياضية والمنطقية والمعارف الطبيعية والإلٰهية والسياسات المدنية." This translates to: "Indeed, the Greek philosophers are of the highest tier among people and the most noble in the ranks of knowledge, due to their proper attention to the various arts of wisdom, including the mathematical, logical, natural, divine sciences, and the urban and political sciences."[54] This depicts the mindset of the scholars and rulers of the time. Turning to the Islamic philosophers, who symbolized the intellectual splendor of their era, they remained in profound reverence of the ancient Greeks. These scholars studied the Greeks' texts with an almost sacred regard, as if these works were heavenly revelations. Ibn Khaldun notes that Al-Farabi perused 'Physics' (On the Heavens) forty times and 'De Anima' approximately two hundred times.[55] Avicenna's experience was similar; he read 'Metaphysics' forty times but couldn't fully comprehend it until Al-Farabi's 'On the Aims of Metaphysics' provided the necessary insight.[56]

The Greek philosophers are of the highest tier among people and the most noble in the ranks of knowledge

For centuries, the enchantment with Greek intellect persisted to the extent that figures like Aristotle and Plato were regarded as the pinnacle of reasoning. Al-Farabi, revered as a cornerstone of Muslim philosophy, when queried about his connection to Aristotle, remarked that had he been of Aristotle's

era, he would have been a commendable disciple. Avicenna, too, remained bound by the notion that despite extensive study, Aristotle's research was beyond augmentation. Writings of Al-Nazzam, Al-Jahiz, and later Al-Ghazali's 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers', did unveil some philosophical fallacies, but by that time, philosophical and theological approaches had thoroughly permeated scholarly methods, being deemed their core. As a result, a shift away from this paradigm was challenging. Even critics like Abu al-Barakat (author of 'Al-Mu'tabar') and Ibn Taymiyyah, who openly critiqued philosophy, still leaned fundamentally towards theological discourse. Razi, who strived to liberate the Quran from redundant narratives and Isra'iliyyat (Israelite stories), was unable to detach himself from these debates and hermeneutic approaches.[57] The crux was that after centuries of theological and logical training, the academic mindset was so embedded that even prominent critics struggled to envisage a form of scholarly discourse that moved beyond the theological framework or was untouched by outdated logical constructs of premises.

Is it feasible, then, to conceive an alternative intellectual framework or module for comprehending the core of religion?

Is it feasible, then, to conceive an alternative intellectual framework or module for comprehending the core of religion and for a deeper understanding of divine texts through reflection? Put differently, is it possible to introduce a novel way of thinking that diverges from the conventional method of truth discovery prevalent in the intellectual realm? In the established thought process, words and concepts often serve as tools, yet sometimes, their symbolic potency alters our mental constructs,

turning us into mere tools of these concepts. This is clearly visible in theological and logical discourse, but even standard methods of analysis are not immune to the deceptive nature of words. The differences in interpretations of truths, especially in the exegesis of divine texts, arise from this very issue. While acknowledging the multifaceted dimensions of divine texts, can we initiate a thought process that prioritizes teaching and discovery over mere analysis, one that embodies the Quranic encouragement for reflection, contemplation, reasoning, and observation? Indeed, the journey to explore and refine such a methodology within the Quranic thought paradigm is still an ongoing endeavor.

Theological Imprint on Islamic Thought

The human mind, with its power of perception and sensation, arrives at conclusions underpinned by a logic that is either conscious or subconscious, or more aptly, a natural coherence. Simply put, based on their observation, contemplation, experience, and knowledge breadth, people form opinions on various issues, which can be either correct or incorrect, compared to others. The variance in analysis and interpretation fundamentally arises from a thought process that, despite underlying similarities, leads to differences among individuals.

Looking at the 'hardware' aspect, nearly all humans are equipped with the same mental faculties and similar sensory capabilities. Yet, it is remarkable how individuals, raised in the same culture and knowledge environment, can hold such diverse views – some affirming God's existence, others denying it, and still others finding refuge in agnosticism. The celestial movements, the cycles of day and night, and the signs of God in the cosmos remain constant, but the adoption of different academic methodologies and inferential techniques results in divergent conclusions.

The methodology of academic inquiry holds greater significance than the knowledge itself

In the pursuit of knowledge and truth, the methodology of academic inquiry holds greater significance than the knowledge itself, as it continually adapts within various contexts. It's this

mutable nature of the academic approach that can cause a slip in our grasp of truth. At times, terms coined for convenience become constraints, hindering progress, and occasionally, a rigid or mechanical application of the academic method can entangle us in a mirage of understanding for extended periods. The theological scholars' approach to academic inquiry serves as a quintessential example of this phenomenon.

In the Holy Quran, the guidelines for engaging in Mubahala (invoking God's curse on the liars) and dialogues with the People of the Book are distinctly outlined. It highlights that guiding others to accept the truth is beyond an advocate's control. In scenarios where mutual conversation risks straying from moderation, or when the opposing party can no longer discern the lines between truth and falsehood, debates and discussions cease to be effective. In such situations, if the opposition genuinely believes in their rightness, the only option for believers is to entrust the matter to God, a practice known as Mubahala in Quranic terms.

Numerous instances in human life warrant the wisdom of refraining from definitive conversations, choosing instead to believe that 'Indeed, Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection.' The Quranic instruction 'And do not argue with the People of the Book except in a way that is best' further elucidates this approach. It suggests that when the integrity of polite discourse is at stake, believers should find it sufficient to merely articulate their position. While debate may silence an opponent, it doesn't necessarily win over their heart.

The Quran's teaching style, distinguished by its use of 'Say' (قُلْ) and 'They said' (قَالُوا), effectively preserved early religious discourse from devolving into linguistic disputes and legalistic interpretations. During the time Medina maintained its central

role, the narratives of storytellers avoided language that could offend the religious sensitivities of the People of the Book. Similarly, the interpretive methods of the People of the Book, particularly Isra'iliyyat (Israelite stories) and analogous tales, didn't find fertile ground to proliferate. Historical accounts abound with instances where Caliph Umar admonished companions for continuing their prior interpretive practices. However, the ascendance of Damascus as the new capital during Muawiyah's reign marked a shift towards a more argumentative mindset within the Muslim community. Influenced by the deep-rooted Christian tradition of debate, Damascus's inhabitants were more adept in the nuances of argumentation. Despite the Christian community's small size in Syria, their scholars and preachers possessed notable skills in debate and rhetoric. As these Christians encountered Islamic argumentative methods, they strove to refine their debating techniques. Their focus transitioned from promoting Christianity to a defensive posture, thereby impacting the direct approach traditionally used in debates.

The practice of formal public debates with Jews and Christians was first institutionalized in the court of Muawiyah.

It is believed that the practice of formal public debates with Jews and Christians was first institutionalized in the court of Muawiyah. Initially, these debates aimed at fostering understanding and enlightenment. The expectation was that once the truth became evident, the defeated groups would accept it. Over time, Muslims started compiling detailed works on the etiquette of debate (آداب الجدال), and the art of debating began to be honed and refined. The argumentative style of the People of the Book, profoundly influenced by

Greek thought, attracted the attention of Muslim scholars. The Mu'tazila sect was instrumental in elevating this form of theological argumentation to a distinct art. Later, even those who initially resisted this dialectical approach adopted it for their refutations, leading to its broad acceptance among Islamic scholars. Dharrar bin Amr (112–184 AH) might be recognized as the first Mu'tazilite scholar to formally present dialectics as a branch of religious science. His work, 'Book of the Etiquettes of Speakers' (كتاب آداب المتكلمون), is likely one of the earliest in this field. However, it was Ibn al-Rawandi's 'Book of the Etiquettes of Debate' (كتاب آداب الجدال) that had a profound impact on Muslim discourse, influencing theology, debate, and to a certain extent, jurisprudence.

Muslim scholars typically categorize issues into two types: the issue of delegation (مسئله تفويض) and the issue of restriction (مسئله حجر). The former type covers questions that allow for expansive discourse, such as inquiries about the nature of faith. In contrast, the latter type necessitates a choice between two distinct alternatives, for instance, debating whether the Quran is created or eternal. This latter approach, particularly favored by jurists, is primarily rooted in Aristotle's 'Topics VIII.2.'[58] The dynamics of debate largely revolve around the nuances and implications of the issue of restriction. For instance, if an opponent concedes that the Quran is eternal, it then becomes necessary to discuss its association with the Divine Essence, thereby initiating a never-ending series of debates about God's nature and attributes. While this method may not always lead directly to the truth, it opens up a new realm of discourse for those seeking truth, where the debate over proofs, causes, and their refutation is perpetual.

Arab scholars became familiar with the key discussions in Aristotle's 'Topics' by the eighth century. However, there was significant debate among the broader Muslim community about the usefulness of these sciences in the quest for truth. By the tenth century, through the efforts of Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus (died 940 CE) and Al-Farabi (died 950 CE), Aristotle's 'Organon' emerged as a celebrated work in human knowledge, garnering the attention of scholars. Yet, philosophy remained somewhat marginal in Muslim intellectual circles. It is recounted that a debate in 320 AH between Abu Sa'id Sirafi, a grammarian, and Abu Bishr Matta, a logician, at the home of the minister Ibn al-Furat, sparked a realization of philosophy's practical relevance. In this debate, Sirafi observed that the world was unchanged by Aristotle's logic. He suggested that life could function without Greek concepts and terminologies, which reportedly diminished the enthusiasm of philosophy and logic advocates.[59] This led to the question of the true value of philosophy and logic if they don't aid in discovering truth. Al-Farabi addressed this issue in his work 'Al-Qiyas al-Saghir,' strongly arguing that the reasoning methods of jurists and theologians owe much to this logical approach.[60] His treatise provided a scholarly foundation for the theological method, which had already gained traction among Muslim jurists and theologians. Al-Ghazali later reinforced logic as the foundation of knowledge and an integral part of jurisprudence. He stated: "واما المنطقيات فاكثرها على منهج الصواب والخطاء نادر فيها" which translates to "As for the topics of logic, most of them are correct, and errors in them are rare.[61]

Logic gradually came to be seen as the backbone of Islamic scholarly disciplines

Over time, logic and a logical approach gradually came to be seen as the backbone of Islamic scholarly disciplines, to the extent that understanding Sharia and interpreting jurisprudence without them appeared unfeasible. Scholars like Ibn Salah (died 1245 CE) and Ibn Taymiyyah (died 1328 CE) strongly objected to this development. However, by then, logic had not only become an integral part of Islamic scholarly disciplines but was essentially their foundation. In Sunni educational institutions, Najm al-Din al-Katibi's (died 1276 CE) treatise 'Al-Shamsiyah' and in Shia learning centers, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's (died 1274 CE) 'Tajrid al-Mantiq' with Allama al-Hilli's (died 1325 CE) commentary had become critical components of the religious curriculum. Among Islamic scholars, the Greek method of interpretation and exegesis had firmly established itself as the predominant approach.

Theology (Kalam), which initially emerged to validate the truth of Islam, predominantly targeted non-Muslims and the People of the Book. With the Islamic conquests in the Levant, and the ensuing encounter with the intellectual traditions of Christian scholars, Muslims felt the need to assert the veracity of Islam through rational arguments. This situation steered some scholars towards the theological methodology for understanding and explanation. As this approach matured into a formal academic discipline, it was termed 'Adab al-Kalam' or 'Adab al-Jadal'. In this vein, Dharrar bin Amr, a disciple of Wasil bin Ata, authored 'كتاب آداب المتكلمين' ('Book of the Etiquettes of Debaters').[62] However, before long, the theologians' original audience largely vanished. The Islamic state's expansion and the mass conversion to Islam changed the Muslim demographic landscape. The initial recipients of Kalam discourse might have disappeared from the debate

stage, but Kalam itself continued to evolve along established lines. Now, instead of focusing on demonstrating the truth of Islam, it became absorbed in theological debates that led to the emergence of various sects within Islam. What began as a discipline for external dialogue thus evolved into a language for internal discourse. Those well-versed in the original principles of the theological method (Kalam) understood, as Plato once critiqued the Stoics, that a master debater is someone skilled in manipulating arguments to portray truth as falsehood and vice versa. This approach of Kalam significantly impacted the interpretive literature of Muslims, transforming what was once a decisive tool against external adversaries into a means for internal discourse. As highlighted in 'Kitab Naqd al-Nazar,'[63] the key distinction between a debate and a discussion lies in the objectives: in a discussion, the inquirer seeks evidence, while in a debate, the aim is to capitalize on even the slightest weakness in the opponent's argument or a minor slip in their narrative, aiming for a rebuttal so strong it leaves no possibility for a comeback, irrespective of its alignment with the truth. This style of argumentative Kalam is prominently reflected in Islamic jurisprudential literature.[64]

Jurisprudence versus Theology

Pinpointing the precise moment when the theological method (Kalam) began influencing jurisprudence (Fiqh) is a complex task. Historical evidence suggests that during the Umayyad period, with the rise of debates on predestination and free will in Muslim discourse, the theological style of reasoning not only gained prominence but also introduced many issues into internal Islamic debates, issues that were previously central in foreign intellectual traditions. Abu Hanifa, known for his theological insight and revered as 'Imam Ahl al-Ra'i' (Imam of the People of Opinion), played a key role in advancing this approach.[65] Al-Shafi'i, despite his robust criticism of theologians, ended up organizing the principles of jurisprudence in his influential work 'Al-Risalah' along theological lines. The integration of foreign intellectual models or alternative scholarly traditions isn't inherently problematic. Yet, for a student of history, it's both fascinating and bewildering to see the close resemblance between the academic methods of theologian jurists and Hadith jurists to those of the Stoics. It prompts the question of how religious expositors came to rely so heavily on the Stoic method of inquiry, to the extent of adopting it as a foundational framework for interpreting Islam. This approach eventually became so ingrained and aligned with Sharia that it was embraced as the standard for interpretative analysis.

The integration of foreign intellectual models became so ingrained and aligned with Sharia that it was embraced as the standard for interpretative analysis.

In earlier sections, we touched upon how the discussions on 'Isharat al-Nass' (Implications of the Text) and 'Iqtiza al-Nass' (Requirements of the Text) have become foundational elements in the jurisprudential methods of both theologians and Hadith scholars. Despite significant differences, both groups are shaped by similar confusions and adhere to a comparable methodology. This section will delve into the similarities between the methodologies of theologian jurists and Stoic logicians. A student of jurisprudence, even at a basic level, understands that in the field of jurisprudence, the concepts of proof (as in substantiation) and its implication are critically important. For instance, it is commonly stated with confidence that the presence of smoke is proof or evidence of fire, termed 'Madlul Alaih' (that which is indicated) in jurisprudential language. The process of extracting evidence from the indicated, known as 'Istidlal' (reasoning), necessitates a connection between the evidence and its indication. Establishing this connection, evidence, and what it signifies, validates the accuracy of a jurist's inference, confirming the attainment of a correct conclusion. Surprisingly, when this scholarly approach is compared with Stoic thought, they appear to have employed a remarkably similar method of inference, even using terms like evidence, indicated, and implication in analogous ways. 'Dalil' (دلیل), translating to evidence or proof, corresponds to the Greek term 'ἀπόδειξις' (apodeixis), while 'Madlul' (مدلول), meaning indicated or inferred, aligns with 'συμπέρασμα' (symperasma). For 'Dalalah' (دلالہ) or 'Istidlal' (استدلال), which refer to implication or reasoning, the Greek equivalent is 'ἐπαγωγή' (epagoge). Even the analogy of smoke signifying fire, also present in Sextus Empiricus's works, illustrates this concept.[66] In such cases, 'ἐπαγωγή' logically follows. When smoke is used to deduce the presence of fire,

this conditional statement, essentially embodying the reason for the connection, is termed 'ἐνθύμημα' (enthymeme) in Stoic thought. The concept of 'Qiyas' (قیاس), which later became a cornerstone of the four fundamental principles of jurisprudence, was akin to 'Qarinah' (قرینة) in theological circles, paralleling the Greek 'σημεῖον' (semeion).[67] These terminologies and methods form the foundation of both jurisprudential and Stoic methodologies. Now, let's examine the terms that are considered markers of advanced reasoning in both schools of thought. For instance, consider the term 'خبر' (khabar), extensively used in our jurisprudential literature and traditions. In theological discourse, 'khabar' essentially denotes an objective idea, one that can be perceived as either true or false. This concept bears a significant resemblance to the Stoic notion of an objective report, or 'ἀπόφανσις' (apophansis). For theologians, 'khabar,' and for Stoics, 'ἀπόφανσις,' both represent not merely a common falsehood but rather a scenario where the quest for truth is hindered by a flaw in the methodology. Hence, it is more apt to describe such a situation as an error rather than outright falsehood. According to Jahiz, when considering any idea, there are three possible types of opinion: it may be true, false, or neither true nor false.[68] Therefore, categorizing 'khabar' (news or report) strictly in terms of truth and falsehood isn't the method of those with discernment. Firstly, reality can often be found between these two extremes. Secondly, knowledgeable individuals aren't typically accused of lying ('kaddaba'), but rather it's more appropriate to say they made a mistake ('akhta'a'). Thirdly, 'sidq' (truth) or realities are not just manifestations of some objective external entity; they also reflect a person's own subjective tendencies.[69] Hence, both in the perspectives of Kalam (theological) and Stoic schools of

thought, it's preferable to indicate that someone made an error instead of accusing them of lying.

Similar to the Stoics, our theologians also believe that the balance of evidence ('dalil') and its indication ('madlul') fully uncovers the truth, leaving no space for doubt. However, it's important to understand that evidence only becomes conclusive ('dalil qat'i') when it is reinforced by the strength of what it indicates. This means that the evidence cannot precede the indicated, and a necessary connection ('wajh al-ta'alluq') between the two must exist. In other words, while the existence of the indicated cannot be proved by the evidence alone, the converse – proving the evidence through the indicated – is indeed feasible.[70] At first glance, it might appear that the Stoic methodology had unveiled truths to the theologians. However, within this methodology itself existed the potential for its own challenge. Critics have pointed out the lack of alternative methods to determine if a piece of evidence genuinely leads to truth discovery, except for its validation by another piece of evidence. This could result in an unending chain of evidences. The theologians lacked a comprehensive response to these critiques, as extensively shown in Qadi Abdul Jabbar's 'Al-Mughni.'[71] As previously mentioned, whether it's the sophistry in the relationship between evidence ('dalil') and what is indicated ('madlul'), the process of inversion and refutation, or the efforts to uncover truths through contrasting implications ('dalalah bil-mudad'), or the quest for definitive truths through the identification of cause and attribute, the reality remains that when contextual changes subtly alter premises, the theologians' formulaic thinking falls short. This shortfall of the Stoic method is prominently evident across the broad spectrum of literature in jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, and divinity, spanning several centuries.

From its inception, jurisprudence (Fiqh) was significantly influenced by the theological approach (Kalam). The second century AH, marked by a vibrant philosophical scene and a remarkable translation movement, played a crucial role in molding the fundamental mindset of Muslims. By that time, the Kalam method of interpretation had been considerably refined. This is the backdrop against which Al-Shafi'i, when he set out to formally organize the principles of Fiqh, analyzed 'كتاب السير' (Kitab Al-Sayir) by Awzai and 'الرد على سير الأوزاعي' (Al-Radd 'Ala Sayir Al-Awza'i) by Abu Yusuf. He concluded that the four principles established by Mutazilite jurists - 'الكتاب' (the Qur'an), 'السنة' (Sunnah), 'الإجماع' (Ijma'), and 'القياس' (Qiyas) - should be fully embraced. In this process, Al-Shafi'i, who earned the honor of laying the foundational methodology of Fiqh after evaluating the methods of Awzai, Abu Yusuf, and Imam Malik, inadvertently bound the evolution of Fiqh to the Kalam approach right from the start. In the following periods, none of the major Fiqh schools - be it Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, Ibadi, Ja'fari, or Zaidi - ventured to deviate from these principles. The leading scholars of these schools made their contributions by modifying and adding to these principles according to their understanding. For instance, Hanafi scholars added 'استحسان' (Istehsan, juridical preference) and 'عرف' (Urf, custom), while the Malikis accorded the status of a principle to the 'إجماع الأهل مدينة' (Ijma' of the people of Medina), alongside advocating 'استحسان' and 'مصالح مرسلة' (Maslahah Mursalah, consideration of public interest). Similarly, the principles of 'ذرائع' (Zarai, means)

From its inception, jurisprudence (Fiqh) was significantly influenced by the theological approach (Kalam).

and 'سد الذرائع' (Sadd Zarai, blocking the means) became key identifiers of Maliki jurisprudence.

Despite their various minor differences, a common thread among these theologian jurists was their adherence to a Kalam or logical style of thought. When jurists engage in the jurisprudential analysis of commandment verses in the Qur'an, or as it is termed, 'جَعَل القرآن عِضِين' (fragmenting the Qur'an), they discuss concepts like 'عبارة النص' (the explicit text), 'إشارة النص' (indication of the text), 'دلالة النص' (implication of the text), and 'اقتضاء النص' (requirement of the text). In doing so, they are essentially following the Kalam methodology, which categorizes the implications of a ruling into two main types: 'منطوق' (the explicitly stated) and 'مفهوم' (the inferred). Further, 'منطوق' includes 'دلالة اقتضاء' (implication of requirement), 'دلالة إيماء' (implication of insinuation), and 'دلالة إشارة' (implication of indication). The method used by jurists for interpreting texts, associated with 'عبارة' (the explicit text), 'إشارة' (indication), 'دلالة' (implication), and 'اقتضاء' (requirement), is essentially a variant of the theologians' approach to interpreting explicit implications ('دلالة المنطوق في الصريح'), requirement implications ('دلالة الاقتضاء'), insinuation implications ('دلالة الإيماء'), and indication implications ('دلالة الإشارة'). Consequently, the Hanafi school's thought process, often referred to as the juristic approach, is not substantially different from Al-Shafi'i's Kalam methodology. This approach led to the emergence of significant debates within juristic texts, questioning whether commandments are causally based and if reason can discern their propriety or impropriety. Discussions also emerged about the accountability of non-existent entities for commands and the possibility of a prophet's life prior to prophethood upholding infallibility. This Kalam style of reasoning quickly turned the schools of Fiqh into battlegrounds

of intricate jurisprudential debates, giving rise to further discussions. For example, the Hanafis strongly advocated that the implications of general statements are definitive, and thus, singular reports ('أخبار آحاد') cannot form the foundation of jurisprudence.

In discussions about 'علة' (illah, causality), there were instances where it appeared as though the core purpose of jurisprudence (Fiqh) had been lost. Throughout these eras marked by rigorous legal debates, the jurists were cognizant that the logical method of analysis sometimes failed to lead to the truth. However, this critical awareness gradually diminished as the principal jurisprudential texts increasingly aligned with the Kalam methodology. To elucidate this, it's relevant to recount an encounter between Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Baqir. Imam Abu Hanifa, known for his deep involvement in Kalam-based reasoning and somewhat notorious for allegedly modifying the Prophet's teachings and traditions through his use of analogy ('قياس') and opinion ('رأي'), met Imam Baqir under circumstances laden with scrutiny. In this meeting, Imam Baqir directly challenged him, saying, "I have heard that you have altered my great-grandfather's religion and the Hadiths through your use of 'قياس'." To this, Abu Hanifa responded, "God forbid! I would like to present three questions to you, after which you may draw your own conclusions about this issue.

First Question: "Who is weaker, a man or a woman?"

Imam Baqir answered, "A woman is weaker."

Imam Abu Hanifa then asked, "What is the share of inheritance for a man and a woman in an estate?"

Imam Baqir replied, "For a woman, it is one part, and for a man, it is two parts.

Imam Abu Hanifa responded, "If I were to base my judgment on analogy, I would argue that the woman should receive two parts, as she is weaker."

Next, the Second Question: "Which is more virtuous, prayer or fasting?"

Imam Baqir stated, "Prayer is more virtuous."

Imam Abu Hanifa remarked, "Had I been following analogy, I would suggest that a woman should make up for missed prayers rather than fasts after her menstrual cycle, considering that prayer is more virtuous than fasting."

Finally, the Third Question: "Which is more impure, urine or semen?"

Imam Baqir: "Urine is more impure."

Imam Abu Hanifa concluded, "If I employed analogy, I would say that one should take a full bath (ghusl) after urinating and that ablution (wudu) would be sufficient after ejaculation. But God forbid, how could I possibly alter the religion of your great-grandfather through analogy?"

It is often narrated that Imam Abu Hanifa's theological intricacies profoundly impacted Imam Baqir. Moved by Abu Hanifa's reasoning, Imam Baqir embraced him and kissed his face. This exchange, which mirrors Imam Abu Hanifa's intellectual methodology, is frequently presented by Hanafi scholars as an exemplar of adherence to the Sunnah. It carries significant theoretical implications. The primary insight from this interaction is the acknowledgment that theological and logical approaches are not sufficient for comprehending the ultimate truths of religion. This is likely why the pursuit of causality ('علة') in ritualistic or worship-related matters is generally not favored. However, it's equally true that in areas of

life beyond worship, jurists have accorded significant importance to the pursuit of causality, recognizing its value in the broader scope of Islamic jurisprudence.

The method of interpretation adopted by jurists, heavily rooted in logic and grammar, has consistently been an obstacle at various levels in understanding the true goals of religion. When searching for 'illah' (causality), the debate over specifics and generalities has sometimes led to complexities. However, there were instances when grammarians showed remarkable ingenuity in text interpretation. Some jurists, influenced by Sibawayh's foundational work in Arabic grammar, spent up to thirty years formulating legal opinions.[72] This led to the establishment of a comprehensive school that intertwined jurisprudential and grammatical principles along with kalam (theological) rules.[73] This path in jurisprudence began with 'Al-Risalah'. Subsequent significant works in Islamic jurisprudence (Usul al-Fiqh) were essentially expansions of Imam Shafi'i's methodology.[74] One reason for this was Imam Shafi'i's extraordinary academic prominence, suggesting little need for fundamental changes or new initiatives in this field. Another factor was the increasing popularity of philosophy and logic, which many prominent scholars considered key to understanding. As a result, major jurisprudential works composed after Imam Shafi'i did not venture into new beginnings or seek a fresh methodological approach.

At times, notable scholars, while maintaining theological thought (kalam), consciously avoided its terminologies. For example, Ibn Hazm's book "Al-Taqrib li Hadd al-Mantiq bi al-Alfaz al-`Ammiyya" (التقريب لحد المنطق بالألفاظ العامية)[75] focuses on logic but eschews common terms, instead using examples from jurisprudence, which makes it seem like a book on jurisprudence.

This method effectively integrated the theological thought process into jurisprudence. Similarly, Abu Ishaq Isfara'ini's "Al-Jami' al-Hulli fi Usul al-Din wa al-Radd 'ala al-Mulhidin" (الجامع الحلي في أصول الدين والرد على الملحدين), blurs the lines between theology and principles of religion, earning respect among Shafi'i scholars despite his theological leanings.[76]

The recognition of the limitations in kalam (theological reasoning) methodology was apparent in Islamic intellectual history from the onset. Scholars like Al-Shafi'i, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Taymiyyah persistently confronted this constricted approach. Yet, they were ingrained in the very methodology they opposed, making it challenging to establish a new intellectual paradigm. Islamic jurisprudence's early development was deeply influenced by kalam, leading jurists to erroneously view it as a natural interpretative framework. Al-Ghazali's journey illustrates this conflict; he ultimately found solace in Sufism, acknowledging the kalam method's incapacity to unravel the essence of religion. According to Al-Ghazali:

Islamic jurisprudence's early development was deeply influenced by kalam

"As for the benefits, it is thought that its utility is in uncovering truths and knowing them as they are, but alas, this noble objective is not fulfilled in kalam. There may be more confusion and misguidance in it than revelation and identification. This, if you hear from a traditionalist or fundamentalist, you might think that people are enemies of what they do not understand. Hear this from someone who has experienced kalam, then said it after true expertise and after delving into it to the utmost degree of theologians, and went beyond that to delve into other sciences, and realized that the

path to the truths of knowledge from this aspect is blocked. By my life, kalam does not benefit you in uncovering, defining, and clarifying some matters, but only rarely."[77]

When Al-Ghazali critiqued the kalam methodology and highlighted the misconceptions in Islam's long-standing philosophical tradition, it was somewhat belated. The idea that the essence of religion could be reached without the longstanding companionship of philosophy and kalam was hard for many to grasp. Al-Ghazali himself was ensnared by this thought process. His "Tahafut al-Falasifah" (تهافت الفلاسفة) became a graveyard for his radical ideas. In a world resistant to new beginnings and where this juristic and theological thought was deemed a legacy of the righteous predecessors, leaving it seemed akin to abandoning Islam. Consequently, Al-Ghazali turned to Sufism for refuge.

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari significantly influenced Islamic thought, particularly against the Mu'tazilah, through his skilled use of kalam debates. His contributions cemented the kalam approach within Islamic discourse, entrapping many scholars in a mindset that continues to dominate. Over time, this interpretive methodology has not only persisted but also attained a form of sanctity. Al-Ash'ari's contemporaries, like Tahawi and Maturidi, who also helped shape the Islamic framework, were adept in theological jurisprudence, further reinforcing this school of thought.

Al-Ghazali, in "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal" (المنقذ من الضلال), acknowledged the limitations of kalam but paradoxically advocated Aristotelian reasoning in works like "Al-Qistas al-Mustaqim" (القسطاس المستقيم), "Al-Mustasfa" (المستصفى), "Mahak wa Nazar," and "Fada'ih al-Batiniyya." In "Al-Mustasfa," he even described this methodology as derived from the

Quran, influencing Islamic thought to this day. Al-Ghazali's philosophical approach encountered significant opposition during his time. Ibn al-Salah al-Shahrazuri (died 643 AH) notably criticized Ghazali and even issued fatwa against him for grounding Islamic sciences in Aristotelian philosophy.[78] This trend of resistance continued with Ibn Taymiyyah's substantial works opposing this method. Al-Suyuti, in his book "Al-Qawl al-Mashriq fi Tahrim al-Ishtighal bi al-Mantiq," and Muhammad Ibrahim Ibn al-Wazir al-San'ani (died 840 AH) also argued against the philosophical methodology. However, despite these efforts, the Greek method retained its popularity and influence in Islamic scholarship. Al-Ghazali, in "Tahafut al-Falasifah," critiqued the philosophical approach yet failed to prevent Ibn Rushd's influence. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, recognizing analogical reasoning's flaws in theology, still endorsed its role in jurisprudence.[79] Baydawi, despite his hesitations about philosophy and kalam, reflected this methodology prominently in "Tawil al-Anwar."

Al-Ghazali's failure to discover a new scholarly methodology was, in a sense, a collective failure of Muslim intellectualism.

Al-Ghazali's failure to discover a new scholarly methodology was, in a sense, a collective failure of Muslim intellectualism. Al-Ghazali became aware of the deficiencies in the Kalam methodology, but instead of initiating a new scholarly approach, he fell captive to the miraculous narratives of Sufism.[80] In 'Ihya Ulum al-Din', Al-Ghazali strongly criticized the science of Kalam and openly declared that involvement in Kalam results more often in confusion and misguidance than in clarification and identification. However, despite such revolutionary, even rebellious statements against the Kalam methodology, Al-Ghazali

was unable to liberate himself from this approach in 'Ihya Ulum al-Din'. The Kalam style of reasoning is so ingrained in his writings, including those in 'Ihya', that it is nearly impossible to conceive of Al-Ghazali's thought without it. For example, consider his method of teaching on the concept of reliance on God. He writes:

> فبهذا تبين أن مسبّب الأسباب أجرى سنته بربط المسببات بالأسباب إظهارًا للحكمة... فالمسبّب يتلو السبب لا محالة مهما تمت شروط السبب وكل ذلك بتدبير مسبّب الأسباب وتسخيره وترتيبه بحكم حكمته وكمال قدرته.[81]

Thus it becomes clear that the Causer of causes operates His law by linking the caused to their causes, to demonstrate wisdom... The caused inevitably follows the cause as long as the conditions of the cause are fulfilled, all of which is managed by the Causer of causes, His subjugation, and arrangement, by the wisdom of His decree and the perfection of His power.

In the same chapter, while unraveling the essence of monotheism, [Al-Ghazali] writes:

> فكل ما بين السماء والأرض حادث على ترتيب واجب وحق لازم، لا يتصور أن يكون إلا كما حدث، وعلى هذا الترتيب الذي وجد. فما تأخر متأخر إلا لانتظار شرطه، والمشروط قبل الشرط محال، والمحال لا يوصف بكونه مقدورًا. وليس في الإمكان أصلًا أحسن منه ولا أتم ولا أكمل، ولو كان الواد خره مع القدرة ولم يتفضل بفعله لكان بخلًا يناقض الجود وظلمًا يناقض العدل، ولولا أنه قادر لكان عجزًا يناقض الألوهية.[82]

'Everything between the heavens and the earth is brought into existence in an ordained sequence, an obligatory truth, and an essential reality. It is inconceivable for it to exist in any way other than how it occurred. And according to this established order, whatever is delayed is only so due to the awaiting of its condition. And something conditional existing before its

condition is impossible, and the impossible cannot be described as being within the realm of power.'

The intrinsic connection between causes (asbab) and their resultant effects (musabbabat) suggests that an effect must inevitably succeed its cause. This method of reasoning, held in high esteem by our theologians and long considered a natural intellectual approach by Muslims, actually diverges from the convincing and dialectical style of the Holy Quran. Al-Ghazali himself pointed out that such an approach is more likely to lead to bewilderment and misguidance than to the unveiling of truths. The issue arose when religious discussions began to be shaped within the framework of cause and effect, corresponding with the emergence of jurisprudential thought in Islam. This shift led to the adoption of the Kalam style of thought as the authoritative form of religious expression. As time passed, Kalam, alongside logic and philosophy, was incorporated as auxiliary sciences in religious education. Texts on jurisprudence principles were thus structured on this foundation of logical premises. Al-Ghazali, esteemed as 'The Proof of Islam', acknowledged the importance of logical discussions in the introductory chapters of his influential book 'Al-Mustasfa' on jurisprudence. From the outset, there were notable reservations, often expressed with great fervor, against philosophy, Kalam (Islamic theological debate), and logic. Nonetheless, in practical terms, the assemblies of Islamic jurists were invariably permeated with terms like 'indication of the text' (isharat al-nass), 'implication

This method of reasoning actually diverges from the convincing and dialectical style of the Holy Quran.

of the text' (dalalat al-nass), and 'necessity of the text' (iqtiza al-nass). These terms are indicative of a thought process rooted in the methodologies of Kalam and logic.

Kalam's Role in Exegesis and Interpretation

The influence of Kalam methodology was so strong that it permeated every corner of Muslim intellectualism. Debates on 'jabr wa qadr' (predestination and free will) and 'zat wa sifat' (essence and attributes of God), which had led to divergent thoughts on the 'khalq al-Quran' (creation of the Quran), soon placed the Quran itself within the ambit of Kalam requirements. The Quranic words and terminologies began to be interpreted through the lens of Kalam. For example, the Quranic declaration 'ليس كمثله شيء' (There is nothing like unto Him) sparked discussions among interpreters about the meaning of 'like'. Was it referring to similarity in 'jawhar' (substance), 'kamiyyah' (quantity), 'kayfiyyah' (quality), or 'qudra wa masahah' (potential and spatial dimensions)? Since all bodies ('ajsam') are similar and a body is defined as a composite of singular substances containing 'miqdar' (quantity), the negation of 'like' in this phrase also implied the negation of God being a body. Thus, it was concluded that God is neither 'jawhar' (substance) nor 'arad' (accident), neither 'muttasil' (connected) nor 'munfasil' (disconnected), neither 'fi al-alam' (in the world) nor 'min kharijihi' (outside it). Similarly, the term 'Ahad' in 'قل هو الله أحد' (Say, He is Allah, the One) became a focal point for Kalam scholars. It was argued that 'Ahad' signifies indivisibility, leading to the affirmation that God is not a body ('jism').

The influence of Kalam thinking on the interpretation of the Holy Quran has been so profound that it has obscured its

true meanings and created obstacles for seekers of truth. This is best exemplified in Razi's 'Tafsir Kabir', where the exigencies of Kalam often forced the commentator to compromise on the plain and apparent meanings of words. The problem is that without this linguistic distortion, the principles of Kalam become unchallengeable, and their requirements remain unfulfilled. When such a methodology dominates thought processes, interpreters are left with no option but to accept these linguistic distortions to preserve the integrity and splendor of their chosen methodology. Let's delve deeper into this issue for a clearer understanding.

The influence of Kalam thinking on the interpretation of the Holy Quran has been so profound that it has obscured its true meanings

The Holy Quran narrates a dialogue between Prophet Abraham and an individual who debated with him regarding God: "Have you not seen the one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom? When Abraham said, 'My Lord is He who gives life and causes death,' he said, 'I give life and cause death.' Abraham said, 'Indeed, Allah brings the sun from the east; so bring it from the west.' The disbeliever was dumbfounded. And Allah does not guide the unjust people." (Quran 2:258)

When the conversation between Prophet Abraham and his interlocutor, as narrated in the Quran, was analyzed through the perspective of Kalam scholars' methods of argumentation, some fundamental flaws in Abraham's reasoning were identified. Firstly, the person who argued with Abraham and claimed divinity should have provided evidence to substantiate his claim, according to debate etiquette. From this viewpoint, Abraham

himself took on this responsibility, thus committing a technical error. Secondly, when Abraham presented his argument that his God is the one who gives life and causes death, and the opponent countered with a similar claim, Abraham should have clarified the flaw in this counter-claim. Instead, he introduced another argument, seemingly acknowledging the failure of his first point. Regarding Abraham's statement that God brings the sun from the east and challenged the claimant of divinity to bring it from the west, the opponent's astonishment was without logical argument.

Razi, who regards Abraham as the founder of Kalam methodology and the first divine philosopher due to his argumentative transformation, addressed this issue. He resolved it by stating, "لكن اذا ذكر لإيضاح كلام مثالا فله أن ينتقل من ذلك المثال إلى مثال آخر" ("However, when an example is mentioned to clarify a statement, it is permissible to move from that example to another").[83] He argued that Abraham was indeed familiar with the principles of debate and was skilled in this art. In this case, Razi explains, there is one argument but two examples, and transitioning from one example to another does not harm the debater's credibility. Razi, in his effort to reconcile the two arguments in the dialogue, elaborates with his own creative interpretation, which could be considered a marvel of intellectual curiosity. He writes:

> The Quranic words and terminologies began to be interpreted through the lens of Kalam.

> لما احتج إبراهيم عليه السلام بالإحياء والإماتة، أورد الخصم عليه سؤالاً لا يليق بالعقلاء، وهو أنك إذا ادعيت الإحياء والإماتة لا بواسطة، فذلك لا تجد إلى إثباته سبيلاً، وإن ادعيت حصولهما بواسطة حركات الأفلاك، فنظيره أو ما يقرب منه حاصل للبشر، فأجاب إبراهيم عليه السلام بأن الإحياء والإماتة وإن

حصلا بواسطة حركات الأفلاك، لكن تلك الحركات حصلت من الله تعالى وذلك لا يقدح في كون الإحياء والإماتة من الله تعالى بخلاف الخلق فإنه لا قدرة لهم على تحريكات الأفلاك.[84]

This translates to:

"When Abraham presented his argument regarding giving life and causing death, the opponent posed an irrational question. The opponent questioned if you claim to give life and cause death without any intermediaries, there's no way to prove it. But if you claim it happens through the movements of the celestial bodies, then something similar or close to it is achievable by humans. Abraham responded that even if life and death occur through the movements of celestial bodies, those movements are initiated by Allah. This does not undermine the fact that giving life and causing death are acts of Allah, unlike creation, over which humans have no control regarding the movements of celestial bodies."

The influence of Kalam methodology was so strong that it permeated every corner of Muslim intellectualism.

The discussion of direct ('bila wasitah') and indirect ('wasitah') involvement, and the inclusion of the movement of celestial bodies ('harakat al-aflak'), entered Razi's mind because in his academic methodology, significant issues are resolved through debates on motion and change. Also, reconciling the two arguments and maintaining the standards of debate etiquette required the creation of a subsidiary story. However, the matter remained unresolved as to why the opponent accepted the argument of the sun rising from the opposite direction. Why didn't he challenge Abraham to ask his God to bring the sun from the west if his claim was true? Razi suggests that the opponent was dumbfounded. However, he remains silent on

why the mere astonishment of the opponent and the presence of a possible counter-argument does not meet the requirements of proper debate etiquette.

The reading of the Holy Quran as a masterpiece of Kalam methodology is so prominent that Fakhr al-Din al-Razi designated Prophet Abraham as its originator. Referencing the verse "وتلك حجتنا آتيناها إبراهيم على قومه," Razi suggested that Abraham used the phenomena of motion and change as evidence of creation. In the verse "فلما جن عليه الليل رأى كوكبا، قال هذا ربي، فلما أفل قال لا أحب الأفلين" (6:76), Abraham's observation of the stars not being creators is highlighted. Razi interprets Abraham's witnessing of celestial bodies' disappearance as proof that entities subject to change and movement are created, not eternal, and thus cannot be creators. Razi explains:

> "فالحاصل أنه ثبت بالدليل أن كون الكواكب أفلة يدل على كونها محدثة، وإن كان لا يثبت هذا المعنى إلا بواسطة مقدمات كثيرة، وأيضا فكونها في نفسها محدثة يوجب القول بامتناع كونها قادرة على الإيجاد والابداع، وإن كان لا يثبت هذا المعنى إلا بواسطة مقدمات كثيرة. ودلائل القرآن إنما يذكر فيها أصول المقدمات، فأما التفريع والتفصيل، فذلك إنما يليق بعلم الجدل. فلما ذكر الله تعالى هاتين المقدمتين على سبيل الرمز لا جرم اكتفى بذكرهما في بيان أن الكواكب لا قدرة لها على الإيجاد والابداع، فلهذا السبب استدل إبراهيم عليه السلام بأفولها على امتناع كونها أرباباً وآلهة لحوادث هذا العالم."[85]

This translates to: "The conclusion is that it is established through evidence that the setting of the stars indicates they are created, and this can only be affirmed through many premises. Similarly, their very nature as created entities requires denying their ability to create and innovate, which also needs numerous premises for confirmation. The Quranic proofs mention only the basic premises, while the elaboration and detailing suit the science of debate. So, when Allah Almighty mentioned these two premises symbolically, it sufficed to state that the stars do

not have the power to create and innovate. Therefore, Abraham used their setting as evidence against them being gods or deities of the events in this world."

By interpreting the admonitory tone, persuasive style, and instructive approach of the Holy Quran within the framework of Kalam scholars' debates and discussions, not only has the core purpose of revelation been overshadowed, but it has also led to the perception of the Quran as a book that doesn't fully comply with the fundamental principles of debate etiquette. We presented these examples from Razi's interpretation to highlight the profound impact of his 'Tafsir Kabir', even among those who didn't hesitate to say that 'it contains everything except tafsir.' In reality, the theological axiom 'العالم متغير وكل متغير حادث فالعالم حادث' ('the world is subject to change, and everything that changes is created; therefore, the world is created') has been a widely accepted and irrefutable principle among theologians for centuries, employed to substantiate their claims.

The reading of the Holy Quran as a masterpiece of Kalam methodology is so prominent that Fakhr al-Din al-Razi designated Prophet Abraham as its originator.

Razi, a later scholar, presented his exegesis as a culmination of the Kalam interpretative style that had been evolving over centuries, revealing all its aspects. The Kalam methodology's roots in Quranic interpretation trace back to the Umayyad era when groups conflicted over free will and predestination, using Quranic verses to strengthen their arguments. This approach gained further traction when esteemed jurists like Wasil ibn Ata adopted complex analytical concepts such as 'isharah' (indication), 'iqtiza' (necessity), and 'dalalah' (implication)

in their Quranic analyses. The formal adoption of Kalam methodologies in Quranic exegesis began in the fourth century, marked by the works of scholars like Abu Muslim Asfahani, Abu al-Qasim Balkhi, Abu Bakr Asam, and Al-Qaffal al-Kabir, who wrote commentaries conforming to Kalam requirements. Abu Muslim Asfahani who died in 323 AH, his work "Jami' al-Ta'wil li-Hukm al-Tanzil," spanning thirteen volumes, is often considered a precursor to Razi's 'Tafsir Kabir.' Razi himself frequently affirmed Asfahani's intellectual stance.[86] Similarly, Abu al-Qasim Balkhi, who died in 309 AH and is credited with writing a twelve-volume commentary, significantly influenced Razi's exegesis. These facts suggest that the integration of Kalam and principles of debate in Quranic interpretation as an established discipline began well before the times of Razi and Al-Ghazali. The influence of Kalam thought was not just confined to theology but extended to other scholarly fields. This was particularly so during a time when jurisprudence, hadith studies, exegesis, and the study of prophetic biography were not fully distinct disciplines.

The formal adoption of Kalam methodologies in Quranic exegesis began in the fourth century

While Hadith scholars generally exhibited caution towards Kalamian exegetes, the latter's profound scholarly influence persisted in shaping religious interpretation and exegesis. Consider Al-Qaffal, whom a renowned scholar like Allama Ibn Subki recognized as an authority in several domains: exegesis, Hadith, Kalam, Islamic jurisprudence, and its various branches.[87] Al-Qaffal was also the teacher of eminent Sunni figure Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. Despite his strong inclinations towards Kalam

and his method of interpreting the Quran through rational principles, he retained his esteemed status within the Shafi'i school. Similarly, Ibn Rushd's works, 'Kashf al-Adillah' and 'Fasl al-Maqal,' remained influential in Muslim thought, despite the numerous accusations of ideological deviation leveled against their author.

The Kalamian approach can often overshadow the essential purpose of divine revelation, leading to convoluted discussions and sometimes resulting in the deferral of clear religious directives. This is illustrated in the Quranic story of the Israelites, when Moses instructed them: "إن الله يأمركم أن تذبحوا بقرة" (Indeed, Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow). Rather than acting promptly, they engaged in detailed questioning about the cow's characteristics. They asked, "اتخذُنا هزوا" (Do you take us in jest?), showing reluctance to comply. This led to further queries about its specific nature, age, and color: "ان البقرة تشابه علينا" (Indeed, to us, the cows look alike). Eventually, after exhaustive clarification, they complied: "فذبحوها وما كادوا يفعلون" (So they sacrificed it, though they were near to not doing so).

The Kalam approach result in delaying obedience, shifting focus, and ultimately leading away from the core objectives of faith.

The Kalam approach, while ostensibly aiming for a deeper understanding and cautious adherence to religious teachings, can often result in delaying obedience, shifting focus, and ultimately leading away from the core objectives of faith. This narrative reflects how excessive inquiry and specification, characteristic of the Kalamian method, can potentially divert and dilute the essence of religious directives.

In the early period, those who contemplated the nature of the Divine in the Kalam style faced profound disagreements regarding God's essence and attributes. Questions arose: Is God's essence separate from His attributes? Is His word as eternal as He is, or is it created and temporal? Diverse answers to these questions further complicated the situation. The debate extended to interpreting Quranic verses like "إنا جعلنا قرآنا عربيا" (43:2) (We have made the Quran in Arabic) - does this imply that the Quran, like other creations, underwent a process of creation and has a temporal place in the universe? Another verse, "كذلك نقص عليك من أنباء ما قد سبق وقد آتيناك من لدنا ذكرا" (Thus We relate to you [O Muhammad] some stories of what happened before; for We have sent you a Message from Ourselves), was also deliberated upon. There was also the question of how the Quran, if it is God's word and an attribute of His, can have boundaries or limits. Some argued that verses like "لا يأتيه الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه" (Falsehood cannot approach it from before or from behind) suggest that at least theoretically, something can be brought before or after it, indicating that the Quran is limited and created. Similarly, references to the 'Preserved Tablet' (لوح محفوظ) in the Quran were interpreted to imply that the Quranic revelation is finite, defined, and created. These discussions during the era of Caliph Al-Ma'mun raised doubts about how something finite, limited, and created in time and space could be an attribute of the Divine.

When the Kalam methodology, originally focused on raising and dissecting questions, began to be used mechanically, it drifted further from its intended path. Tabari, in his historical works, has preserved accounts of these debates where individuals, claiming to uphold truth and religion, veered towards a path

that seemed to undermine the core principles of monotheism. A critical weakness of this scholarly approach was the failure to recognize that methodologies must adapt to shifting contexts and perspectives. Also, trying to articulate transcendent truths within the limited realm of three-dimensional space turned out to be ineffective in the pursuit of deeper, metaphysical realities.

The Onslaught of Greek Philosophy on the Muslim Mind

The Kalam method, once central to Muslim intellectualism, appeared distinct or even opposed to philosophy. Seen as the knowledge of the devout in Islam, Kalam contrasted with philosophy, perceived as an external intellectual tradition. However, this distinction was more nominal, as both fields' methodologies and discussions overlapped significantly. Early Kalam debates, mirroring philosophical discourse, initially served political aims before morphing into tools for enforcing orthodoxy, leading to the suppression of dissent.[88]

Philosophical discussions on divine nature, Quran's createdness, and the metaphysical concepts of time, space, and eternity introduced deep divisions in Islamic theology, blurring the consensus on what defined a 'Muslim.' This ambiguity shrouded the unified message of Prophet Muhammad. The genesis of this shift lies in a time marked by political upheaval and the infusion of Greek philosophical thought into Islamic discourse. Al-Shafi'i, aware of Greek influence in Kalam, understood that despite its Islamic sanction, Kalam essentially extended Greek philosophical ideas. This realization was paradoxical, given that Al-Shafi'i, like Abu Hanifa before him, was steeped in the Kalam tradition, leading to a persistent dichotomy in Islamic intellectualism concerning Kalam.

Abu Hanifa, having mastered Kalam, eventually distanced himself from it. Al-Shafi'i, while critical of Kalam scholars, remained committed to Wasil ibn Ata's principles and the

Kalam debate style. The conflict between Kalam and philosophy, in retrospect, resembled an intellectual joust rather than a profound ideological divide. As philosophy later established its unique identity within Muslim thought, scholars like Ibn Hazm could openly endorse it. Ibn Hazm stated about Aristotle's works, "والكتب التي جمعها أرسطاطاليس في حدود الكلام قال أبو محمد وهذه الكتب كلها كتب سالمة مفيدة دالة على توحيد الله عز وجل وقدرته عظيمة المنفعة في انتقاد جميع العلوم" – "The books that Aristotle compiled on the limits of discourse, according to Abu Muhammad (Ibn Hazm), are all sound and beneficial, pointing to the oneness of Allah and His power, and immensely valuable in critically examining all knowledge."[89]

The conflict between Kalam and philosophy, in retrospect, resembled an intellectual joust rather than a profound ideological divide.

The popularity and credibility of philosophical discussions and methodologies are clearly reflected in the legal treatises and doctrinal books authored by Islamic jurists. These intellectual debates, which have spanned centuries, echo the influence, or at least the resonance, of philosophical thought. Key figures like Ghazali[90] and Razi,[91] who were deeply immersed in philosophy throughout their lives and staunchly advocated for this approach, eventually chose to renounce it. This shift in their later years was due to two main reasons: firstly, their realization of the shortcomings in the Islamic framework of philosophy they once considered accurate; and secondly, their evolving understanding that the perceived boundary between Kalam and philosophy was illusory, leading them to view these disciplines as interrelated aspects of the same intellectual pursuit.

Philosophy and Kalam, seemingly at odds for centuries, converged at a pivotal point during Ghazali's time, giving the impression that Kalam had finally triumphed over philosophy. However, this moment marked the lifting of the veil that Kalam scholars had long cast over philosophy. Ibn Khaldun attributed this blending to Qadi Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi, under whose influence the issues of philosophy and Kalam became so intertwined that they were hard to separate.[92] In our opinion, Ghazali had already revealed this reality much earlier. In his works 'Tahafut al-Falasifah' and 'Ihya Ulum al-Din,' he openly recognized the shortcomings and adverse effects of both philosophy and Kalam. As the lines between these two disciplines blurred, it became unnecessary for later scholars to maintain the pretense of categorizing philosophy as Kalam. This melding of the two is perfectly exemplified in Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's famous work 'Tajrid al-Kalam,' which is revered in both philosophical and Kalam circles, honored by both Shia and Sunni scholars, and has been the subject of extensive analysis and commentary for centuries.[93] While it ostensibly covers topics like the existence of the Creator, prophethood, imamate, and the afterlife, its underlying structure is deeply rooted in argumentative methods that prioritize substance and essence.

In the early stages of Islamic intellectual history, the amalgamation of philosophical discussions and academic methods with the study of Kalam resulted in an unexpected stalling of the evolution of Quranic thought. This blending led to a persistent intellectual struggle, as discussions about the universe, the nature of the Divine, and humanity's existential role began to deviate from Quranic concepts, aligning instead with the philosophical frameworks established by ancient Greek thinkers. Muslim intellectuals, somewhat reluctantly, found themselves

engaged in analyzing these philosophical debates – a detour they deemed necessary to reconnect with the core of Quranic ideology. This intricate situation was further complicated by the intertwining of philosophy and Kalam, transforming what was already a significant intellectual challenge into an even more daunting task.

Had philosophy been confined within the boundaries of Quranic thought, it might have been feasible to reign in debates that eventually led to widespread intellectual disarray within the Muslim community. Instead, early Muslim scholars showed keen interest in topics that were traditionally explored by Greek philosophers, Jewish theologians, and Christian mystics—topics that the Quran typically avoided as unnecessary. For example, they delved into the origins of the universe, questioning its creation: Is it eternal, or did God create it at a specific moment? If it's eternal, does it share the timeless attribute of God, and how does that reconcile with the Biblical phrase "In the beginning"? This raised further questions: If the universe was created at a particular time and is finite, has its creation ceased, or is it an ongoing process, as indicated by the continual emergence of new phenomena?

These questions compelled theologians to adopt ancient philosophical concepts, particularly the notion that everything is fundamentally composed of indivisible 'atoms' or essences, confined in time and space, and incapable of merging. This view meant that all observed phenomena are simply arrangements of these essences. In this perspective, time, space, and matter were seen as entities with essence-like attributes, each possessing intrinsic properties. This approach, however, led to a logical dilemma: if the universe operates through the inherent properties of objects, then the need for a dynamic

God in the universe became questionable. If objects, by virtue of their attributes, could orchestrate a coherent process in the universe, did this imply God's detachment from this active cosmos? Theologians, grappling with these questions, sought to reconcile these philosophical concepts without diminishing the divine role. They argued that things maintain their state and essence, unchangeable by nature. They even questioned the reality of motion, suggesting that the perception of an object moving from one place to another could be a sensory illusion, shaped by divine design in human perception, rather than a true physical movement. Al-Ash'ari, a distinguished Islamic theologian, strongly challenged the notion that objects or beings have an inherent capacity to act before the actual occurrence of an action. The core of this debate focused on whether humans should be held accountable for their actions if God has eternally endowed them with the potential for those actions. To address this philosophical conundrum, both the Ash'arite and Mu'tazilite schools adopted the concept of atomism. They contended that a person's responsibility for their actions does not stem from being the creator of those actions, as creation is an attribute of God. Instead, responsibility arises from the individual's choice between two potential alternatives, both instilled with the possibility of occurrence by God.

The discussion that unfolded around the concept of God's eternality, along with the possible eternality of other entities in the universe's creation, brought about a complex theological dialogue. This included contemplating whether God could be equated with time, which was reflected in the tradition "لا تسبوا الدهر فإن الله هو الدهر" ("Do not curse time, for God is time"), aiming to address this theological complexity. In the process of establishing formal Muslim doctrines, scholars like Al-Nasafi

(died 1142 AD) addressed these issues. Al-Nasafi advocated for the portrayal of God as a being transcendent of time, unaffected by its flow. Later, Taftazani (1322-1392 AD) further developed this concept, articulating that time is a creation used to measure other created entities. While philosophers view time as a tool for measuring motion, they concur that God exists beyond the confines of time.[94]

If God is the creator of time and transcends it, then what is His relationship with space? What is the connection between space and God? Addressing this in "Ihya Ulum al-Din," Al-Ghazali argues that God is independent of spatial dimensions. He points out that concepts like 'up', 'down', 'right', 'left', 'front', and 'back' are relative, suggesting that our understanding of direction would differ if we lived in a spherical context like Earth. In "Tahafut al-Falasifah," he extends this concept to time, proposing that past and future are not inherently temporal but reflect the perspective of the observer. This discussion led to the belief that Islamic theologians may have formulated a new framework for understanding time and space, offering a fresh perspective that could potentially liberate centuries of Muslim intellectual thought. However, this apparent breakthrough was more a logical progression of earlier debates, with Al-Ghazali's views on time showing echoes of Stoic philosophy.

Past and future are not inherently temporal but reflect the perspective of the observer.

Al-Kindi, recognized as the first formal philosopher, made significant contributions to the conceptualization of Time (وقت) and Eternity (ازلیت), distinguishing them through five elements. He drew on Aristotle's idea that time measures motion. Al-Kindi

proposed that the universe was created by God ex nihilo, from nothingness. Like other philosophers of his time, Al-Kindi faced the challenge of not being able to completely reject or accept Greek philosophy, often adapting within its conceptual boundaries. This approach created challenges in interpreting Quranic narratives of creation, particularly when considering time as eternal. Al-Razi later addressed Aristotle's definition of time, arguing that if motion ceased, time itself would become irrelevant. He suggested that God created both time and space alongside the universe. However, he distinguished Absolute Time and Space (ازلی زماں و مکاں), termed الدھر and الفضاء in his writings, as existing independently of the cosmic framework. Despite partially disagreeing with Aristotle's conception of time, Al-Razi was essentially embedded within the same philosophical domain. He asserted that five entities have existed eternally in the universe: God, the Universal Spirit, Time (encompassing Space and Time), and Matter. Razi maintained that understanding the philosophy of creation is incomplete without recognizing these five as ancient. This perspective challenged traditional Islamic concepts of God, particularly the uniqueness and incomparability, as expressed in the Quranic phrase "ليس كمثله شيء" (There is nothing like unto Him). Razi and his fellow Kalam scholars were constrained by the philosophical principles they employed for interpreting reality, and lacked the courage to challenge these established norms. In an effort to safeguard the principle of monotheism, Razi distinguished God from the other four eternal factors.

Razi and his fellow Kalam scholars were constrained by the philosophical principles they employed for interpreting reality

He contended that the attributes of movement and change within matter, which form the universe's order, fundamentally originate from God.[95]

In the early 9th century, the scholars Ma'mar and Nazzam critically engaged with ancient philosophical discourses on time, adding complexity to already intricate discussions. Ma'mar, who passed away in 830 CE and was predominantly an atomist, endeavored to uncover a systematic pattern within the universe. He argued that once God had created the universe and set its principles, it was unrealistic to expect continual divine intervention. Ma'mar perceived the universe as a cohesive system governed by natural laws of cause and effect, with each occurrence being distinct and independent. Controversially, he was also known for his rejection of movement,[96] asserting that everything is essentially static and our perception of motion is merely an illusion. Nazzam, who died in 845 CE, challenged this view. He advocated that stillness is relative and everything in the universe is in constant motion. Even objects that appear static are, in reality, in motion within their fixed position.[97] Nazzam further proposed that objects that seem finite externally are actually infinite in their essence, leading to the idea that finite entities can be divided infinitely. He speculated that even God, who is omniscient, might not know the final count if the division of objects continued endlessly. Nazzam introduced the notion of atomistic time and motion, suggesting that movement from one point to another does not necessarily entail passing through an intermediate point. He also expressed that an object cannot manifest in a form unless the characteristic for such a form exists within it; the new form of an object is essentially a transformation of its prior state.[98]

Al-Najjar's philosophical exploration sought to clarify the concept of time. He suggested that God wills for His creation and knowledge to become evident at specific, predetermined moments.[99] This idea likens the progression of events to a staged play, with scenes pre-arranged behind a curtain, each unfolding in turn at its appointed time. This model negates the necessity for change, portraying events as emerging in a predetermined sequence, each remaining true to its original form. In Al-Najjar's view, time resembles a wheel on which events are set, moving past the observer one by one. However, he posits that time, in its essence, lacks inherent reality, being more a framework for the orderly revelation of events rather than a dynamic force of change.

The philosophical acceptance of a timeless world resulted in the perception of the current world as merely a reflection of a more authentic reality. This concept echoes ancient religions like Hinduism, where the world is seen as 'Maya', an illusion, not as it appears. Hindu mystics aimed to achieve liberation from this illusory world, seeking Nirvana as their ultimate goal. This pursuit became increasingly significant among Muslim mystics and theologians, who felt the need to experience the 'real' world beyond, as suggested in the realm of 'Malakut' mentioned in the Quran (75:6). This 'Malakut', a term enriched with meanings beyond the Quranic context, became a product of Sufi influences and theological discussions. With the prevalent belief that the eternal Quran resides in the 'Lawh Mahfuz' of an eternal world, and that the material world is nothing but an illusion, those seeking divine truth shifted their focus to connecting with the realm of Malakut.[100] This marked a departure from engaging with the material world to discovering

effective ways to experience the higher realm. The centuries-long theological debates eventually led to a focus on the pursuit of Malakut, transitioning from intellectual inquiries about God's nature to seeking direct experiences of the divine. This journey, starting with the pursuit of knowledge and meticulous analysis, culminated in the quest for direct realization of divine truth.

Muslims, who once viewed themselves as custodians of the final divine message and responsible for guidance and well-being of all communities until the end of times, were deeply impacted by new theological discourses. These discussions, influenced by foreign ideologies, profoundly altered their worldview. Instead of striving for leadership in the tangible world, they became preoccupied with the pursuit of the hypothetical realm of 'Malakut'. Ghazali suggested that since the true world resides in Malakut, our purpose in this life should be to interpret the symbols and systems that could elevate us in that realm. He emphasized that the goal of life should be an ascension to Malakut, where each individual harbors the potential for immortality. He underscored the importance of self-knowledge, echoing the proverb "من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه" – "He who knows himself knows his Lord."

Muslims, who once viewed themselves as custodians of the final divine message were deeply impacted by new theological discourses.

Ghazali argues that in the spiritual journey, the heart can be an ally. He stresses that spiritual enlightenment is unattainable without the Quran as a companion, which in his mystical philosophy acts as a spiritual agent. For Ghazali, the Quran isn't just sacred text; it's a guide illuminating the seeker's path. He further points out that reaching one's spiritual destination

is improbable if there are uncertainties about the realm of 'Malakut.' The journey towards Malakut necessitates traversing the realm of 'Jabarut', which involves a personal struggle and introspection. This pursuit of Malakut is essentially about connecting with an eternal and boundless truth. It's at this stage that the seeker experiences the unveiling of the highest truths. Ghazali conveys that access to the 'Lauh Mahfuz' or the Preserved Tablet leads to a broader understanding of the past, future, and even the uncovering of divine secrets, making this revelation a logical outcome of such a spiritual quest.

Upon close examination, it becomes apparent that the debates in Kalam, or Islamic theology, have long entrapped our intellectuals in misconceptions. This misdirection even altered our objectives, leading us into a relentless search for an imagined realm of 'Malakut.' This realm, far removed from reality, was a construct of ancient philosophers, yogis, and mystics.

The debates in Kalam, or Islamic theology, have long entrapped our intellectuals in misconceptions.

Al-Ghazali, in his renowned work "Tahafut al-Falasifah" ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"), embarked on a mission that seemed to dismantle philosophy. However, his approach was more about refining rather than outright rejection. He somewhat distanced himself from occasionalism and atomism, while still holding on to Aristotelian concepts of time and space. He proposed the idea that entities can come into existence imperceptibly and assume any form. On the notion of the world's eternity, Al-Ghazali reasoned that acknowledging an infinite past also implies the possibility of the universe having a different scale. For God, he argued, no particular

moment is inherently significant, nor is He constrained by any moment. Thus, God could create the 'first moment' at any time, irrespective of the uniform nature of these moments.[101]

In "Tahafut al-Falasifah" ("The Incoherence of the Philosophers"), Al-Ghazali's efforts were somewhat successful in conveying that philosophy is not the key to ultimate knowledge. However, the notion of completely rejecting Aristotelian philosophy and returning to a Quranic framework, as a way to escape the intellectual dispersion or exile that the Muslim mind had endured for about four hundred years, remained a mere idea. This was because "Tahafut al-Falasifah" wasn't fundamentally an attempt to establish a new worldview. Ibn Rushd, in his rebuttal of Al-Ghazali, mainly supported traditional Aristotelian thought, which Al-Ghazali did not attempt to fully dismantle. Ibn Rushd strongly contested the idea that nature arbitrarily chooses a specific time for creation, asserting a technical distinction between time and space. Time, according to him, has continuity but is not interconnected.[102] While Al-Ghazali considered time, like motion, to be a created entity,[103] he did not imply that motion, which measures time, should be regarded as eternal.

"Tahafut al-Falasifah" wasn't fundamentally an attempt to establish a new worldview.

Al-Farabi (870–950 CE) and Ibn Sina (980–1038 CE) faced difficulty reconciling the Aristotelian view of the universe with the idea of its creation at a specific moment. To address this, they proposed interpreting Quranic narratives about creation allegorically, rather than literally. Ibn Sina pointed out the logical problem of infinite regress if one assumes a specific beginning of time. He suggested that accepting a beginning leads to the

paradoxical question of what preceded it, making it impractical to pinpoint an exact start to time.[104] Similarly, Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, along with Ibn Rushd, realized that rejecting Aristotelian cosmology would necessitate a new cosmological framework, which was challenging in the 10th-century Islamic world. The intellectual landscape of the time was deeply entrenched in Aristotelian thought, creating a barrier to developing a new model based solely on Quranic descriptions. Al-Ghazali, who lived in the midst of these intellectual currents, attempted to address these philosophical issues. However, he chose to refute these ideas rather than analyze them within their own framework. His approach was shaped by the same tradition he was critiquing, limiting his ability to form a completely new perspective on the cosmos. Despite his critiques, he remained within the confines of existing philosophical terminology and concepts, reflecting the complexity of transitioning to a new worldview in the context of established thought.

Prophetic Message vs. Greek Wisdom

The philosophical discourse was subtly masked within Kalam, the Islamic theological framework, leading to a widespread belief that Kalam was a scholarly approach developed by Muslims in response to Greek philosophy. This perception persisted even among those who viewed Kalam as an external influence, considering it more as a distinct methodology rather than a competing ideology or religion. However, both philosophy and Kalam, in their respective debates and methodologies, essentially constituted a call towards a new form of religious thinking. While the influence of philosophy originated externally, Kalam's methodological approach had intricately woven itself into the fabric of the religion itself. A significant factor in the integration of philosophical debates into Muslim discourse was the underestimation of the philosophical call as a potential invitation to a new religion. Another reason was the Quranic mindset, inherently open to exploration and devoid of intellectual conservatism, unlike the Church, which could categorize certain Greek philosophical texts as 'incomprehensible' and restrict their access.[105] If the analysis of Greek philosophical works had been undertaken within the Quranic intellectual framework, and if the true intentions behind the philosophical discourse had not been obscured by Kalam, Greek philosophers might have been placed in a similar context to the interactions with Christians, Jews, and followers of other faiths. Such an approach would have limited the extensive and enduring influence of Greek philosophy within the realm of Quranic thought.

The skepticism towards the philosophical approach, prevalent since the era of Al-Kindi, regarded as the first Muslim philosopher with uncertain intellectual lineage, presented a significant dilemma. The issue was that the Islamic methodology of 'Kalam' required a profound study of philosophy for its evolution and refinement, even if the goal was to refute it. This dependence made it impractical to completely reject philosophy. The writings of Al-Kindi and Al-Farabi quickly became havens for atheism and heresy. Philosophy, meanwhile, flourished in the intellectual landscape of Islam, dominating theological debates for centuries through the disciples of Greek philosophers. Concerns were periodically voiced about this philosophical influence eroding faith and facilitating atheism and heresy. One notable example involved Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib al-Sarakhsi, a disciple of Al-Kindi and the personal physician and confidant of the Caliph Al-Mu'tadid (ruling from 279 to 289 AH). According to the historian Yaqut, Al-Sarakhsi was executed by Al-Mu'tadid, accused of encouraging the Caliph towards atheism.[106]

The philosophical explorations of Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd, marked by their independent thinking, stirred controversy within the Islamic intellectual circles. While Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina managed to cloak their philosophical complexities under the veil of faith, Ibn al-Rawandi (died 345 AH) diverged starkly, embracing atheism. His writings included critiques of Islam and even a direct refutation of the Quran, famously known as "Kitab al-Taj."[107] Al-Ghazali's era saw a gradual refinement in the perception of philosophy, increasingly viewed as a distinct belief system at odds with core Islamic tenets—monotheism, prophethood, afterlife, angels, and revelation. By this time, however, the influence

of these self-proclaimed Islamic philosophers had profoundly impacted the realm of mysticism. The enchanting pursuit of spiritual truth and yearning for divine revelations had ignited a deep-seated quest akin to prophethood among them. This led to an uncritical acceptance of Greek philosophical doctrines, perceived as a panacea for their spiritual yearnings and quests.

To comprehend this concept, it's crucial to have some insight into the essence of Muslim philosophy. For instance, Ibn Sina's "Al-Shifa" represents a mature form of Muslim philosophical thought. The first part of this book, dealing with logic, is largely a compilation of Aristotle's writings and Porphyry's "Isagoge." The mathematics section is derived from Banu Musa's "Introduction to the Science of Number" and principles from Archimedes, Euclid, and Ptolemy's "Almagest." The physics and metaphysics sections primarily reiterate Aristotle's works, infused with Ibn Sina's own interpretations. This is the state of Sheikh al-Ra'is's acclaimed philosophical work, held as a cornerstone of philosophy by Muslim scholars. This pattern is echoed in the Illuminationist philosophy (Ishraq), which influenced a generation of mystics and led to Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi being recognized as Sheikh al-Ishraq among mystics and reputable scholars. As Qutb al-Din Shirazi points out in his esteemed commentary on "Hikmat al-Ishraq," Suhrawardi grounded this work in intuition (dhawq), spiritual unveiling (kashf), and the vision of lights (mushahadat al-anwar).[108] What exactly is this vision of lights? Let's hear it from Sheikh al-Ishraq himself:

> "وهو ذوق إمام الحكمة ورئيسنا أفلاطون... وكذا من قبله من زمان والد الحكماء هرمس إلى زمانه أي زمان أفلاطون من عظماء الحكماء وأساطين الحكمة مثل أنكساغوراس وبيثاغورث وغيرهما... وعلى هذا يتبع قاعدة الإشراق في النور والظلمة التي كانت طريقة حكماء الفرس مثل جاماسب وفرشاد شور وبوزرجمهر من قبلهم."[109]

"This is the intuitive understanding of the Imam of Wisdom and our chief, Plato... And so from the time of the sage Hermes to the era of Plato, among the greatest philosophers and masters of wisdom, such as Anaxagoras, Pythagoras, and others... And on this foundation stands the doctrine of Illuminationism concerning light and darkness, which was the way of the Persian philosophers like Jamasp, Frashad Shur, Boz Jomehr, and their predecessors."

The remarkable acceptance of 'Hikmat al-Ishraq' (Philosophy of Illumination) by Shirazi and Mulla Sadra was significantly influenced by their view of this seminal work. They regarded it not as a product of Islamic thought, but rather as a legitimate testament of ancient Sassanian wisdom.[110] This perspective was pivotal in shaping their engagement with the text. Consequently, both the Peripatetic philosophy and Illuminationism, in their endeavors, effectively led the Muslim intellect away from the Quranic framework of thought. This shift steered the Muslim intellectual discourse towards a sort of intellectual diaspora, distancing it from its Quranic roots.

The philosophical doctrine, which markedly diverged from Islam and even positioned itself as an alternative religion, is underscored by Al-Farabi's intricate interpretations of the core Islamic beliefs. Al-Farabi, in line with the ancient Greek philosophers, embraced the concept of an eternal world. This belief starkly contradicts the Quranic verse "خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ" (Allah created the heavens and the earth in truth. Indeed, in that is a sign for the believers). For Al-Farabi, the Islamic notions of faith in the afterlife and divine retribution were mere superstitions, akin to old wives' tales.[111] He also regarded the divine revelation and the exalted position of prophethood as acquired (kasbi), not as a divine gift (wahbi). In his own words:

"ولا يمتنع أن يكون الإنسان، إذا بلغت قوة المتخيلة نهاية الكمال، فيقبل، في يقظته، عن العقل الفعّال الجزئيات الحاضرة والمستقبلة، أو محاكياتها من المحسوسات ويقبل محاكيات المعقولات المفارقة وسائر الموجودات الشريفة ويراها، فيكون له بما قبله من المعقولات، نبوة بالأشياء الإلهية، فهذا هو أكمل المراتب التي تنتهي إليها القوة المتخيلة وأكمل المراتب التي يبلغها الإنسان بقوة المتخيلة."[112]

This implies that once a person's imaginative power reaches its peak, they can perceive, in their wakefulness, both present and future particulars, or their sensory analogues, from the Active Intellect. They can also apprehend the likenesses of separate intelligibles and other noble existences. This capacity allows them to achieve prophecy regarding divine matters, representing the highest level attainable by imaginative power.

Al-Farabi, influenced by Greek philosophers, sowed the seeds of a new doctrine that later evolved into a tradition of speculation and conjecture, which for centuries was mistaken for truth. Esteemed Islamic scholars chewed over these ideas, believing them to be knowledge. For those whose curiosity wasn't satisfied by divine revelation alone, Al-Farabi's statements appeared as precious gems of knowledge and understanding. He delved into questions like: What is revelation? How does it descend? What is the nature of the soul?[113] Why do senses like hearing, sight, touch, and smell fail to perceive angels?[114] And most crucially, why do extraordinary truths experienced by prophets not fall within the realm of ordinary human perception? Al-Farabi attempted to unveil the nature of prophecy, declaring:

Al-Farabi, influenced by Greek philosophers, sowed the seeds of a new doctrine that later evolved into a tradition of speculation and conjecture, which for centuries was mistaken for truth.

"النبوة تختص في روحها بقوة قدسية تذعن لها غريزة عالم الخلق الأكبر كما تذعن لروحك عالم الخلق الأصغر، فتأتي بمعجزات خارجة عن الحيلة والعادات ولا تصدأ مرآتها لا شيء عن انتقاش ما في اللوح المحفوظ من الكتاب الذي لا يبطل وذوات الملائكة التي هي الرسل فتبلغ مما عند الله إلى عامة الخلق."

"Prophecy is specialized in its spirit by a divine power, to which the natural disposition of the greater world of creation submits, just as your soul submits to your lesser world of creation. It brings forth miracles outside the realm of trickery and habits and does not deflect its mirror from reflecting what is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet from the unalterable Book and the entities of angels who are the messengers, thus conveying from God to the general populace."[115]

According to Al-Farabi, who was significantly influenced by Greek philosophers, a person who possesses a sacred power, known as 'quwwat-e-qudsiya,' is regarded as a prophet. This sacred power grants dominion over the celestial sphere, endowing prophets with the ability to perform miracles. In Al-Farabi's perspective, angels are more than mere intellectual forms; they are accessible only through this divine force. When this force attentively directs its external and internal perceptions towards the higher world, it perceives angels in a tangible form. This encounter enables it to hear what Al-Farabi describes as the voice of revelation. In this process, the angel establishes a direct connection with the soul, imprinting its innermost message onto the soul much like the reflection of sunlight upon water.[116]

Al-Farabi's writings are scattered with such unfounded speculations, which he presents as profound wisdom. These assumptions eventually shaped a trend among Islamic philosophers of seeking knowledge independently of divine revelation. Ibn Miskawayh echoed these thoughts, ardently

advocating the idea that prophethood is not beyond human reach. According to him, humans possess extraordinary potential for evolution and advancement. When intellectual faculties such as intellect, wisdom, heart purification, and a refined soul reach a certain level, one enters a realm of spiritual transcendence, comparable to prophethood. At this stage, the realities of things become apparent without the need for analytical or inductive reasoning, similar to divine revelation and inspiration. Just as ordinary people perceive formed images in their dreams through imaginative power, prophets, due to their intellectual and spiritual elevation, experience these realities in a waking state.[117]

Al-Ghazali accepted Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts as they were, which can be seen in this excerpt:

> "إن لسان الحال يصير مشاهدًا محسوسًا على سبيل التمثيل وهذه خاصة الأنبياء والرسل عليهم الصلاة والسلام، كما أن لسان الحال يتمثل في المنام لغير الأنبياء ويسمعون صوتًا وكلامًا، فالأنبياء يرون ذلك في اليقظة وتخاطبهم هذه الأشياء في اليقظة"[118]
>
> (المضنون به على غير أهله)

"In the language of symbolism, these observations become tangible experiences. This characteristic is unique to prophets and messengers, peace and blessings be upon them. Just as in dreams, non-prophets experience symbolic representations and hear voices and speech, the prophets witness these things in wakefulness. These entities speak to them while they are awake." (Al-Ghazali)

Al-Farabi, Ibn Miskawayh, and Al-Ghazali's interpretations, if accepted, effectively diminish the grandeur of the prophetic office, reducing it to something achievable through human endeavor and attainable through spiritual exercises and exertions.

These interpretations of prophecy and divine revelation encouraged mystics to seek their own prophethood or direct perception of truth, rather than believing in the prophethood of others. As a result of these fallacious interpretations, those who traversed the path of spiritual journey began to lose regard for the commandments of the Sharia law.

The so-called "scientific insights" propagated by Al-Farabi, which he derived under the influence of Greek philosophy, laid the foundation for a prolific field of conjecture and interpretation among Sufis. This trend can be traced from the Ismaili authors of the Brotherhood of Purity to devout believers like Shah Waliullah. Notably, none within the Sufi domain, irrespective of their origins, remained unaffected by Al-Farabi's profound philosophical impact. In Shah Waliullah's teachings, for instance, the intricate concepts of 'Alam-e-Mithal' (the Imaginal World) and 'Malae A'la' (the Highest Angelic Realm) are deeply rooted in the intellectual trajectory initially laid by Al-Kindi. However, it was Al-Farabi who sculpted these ideas into a fully-fledged alternate religious doctrine. A comparative study of Al-Farabi's so-called "scientific insights" with later Sufi writings reveals a striking deviation. These once esteemed scholars, in their post-Quranic intellectual journey, veered towards adopting beliefs that strikingly echo a newfound desire for an alternative form of prophethood.

The Emergence of Clergy and the Division of Knowledge

In the early stages of Islamic history, political divisions, initially secular in nature, were given a religious overlay by scholars of traditions. They did so by narrating virtues and noble deeds (Faza'il and Manaqib) of their favored leaders, thus infusing these political divisions with religious significance. Theologians engaged in Islamic discourse (kalam) further interpreted these differences through the prism of doctrinal disagreements, deepening their religious context. This convergence of politics and religion significantly altered the perception of knowledge within the Muslim community. It led to pressing inquiries: What constitutes knowledge? How is religious knowledge distinguished from secular? Crucially, which form of knowledge is deemed superior? These questions, over the centuries, led to a profound fragmentation of the Muslim intellectual landscape. Those dedicated to exploratory sciences often felt relegated to a lesser status compared to those who considered themselves inheritors of prophetic wisdom. This reorientation in the understanding of knowledge eventually trapped the Muslim mind in a cul-de-sac, a predicament that remains an ongoing challenge. This distressing narrative underscores the need for a thorough reassessment and analysis. Without it, the quest for new knowledge and enlightenment remains stymied, hindering the intellectual revival necessary to break free from this impasse.

In the aftermath of Uthman's assassination, the political factions within the Muslim community were cast in a religious light by scholars of hadith, who used narratives of virtues and

noble deeds (Faza'il and Manaqib) to favor certain leaders. This created a confusing ideological landscape, making it difficult to discern the truth amidst conflicting reports. The Abbasid-era scholars further perpetuated these narratives, to the extent of predicting names of future caliphs,[119] suggesting a deep entwinement with the political system. During Abdul Malik's reign, Shihab Zahri's timely narrations supported the caliph's political stance, notably when Abdul Malik prohibited pilgrimages to Mecca due to its control by Ibn Zubair, a rival.[120] These narrations were perceived as providing religious justification for political decisions. The political system, which was established by force and continued through hereditary succession, seemed to have found a form of religious validation from the scholars of tradition. This led to a mutual respect and support between many rulers and these scholars. For instance, Malik bin Anas, a prominent figure in hadith and jurisprudence, accepted state gifts, rationalizing them as belonging to the Muslim community.[121] The reverence for these scholars grew as they gained popularity, particularly as the direct companions of the Prophet passed away. Nostalgia for the Prophet's era intensified, leading to a romanticized view of that period. Even those who had not met the Prophet but had seen his companions began to be regarded with a degree of sanctity.[122] Besides the scholars of traditions, the social scene was vibrant with activities like poetry recitals, music gatherings, Quranic study circles in mosques, and sermons by storytellers. These cultural and intellectual activities formed an integral part of the era's intellectual dynamism. Furthermore, there were technical sciences that developed to meet the administrative needs, political strategies, and public interest, though these are not the primary focus of our discussion here. Our main

interest lies in illustrating how the innate but romanticized fascination with history and traditions eventually formalized into educational institutions around scholars of hadith. These circles initially resembled those around Malik bin Anas in the Prophet's Mosque, detailed by Imam Shafi'i, who attended as a student.[123] Imam Shafi'i, after eight months in Imam Malik's classes, fully absorbed the teachings of the Muwatta and later gained insights from Imam Muhammad bin Hasan and Imam Abu Yusuf in Kufa. While Medina was a hub for the study of hadith and traditions, Kufa was known for its focus on theological discourse (Kalam). Notably, both the study circles of hadith scholars and jurists prominently reflected the methodologies of judicial proceedings. In the early Islamic era, training individuals for the role of judges, who could efficiently manage Zakat collection and adjudicate communal disputes, was an established practice. The expansive nature of the Islamic state necessitated a network of judges and tax collectors across diverse regions, and scholarly circles played a vital role in training these officials. Initially, there was no misconception that these circles of hadith scholars and jurists encompassed all or the most important forms of knowledge. Imam Shafi'i's experience reflects this reality. After only eight months in Imam Malik's study circle in Medina, he felt the need to move to Kufa for further learning. This period was also marked by a flourishing of exploratory sciences in Baghdad. While Imam Shafi'i often critiqued theologians in his writings, he showed no opposition to scholars of exploratory sciences. This absence of conflict stemmed from two main factors. First, various fields of knowledge hadn't yet evolved into distinct specialties. Second, people's personal interests and inclinations led them to contribute differently across various disciplines.

These branches of knowledge were regarded as complementary, each with its own recognized value and utility.

In the first three centuries of Islam, there was no concept of purely religious educational institutions focused solely on Sharia, or Islamic law, where secular knowledge was deliberately and disdainfully omitted. Not even basic educational setups for children, known as 'Kuttab,' were exclusively dedicated to religious teachings. Caliph Umar is noted for emphasizing the establishment of schools across various regions for children's education, specifically instructing that these schools should include poetry, literature, swimming, and horseback riding in their curriculum.[124] The practice of using the Quran, a revered text, merely as a beginner's learning tool had not yet developed. Hence, prominent scholars like Qadi Ibn Al-Arabi and Ibn Khaldun didn't feel compelled to argue against using Quran memorization as a primary educational tool, considering its profound scholarly significance.[125] During these early centuries, circles of scholars and jurists did emerge, but they resembled personal academies rather than formal educational institutions. The era's political stability and general prosperity led to a broad interest in various disciplines, including poetry, history, philosophy, and scientific studies, reflecting the societal zeitgeist. The label 'scholar' or 'person of knowledge' was applied to all leaders in society, regardless of their specific area of expertise. Scholars, even those with specialized interests, were expected to have a broad knowledge base, particularly in areas considered integral to the Quranic intellectual tradition.

In the first three centuries of Islam, there was no concept of purely religious educational institutions focused solely on Sharia

The division of knowledge into religious and secular realms crystallized in the latter centuries of the Abbasid period, particularly evident with the rise of the Nizamiyyah in Baghdad, known as a bastion of Sunni religious scholarship. Yet, the groundwork for this categorization was laid earlier by the Fatimids in Egypt, who established Al-Azhar Mosque in 359 AH (970 CE) as a symbol of Islamic intellectualism. This significant move by the Fatimids was fueled by both political and sectarian motives. The emergence of the Ismaili caliphate, despite daunting challenges, was largely attributed to the formidable power of its ideological framework. The Ismaili missionaries surreptitiously built a considerable following, who embraced the notion that the true essence of Divine revelation lay in its esoteric interpretation, knowledge believed to be exclusive to the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. They propagated the belief that the caliphate rightfully belonged to the descendants of Fatima, claiming it had been usurped by the Umayyads and then the Abbasids. Consequently, they posited that until Islam's political system was reestablished under the leadership of the Fatimid lineage, there would be no hope for salvation or success in either the religious or worldly realms for the true believers. The Fatimid Caliphs recognized that the key to the stability and growth of their state lay in the promotion and dissemination of their unique religious interpretation. They were acutely aware that ideological and intellectual propaganda could achieve significant influence, often surpassing the effectiveness of military force. Given this understanding, the establishment of

The division of knowledge into religious and secular realms crystallized in the latter centuries of the Abbasid period

Al-Azhar Mosque was not just a religious initiative but a political necessity for the Fatimid Caliphate. They faced a challenge: the existing personal schools of scholars couldn't fulfill their ideological objectives. Consequently, the Fatimids sought to establish an apparatus that could adeptly handle interpretation and exegesis, forming a group of experts capable of persuading the public about the Fatimids' political legitimacy. This strategic establishment aimed to align the populace with the Fatimids' political vision, capturing hearts and minds through intellectual and ideological means.

The establishment of Al-Azhar Mosque by the Fatimids unexpectedly set a precedent for Sunni Islam, leading to the creation of institutions focused solely on Sharia studies. This marked a significant shift in the academic landscape of Islam. The Fatimid initiative was initially a political maneuver to promote their distinct interpretation of Islam. However, it inadvertently catalyzed a similar response from Sunni Islam, which recognized the need for educational institutions dedicated to preserving and propagating orthodox Sunni thought. In this context, the Abbasid dynasty played a pivotal role by formalizing personal schools into structured madrasas. Notably, such institutions had been established in the regions of Sham and Iraq well before the renowned Nizamiyya of Baghdad, as highlighted by As-Subki.[126] A prime example was Ibn Furak's madrasa, where Imam Al-Haramain Al-Juwayni, the mentor of Al-Ghazali, was educated. The creation of Islamic academic strongholds, such as the Nizamiyah madrasas, was born out of a distinct necessity, particularly during the tenure of Nizam al-Mulk Tusi. This era saw an urgent need to fortify Sunni Islamic thought against burgeoning challenges. Nizam al-Mulk, recognizing the imperatives of the time, embarked on an ambitious project to

establish a comprehensive network of Nizamiyah madrasas. This initiative prompts a deeper exploration into the factors that necessitated their establishment. Why, during this specific period, did these madrasas garner exceptional endorsement and patronage? What were the key drivers that fueled their widespread acceptance and the special support they enjoyed?

The fourth century of the Hijri calendar marked a significant era of intellectual upheaval in the Islamic world. Until then, despite all ideological differences, the general Muslim mindset adhered to the unity of the caliphate. However, the declaration of the Ismaili caliphate in North Africa in 297 AH brought to the forefront, with greater intensity than in the eras of Muawiya or Ibn Zubayr, the question of whether it was acceptable for two caliphs to coexist in different regions of the Islamic world. This issue gained complexity with the Umayyads in Spain proclaiming their own caliphate in 316 AH and the establishment of three concurrent caliphates in Cairo, Baghdad, and Andalusia after the Fatimids conquered Egypt in 359 AH. This rise of the Fatimids signaled the waning political power of the once Sunni stronghold of Abbasid Baghdad. By 335 AH, the Buyids had effectively taken control of Iraq. Their reluctance to seize the caliphate directly was due to their Zaidi Shia belief, which held that rebellion (khuruj) was permissible, but actual rulership was reserved for the hidden Imam. To counter the Buyids, the contemporary caliph sought the support of the Seljuq Turks, who established themselves within the caliphate as sultans. The caliph became a mere symbolic figurehead, with real power resting with the sultan. The division between religious (din) and state (dawla) authority was an unfamiliar concept to the Muslim psyche. In such circumstances, the Seljuq rulers turned to scholars and Sufis, who, due to their social respect

and intellectual stature, commanded great influence among the masses.

These circles of scholars and Sufi orders, with few exceptions, supported the prevailing system, reciprocated by the state through endorsement and rewards. However, challenges arose with significant deviations or major ideological shifts. The struggle between caliphate and sultanate, and the effort to simultaneously endorse both, required the Seljuq rulers to garner the widespread support of scholars.[127] Mawardi, in his discussions about the restricted caliphate under the Buyids, noted that a caliph's power could be nullified by confinement (hajr) or overpowering force (qahr). When it seemed improbable for a caliph to break free from such constraints, questions about his legitimacy could arise. Mawardi not only provided justifications for the confined Abbasid caliph of the Buyid era but also religiously legitimized the concept of "Amirate of Coercion" for the unity of the Ummah.[128] In this context, if the Seljuq rulers sought to justify their sovereignty through interpreters of prophetic knowledge and esoteric scholars, it was part of a standard procedure. They faced little resistance in granting religious legitimacy to this duality of religion and state. Even though Ein al-Qudat Hamadani from the Sufi circle opposed this, he paid the ultimate price for his dissent.

The division between religious (din) and state (dawla) authority was an unfamiliar concept to the Muslim psyche.

This was a pivotal moment in history, marked by the internal conflicts and political fragmentation of the Muslim world. These circumstances compelled various sects to establish their own distinct bastions of Islam. The Fatimid Ismaili movement,

at its core, was a political venture, zealously promoted by its missionaries with remarkable dedication and determination. Consequently, once their state was established, there arose a need to reorganize and strengthen this missionary infrastructure. Meanwhile, the Sunni realm, witnessing the gradual decline of the Abbasid Caliphate's influence, could not ignore the emergence of this new ideological stronghold. Despite the deep-rooted belief of Sunni scholars, both Shafi'i and Hanafi, in the Abbasid interpretation of the Caliphate, the rise of the Fatimids to power in North Africa and Egypt significantly bolstered the Shia ideology. This growing influence was further amplified by the ascendancy of the Buyids, sounding a warning bell across the region. In the early stages, the Sunni intellectual movement, spearheaded by Ibn Furak and other eminent scholars, was institutionalized into a systematic state policy during Nizam al-Mulk Tusi's tenure. However, a complication arose from the differing doctrinal leanings within the state: Nizam al-Mulk adhered to the Shafi'i school, while the Seljuks were staunchly Hanafi. This divergence led to both groups extensively supporting scholars aligned with their respective doctrines. As a result, the Sunni strongholds, intended to be the ideological vanguard of the state, became so intertwined in their disputes that the streets of Baghdad were engulfed in their confrontations.

The Fatimid Ismaili movement, at its core, was a political venture

The Seljuks, renowned for their valor as Muslim soldiers and devout Sunni Hanafi Muslims, held a significant place in history. Their military reputation, however, was insufficient to justify their control over the institution of the Caliphate. At the time, the Muslim world was unaccustomed to a Caliphate

where the roles of a Caliph and a Sultan were distinct and separate centers of power. To legitimize his rule, Tughril Beg positioned himself as the right hand of the Caliph, strategically merging religious authority with his political reign. Efforts were also made to culturally elevate the Seljuks' stature, including commissioning works like 'Fada'il al-aTrak' in Arabic. These texts sought to enhance the Seljuks' prestige by linking their lineage to the legendary King Afrasiab, portraying them as descendants of a great emperor and thus elevating their royal status.

Despite these efforts, establishing a new and alternative form of sultanate was a considerable challenge, particularly given the presence of an existing Caliph whose lineage was traditionally believed to be connected to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Caliph's role, deeply entrenched in Islamic tradition, complicated the justification of a separate sultanate.

A significant challenge arose from the dominance of Shafi'i scholars over the country's scholarly institutions. Their sectarian bias hindered their ability to meet the needs and concerns of the Hanafi Seljuks. This left the Seljuks with no option but to place Sunni scholars of their own Hanafi sect in key positions. They supported these Hanafi institutions, including educational establishments and Sufi lodges, with political and financial backing, thereby aiming to strengthen and extend their influence. Additionally, new Hanafi madrasas and Sufi lodges were established to support this endeavor.[129] For Hanafi scholars, the rise of the Seljuks signaled a bright future. They fervently supported the Seljuk regime, seeing it as an opportunity to align with and strengthen their political power.

During the Seljuk era, the establishment of madrasas in their distinctive style, along with the granting of substantial

endowments and fertile land tracts (Iqta')[130] to Sufi lodges, became a widespread practice. This development led these Sunni Islamic scholarly institutions to evolve into supportive bodies for the ruling authorities. Their primary role increasingly revolved around endorsing the contemporary regime in exchange for various benefits and privileges. It was against this backdrop that Imam Ghazali, a product of these very madrasas, felt compelled to raise strong objections, critiquing the transformation of these educational and religious institutions into mere political tools.[131]

In the fifth century of the Islamic era, Sufis and ascetics began to rise in prominence, gaining social respect and spiritual reverence. Informal religious institutions like Ribat, Zawiya, and Da'irah evolved into formal Sufi lodges known as Khanqahs.[132] Central Asia, with its pre-Islamic history of monastic spirituality, saw these Muslim ascetic circles flourish with state support, transforming into Khanqahs. These places became so significant that even sultans felt compelled to visit for their own purposes.

Khanqahs gained a revered status as centers where esteemed sheikhs, known for their miraculous abilities, directly bestowed blessings and adeptly catered to the needs of both the elite and the ordinary people. Initially, these Khanqahs were perceived as extensions of madrasas, the bastions of Islamic thought. It was common for one person to be both a Sufi and a scholar, dispensing spiritual guidance in the Ribat and Khanqah while imparting education in the madrasa.[133] In some cases, students who set out for a madrasa would find themselves drawn to the tranquility and solace within the walls of a Khanqah, thus blending their pursuit of knowledge with spiritual fulfillment.[134]

The Seljuk sultans, whose governance was legitimized by scholarly debates using the jurisprudential concept of 'Tafweez',

strategically utilized people of the spiritual path (Ahl-e-Sulook) to lend spiritual authority to their rule.[135] It was widely propagated that the Seljuk rulers were not just devout Muslims who had fortified Islam with their swords during a critical era, but also received endorsements from revered spiritual leaders like Baba Tahir Uryan and Abu Said Abi al-Khair. This endorsement aimed to cement the Seljuks' political legitimacy, irrespective of the ongoing debate about whether Baba Tahir was a mythical figure or a historical person. These narratives were part of a broader strategy to reinforce the Seljuks' political justification.[136] In this context, Ravandi, the chronicler of Tughril Beg, has written about his appointment as Sultan, a role believed to be ordained by divine will:

When Sultan Tughril Beg arrived in Hamadan, he encountered three distinguished Sufis: Baba Tahir, Baba Jafar, and Sheikh Hamsha, all of whom were standing on Mount Khizr outside the city. Observing them, the Sultan ordered his army to stop and, accompanied by his minister Abu Nasr al-Kanduri, ascended the mountain on foot to meet them. He showed his respect by kissing their hands. During this encounter, Baba Tahir questioned the Sultan, asking, "O Turk, how do you intend to treat God's creation?" The Sultan, showing deference, replied, "I will follow your guidance." Baba Tahir, however, advised, "No, you must act as God has commanded: to uphold justice and goodness." This counsel moved the Sultan to tears, and he vowed to adhere to these principles. In a symbolic gesture, Baba Tahir then took an old ablution vessel, which he had been wearing like a ring on his finger due to its broken spout, and placed it on the Sultan's finger. This act was significant; Baba Tahir declared, "Take this, we have granted you the kingdom of the earth. Stay true to justice."[137]

In a similar account documented by the author of 'Asrar al-Tawhid,' Sheikh Abu Said's influence in granting divine sanction to the Seljuk sultans' rule is described. The narrative goes as follows:

"Our Sheikh Abu Said, may God shower him with mercy, was renowned for his perceptiveness. When the two brothers, Chaghri and Tughril, came to visit him, the Sheikh was in his Khanqah, surrounded by his disciples. The Seljuk brothers approached, offered their salutations, kissed the Sheikh's hands, and stood respectfully. After a brief moment of contemplation with his eyes closed, Sheikh Abu Said turned to Chaghri and declared, 'I have granted you the dominion of Khorasan.' Then, addressing Tughril, he proclaimed, 'The governance of Iraq is now in your hands.' Having received this blessing, both brothers respectfully acknowledged his words and departed."[138]

In a society where Sufi sheikhs had risen to the stature of demi-gods, effortlessly bestowing kingdoms of the east and west upon individuals, the act of conferring sovereignty by a saint's words just before Tughril's entrance into Baghdad served to sanctify the notion that the Seljuk sultans were divinely commissioned for the grandeur of Islam. In such a context, it was virtually impossible to contest the political legitimacy of rulers who had been declared by revered figures like Abu Said and Baba Tahir as divinely appointed. This assertion of divine right was particularly compelling given their unassailable and firm control over the sword, leaving no room for challenge.

This was the ideological and political crisis that not only fostered an environment conducive to the growth of Sufi leadership but also exploited this institution to validate its own ideological and practical misdirections. It's remarkable to note the shift in perspective within the same community:

the initial generation at Saqifah Bani Sa'ida had rejected the Ansar's proposal for having both a Qurayshi and an Ansari Caliph in the Ummah, deeming it impractical. Yet, later interpreters, influenced by the circumstances and their ties to royal courts, began justifying the existence of three Caliphs simultaneously. Even within the framework of the Caliphate, the concept of autonomous Sultans was rationalized. The argument presented was that under certain conditions, leadership could be established through force, and that the transfer of authority could validly occur in a bottom-up approach, without any inherent issue. Mawardi, Juwayni, Ghazali, and Kasani, who were nurtured by this educational system and also garnered the attention of the rulers of their times, were more than just influential political characters. As esteemed scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, they undertook the significant task of interpreting and explaining the religion.[139] Alauddin Kasani, renowned as the author of 'Bada'i al-Sana'i' and a pivotal figure in Sunni Hanafi thought, and Mawardi, a key influencer in the development and interpretation of Muslim political thought, frequently served as diplomats on behalf of their trusted rulers during critical moments.[140] A similar stature was held by Ibn Taymiyyah in his era. Thus, the scholarly institutions, which had attained remarkable prestige and influence in society through endowments and land grants from the ruling government, were merely extensions of a deteriorating system. This system was plagued with a tendency to reinterpret the collective societal framework under existing pressures, instead of pioneering a fresh start. This intellectual decline, which can be seen as the downfall of the Muslim intellect, was a situation that neither the swords of the Turks nor the scholars, who were themselves nurtured by this system, could reverse. Proponents of theological

discourse, engaged in legalistic debates with terms such as 'Hajr' (restriction) and 'Qahr' (force), 'Tafweez' (delegation) and 'Isti'la' (dominance), managed to make otherwise unacceptable situations seem justifiable by invoking necessity. However, they lacked the initiative to take decisive action to resolve these emergency conditions. The stature of scholars, which had evolved from personal schools to formal madrasas and Sufi lodges by the second half of the fourth century, and subsequently gained prominence as a definitive institution of Sufi leadership under the direct patronage of the government with the establishment of the Nizamiyah in Baghdad, was ultimately undermined by the conflicts between Hanafi and Shafi'i factions. Moreover, the fall of Cairo in 1171, Baghdad in 1258, and Granada in 1492 marked the end of the dispute over the three Caliphates, relegating it to a chapter in history. The generation of eminent scholars who served as dynamic and decisive influencers within the corridors of power, especially in the waning days of Abbasid Baghdad, and who employed madrasas and Sufi lodges as centers of spiritual leadership, vanished with the fall of Baghdad. However, the structures of these madrasas and Sufi lodges and their educational methods persisted, now predominantly recognized as bastions of religious education, integral to the Muslim faith, if not to worldly matters. These remnants of the defunct Caliphate have continuously obstructed our intellectual progress. Today, many of our most insightful thinkers are still trapped in the false notion that these institutions are unassailable strongholds of religious learning. This misunderstanding has led to a broader, more profound misconception: the idea that knowledge can be bifurcated into distinct categories of 'religious' and 'non-religious'.

Madrasas and the Rise of Ulema

When mosques were hubs for dialogue, debate, and intellectual pursuits, they functioned as open spaces where everyone felt like a participant, whether as a teacher or a learner. At that time, there was no single group dominating academic discourse. Different learning circles would coexist within the same mosque: experts in traditions and narratives in one area, enthusiasts of poetry, literature, grammar, and rhetoric in another, and prolonged discussions on Quranic understanding and jurisprudence in yet another. These circles, distinct yet often overlapping, allowed for free movement and exchange of ideas. Participants could easily shift from one group to another or even start their own. An example of this fluidity is Wasil bin Ata, who gained fame in the Mu'tazila movement. Initially part of Hasan al-Basri's circle, he eventually formed his own group following a disagreement with his teacher over a specific issue. As time went on, some groups began to strongly emphasize their specific jurisprudential identities, leading to the formation of distinct gatherings for Shafi'i, Hanafi, and Maliki followers within the same mosques. This evolution was part of a broader landscape of intellectual activity. The mosques hosted not just discussions on history and traditions, or the captivating stories of narrators, but also debates on poetry, literature, and theological issues.[141] This bustling marketplace of knowledge and wisdom was not confined to what was traditionally considered essential learning. In fact, numerous fields such as astronomy, medicine, alchemy, and others were being rigorously explored in observatories and laboratories beyond the mosque walls.

Essentially, there was no single group holding a monopoly over intellectual discourse. Similarly, the personal schools of jurists and scholars of hadith and traditions offered a range of teachings; individuals had the freedom to either accept these teachings or distance themselves and move on. However, when the teaching and interpretation of Islam began to shift from mosques to madrasas as separate entities, these madrasas gradually gained a foothold as influential political forces within the declining Muslim states. They were increasingly regarded as bastions of religious knowledge. The influence of madrasa scholars on religious interpretation became so pronounced that the weakening Muslim states began to incorporate these scholars into governance as a means of survival. This shift marked the eventual division of knowledge into two distinct realms: 'religious sciences' and 'worldly sciences.' The former became the domain of the scholarly class, who asserted their control and even monopoly, claiming exclusive rights to decide on certain religious matters, effectively excluding the sultan's involvement in these areas.

This distinction between the sacred and the secular crystallized in an era marked by the Caliphate's decline, which necessitated accommodating the Seljuk Sultanate. The Sultan's legitimacy hinged on the scholars' interpretations, who, through concepts like 'Tafweez' (delegation) and 'Isti'la' (dominance), carved out a role for the Sultanate right at the heart of the Caliphate. The scholars were quick to exploit the Seljuk Sultans' vulnerabilities for their gain. Consequently, both the Sultanate and the clergy emerged from the decay of the Caliphate, each claiming their own realm of influence within the state. The former, having seized control by force, was visibly oppressive. The latter, positioning themselves as the heirs of prophetic wisdom, maintained an

aura of sanctity around their intentions. A notable instance occurred when Sultan Malik Shah prematurely declared Eid on the 29th day. Juwayni, known as Imam al-Haramayn and respected for his social influence, saw this as an encroachment into his jurisdiction. He publicly denounced the Sultan's decision, asserting that the Sultan lacked the authority to make such a proclamation. Juwayni then backed up his position with the following argument:

"Regarding matters that hinge on the Sultan's command, our obedience is mandatory. However, issues pertaining to religious decrees should be consulted with me by the king. In accordance with Sharia law, a scholar's decree holds as much weight as a royal edict. Practices like fasting, celebrating Eid, and similar affairs are governed by religious decrees, in which the ruling monarch has no jurisdiction."[142]

The concept of separating religion from state, brought to full clarity in the Seljuk era, underscored the existence of two distinct realms of knowledge: one grounded in Sharia, and the other in state governance. The realm of Sharia was the exclusive preserve of scholars, where any encroachment by the sultans was seen as tantamount to meddling in religious affairs.

This dichotomy between the sacred and the mundane, which ultimately misdirected our intellectual and national course, proved to be more profoundly damaging than the apostasy crisis of Caliph Abu Bakr's era. At its core, it appeared as a mere dispute over power and authority distribution. However, within the realms of religion and Sharia, the scholars' pursuit to dominate certain life aspects led to a nuanced division in the Muslim psyche. The common understanding evolved that some life aspects necessitated Sharia's guidance, while others

fell outside its ambit. Knowledge thus split into two categories: the sacred, encompassing religious teachings, and the mundane, covering worldly matters. The sacred, as a continuation of the chain of prophetic wisdom, was championed by scholars, who, in their role as its custodians, attained a revered stature.

In the realm of Islam, the rise of a new form of spiritual leadership was significantly aided by the specific attire adopted by scholars, as noted by Ibn Khallikan. This trend was initially popularized by Qadi Abu Yusuf. During that era, the primary role of jurists and scholars of traditions, beyond teaching, was seen as judicial. It seems plausible that Qadi Abu Yusuf's introduction of a unique dress code for judges was a reflection of their professional stature. The adoption of garments like the Thobe, Turban, Khirqa, and Jubbah presented a figure in society who, at least in terms of attire, appeared not as an ordinary, fallible human, but more like a celestial being. Despite the allure of this image,[143] the reality was that these sacred vestments enabled religious scholars to position themselves as the Islamic clergy. Hasan al-Basri had earlier cautioned about Persian or Mawali narrators and scholars of traditions, warning against judging them by their outward simplicity and austere lifestyles. He emphasized that their hearts were filled with arrogance, masked by their humble clothing: "Be cautious, be cautious, be cautious. They have hidden arrogance in their hearts and displayed humility in their clothing. By Allah, one of them is more amazed by his garment than a man of luxury is by his fineries." (تفاقدوا تفاقدوا، تفاقدوا. قد أكنوا الكبر في قلوبهم وأظهروا التواضع في لباسهم والله إن أحد هم أشد إعجابًا بكسائه من صاحب المطرف بمطرفه.)[144]

The rise of a new form of spiritual leadership was significantly aided by the specific attire adopted by scholars

In an era when Hadith literature, embodying the teachings of the Prophet, was revered as the cornerstone of social respect, yet unclaimed by any specific scholarly group, a significant transition unfolded. Scholars, deeply entrenched in religious knowledge, gradually shifted away from their traditional ascetic lifestyle as they began to assume active roles in governance, aligning themselves with the political sphere. The journey of Abu Ishaq Shirazi, an Abbasid ambassador to Nishapur, illustrates this change. His passage through cities transformed into grand displays of support, with crowds gathering and offerings lavished upon his caravan, including money changers showering dinars.[145] On a separate occasion, as Shirazi traveled to meet Sultan Malik Shah, the density of the crowd, eagerly vying to kiss his hands and feet, was so immense that it hindered his procession's movement. Those unable to reach him expressed their reverence by kissing his horse, extending their respect even to the animal's tail.[146] The case of Fakhr al-Din Razi further exemplifies this shift. Renowned for his scholarly stature, his travels were marked by the accompaniment of about three hundred scholars and disciples.[147] The death of Imam al-Haramayn was an event that shook the community profoundly. In its aftermath, city gates were closed, his pulpit was dismantled, and students in their grief broke their inkpots. For an entire year, the rhythm of education and learning ceased, as students, in a state of mourning, traveled from city to city, bareheaded, chanting eulogies for their lost mentor.[148]

These extraordinary displays of reverence towards religious scholars were more indicative of their political influence and worldly stature than of their knowledge and piety. This prominence was greatly aided by their celestial attire and grandiose titles. The Seljuk era, in particular, emerged as a

golden age for scholars in terms of acquiring prestigious titles. This period marked the beginning of the creation and conferring of new titles, which became almost indispensable for religious scholars, even during times of intellectual, mental, and material struggles. However, the reality behind these titles often did not match their outward grandeur.[149] For example, the title 'Imam al-Haramayn' attributed to Juwayni merely stemmed from his brief stay in Hejaz, where he had the chance to reside in both Mecca and Medina, and occasionally lead prayers. It was this experience that earned him the renown of 'Imam al-Haramayn' upon his return.[150] During the Abbasid era, the pursuit for revered titles escalated to such an extent that the existing vocabulary of formal titles seemed insufficient. Previously esteemed titles like Shams-ul-Ulama (Sun of Scholars), Malik-ul-Ulama (King of Scholars), and Imam al-Haramayn (Imam of the Two Holy Mosques) no longer sufficed, prompting the creation of new designations. Some were called 'Dhul-Sharafayn' (The Possessor of Two Honors),[151] while others were known as 'Faqih-ul-Iraqayn' (Jurist of the Two Iraqs).[152] Nizam al-Mulk himself was honored with the title 'Qawam al-Din' (Upholder of the Faith). Al-Yafi'i points out that the current tendency, where even the corrupt and immoral bear titles like 'Shams al-Din' (Sun of the Faith) or 'Nur al-Din' (Light of the Faith), originated in this period.[153] Ghazali, too, while treading the path of renowned scholars, yearned for more prestigious titles.[154] Centuries later, in the eighth century, when Ibn Battuta embarked on his global journey and arrived at the court of Sultan Atabek, he was surprised to discover that in Persia, a Faqih (jurist) was respectfully referred to as 'Mawlana' (Our Master).[155]

We felt it necessary to detail the story of the emergence of eminent scholars because, without understanding its actual

background and the factors involved, we cannot fully grasp how the institution of scholars, which we now regard as divinely ordained and sacred, is entirely a product of the decline of the Caliphate. Had the Shia Buyids not invaded Abbasid Baghdad, had the Seljuks not felt the need to seek religious and spiritual support to justify their rule, and most importantly, had there been no threat of an alternative Caliphate in the form of the Ismaili call, there would have been no need to establish madrasas or to endow Sufi lodges with substantial privileges and properties to create a new form of ecclesiastical authority within the faith. Thus, the institution of scholars, which today holds the responsibility for interpreting religion and safeguarding Sharia across the entire Muslim world, and enjoys spiritual leadership over Muslims, is purely a creation of history. To justify it with divine revelation is a profound misguidance, fitting the Quranic description of 'distorting words from their [rightful] places' (يحرفون الكلم عن مواضعه).

In response to the intellectual challenges posed by the Ismaili movement and the Buyids, Sunni rulers employed scholars like Ibn Furak (who died in 405 AH), Asfaraini (died in 418 AH), Bayhaqi (died in 458 AH), and Albayshaki (died in 453 AH). They further established the Nizamiyah madrasas as strongholds of religious learning in a structured manner.[156] This strategy significantly strengthened Sunni Islam and Ash'arism. However, it simultaneously dealt a severe blow to the universal essence of Islam. This profound and internal assault had far-reaching and destructive consequences. From that point onwards, the universal philosophy of Islam has struggled to regain its original and foundational form. From their inception, the primary aim of these madrasas was to counter the Ismaili movement and other Shia ideologies, while simultaneously fostering and propagating

Sunni orthodoxy. A significant majority of these influential madrasas were controlled by Shafi'is,[157] who often struggled to even tolerate Hanbalis and Hanafis. Compounding this was an intellectual predicament: while the Shafi'i theologians were vehemently anti-Kalam (Islamic theology), Ash'arism, gradually gaining recognition as the mainstream Muslim belief, emerged from the very discipline of Kalam they opposed. Faced with the responsibility of defining and explaining Sunni doctrine, Shafi'i scholars were compelled to soften their stance on Kalam, deviating from the views of their founding Imam.[158] Over time, Ash'arism evolved into the official doctrine and came to be recognized as the belief system of the Ahl al-Sunnah. This development, however, brought about an irrevocable loss: it effectively sealed the door to inter-Muslim discourse permanently. This shift served as an unspoken but stark proclamation that henceforth, the use of heart and mind to engage with Islam would be restricted. The religion's commonly accepted framework had been set in stone, rendering further discussion unnecessary. Consequently, the avenues for Ijtihad (independent reasoning) were now confined solely within the bounds of Ash'arism, with no room for exploration beyond its limits.

In a time marked by the Abbasid Caliphate's dwindling flame, nearly extinguished by the Fatimids' relentless political, military, and ideological attacks, the scene was one of profound upheaval. Sword-bearing sultans had forcefully taken over the reins of government. In this backdrop, terminologies like 'Tafweez' (delegation) and 'Isti'la' (dominance) were being introduced as lifelines for the encircled Caliph. Amidst this turmoil, fierce conflicts between the Hanafi and Shafi'i factions were ravaging the state's stability. It was in such a

critical juncture that a sage and conciliatory figure like Nizam al-Mulk emerged, feeling the necessity to embrace Ash'arism as the mainstream interpretation of Islam. This decision was shaped not just by his personal beliefs, but also by a strategic commitment to restoring peace and maintaining political balance. Yet, this temporary measure, adopted for its expedience, inadvertently became mischaracterized as the definitive essence of Islam, leading to a skewed portrayal of the original spirit of the faith. In the madrasas, the manner in which Shafi'i, Hanbali, or Hanafi ideologies were meticulously shaped, alongside the training given to students from one sect to undermine and belittle those of other sects, and the persistent portrayal of Ash'arism as an unassailable, beyond debate, embodiment of staunch belief, have inherently turned these centers of religious learning into arenas of sectarian conflict from the outset. This flawed approach to religious education held and continues to hold immense destructive potential. The streets of Abbasid Baghdad were once marred by Hanafi and Shafi'i conflicts; today, the proliferation of madrasas has spread the scourge of sectarian and factional violence throughout the Islamic world. The dominance of Ash'arism and the resulting stagnation of Muslim discourse have, for centuries, left the Muslim intellect mired in a stifling state of tension and profound intellectual strife.

The madrasa was more than just an educational establishment; it emerged as the custodian of Ash'arism, monopolizing the interpretation and explanation of religious doctrine. This rise of a new ecclesiastical authority within the faith not only legitimized the erroneous division of knowledge into 'religious' and 'non-religious' realms but also introduced perplexing misconceptions about the nature of knowledge itself. In the

initial three centuries of Islam, the idea of splitting knowledge into these categories was unheard of. The entire 'Book of the Universe' was subject to contemplation and analysis within the Quranic framework. While specialized schools of jurists and hadith scholars focusing on Quranic laws started forming early, parallel to these were the cradles of exploratory sciences, each actively fulfilling its role. Be it libraries, hospitals, the 'House of Wisdom' during Caliph Ma'mun's time, the Fatimid 'House of Knowledge', observatories, or schools dedicated to poetry and philosophy – all these centers of learning functioned in a mutually supportive and complementary manner, enriching rather than negating each other.

The term 'religious sciences' in Islamic history was first coined not by a scholar or thinker, but by a figure renowned for compiling bibliographies.

The term 'religious sciences' in Islamic history was first coined not by a scholar or thinker, but by a figure renowned for compiling bibliographies. Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yusuf Al-Katib Al-Khwarizmi (died in 387 AH) created a categorized list of books, 'Mafatih al-'Ulum'. For ease of reference, he divided it into two main sections: the first encompassing 'Al-'Ulum al-Shar'iyah' (religious sciences), and the second dedicated to 'Al-'Ulum al-'Ajam' (non-Arabic sciences).[159] Unbeknownst at the time, this classification by a mere scribe and list compiler would gain substantial credibility, to the extent that even Ghazali, esteemed as 'Hujjat al-Islam', would adopt this bifurcation of knowledge into 'religious' and 'non-religious' sciences.[160] This division would eventually embed itself as a lasting conceptual confusion within the Muslim intellectual tradition.

The elevation of sectarian education in madrasas to the revered status of 'religious sciences' led to a notable undervaluing of other knowledge domains. As a result, the progress of exploratory sciences markedly slowed down. During the fifth and sixth centuries Hijri, the immense prestige of religious scholars, their significant role in politics, and their control over state assets and endowments, all steered the brightest minds towards engaging in jurisprudential debates as a pathway to securing lucrative opportunities. Those most driven by worldly ambitions gravitated towards madrasas and Sufi lodges, viewing them as gateways to prestige and high-ranking positions. This shift left the field of exploratory sciences bereft of top minds and essential resources.

With the elevation of sectarian education in madrasas to the status of 'religious sciences,' other fields of knowledge suffered a significant decline in esteem. This led to a slowdown in the advancement of exploratory sciences. In the fifth and sixth Hijri centuries, the overwhelming prestige and political influence of religious scholars, as well as their dominion over state properties and endowments, attracted the most brilliant minds towards jurisprudential debates, offering a path to lucrative opportunities. Those seeking worldly success were drawn to madrasas and Sufi lodges as gateways to prestige and high positions. In such a scenario, one must ask: where did this trend leave the advancement of exploratory sciences, in terms of both intellectual talent and resources?[161]

Since these madrasas were established on the basis of sectarian interpretations rather than on the core principles of Islam, they inherently fostered intellectual bigotry and cultic-thinking right from the start. For them, comprehending Islam was impossible without framing it through the lenses of

the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Maliki schools of thought.[162] Consequently, these personal doctrinal stances quickly became perceived as the natural framework of the religion itself. This development led the community, originally a bearer of monotheism, to mirror the Qur'anic admonition: 'Indeed, those who have divided their religion and become sects - you are not [associated] with them in anything' (Qur'an 6:159). It is reported that in 457 AH, when Sharif Abu al-Qasim was appointed preacher at Nizamiyah in Baghdad, he felt obliged to declare from the pulpit that although he was not a follower of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, those who were, were infidels. Ironically, instead of facing censure for such inflammatory rhetoric, he was awarded the title 'Alam al-Sunnah' (the flag of Sunnah) by the government.[163] Similarly, Abu Nasr Abd al-Rahim, son of Imam Abu al-Qasim Qushayri, relentlessly seized every chance to denounce the Hanbalis. His incendiary sermons reportedly led to severe violence and numerous fatalities.[164] During Alp Arslan's era, Shi'as and Ash'aris were openly cursed from mosque pulpits.[165] Jurists deemed declaring their theological opponents as infidels and deserving of death a sectarian duty. This pattern led to the killings of figures like Ja'd ibn Dirham, Ghailan ibn Muslim, Shahabuddin, and Mansur Al-Hallaj, often instigated by political rivalries among clerics. Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Rushd also became victims of such biases, while Qadi Iyad's antagonism towards Al-Ghazali stemmed from similar narrow-mindedness.[166] Ibn Hazm endured exile and nomadism due to these prejudices.[167] This trend of canonizing sectarian interpretations as the definitive religious framework fostered a mentality where followers of one sect felt justified in demeaning, even violently opposing, those of another. In an extreme example, an imam in a Delhi Mosque, driven by his

sectarian viewpoint, kidnapped a woman. He rationalized this action by stating, "These people, who follow the Hanafi school of thought, are 'Mustahal al-Dam' (indicating that shedding their blood is permissible). Their possessions are considered spoils of war, and their wives are lawful for us."[168]

The exclusion of exploratory sciences from the scope of religious studies significantly constricted the intellectual discourse among religious scholars. Their discussions were confined to narrow topics like marriage, divorce, worship, cleanliness, and inheritance. The challenge, however, was that these scholars needed to showcase their intellectual depth and religious fervor within these limited areas. This led to the emergence of a cadre of scholars who engaged in petty and meaningless debates, mistakenly believing them to be deep theological inquiries. Ghazali critiqued such individuals, labeling them 'Battanin'. He suggested that if they were not occupied with these trivial debates, they might end up wasting time in even more unproductive activities, such as excessive sleeping or idle gossip.[169] In the madrasas' curriculum, the room for intellectual engagement was quite restricted, especially in subjects not directly related to Islamic jurisprudence. For example, in the study of supportive disciplines like grammar, logic, theology, and philosophy, trivial issues often became major points of contention. A notable instance was in the text "Shamsiyah," where a lengthy debate emerged over the reference of the pronoun "huwa" (هُوَ) in the phrase "العلم اما تصور فقط وهو..." The argument revolved around whether "huwa" referred to "tasawwur" (conceptualization) alone, or to "tasawwur faqat" (only conceptualization). This dispute led to extensive discussions by scholars such as Qutbi and Mir, yet without reaching a definitive conclusion. Such debates often

overshadowed the primary educational objectives, focusing on minute details rather than the broader aims of Islamic learning. As Ibn Khaldun observed, this approach resulted in repetitive study without substantial intellectual gain, a practice that eventually became ingrained in the educational ethos of these institutions.[170] In India, a region not lacking in fervor for Islamic scholarly pursuits, remarkable scholars emerged who devoted their lives to memorizing key texts. Baba Dawood, known for memorizing the entire "Mishkat al-Masabih," earned the nickname 'Mishkati'. Sheikh Muhammad Farukh, the grandson of the renowned Mujaddid Alf Thani, had an impressive memory, retaining seventy thousand hadiths with their full chains of narration. Rahmatullah Alahabadi was famed for memorizing the 'Sihah Sittah' (the six authentic books of hadith), and Maulana Inayatullah Kashmiri (died in 1125 AH) completed 'Sahih Bukhari' with detailed discussions thirty-six times.[171]

When the potential for novel thinking in the field of authorship and compilation began to wane, some authors turned their attention to new methods in collecting and documenting works. A notable example is Imam Sakhawi, who in his work 'Al-Jawahir al-Maklullah fi Akhbar al-Musalsalah', meticulously compiled a hundred and one hadiths. Each hadith featured a unique chain of narrators, all of whom consistently used the Arabic letter 'ع' (Ain) from the first narrator to the last. In a similar vein, some scholars dedicated themselves to assembling collections in which every narrator, without exception, was either solely from Syria or Iraq. Furthermore, there were authors who demonstrated their academic rigor by focusing on chains of narration where each narrator, from the beginning to the end, was over seventy years old, showcasing this feat

as a symbol of their scholarly dedication.[172] As the habit of engaging deeply with heart and intellect fell out of favor, authors began positioning their works as mere extensions of their predecessors' contributions. In the realms of knowledge and art, innovation gave way to a trend of repurposing old ideas into new books. A case in point is Ibn Subki's approach in 'Al-Qawaid Al-Ashbah Wal-Nazair', where he claimed to have distilled the core insights from the works of his forerunner, the jurist Sadr al-Din Muhammad ibn Umar ibn Marhal. He aimed to extract the essence and discard the superficial froth from the ocean of their principles. This method of sifting out the core essence and discarding the excess became a hallmark of the compositions by later jurists. The great scholars of Islamic law, who achieved fame through their books, primarily focused on writing about trivial and outdated issues. Their contributions, which were not much different from theological polemics, centered around debates on minor practices such as raising hands during prayer, reciting Al-Fatiha behind the Imam, saying 'Amen' loudly, the possibility of lying in divine speech, the possibility of creating something similar to God's creation, the creation of the Quran, triple talaq (divorce), Halala (a practice involving remarriage after divorce), and discussions on wet-nursing.[173] As the discourse evolved, a trend emerged of writing extensive commentaries on ancient texts, followed by layers of annotations on those commentaries. A prime example of this is the multitude of commentaries written by prominent scholars on Imam Shafi'i's 'Al-Risalah'.[174] Influential works like 'Al-Umda', 'Al-Mu'tamad', 'Al-Burhan', and 'Al-Mustasfa' gained prominence in Razi's 'Al-Mahsul' and Amidi's 'Al-Ahkam fi Usul Al-Ahkam'. Subsequent scholars not only composed commentaries on these two foundational texts but also

developed their summarized versions. This led to an ongoing tradition of further expounding upon these summaries through additional commentaries.[175] In both philosophy and mysticism, a similar pattern unfolded, marked by an extensive lineage of scholars dedicating themselves to writing commentaries and abridgments of 'Ihya' ulum al-Din'.[176] Despite the illustrious roster of philosophers, the stark reality remained that later thinkers predominantly focused on producing interpretations and concise versions of foundational texts like 'Shifa' and 'Isharat', rarely venturing beyond these established boundaries.[177]

In the obscured sanctity surrounding the religious sciences, our best intellectual efforts remained ensnared in a handful of narrow issues. This situation mirrored the scholarly quandary of how many angels could dance on the tip of a needle. With religious sciences acquiring a revered status and being deemed the pinnacle of knowledge, a notable part of the state's budget was allocated to the bastions of Sunni Islam. As state patronage eventually waned, the public, driven by a deep-seated religious zeal, willingly took up the financial support of these institutions. In this way, at the core of Muslim intellectual endeavors, rigid doctrinal interpretations like Ash'arism, Hanafism, Shafi'ism, among others, firmly established their presence. In Muslim society, the division of knowledge gave rise to the cultivation of two distinct and alternate spheres of thought. Scholars engaged in exploration were not acquainted with the complexities that had emerged from the proliferation of commentaries and annotations in religious sciences. Conversely, religious scholars, whose primary focus was on interpreting a select group of commandment verses and engaging in theological discussions, had, due to their immersion in jurisprudence, theology, and traditional narratives, neglected the comprehensive study of

the Quran. For them, recognizing the importance of these exploratory scholars was challenging. This development of two contrasting and often opposing intellectual realms within Muslim society led to a state of intellectual civil strife within the community.

The exploratory scholars lacked both the captivating garb of the clerics and their revered, sanctified titles. Consequently, they faced a formidable challenge in contending with these almost celestial figures. As a result, especially after the emergence of Sufi leadership, these scholars of discovery continuously confronted opposition from the religious clergy.[178] A notable instance is reported where Ibn al-Maristani, in a large public gathering, cast Ibn al-Haytham's book on astronomy into a fire, declaring it a fountainhead of disbelief.[179] Similarly, Ahmad Sirhindi, who is considered a major reformer of the second millennium in our tradition, denigrated geometry as futile and irrelevant, questioning the relevance of the study of triangles and angles for the afterlife.[180] In the 13th century, when Turkish Sultan Selim started equipping his troops with Western military technology, Sheikh al-Islam Ataullah Afandi vehemently opposed this action, labeling it as an inappropriate innovation and an emulation of Christians. This stance eventually led to the deposition of Sultan Selim.[181] In the year 1337, during the Mamluk period in Cairo, a devastating plague swept through the city. The scholars initially disagreed on the most effective 'qunoot' prayer to counter this plague. They ultimately resolved that forbidding women from leaving their homes was the solution, attributing the calamity to their public presence, which they wrongfully associated with

Ahmad Sirhindi denigrated geometry as futile and irrelevant

immorality.[182] In the 15th century, the Western world witnessed a significant revolution in printing with the advent of movable type, but Muslim scholars dismissed this innovation, arguing that it was unsuitable for printing Arabic or Turkish books that contained the names of God and the Prophet, fearing it would lead to disrespect.[183] In 1577, a major observatory was established in Istanbul. However, religious scholars deemed it contrary to Islam. Around the same time, a plague outbreak occurred, which the scholars interpreted as divine retribution for intruding into God's mysteries. Yielding to public pressure, the observatory was demolished in 1580.[184] The dismantling of the Istanbul observatory by the Muslim populace symbolized a shift away from the Quran's rationalist perspective, indicating a descent into an era dominated by obscurantism and superstition. The situation reached a critical point in 1869 when Tahsin Afandi, having returned to Istanbul after studying science abroad, faced stiff opposition as he attempted to elucidate basic scientific principles in his role as Dean of the Ottoman University. He endeavored to explain the concept of a vacuum by placing a pigeon in a large glass jar and then slowly removing the air from it. The demonstration, which showed the bird struggling in the absence of air, was meant to educate. However, rather than grasping the scientific truth, the audience accused him of atheism and sorcery. This misunderstanding led to his unfortunate dismissal from the position.[185] The neglect of exploratory sciences and the

The neglect of exploratory sciences and the turning away from the Quran's encouragement of conquest and discovery led to a regressive journey for the Muslim intellect

turning away from the Quran's encouragement of conquest and discovery led to a regressive journey for the Muslim intellect, ultimately entrapping it in the very superstitions that God had intended to eradicate through His final Prophet. Muslims found themselves in a similar predicament to that of their predecessors, the Jews, harboring the misconception that true knowledge was restricted to the Torah, with emphasis placed solely on its accurate recitation and teaching in a specific tone and style.

The onset of religious extremism in the Muslim community gave rise to a stark division between what was deemed 'religious' and 'non-religious' knowledge, leading to a deep intellectual schism. Disciplines such as recitation, memorization, and the precise enunciation of the Quran were classified as religious sciences. Yet, the exploration of the natural world, a pursuit actively encouraged by the Quran, was curiously omitted from this category. This segregation of knowledge ultimately mirrored the downfall of past civilizations, as the followers of Muhammad gradually forfeited their longstanding leadership and intellectual prominence.

Conclusion

The ascendance of Ash'arism signified a pivotal moment in the Muslim intellectual landscape, where the tension between exploratory and traditionalist thought reached a climax. Originating from early philosophical and theological debates, Ash'arism was never meant to crystallize into unyielding dogma. Yet, its rise brought about two significant shifts: Firstly, it effectively curtailed the internal intellectual dialogue within Islam, steering scholarly pursuits toward the reinforcement of the Ash'ari perspective. Secondly, it led to a scenario where human interpretations began to overshadow the inherent universality of Islam, assuming an almost permanent influence. This resulted in a period of intellectual stagnation, marked by the widespread belief that Ijtihad, or independent reasoning, had become a closed avenue.

Amidst this backdrop, even though the divine revelation continued to exist in all its majesty, the approach to understanding the Holy Quran became constrained by various interpretive lenses. Some insisted on interpreting the Quran strictly through historical and traditional contexts. Others argued that grasping its essence was impossible without the application of theological and jurisprudential methods. A segment believed that the Quran's deeper, mystical meanings, seen as its true essence, were accessible only under the tutelage of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt or Sufi masters. Such perspectives effectively sealed off not just the Quran's pages for independent interpretation but also symbolized the closure of the door to Ijtihad. In this environment, the Ash'ari

doctrine and the jurisprudential texts were deemed adequate for guiding the Islamic faith.

In the 4th and 5th centuries Hijri, Ash'arism was embraced as the mainstream religious ideology, driven by political necessity and expediency. This era was fraught with internal strife among Hanafi, Shafi'i, and Hanbali Muslims, threatening the Baghdad Caliphate, while Egypt and Andalusia saw rival claims to the Caliphate amid the constant Crusader attacks. In this tumultuous context, Ash'arism provided a unifying ideological framework. By the 7th century, particularly during Sultan Baibars' reign, the formal political recognition of the four major jurisprudential schools - Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali - seemed to offer a momentary semblance of peaceful coexistence among Islamic thought streams. However, this initiative by Sultan Baibars unwittingly set the stage for a deeper crisis.[186] The elevation of these four schools to a sacred, unalterable status led to a pervasive notion that every Muslim must align with one of them, including Ja'fari or Zaidi. This rigid classification made it seem impossible to understand or practice Islam without these human-defined structures. Consequently, historical understanding became so intertwined with religious belief that the complex historical accounts of the first four Caliphs were overshadowed, and they began to be perceived as integral components of religious doctrine, rather than figures in nuanced historical narratives.

In an era marked by intellectual stagnation, numerous eminent figures from different times endeavored to address the situation. Yet, their efforts largely failed to bear fruit. This was largely because they either perceived history only in its literal sense or were oblivious to the fact that their allegiance to specific jurisprudential schools had hindered their capacity for an objective study and direct engagement with the Holy Quran.

During these declining centuries, there was a pressing need to reorient towards the Quran as the primary source of guidance. However, the prevailing discourse, dominated by theologians and jurists and confined to their interpretative methodologies, lacked the impetus for innovation. A new beginning necessitated challenging the established modes of interpretation. Essentially, as students of divine revelation, we should have had the fortitude to approach our intellectual and interpretative history simply as history. It was crucial to pinpoint where our intellectual trajectory had deviated. This shift in perspective was possible only if we stopped viewing personal schools of thought, like Hanafi or Shafi'i, as divinely mandated and instead recognized them as natural developments in our historical journey.

As long as Muslims maintained a tradition of free thought and open scholarly discourse, the exploratory mindset successfully resisted being eclipsed by mythological thought. Diverse ideas underwent thorough scrutiny, and over time, their true value was discerned, though this process often spanned centuries. An example of this is the prolonged effort to move beyond the intellectual influence of Greek philosophy. In such an environment, where rigorous analysis was the norm, there was always potential for intellectual misconceptions to be recognized and corrected. This dynamic was apparent in the natural and astronomical sciences. However, in the realm of metaphysics, the prevailing theological interpretations hindered a similar rigorous examination. Theological exegesis had become so ingrained in religious understanding that reconsidering this framework seemed unthinkable. Leaders in religious scholarship, who had solidified their authority in interpretation, were themselves products of this theological method. For them, not only was departing from this approach inconceivable, but so

too was envisioning Islam outside the parameters of the four major jurisprudential schools. This entrenched situation cast significant doubts on the future of the exploratory intellectual tradition in Islam.

When the interpretations of earlier scholars became entrenched as the sanctified framework of Islam, it left no space for critically evaluating the errors of eminent scholars or for scrutinizing the esoteric claims of mystics against the standards of revelation and reason. This shift led to a significant transformation of Islam's image during the Seljuk and Mamluk periods. The era not only facilitated the rise of Sufi mysticism within the religion but also formalized sectarian biases into its fabric. Additionally, a revered group of Sufi mystics emerged, believed to bestow strength to rulers through their spiritual insights and whose prayers were believed to always find their mark, never missing their intended outcomes.[187] This Islam, as shaped during the Seljuk and Mamluk times, diverged considerably from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Tragically, the tradition of critical analysis and debate had by then diminished. Even those who sought reform were unable to transcend the bounds of theological and jurisprudential discourse, resulting in their efforts merely extending the prevailing interpretative methodologies. A notable example is Ibn Taymiyyah, who strongly challenged mainstream Islamic beliefs but ultimately found his efforts entangled in the Hanbali-Ash'ari doctrinal disputes. The opportunity for a renaissance that could move beyond these outdated debates and liberate the seeker of divine guidance from human interpretations remained unachieved.

The development of distinct religious frameworks within Islam stemmed from the notion that various groups had solidified

their unique interpretations, making them immune to debate within those specific circles. This rigidity initially provided an opportunity for the Ismaili Da'wah, and subsequently, for esoteric Sufis, to flourish. Both factions proposed new cosmological systems, challenging the traditional Quranic view of the universe and offering their interpretations as religious justifications.[188] These speculative ideas widely dispersed throughout the Muslim community, leading to widespread acceptance of beliefs like the influence of planetary movements on human life. The concept that souls connect with light post-death and gain the power to impact the living, once exclusive to Ismailism, soon found resonance among the esoteric Sufis. This belief became so pervasive that it even infiltrated the writings of staunchly orthodox scholars like Shah Waliullah, who began using these baseless superstitions as points of theological reference.[189]

The cosmological perspective of the esoteric masters, a blend of varied and unevenly developed sources, was crafted to resonate with Quranic principles, giving an impression of divine inspiration rather than external influence. Focusing on Ibn Arabi, esteemed as 'Sheikh al-Akbar' (The Greatest Master) in the broader Muslim intellectual sphere, we see his profound impact on all branches of Sufism. In an era when the discourse on causality was prevalent, Ibn Arabi intrigued his contemporaries with the concept that God transcends the conventional framework of cause and effect. He posited that since a cause suggests a dependent effect, God's unique and self-sufficient nature places Him beyond such relationships. Ibn Arabi's stance was that any attempt to understand God through this causal lens would lead to a fundamental misunderstanding of His essence. Further exploring Ibn Arabi's thought, his interpretation of existence

deviated from traditional monotheism, leading to an intricate cosmic schema. This system assigned pivotal roles to mystical figures like the Qutb, Imam, Awtad, Abdaal, Nuqaba, and Nujaba, with the twelve Nuqaba being connected to the twelve Zodiac Signs and the Nujaba believed to influence celestial bodies. Ibn Arabi reinterpreted the Quranic term 'Alameen', indicating the universe's vastness, into specific realms: 'Alam Malakut', 'Alam Misal', and 'Alam Jabarut', a structure initially introduced by Suhrawardi but systematically developed by Ibn Arabi. Moreover, Ibn Arabi promoted the idea that the Arabic alphabet's twenty-eight letters correspond to the lunar month's twenty-eight days, endowing them with mystical significance.[190] This interpretation transformed astrology and horoscope reading from marginal practices to essential components of Quranic understanding, playing a significant role in strategic decisions within Muslim society. Concurrently, the practice of 'Ilm al-Raml' (sand divination) gained prominence, especially with the publication of 'Kitab al-Fasl fi Usul Ilm al-Raml', which became a crucial resource for diviners across North African deserts and Persian monasteries.[191]

The Greek universe model, long revered in Muslim society due to Ibn Sina's intellectual ambiguities, eventually met its logical end. The enchantment cast by his 'Al-Shifa', 'Al-Isharat', and 'Al-Mabda wa Al-Ma'ad' was dismantled by Al-Biruni's empirical and scientific observations. However, the superstitions introduced by esoteric masters and the author of 'Al-Risala' became deeply embedded in Muslim thought. This was largely because their cosmic system derived from personal spiritual insights rather than objective experimentation, thus gaining a reverence among devout Muslims akin to divine revelation. This left little room for anyone to challenge these deep-seated

beliefs in the realm of empirical scrutiny. Stars, once seen as navigational aids, were now perceived as arbiters of human fate.[192] The Muslim identity shifted from being guardians of the universe and bearers of Muhammad's message to a perception of helplessness, with lives seemingly at the mercy of celestial movements. In this universe envisioned by esoteric masters, a spiritual kingdom with divine splendor and authority firmly established itself on Earth.

The cosmological conception held by the esoteric masters was essential to their ideological mission, vital for cementing their spiritual dominance in the universe. In the Seljuk and Mamluk periods, an atmosphere ripe for such spiritual pursuits was fostered. The support for Sufism from leaders like Tughril Beg, and dynasties like the Zengids and Ayyubids during the 6th and 7th centuries Hijri, shaped a form of Islam that was previously unknown prior to the decline of the Caliphate. Figures such as Mohyiddin Ibn Arabi (560–637 AH), his disciples Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (605–673 AH), and Afif al-Din al-Tilimsani (616–690 AH) took on the task of reshaping religious understanding through the lens of Sufism. Ibn Arabi, who gained substantial fame for his works 'Fusus' and 'Futuhat', left a lasting imprint on Muslim thought with his mystical revelations. It seems that Ibn Arabi may have been an Ismaili Da'i operating covertly, using spiritual experiences as a cover for his teachings in a politically antagonistic environment. Regardless of his possible hidden Ismaili affiliations, Ibn Arabi crucially influenced the shift in Muslim intellectual tradition from an exploratory approach to one steeped in mythology. Umar Ibn al-Farid (576–632 AH) significantly contributed to the spread of the concept of Wahdat al-Wujood (Unity of Existence) through his renowned poems 'Khamriyya' and 'Ta'iyya Kubra'.[193] During this

era, mystical figures like Abu al-Hasan al-Shazili (593–656 AH) and Sayyid Ahmad al-Badawi (596–675 AH) established their spiritual orders,[194] known for their mystical insights. On one side, Zengid and Ayyubid rulers were influenced by the belief that Sufi monastic leaders possessed a special divine position, with prayers capable of leading to triumphs.[195] Simultaneously, the rising popularity of these Sufi monasteries made supporting them a politically beneficial move. These monasteries often served as ideological forefronts under governmental patronage. Notably, Salahuddin Ayyubi, after establishing his rule in Cairo, focused on setting up Sunni madrasas and Sufi monasteries. He is credited with founding Egypt's first monastery, Dar Sa'eed al-Sa'ada, around 569 AH, which could house three hundred Sufi pilgrims.[196] By Ibn Taymiyyah's era, Egypt had transformed into a center for Sufi monasteries. Being affiliated with a monastery was considered a secure profession, providing Sufis with not only a monthly allowance but also high-quality food and accommodation. Each monastery typically had a considerable income from endowments, leading to intense competition for the prestigious position of Sheikh al-Sheikh (Chief of Chiefs).[197] The Mamluk rulers, influenced by both their personal beliefs and a desire for public favor, dedicated a significant part of the state budget to these monasteries. They held the conviction that having Quran reciters send blessings to their ancestors' graves would ease their path in the afterlife. This led them to establish monasteries around their ancestral graves on the outskirts of cities.[198] These monasteries evolved into permanent fixtures within Muslim society, acting as hubs where recitations of Al-Fatiha, Ayat al-Kursi, Surah Ikhlas, the Mu'awwidhatayn, and the names and attributes of God were performed. This ritual was believed to send blessings to the deceased relatives of the

rulers and confer blessings upon the living rulers themselves.[199] During the Mamluk era, the prevalent intellectual confusions not only established a distinct class of dependents in Muslim society, known as the 'ahle kashaf' or eligious seers , who made their livelihood by reciting scriptures for spiritual merit, but they also profoundly diminished the grandeur and respect of divine revelation. The Holy Quran, traditionally seen as a guide to wisdom and knowledge, was effectively demoted from its central purpose. It transformed into a book used for bestowing spiritual rewards on the deceased and for seeking blessings or fulfilling various goals by the living, through the use of its verses, symbols, and talismans. This misuse of the Quran, amounting to its marginalization and near denial, pushed the Muslim intellect into a corner dominated by mythological thinking. This significant deviation from the Quran's intended role led to a stagnation in the Muslim thought process, heavily influenced by superstitions and ritualistic practices.

From the earliest times, societies have experienced a constant interplay between exploratory and mythological thinking, with both perspectives coexisting in every era. When the exploratory mindset is dominant, the world is enriched with advancements and discoveries. In contrast, the prevalence of mythological thinking turns society into a breeding ground for various superstitions. These two approaches have a significant impact on the rise and fall of civilizations. In the Muslim world, as long as the spirit of exploration was strong, it successfully withstood challenges from philosophical and theological arguments, Crusader invasions, complex theological ideologies, misconceptions propagated by jurists and Sufis, and the misdirection of rulers, upholding the dignity and grandeur of Muhammad's teachings and keeping the community's identity vibrant and progressive. However,

when mythological thinking took over, even the extensive territories and historical grandeur of the Ottoman Caliphate quickly eroded. The 15th-century decision by Sultan Bayezid II to task Ferdowsi al-Tawil with compiling a book detailing methods for achieving goals through jinns and unseen entities[200] indicated that the Caliphate's mindset was deeply entrenched in mythological thought, a path that seemed destined for inevitable downfall, irredeemable by any worldly force.

It is said that during the Battle of Siffin, an astrologer warned Ali, the fourth Caliph, about his imminent defeat, citing the moon's position in Scorpio's halo as an ill omen. However, Ali disregarded this astrological prediction and eventually won the battle.[201] A similar episode involved Mukhtar al-Thaqafi (died 66 AH), who, despite leading an army of just seven thousand against Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad's formidable force of eighty thousand, was foretold to face certain defeat. This prediction, likely based on sheer military logic rather than just astrology, was also proven wrong as Mukhtar triumphed in this encounter.[202] In another instance, Caliph Al-Mutawakkil, consistently defeated by the Qarmatians, dismissed his astrologers' warnings. They had cautioned that another battle with the Qarmatians could not only lead to his loss of power but also potentially end the Abbasid Caliphate.[203] Once again, the astrologers' foresight turned out to be inaccurate. Caliph Mansur, when founding Baghdad, acted upon astrologers' advice that this site would ensure the safety and prosperity of caliphs and their descendants.[204] Yet, in an ironic twist of fate, Amin, the brother of Caliph Ma'mun, was killed in that very city. Subsequent caliphs, including Wathiq, Mutawakkil, Mu'tadid, Muktafi, and Nasir, also met their demise in Baghdad. These events underscore the persistent, albeit often overlooked,

influence of mythological thinking in every era, even though it is typically disregarded by the rational-minded. Initially, when an exploratory mindset was more reflective of society's general attitude, astrologers' predictions were mostly confined to the personal interests of certain rulers. Al-Biruni, while authoring a book titled 'تفهيم النجوم' (Understanding of the Stars), primarily focused his exploratory efforts and expertise on astronomy and celestial studies. In the context of Quranic thought, the study of the universe, of which Al-Biruni is a prime example, reflected the general mindset of society when it was driven by exploration. During this phase, astrologers' apprehensions and the supposed mystique of talismans and horoscopes could not hinder our intellectual journey. Even the mythological and distorted accounts found in respected and popular historical and traditional texts were unable to sway our intellectual rigor.[205] However, when a mythological way of thinking started to dominate the collective mindset, the dynamics began to shift. Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, commenting on this distressing change, observed that in his era, only astrologers were left, and the field of experimental and exploratory astronomy had effectively come to an end.[206]

During Ibn Taymiyyah's era, the conflict between exploratory and mythological thinking in the Muslim world had reached a critical juncture. Practices like physiognomy and talisman crafting, once peripheral, had become mainstream in Muslim societies. This trend was particularly evident during the Mamluk era, with Cairo and regions in Egypt and Syria emerging as centers of superstition. For instance, large crowds would gather at the site believed to hold Imam Hussein's head, attributing special significance to it. Similarly, the tomb of Sayyida Nafisa, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq's daughter-in-law, drew many visitors who

believed in her power to liberate prisoners and fulfill the desires of the destitute, viewing her mausoleum as a gateway to divine enlightenment.[207] This pursuit of blessings extended beyond the shrines of the Prophet's family. Graves of other esteemed figures also became focal points for pilgrims, who would fervently attach themselves to the tomb railings, seeking favors and intercessions. These sites buzzed with tales of the buried saints' miracles and virtues.[208] There are also accounts stating that when Al-Hallaj was executed in 309 AH, his blood allegedly spelled 'Ana al-Haq' ('I am the Truth') on the ground, and, in a dramatic turn of events, this momentous incident supposedly caused the River Tigris to momentarily halt its flow.[209]

The transformation of tombs into popular pilgrimage sites signaled a negative shift in societal values, with life seemingly flowing in an adverse direction. These graveyards and monasteries quickly evolved into hubs for vibrant music, dance, and song. In these settings, a lifestyle of celibacy bred a sexual interest in young, lush boys. Experiences of ecstasy and spiritual states were increasingly fueled by wine, considered a means to achieve enlightenment.[210] Superstitions clouded people's hearts and minds to such an extent that they began claiming to witness 'Rijal al-Ghaib' (Men of the Unseen) with their own eyes. It was commonly stated that Mount Lebanon was a dwelling place for forty such beings. Believed to traverse distances of months in mere moments, these 'Rijal al-Ghaib' were thought to possess knowledge of future events, yet remained invisible to ordinary sight.[211]

The transformation of tombs into popular pilgrimage sites signaled a negative shift in societal values, with life seemingly flowing in an adverse direction.

During this period in the Islamic world, from cities to villages, there was a flourishing of esoteric masters. The journey of spiritual development did not require formal education or training. A sheikh's transformative glance could instantly elevate an ordinary farmer to a revered spiritual seer. Ibn Taymiyyah, in one of his legal opinions, referenced a farmer who, to escape the toils of agriculture, assumed the role of a seer and even developed the ability to consume artificial snakes and scorpions.[212] This pursuit of miraculous feats, like snake handling, sometimes had lethal outcomes.[213] In a society where signs of miraculous powers seemed ubiquitous, everyone, from the elite to the common people, was drawn to these pursuits. The shops of physiognomists were bustling with crowds seeking to achieve their grandest wishes through Quranic symbols and talismans.[214] As the demand for talismans and amulets intensified, so did the proliferation of spiritual trickery, each with its own unique twist. Some individuals claimed expertise in capturing live snakes, others boasted of their ability to walk on flames as a sign of spiritual prowess, and there were those who purported to magically produce sweets, drops of blood, or fresh flowers from thin air, hailing these feats as the zenith of spiritual attainment.[215] These self-styled miracle workers had deeply influenced the public consciousness, to the point where rulers deemed it politically prudent to align with them for the sake of maintaining power. The impact of this pervasive superstition was profound, affecting even those who were initially skeptical of such mystical phenomena. A notable example of this occurred in 699 AH, during the Tatar and Armenian siege of Damascus. Followers of Ibn Taymiyyah, longing for his presence, claimed to have seen him arrive miraculously on the wind, halting the enemy's advance.[216]

Even those who regarded the mythological mindset as detrimental to Muslim intellect were themselves products of that era, making it challenging for them to completely dismiss such superstitions. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that these superstitions had become embedded in authoritative and reliable texts, courtesy of hadith chroniclers. For example, the notion that black cats or dogs might be demons or jinn,[217] or the belief that a snake found in a house should be given a three-day grace period to leave, lest it be a jinn,[218] had become widely accepted. Similarly, beliefs in the power of the evil eye, which had previously been on the fringes of our historical and cultural literature, had now become central.[219] In this environment, rather than subjecting these traditions to critical analysis based on reason, revelation, and historical context, they were embraced as justifications for a mythological way of thinking. This meant that even staunch critics of this approach, like Ibn Taymiyyah, found it hard to escape its influence. A telling example is the story of a Mongol commander who recounted to Ibn Taymiyyah in a Cairo prison how he got lost in the Syrian desert, saw Ibn Taymiyyah appear miraculously, give him water, guide him, and convert him to Islam. Instead of dismissing this story as hallucination or delusion, Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledged it as a real event, interpreting it as an act of a jinn who admired him and performed this deed out of respect for his stature and greatness.[220]

When Ibn Taymiyyah, a staunch advocate of Quranic and prophetic teachings and a firm opponent of mythological thinking, began to accept the idea of subjugating jinns and performing supernatural feats, it indicated the extent to which the collective mindset of the community had become tainted by

the eighth century. A mythological world, contrasting the real world, where the assistance of invisible beings ('Rijal al-Ghaib') and the miracles of mystical seers were believed to influence major events, had come to dominate the public psyche. Ibn Taymiyyah, rather than analyzing these incidents rationally, accepted them based on their popularity. His 'Al-Nubuwwat' discusses the control over jinns and seers flying alongside them, teleporting from one place to another, or even jinns transforming into horses to be ridden. These tales are presented not with evidence from reason or revelation, but rather based on public repute. Ibn Taymiyyah even claimed to have personally witnessed such incidents where jinns invisibly intervened to prevent harm to humans ("وهذا امر كثير معروف قدرائنا من ذالک") and claimed to have exorcised evil spirits from people ("وقد ضربنا نحن من الشياطين فى الانس ماشاء الله حتى خرجوا من الانس ولم يعادوه").[221]

In the 8th century Egypt, tales of jinn and demon subjugation were accepted as true, largely because they were widely discussed and known. Ibn Taymiyyah, in his observations, noted the widespread nature of these supernatural accounts: "The extraordinary deeds of jinns, such as revealing hidden things or influencing events to suit certain human desires, are well-known and numerous across various nations. These occurrences were frequent among the Arabs, and likewise in the regions of India, among the Turks, Persians, and Berbers." ("وخوارق الجن كا لاخبار ببعض الأمور الغائبة و كالتصرفات الموافقة لأغراض بعض الإنس كثيرة معروفة في جميع الأمم فقد كانت في العرب كثيرة و كذلك في الهند وفي الترك والفرس والبربر.")[222]

Ibn Taymiyyah mentioned the practice of subduing jinn and cautioned that sometimes, rather than being subservient to humans, jinn could cause harm or even death.[223] He specifically noted that Muslim jinn assist humans in perilous situations and can even manifest in the form of Khidr.[224] For expelling a

devilish jinn from a person, Qur'anic verses are used, notably Ayat al-Kursi, known for its efficacy. The final verses of Surah Al-Baqarah are also deemed powerful. It's believed that reciting Surah Al-Baqarah in a house drives away devilish jinn.[225] Ibn Taymiyyah also wrote about the effectiveness of other verses for this purpose. He mentioned "افحسبتم انما خلقناكم عبثا و انكم الينا لا ترجعون" (Quran 23:115), suggesting that if this verse were recited over a mountain, the mountain would move.

Our detailed discussion of Ibn Taymiyyah highlights his role as not just an observer, but a formidable leader in the intellectual and practical battle against superstitions. Even today, those who seek direct guidance from the Quran turn to his writings for insight. Despite his efforts to stem the tide of superstitions, Ibn Taymiyyah couldn't completely escape the pervasive mythological mindset of his society. His writings, for instance, suggest that Muslim jinn can assist believers in critical times, and that reciting specific Quranic verses could move mountains. This led to a preference for what was perceived as easier spiritual solutions over the arduous path of exploration and discovery. Tragically, those who sought to rejuvenate the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah didn't fully recognize how promoting the Quran as a source of miracles inadvertently diverted it from its primary purpose. Treating the Quran as a tool for supernatural interventions effectively signaled the decline of the exploratory mindset in the Islamic world.

In a Muslim society increasingly governed by mythological thought, attempts to address its challenges only accelerated its decline. The reliance on talismans and Quranic inscriptions failed to provide any substantial support. This mindset, deeply steeped in mythology, was ill-equipped to recognize the true nature of its situation or engage in analytical thinking. It was a

challenge for this mindset to comprehend why the community, once a flourishing caravan, was now seemingly in regression. This perspective, habituated to reading history with reverence rather than critical analysis, struggled to critically assess the past or learn from it for future planning. Historical events were often viewed through a lens of sanctity, not scrutiny. A notable example is the military successes of Khalid ibn al-Walid, attributed to his possession of a cap believed to contain a hair of Prophet Muhammad. According to popular belief, Khalid's victories were linked to this revered object. There's a narrative that during a battle where Khalid forgot this cap, he nearly faced defeat. However, the battle's outcome dramatically shifted in his favor once his wife, Umm Tamim, brought the cap to the battlefield.[226] When Abbasid Caliph Mustarshid Billah was captured and taken to Maragha after his defeat by Seljuk Sultan Mas'ud, it puzzled both the elite and the public. They grappled with understanding how someone claiming descent from Prophet Muhammad and viewed as God's representative on Earth could be defeated by the Seljuks. This situation led to widespread anticipation of a catastrophic event among the populace. The mental state at the time was so influenced by superstition that rumors of earthquakes and thunderstorms were constantly swirling.[227] The Abbasid Caliphs treasured a cloak that was said to have been used by Prophet Muhammad and was later acquired by Muawiya from Ka'b ibn Zubeir. It was believed that this cloak conferred invincibility to its wearer. However, the harsh reality contradicted this belief. When Mustarshid Billah was killed by the Turks, the cloak, which was thought to offer divine protection, was found on his body, stained with his blood, shattering the myth of its invulnerability.[228]

In his introduction to 'Fath al-Bari', it's noted that reading Sahih Bukhari serves as a protection against misfortunes and calamities. It's believed that if carried on a ship, Sahih Bukhari can prevent it from sinking. During times of decline, there were multiple instances where the completion of Sahih Bukhari ('Khatm Bukhari') was undertaken in an effort to thwart enemy advances. For instance, during a war between Ethiopia and Egypt, as Egypt faced successive defeats, the Khedive resorted to organizing Khatm Bukhari as a crisis response. However, this ritualistic practice at Al-Azhar University couldn't stop the advancing enemies.[229] In the era of colonialism, when most Islamic regions fell under the control of various European powers, a significant number of Muslims, instead of actively responding, passively awaited the arrival of Imam Mahdi. As mentioned in 'Nafahat al-Makkiyah', some elders in Mecca believed they might soon be honored with the status of Mahdi. There were even claims by an elder who asserted that he had seen the future Mahdi praying in the Kaaba.[230]

History flows like a river, with various intellectual currents moving, clashing, and striving to overtake each other. The world has always been a hub of divergent and competing ideologies and will continue to be so. When a nation collectively adopts an exploratory mindset, making it their dominant national character, its significance in the cosmos remains acknowledged and respected. Conversely, when the same nation succumbs to a mythological mindset, it signals the decline of its intellectual vitality. In such times, no matter the effort - be it military endeavors, impassioned oratory, or grand displays of sacrifice - none can halt its fall. This symbolizes that mere physical actions cannot revive a nation that has suffered an intellectual death.

Notes and References

1 After the demise of Prophet Muhammad, various tribes began exhibiting rebellious tendencies, posing a threat to the unity of the Islamic state. Amid this turmoil, a significant delegation from the Najd tribes approached Medina. They proposed a condition: exempt them from the obligation of Zakat, and in return, they would remain committed to Islam; otherwise, they threatened to revolt against Medina. This proposition posed a delicate challenge. Several esteemed companions, including Umar bin Al-Khattab and Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah, counseled Caliph Abu Bakr to consider a diplomatic approach. Their rationale was rooted in the Prophet Muhammad's practice: acknowledging anyone who recited the Shahada (the Islamic proclamation of faith) as a Muslim, which inherently assured the protection of their lives and property. Despite their exemption from Zakat, these tribes were willing to maintain their Islamic faith. Abu Bakr, however, firmly opposed this lenient stance. He was of the opinion that yielding to such demands would signal Medina's vulnerability and potentially encourage a cascade of similar, untenable demands.

When Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq faced ongoing resistance from certain tribes in Oman who refused to pay Zakat, he launched a military campaign against them. This decisive action led to the defeat of these rebellious tribes. Post-defeat, the leaders of the rebellion were deemed punishable by death, while around three hundred adult men and four hundred women and children were captured. These captives were sent to Medina for Caliph Abu Bakr al-Siddiq to decide their fate. Abu Bakr al-Siddiq initially leaned towards executing the male prisoners and enslaving the women and children. In contrast, Umar bin Al-Khattab

and other companions disagreed, arguing that although the prisoners refused to pay Zakat, they remained Muslims and had already been punished enough for their defiance. This difference in opinion led to an impasse, with no final decision being reached about the captives, who were then placed under house arrest. Following the passing of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq and Umar bin Al-Khattab's rise to the Caliphate, Umar chose to release these prisoners, granting them the freedom to go as they pleased. This historical account is detailed in the manuscript 'Al-Iktifaa' by Abi al-Rabi' Sulaiman bin Musa bin Salim al-Kala'i al-Balansi, a handwritten manuscript available at Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, on page 267 (الإكتفاء لابى الربيع سليمان بن موسى بن سالم الكلاعى البلنسى، قلمى مخطوطه ، دارالكتب، قاهره، ص ٢٦٧). Additional information on this topic can be found in 'Tarikh al-Riddah,' compiled by Khurshid Ahmad Farooq, published in Delhi in 1970.

2 In Sunan Abu Dawood, the narration concerning the mentioned individual reads as follows:

عن وهب قال: سألت جابرًا عن شأن ثقيف إذ بايعت، قال: اشترطت على النبي ﷺ أن لا صدقة عليها ولا جهاد، وأنه سمع النبي ﷺ بعد ذلك يقول: سيتصدقون ويجاهدون إذا أسلموا.

Translation:

Wahb narrated: I asked Jabir about the matter of Thaqif when they pledged allegiance. He said, "They stipulated to the Prophet (PBUH) that there would be no charity (Zakat) or Jihad upon them. And he (the Prophet PBUH) was heard saying afterward, 'They will give charity and fight in Jihad once they embrace Islam.'" (Sunan Abu Dawood)

3 أبو بكر الصديق كان يشير إلى هذا الحديث: 'نحن معاشر الأنبياء لا نورث ما تركنا صدقة'. روى البخاري هذا التقليد مع لمسة أسلوبية من شهاب الزهري كما يلي: حدثنا عبد الله بن محمد، قال حدثنا هشام (ابن يوسف اليماني)، قال أخبرنا معمر عن الزهري عن عروة عن عائشة أن فاطمة والعباس أتيا أبا بكر يلتمسان ميراثهما من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وهما حينئذ

يطلبان أرضهما من فدك وسهمه من خيبر. فقال لهما أبو بكر: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول 'لا نورث ما تركنا صدقة إنما يأكل آل محمد من هذا المال'. وأقسم أبو بكر أنه لن يترك أمرًا رآه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصنعه. بناءً عليه، هجرته فاطمة ولم تكلمه حتى ماتت." (صحيح البخاري، المجلد الثاني، كتاب الفرائض، باب قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا نورث ما تركنا صدقة، ص 996، مطبع مجتبائي نور محمد، دلهي)

Abu Bakr Siddiq was alluding to this Hadith: "نحن معاشر الأنبياء لا نورث ما تركنا صدقة" ('We, the community of Prophets, do not inherit; what we leave is charity'). This tradition is recorded in Bukhari with Shahab Zahri's narrative style as follows: Abdullah bin Muhammad narrates that Hisham (bin Yusuf al-Yamani) reported to us, who was informed by Ma'mar, who in turn learned from Zahri, who heard from Urwah, who was told by Aisha. She recounted that Fatima and Abbas approached Abu Bakr, seeking their inheritance from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Specifically, they were asking for their shares of the land of Fadak and the Prophet's share from Khaibar. Abu Bakr responded, 'I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, say, "We do not inherit; what we leave is charity. The family of Muhammad can benefit from this wealth."' Abu Bakr swore by Allah that he would not abandon any practice he had observed in the Prophet. Consequently, Fatima became estranged from him and did not speak to him until her death." This narration is found in Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 2, Book of Inheritances, Chapter: 'The Prophet's Saying: We do not inherit; what we leave is charity,' page 996, published by Matba' Majtabai Nur Muhammad, Delhi.

The sentence 'Consequently, Fatima became estranged from him and did not speak to him until her death' is an additional statement whose source is not clear. This added detail has led to differing and conflicting interpretations of history within the Muslim community. However, this particular aspect is not the central focus of our current discussion and will not be further elaborated upon.

4 Tabari, Volume 5, Page 56. Yaqut, Volume 4, Page 431.

5 "الملك في قريش والقضاء في الأنصار و الأذان في الحبشة والأمانة في الأزد يعني اليمن۔ (ترمذی)

Translation: "Kingship is in the Quraysh, judgment is among the Ansar, the call to prayer is among the Ethiopians, and trust is in the Azd, meaning Yemen. (Tirmidhi)

6 Bazzaz has narrated this tradition with the chain of Abu Hurairah, and Dar Qutni has reported it individually with the chain of Ibn Abbas.

7 وقال الدار قطني في الأفراد حدثنا عبد الله بن عبد الصمد بن المهتدي حدثنا محمد بن هارون السعدي حدثنا أحمد بن إبراهيم الأنصاري عن أبي يعقوب بن سليمان الهاشمي قال سمعت المنصور يقول حدثني أبي عن جدي عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال للعباس 'إذا سكن بنوك السواد ولبسوا السواد وكان شيعتهم أهل خراسان لم يزل الأمر فيهم حتى يدفعوه إلى عيسى بن مريم'.(تاريخ الخلفاء للسيوطي، ص ١١)

Translation:

"Dar Qutni stated in 'Al-Afrad': Abdullah bin Abd al-Samad bin al-Muhtadi narrated to us, he said Muhammad bin Harun al-Sa'di reported to us, he said Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Ansari told us, on the authority of Abu Ya'qub bin Sulaiman al-Hashimi, who said, 'I heard al-Mansur saying, he was informed by his father, who was informed by his grandfather, who narrated from Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said to Al-Abbas, 'When your descendants settle in al-Sawad (region of Iraq) and wear black, and their supporters are the people of Khorasan, the command (or authority) will remain with them until they hand it over to Jesus, son of Mary.'"

8 The events at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah significantly strained the relationship between the Ansar and the Quraysh elite. Sa'd ibn Ubada, whom the Ansar had proposed as a candidate for the Caliphate, was deeply upset by Abu Bakr's ascension and consequently refused to pledge allegiance to him. This

incident not only affected the dynamics between these two influential groups but also had a notable impact on state policy. It's fair to say that the contentious environment of Saqifah Bani Sa'idah necessitated a more cautious approach in state affairs. During the era of Caliph Abu Bakr, among the ten governors appointed, prominent members from the Quraysh, Thaqif, Ash'ar, Ghassan, and Azd tribes were evident. From the Ansar tribe, only Ziyad bin Labid, the governor of Hadramaut, was included. It's important to note that his governorship predated the era of Prophet Muhammad. Ziyad bin Labid's distance from the upheaval at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah and his support for Abu Bakr's leadership ensured his continued role in governance. In the military hierarchy, notable figures from the Quraysh tribe included Khalid bin Walid, Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, and Khalid bin Saeed. From the Ash'ar tribe, Ayaz bin Ghanm stood out, while the Sheban tribe was represented by Muthanna bin Haritha, and Suwaid bin Qutbah hailed from the Ajl tribe. Notably absent from these prominent ranks were commanders from the Ansar tribe. Among the subordinate military ranks, an Ansari, Thabit bin Qais, is mentioned. He served under Khalid bin Walid's command in a campaign against the Najdi rebels, leading an Ansar unit. Also under Khalid bin Walid's command was Bashir bin Saad from the Ansar, known for his pivotal speech in favor of the Quraysh at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah, which had a significant impact on the proceedings. (Referenced from Ibn Sa'ad 3/532, Yaqut Lemberg 1/482) Another notable Ansari was Abu Darda, recognized in historical accounts as a judge. Thabit bin Qais, who was integrated into Khalid bin Walid's forces, expressed deep dissatisfaction with the apparent bias against the Ansar. His grievance was eloquently recorded by Yaqubi:

"يا معشر قريش، أما كان فينا رجل يصلح لما تصلحون؟ أما والله ما نحن عميا عما نرى ولا صمّا عما نسمع ولكن أمرنا رسول الله بالصبر فنحن نصبر۔"

(Translated: "O people of Quraysh, was there not among us a man fit for what you are fit for? By Allah, we are neither blind to what we see nor deaf to what we hear. But the Messenger of Allah commanded us to be patient, so we are patient.") (Yaqubi, Beirut Edition, 2/129)

During the Prophet Muhammad's time, the Ansar were recognized for their substantial contributions, with notable individuals assuming key roles. Mu'adh bin Jabal served as the governor of Yemen, Amr bin Hazm was the Zakat collector in Najran, Ubadah bin Bishr held the same role for the Banu Mustaliq, and Bashir bin Saad was a distinguished military commander in the Khaibar region. Furthermore, A'jim bin Sufyan is noted as the Zakat collector around Medina. This highlights that the Ansar were well-represented and entrusted with significant responsibilities by the Prophet. However, under the new state policies initiated in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, there was a noticeable shift. The Ansar, previously integral to administrative and military roles, found themselves increasingly sidelined. Not only were they largely excluded from the state system, but those previously mentioned were also not retained in their positions. Poet Hassan bin Thabit lamented this change in an evocative verse:

يا للرجال لخلفة الأطوار
ولما أرادالقوم بالأنصار
لم يُدخلوا منا رئيساً واحداً
ياصاح في نقض ولا إمرار

Translation: "Oh, how times have changed with the new leadership, And what the people did to the Ansar, Not a single one of our leaders was included, Oh, the betrayal and its perpetuation."

This approach continued under the caliphates of Umar and Uthman. The Ansar faced further disappointment as their

stipends from the Diwan al-Ata were set lower than those for the Qurayshi Muhajirun, signaling a diminished status in the new government compared to their earlier prominence.

9 During the eras of the first three Caliphs, the Ansar naturally developed a sense of affinity toward the Hashemite contenders for the Caliphate, partly due to the state's perceived neglect of their community. This neglect wasn't one-sided but rather a shared sentiment. As a result, when Ali became Caliph, he appointed Ansar leaders as governors in three of the five major provinces, highlighting their importance and capabilities. Among these leaders was Qais bin Saad bin Ubada, who emerged as an active supporter of Ali.

In fact, it was during the Battle of Siffin where the Ansar's latent tactical skills were notably displayed after a long period of obscurity. Qais bin Saad bin Ubada and Sahl bin Hunayf Ansari were reputedly among the key commanders in Ali's army, demonstrating the strategic prowess of the Ansar in this significant conflict. This account is detailed in Tabari's chronicles (Leiden Edition 1/3283).

10 During the initial years of Caliph Umar's rule, an extraordinary influx of wealth into the central treasury is evident from various sources' accounts of three major battles. According to 'Iktifa' (p. 398), it's clear that Medina received significant income in the first two to three years of his caliphate. This was a period marked by continuous military engagements across different regions, consistently channeling both substantial and modest sums of Khums (an Islamic tax) to Medina.

In addition to Khums, separate revenue streams were established from Jizya (a tax levied on non-Muslims) and land taxes. Under Umar's leadership, the Islamic empire expanded to include vast territories like Iraq, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Egypt.

The taxes levied on the agricultural lands in these newly acquired regions created a reliable and continuous source of income. Moreover, payments from various treaties regularly contributed to the treasury from different directions.

This era, characterized by Umar's significant military conquests, led to an unprecedented surge of wealth into Medina from all corners, transforming the financial landscape of the Islamic state.

11 Hakim bin Hizam and Abu Sufyan bin Harb were prominent figures who raised objections to Caliph Umar's economic policies. Hakim was renowned as the nephew of Hazrat Khadijah, while Abu Sufyan was a notable member of the Quraysh and also the father-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. Both were recognized as leading merchants and held in high esteem within the Quraysh for their experience and wisdom.

Their primary concern centered around the fear that Umar's policies could lead the Quraysh to become overly reliant on the government, potentially moving away from their trading activities. They worried that if future Caliphs decided to end the system of stipends, it would leave the Quraysh in a precarious position with no fallback. This apprehension is documented in 'Nasab Quraysh' (p. 372) and in the works of Baladhuri (p. 463).

12 Baladhuri, p. 463.

13 Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidayah wan Nihayah, Volume 10, Yazid bin Walid bin Abdul Malik bin Marwan.

14 Al-Iqd al-Farid, p. 366.

15 Abdul Wahid Khan, Tareekh Tehzeeb wa Tamaddun Islami, p. 67.

16 Suyuti, Tarikh al-Khulafa (History of the Caliphs).

17 Abdul Wahid Khan, po.cit., p. 68.

18 Shibli Nomani, Al-Mamoon, pp. 136-7.

19 In widely circulated books of Hadith and traditions, there are numerous narrations that support the notion of a society under the Prophet Muhammad where there was substantial provision for the complete development and expression of human personality. As examples, we will mention just two narrations:

"جاء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حين بني علي فدخل بيتي وجلس على فراشي فجعل جويريات لنا يضربن بالدف و يندبن من قتل من آبائهن يوم بدر إذ قالت إحداهن وفينا نبي يعلم ما في غد فقال لها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم دعي هذا وقولي بالتي كنت تقولين."

Translation: "On the occasion of my marriage, the Prophet came to my home, sat on my bed, and some young girls were playing the duff and lamenting the loss of their ancestors in the Battle of Badr. One of them said, 'Among us is a Prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow.' The Prophet told her to stop saying that and to continue with what she was singing before." (Narrated by Rubayyi' bint Mu'awwidh, recorded in Bukhari, Abu Dawood, and Tirmidhi)

"دخل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم و عندي جاريتان تغنيان بغناء بعاث فاضطجع على الفراش و حول وجهه فدخل أبو بكر فانتهرني وقال مزمارة الشيطان عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم! فأقبل عليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال دعهما... وكان يوم عيد..."

Translation: "The Prophet entered my home while two girls were singing songs of the Battle of Bu'ath. He lay down on the bed and turned away. Then Abu Bakr came in, scolded me, and exclaimed, 'Musical instruments of Satan in the presence of the Prophet?' The Prophet turned to him and said, 'Let them be... It is the day of Eid...'" (Narrated by Aisha, the wife of the Prophet, recorded in Bukhari, Muslim, and Nasai)

20 Narrated by Tabarani

21 Narrated by Abu Musa Ash'ari, as reported in Muslim and Nasai.

22 Narrated by Abu Dawood, Nasai.

23 Ibn Majah, Abu Dawood, Musnad Ahmad, Darimi.

24 In addition to other sources, the names of several notable individuals are mentioned in various books of traditions and narrations. These include Abdur Rahman bin Auf, as narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah and Ibn Abdul Barr; Saad bin Abi Waqqas, according to Ibn Qutaybah in 'Al-Rukhsah'; Abdullah bin Arqam, as noted by Ibn Abdul Barr; Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, narrated by Al-Bayhaqi; Usamah bin Zaid, also by Al-Bayhaqi; Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib, as reported in Bukhari and Muslim; Amr bin Al-Aas, mentioned by Ibn Qutaybah; Hassan bin Thabit, as found in the work of the author of 'Al-Aghani'; Abdullah bin Umar, according to Zubair bin Bakkar in 'Al-Muwafaqiyat'; and Khuwât bin Jubair, as narrated by Al-Bayhaqi.

25 Cited by Syed Murtaza Zabidi in 'Sharh Ihya Ulum al-Din', Volume 6, Page 458.

26 Sheikh Taqi al-Din Ibn Daqiq al-Eid (625–702 AH) narrated in his book "Iqtinas al-Sawaneh" with his chain of transmission from Wahb bin Sinan, who said: "I heard Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, may Allah be pleased with him, humming a tune." Abdullah said, "Whenever I heard a man from the Muhajirun, he would also be humming." Imam al-Haramain and Ibn Abi al-Dam mentioned that the reliable historians reported that Abdullah ibn al-Zubair had singing slave girls. Ibn Umar entered upon him and saw a musical instrument and asked, "What is this, O companion of the Messenger of Allah?" Abdullah replied to him and Ibn Umar examined it and said, "This is a Syrian scale." Ibn al-Zubair then said, "It is used to weigh minds."

Cited by Syed Murtaza Zabidi in "Sharh Ihya Ulum al-Din", Volume 6, Page 458; see also: "Akhbar Mecca" by Al-Fakihi, Volume 3, Page 27.

27 Loc. Cit.

28 In the collections of traditions and narrations, there is a prevailing perception about Caliph Umar that he was generally indifferent, if not opposed, to poetry and music. For example, in a narration by Buraidah bin Al-Haseeb in Tirmidhi, it's mentioned that when the Prophet Muhammad returned from a campaign, a black slave girl approached him and said she had vowed to sing with the duff in his presence if Allah brought him back safely. The Prophet told her to fulfill her vow or abstain. She began to sing, and Abu Bakr and Uthman arrived and she continued. However, when Umar arrived, she stopped singing, turned the duff upside down and sat on it. The Prophet humorously commented, "إن شيطان يخاف منك يا عمر" ("Indeed, even the devil fears you, O Umar").

Contrary to these accounts, there are also narrations that suggest Umar did appreciate poetry and music. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani in 'Al-Talkhis al-Habir' (p. 408) mentions that Umar would recite a verse or two melodiously when alone in his house. Ibn Abdul Barr in 'Al-Isti'ab' (Vol. 1, p. 170, published by Da'irat al-Ma'arif, Hyderabad Deccan) relates an incident during Hajj where, upon people's request, Umar asked Khuwat bin Jubair to sing the poems of Zirar. Khuwat states that this continued all night until dawn, to which Umar responded, "ارفع لسانك يا خوات فقد أسحرنا" ("Raise your voice, O Khuwat, for you have enchanted us").

29 Ittihaf al-Sadah" by Al-Zabidi, Volume 5, p. 459.

30 In an account described by the author of Al-Aghani about a gathering attended by Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Muttalib, Kharjah

bin Zaid, and Abdul Rahman bin Hassan bin Thabit, among others, Kharjah bin Zaid narrates:

"We were invited to a feast, and we attended along with Hassan bin Thabit, who had lost his sight, and was accompanied by his son Abdul Rahman. We all sat together at the feast. After the meal, they brought two singing slave girls, one named Ba'ah and the other 'Uzza al-Ma'ilah. They sat, took their instruments, and played a unique rhythm, singing the poetry of Hassan:

'فلا زال قصر بين بصري وحلق عليه من الوسمي جود ووابل'

(Let there always be a palace between my sight and Halq, Adorned by the generous and pouring rain.)

Hassan, upon hearing this, said, 'It makes me feel as if I am there, seeing and hearing,' and his eyes teared up. When the girls stopped singing, his tears stopped, and when they sang, he cried. I saw Abdul Rahman, his son, gesturing to them to continue singing whenever they paused."

31 Al-Mawardi mentions in 'Al-Hawi' that Muawiyah and Amr bin Al-Aas visited Abdullah bin Ja'far, who had developed a keen interest in music and was heavily engaged in it. Upon their arrival, the slave girls performing music for him stopped. Muawiyah asked Abdullah to let them resume, and as they started singing again, Muawiyah began tapping his foot to the rhythm while sitting on the couch. Observing this, Amr remarked to Muawiyah, "You came to advise someone who seems in a better state than you." To this, Muawiyah responded, "فإن الكريم طروب" ("For indeed a noble person is joyful.")

This account is cited by Zabidi in 'Sharh Ihya Ulum al-Din', Volume 6, Page 458.

32 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 2, Page 123.

33 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 16, Page 13.

34 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 4, Page 40.

35 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 14, Page 16.

36 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 1, Page 101.

37 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 6, Page 30.

38 Kitab al-Aghani, Vol. 1, Page 61.

39 In an incident recounted in Ibn Asakir's "Tarikh Dimashq," it's described that Umar bin Abdul Aziz, a revered Islamic leader, was once present where numerous slave girls were being showcased. Abbas bin Walid bin Abdul Malik was also in attendance. Each time a beautiful slave girl was presented, Abbas suggested to Umar bin Abdul Aziz, "O Commander of the Faithful, you should keep this one for yourself." After Abbas repeated this suggestion several times, Umar bin Abdul Aziz, clearly annoyed, retorted, "Are you inciting me to commit adultery?" Abbas was deeply offended by this remark and began telling other family members, "Why do you associate with someone who accuses your forefathers of adultery?"

This narrative is detailed in "Tarikh Dimashq" by Ibn Asakir, annotated by Ali Shiri and published by Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, in the year 1415 AH, Volume 26, Page 447.

40 Richard W. Bulliet, "Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History," Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 81.

41 Sandra Toenies Keating, "Defending the 'People of Truth' in the Early Islamic Period," BRILL Leiden, 2006, pp. 81-82.

42 During the reign of Hisham bin Abdul Malik (105–125 AH), there was significant translation work undertaken. This included translating Aristotle's treatises, originally addressed

to Alexander the Great, into Arabic. Additionally, during this era, famous Persian literary works such as the tales of Rustam and Esfandiyar, as well as the biographies of Persian monarchs, were also translated into Arabic, enriching the cultural and literary landscape.

43 There are indications that the works of Aristotle and Plato were first translated into Arabic from Persian. This is inferred from the pre-Islamic philosophical discussions about Greek thinkers in the School of Nisapur, as mentioned in "Al-Turath al-Yunani," p. 119. It seems highly probable that Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa initially made these Arabic translations from Persian rather than directly from Greek. However, subsequent translations were made from the original Greek sources due to the immense interest in Greek scholarship, leading to multiple translations of the same texts. Notably, the first three books of Aristotelian logic underwent this process:

"كتاب المقولات" ("Kitab al-Maqulat") for "Categories"

"كتاب العبارة" ("Kitab al-'Ibarah") for "De Interpretatione"

"كتاب القياس" ("Kitab al-Qiyas") for "Prior Analytics"

Moreover, Porphyry's "Isagoge" was also translated into Arabic by Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa. A subsequent translation was done by Abu Nuah, a Christian scribe, followed by a third translation directly from Greek by Salem al-Harrani of the House of Wisdom for Yahya ibn Khalid al-Barmaki. This is confirmed by the annotation in a Beirut manuscript:

"تمت الترجمة بواسطة محمد عبد الله المقفع. بعد محمد، ترجمها أبو نوح الكاتب المسيحي، ثم ترجمها بعد أبو نوح سالم الحراني، العالم في بيت الحكمة ليحيى بن خالد البرمكي."

(As referenced by Dr. Abdul Rahman Badawi in "Al-Turath al-Yunani fi al-Islam")

44 In "Akhbar al-Ulama bi Akhbar al-Hukama" by Ibn al-Qifti, on page 232, the author identifies a prominent philosopher as Yahya al-Nahwi. However, it appears to be an authorial oversight. Yahya al-Nahwi, also known as John Grammaticus, had actually passed away approximately forty years prior to the Arab conquest of Egypt. This discrepancy suggests a possible historical inaccuracy or confusion in Ibn al-Qifti's account.

45 "Sahifah Kamila, Zabur Al Muhammad," p. 124. See also Tabari and Ya'qubi for the account of the martyrdom of Husayn.

46 Dinawari, p. 272, referenced in Faraq, p. 309.

47 The Abbasid revolution, which initially gained momentum under the banner of devotion to the Prophet's family (Ahl al-Bayt), saw a shift in dynamics once the Banu Abbas secured their rule. After establishing their reign, the Ahl al-Bayt faced intermittent rebellions. One notable uprising was led by Nafs Zakiyyah, also known as the Pure Soul, which ultimately failed. However, the intriguing correspondence that took place between Nafs Zakiyyah and Caliph Mansur has been preserved as a significant historical record. Nafs Zakiyyah maintained that the rightful successors to the Imamate were the descendants of Ali, not Abbas. Contrarily, Caliph Mansur vigorously argued in favor of established inheritance principles, claiming that the caliphate was the legitimate hereditary right of the Banu Abbas in all aspects. This episode and the detailed correspondence can be explored in "The Correspondence between Mansur and Nafs Zakiyyah" found in "Tarikh al-Ummat", Volume Eight, authored by Aslam Jairajpuri.

48 Cited by Ibn al-Qifti.

49 Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun, p. 401.

50 "Tabaqat al-Umam," Qadi Sa'id Andalusi, pp. 75–76.

51 Ibid.

52 The philosophical works of Farabi, Ash'ari, Ibn Sina, and to a considerable degree, Ghazali, were significantly influenced by a particular composition. Although the basic framework of a Kalam (Islamic theology) methodology had largely been established by the second century, as reflected in Hanafi jurisprudence discussions, the translation of the "Enneads" played a pivotal role in further developing and strengthening this methodological approach.

The complex debates around Logos and Kalam, as well as intricate discourses on the nature and attributes of God, which arose from interactions between Christian and Muslim thinkers, were profoundly shaped by the "Enneads." This book's influence is particularly evident in how these theological discussions were deemed central to understanding religion itself. The "Enneads" thus contributed significantly to shaping key intellectual trends in the Islamic world.

53 Suhrawardi, known as Yahya ibn Habash and Shahab al-Din, and often referred to as "Al-Sheikh al-Maqtul" (The Murdered Sheikh), is the author of "Kitab al-Mashari' wal Mutarahat." This work is included in a collection on divine wisdom, published in Istanbul at Matba'at al-Ma'arif in the year 1345 AH. The specific reference can be found in the third section, on page 205.

54 The Greek philosophers are esteemed and revered among scholars for their elevated status and significant contributions. Their recognition and respect among intellectuals stem from their comprehensive and meticulous work in various fields of wisdom. These fields include mathematics, logic, theology, as well as household and civil politics. This appreciation of Greek philosophers is affirmed by Qadi Sa'id al-Andalusi, whose words are quoted by Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah in "Uyun al-Anba' fi Tabaqat al-Atibba."

55 Ibn Khallikan, "Wafayat al-A'yan," Beirut, Dar Sader, 1977, Vol. 5, p. 154.

56 Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah, "Tabaqat al-Atibba" (The Classes of Physicians), Second Volume, pp. 3-4. Ibn al-Qifti has also mentioned this event in "Akhbar al-Ulama bi Akhbar al-Hukama," and Al-Bayhaqi in "Tatimma Safwan al-Hikmah," p. 42.

57 Razi stands out as the first scholar to critically assess certain Isra'iliyyat (Judeo-Christian) traditions, despite their endorsement by reputable narrators. For example, he reevaluated the tale where God is said to have taken an oath from Adam's progeny, who emerged like ants from his back and acknowledged His divinity. Razi suggested that this story is an allegory for the innate human recognition of God's sovereignty.

He also addressed the narrative complexities in stories about Prophet Abraham, particularly those involving allegations of lying. Razi posited a challenging question: if the narrators of these tales are deemed reliable, it implies Abraham was untruthful; conversely, if Abraham is to be believed truthful, then the credibility of these narrators comes into question. He left the resolution of this dilemma to the judgment of informed scholars.

Furthermore, Razi courageously refuted many popular yet fantastical narratives that had found widespread acceptance in traditional exegesis, such as those in Tafsir al-Tabari. These included myths like Zahra, a Babylonian prostitute, becoming a star using the Greatest Name; Prophet Joseph being tempted to sin; Satan deceiving Prophet Job; Prophet David's attraction to Uriah's wife; and Dhul-Qarnayn finding the spring where the sun sets. Despite the methodological constraints of his era, Razi's approach marked a significant intellectual milestone,

particularly in an environment where questioning established narratives was often equated with challenging traditional interpretations.

58 Sandra Toenies Keating, "Defending the 'People of Truth' in the Early Islamic Period," BRILL Leiden, 2006, p. 30.

59 Quoted in Tony Street, "Logic" in "Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy," pp. 247-265, Cambridge, 2005.

60 Al-Farabi, "Kitab al-Qiyas al-Saghir fi al-Mantiq 'inda al-Farabi" (The Book of Lesser Syllogism in Logic by Al-Farabi), Vol. 2, p. 68.

61 In "Maqasid al-Falasifah" (The Intentions of the Philosophers), Ghazali states, "The utility of logic lies in the acquisition of knowledge, and the benefit of knowledge is in gaining eternal happiness. Thus, if it is true that happiness is achieved through the perfection and purification of the soul, logic becomes of immense importance." He echoes this sentiment in the introduction of "Al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usul," where he asserts that the study of logic is vital for attaining a deep understanding in the field of jurisprudence (Fiqh).

62 Without access to Dirar bin Amr's book, it's challenging to definitively understand the early Kalam (Islamic theological discourse) methodology. Nevertheless, references to his work in Maturidi's "Al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya" and Abu al-Husayn al-Katib's "Burhan fi Wujub al-Bayan" hint at a dialectical approach in these discussions. It appears that from the outset, religious debates were dominated by a confrontational style. Theologians either focused on aggressively challenging their opponents or dedicated their eloquence to defending their own views. This approach hindered the development of an independent and self-sustaining intellectual tradition, one that could thrive on its theoretical foundations.

63 Refer to the book "Kitab Naqd al-Nazar," edited by Taha Hussein and Abdul Hamid Al-Abadi, published in Cairo in 1938. It is believed that this is the same work historically known as "Al-Burhan fi Wujub al-Bayan" by Abu al-Husayn Ishaq bin Ibrahim bin Sulaiman bin Wahb al-Katib.

64 Razi's book "Al-Munazarat" serves as an excellent example of the Kalam and argumentative jurisprudential debate. Studying this work, it becomes apparent how even highly regarded scholars occasionally employed low tactics to undermine their adversaries. The intention here is not to critique the debate literature itself, but to emphasize how the quest for logical proof and deeper understanding was often neglected in favor of such argumentative strategies.

65 Nabil Shehaby has taken a very insightful review of the impact of Stoic logic on Abu Bakr al-Jassas's principles of Islamic jurisprudence, which can help in understanding the evolution of the Kalam methodology in Islam. This review can be found in "The Influence of Stoic Logic on Al-Jassas's Legal Theory" within "The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning," edited by J.E. Murdoch, published in Holland in 1973.

Al-Jassas, renowned for his seminal work "Ahkam al-Quran," holds a significant place among Sunni jurists. His era dates back to the 4th century Hijri, a period when Stoic methodology had been finely honed in the realm of jurisprudential literature. However, it is often overlooked by historians that the Kalam method, known for its analytical and dissective approach, had been gaining traction in the Muslim intellectual sphere since the early 2nd century Hijri, even if it hadn't reached its peak in technical sophistication. Initially, enthusiasts of this methodology were mocked by the Ahl al-Ra'y, especially in the intellectual circles of Iraq and Syria, far from Medina. These regions were burgeoning centers of scholarly discourse. Within this backdrop,

the intellectual gatherings associated with Imam Abu Hanifa offer insightful examples. Understanding his sessions reveals that Abu Hanifa's sharpness was an early, unadorned expression of Stoic thought. To further clarify this concept, we will present two instances of Abu Hanifa's jurisprudential ingenuity:

1. There's a story where a man, angered with his wife, impulsively swore not to speak to her until she spoke to him first. His wife, equally stubborn, took the same oath in the same words. Once their anger subsided, both regretted their oaths. The husband sought advice from the esteemed jurist Sufyan al-Thawri, who said that atonement for breaking the oath was the only way out. Unsatisfied, the man then approached Abu Hanifa for counsel. Abu Hanifa offered a simple solution: "Go back and speak to each other warmly. There's no need for atonement. By addressing you while repeating the oath, your wife had already initiated conversation. So, there's no oath left to atone for." (Referenced in Razi's Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 1, p. 411)

2. A man approached Imam Abu Hanifa for advice regarding his son, known for his difficult temperament. The son had a tendency to divorce his wife soon after marriage and to free any slave girl he received. Unsure of how to handle this, the father sought guidance. Abu Hanifa suggested a clever solution: he advised the father to take his son to the market, let the son choose a slave girl he liked, and then marry the girl to him. Abu Hanifa explained that if the son later wanted to free her, he couldn't, since she wouldn't be his property. And if he chose to divorce her, the father wouldn't incur any loss, as the slave girl would still belong to him. (This incident is referenced in Razi's Tafsir al-Kabir, Vol. 1, p. 412)

66 Sextus Empiricus, "Adversus Logicos ii. 151," in B Mates, "Stoic Logic" (2nd edition; Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961).

67 See, "Mafatih al-Ulum" by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Khwarizmi, a 4th-century Hijri scholar, who introduced the term 'qarina' (criterion) for the combined concept of 'two related premises' (al-muqaddimatan idha jam'ata), as found in the edition edited by G. van Vloten (Leiden, 1885, p. 147, line 7). This concept was similarly applied by Ibn Sina in "Kitab al-Shifa," where he used the term 'qarain ghair muntija' (non-conclusive criteria), and by Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi in "Al-Mu'tabar fi al-Hikmah," who used 'qarain qiyasiyyah' (logical criteria). For further reference, see Ibn Sina's "Al-Shifa," edited by Saeed Zayed, published in Cairo in 1383 AH, p. 65, and Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi's "Al-Mu'tabar fi al-Hikmah," published in Hyderabad in 1357 AH.

68 Quoted in Abu al-Husayn al-Basri's "Al-Mu'tamad fi Usul al-Fiqh," two volumes, edited by Muhammad Hamidullah, Damascus, 1964-1965, Vol. 2, p. 544.

69 Jahiz articulated this thought, drawing reference from his teacher, Al-Nazzam. This is detailed in "Al-Muqaddimah" by Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Sanusi.

70 See the apparent similarity of this idea in Sextus Empiricus and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's book "Nihayat al-Uqool."

Refer to Sextus Empiricus, "Adversus Logicos ii. 164 and 166ff" for more details.

71 Qadi Abdul Jabbar al-Mughni expressed this idea in "Al-Mughni" (Vol. 12, p. 45), and Al-Maqdisi did the same in "Al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya" (Vol. 1, p. 52), stating that one should not demand a proof for another proof or a cause for another cause.

72 Abu Umar al-Jarmi, known for his work with Hadith, famously based his legal opinions on Sibawayh's book for thirty years,

emphasizing the importance of grammatical interpretation. Words, when given extraordinary importance, can lead to diverse interpretations and disagreements. Grammatical or linguistic perspectives have significantly influenced differences in jurisprudential matters. Ibn Rushd, in "Bidaya al-Mujtahid," delves into these issues.

In modern times, the philosophical interpretation of language suggests that the reader's mindset imbues words with meaning, opening up vast interpretative possibilities. Determining 'Isharat al-Nass' (indications of the text), 'Iqtida' al-Nass' (requirements of the text), and 'Dalalat al-Nass' (implications of the text) is often a reflection of the reader's own biases. This has led to a situation where scholars experience a sense of emptiness in interpreting language, as words become mere vessels to be filled with the reader's chosen meanings. The evolution of textual interpretation, starting from 'Ibarah' (expression), 'Isharah' (indication), and 'Iqtidah' (requirement), has reached a point in our times where just the discerning gaze of a reader can profoundly challenge the text's ultimate purpose.

73 Ibn al-Subki (died 771 AH) defined the rules of linguistic principles in his work "Al-Qawaid wal Ashbah wal Nazair." He states that the jurisprudential implications of words like 'fa' (so), 'thumma' (then), 'illa' (except), 'hatta' (until), 'bali' (indeed), 'idha' (when), 'kadha' (thus), 'loula' (if not), and others, are bound by certain rules. In this field, Ibn Faris's "Al-Sahibi," Asnawi's "Al-Kawkab al-Durri," and especially Ibn Rushd's "Bidaya al-Mujtahid" are particularly noteworthy.

74 For example, the works of Qadi Abu Bakr Baqillani (died 403 AH), such as "Al-Irshad Al-Mutawassit" and "Al-Irshad Al-Saghir," Qadi Abdul Jabbar's (died 415 AH) "Al-Umda," Qadi Abu al-Tayyib al-Tabari's (died 450 AH) "Sharh al-Kifaya,"

Abd al-Malik Abu Ishaq Shirazi's (died 476 AH) "Al-Luma," Juwayni's (died 478 AH) "Al-Burhan," and particularly Abu Hamid Ghazali's (died 505 AH) "Al-Mustasfa," all represent expansions of the methodology set forth in "Sahib al-Risalah." Ghazali's "Al-Mustasfa," where Shafi'i jurisprudence shines in its full theological glory, has enduringly shaped Shafi'i jurisprudence within the Kalam framework. Following this, Fakhr al-Din Razi's (died 606 AH) "Al-Mahsul" and Saif al-Din al-Amidi's (died 613 AH) "Al-Ahkam fi Usul al-Ahkam" continued to orbit around the discussions from "Al-Umda," "Al-Mu'tamad," "Al-Burhan," and "Al-Mustasfa." This led to a general belief that these texts had extracted all the essence of jurisprudence. Consequently, the primary focus of later scholars was not on pioneering new methodologies, but on writing commentaries on these established works or compiling their summaries.

75 For more details, see: Ibn Hazm, "Al-Taqrīb li-Ḥadd al-Mantiq wa al-Madkhal ilayhi bi-Alfazh al-Amiyah wa al-Amthilah al-Fiqhiyah," Beirut, 2007.

76 For more details, see: "Al-Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyah."

77 "Ihya' Ulum al-Din," Vol. 1 (Book of the Principles of Beliefs), p. 238.

78 Refer to "Seerah al-Ghazali" by Abdul Karim Usman, Damascus, 1960, p. 72.

79 Refer to "Juhd al-Qariha" by Suyuti, p. 232.

80 Ghazali, deeply immersed in mystical experiences and visions, believed that he had unlocked the doors to divine knowledge. His devotion to Sufi practices gave him the impression that he was unveiling the true nature of prophethood. He stated, "What became clear to me as a necessity from practicing their [Sufis'] way was the truth and essence of prophethood." He also

believed that without experiencing Sufism, one couldn't fully comprehend the essence of prophethood, saying, "In essence, anyone who hasn't tasted it [Sufism] can only grasp the name, not the true nature, of the reality of prophethood."

However, who could have explained to Ghazali the vast difference between the exalted role of prophethood and the mystical revelations experienced by Sufis? In "Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal," where Ghazali claimed to have discovered the reality of prophethood through Sufism, his thought process led him into deeper confusion. Despite emerging into enlightenment, Ghazali was unable to initiate a new beginning in his journey, a theme he explores in "Ihya' Ulum al-Din."

81 (Ihya' Ulum al-Din, Vol. 4, p. 285).

82 Every element in the heavens and on earth has been created with precise order and rightfully so. The manner and sequence of each creation could not have been any different. Anything that came into existence did so because its creation was contingent on certain conditions. The existence of something conditional without meeting these conditions is impossible. Thus, it cannot be asserted that an impossibility was a result of Divine will. (Ihya' Ulum al-Din, Kitab al-Tawhid wal-Tawakkul).

83 Razi, "Al-Tafsir al-Kabir," Volume 7-8, Beirut 1411 AH, p. 23.

84 Razi, "Al-Tafsir al-Kabir," Volume 7-8, Beirut 1411 AH, p. 24.

85 Razi, "Al-Tafsir al-Kabir," Volume 13-14, Beirut 1411 AH, p. 44.

86 As Razi mentions: "Abu Muslim has an eloquent discourse in interpretation, deeply exploring the intricacies and fine points," in "Al-Tafsir al-Kabir," under the verse "قال ربي اجعل لي آية" (My Lord, make for me a sign).

87 Refer to "Tabaqat al-Kubra" by Allama Ibn Subki.

88 Historically, many historians have incorrectly attributed the controversy surrounding the debate on predestination (jabr) and free will (qadr) to Ma'bad al-Juhani. However, the truth differs. The Umayyads, aiming to quell public discontent against their authoritarian rule, started promoting the notion that all occurrences are divinely ordained and humans lack autonomy over their actions. This propagation was essentially a tactic to provide a religious rationale for maintaining their system of coercion.

Reportedly, Ma'bad, known for his boldness and affiliation with Imam Hasan al-Basri's scholarly circle, once inquired in a study session about the regime's stance on predestination and free will. Hasan al-Basri replied, "By Allah, the Umayyads are lying." Encouraged by the Imam's statement, Ma'bad al-Juhani initiated a rebellion against the Umayyads, which ultimately led to his martyrdom.

89 Ibn Hazm, "Al-Muhalla fi al-Milal wa al-Nihal," Vol. 2, p. 95.

90 Ghazali, during his tenure as a proponent of philosophy and logic, upheld the philosophical approach as the measure of knowledge. He stated in "Maqasid al-Falasifah": "Regarding logical matters, most are based on sound reasoning with errors being a rarity... Therefore, the utility of logic lies in the acquisition of knowledge, and the value of knowledge is in achieving eternal happiness. If it's established that happiness is tied to the perfection of the soul through purification and adornment, then logic undoubtedly holds immense value."

("Maqasid al-Falasifah," page 3)

91 From Razi's later writings, it becomes evident that the author of "Al-Tafsir al-Kabir," who persistently encountered opposition in Islamic thought, ultimately faced deep disillusionment with

his methodological approach near the end of his significant academic career. Reflecting on this, he acknowledged:

"لقد تأملت الطرق الكلامية والمناهج الفلسفية، فما رأيتها تشفي غليلاً، ولا تروي غليلاً، ورأيت أقرب الطرق، طريقة القرآن. اقرأ في الإثبات: الرحمن على العرش استوى، واقرأ في النفي: ليس كمثله شيء. ومن جرب مثل تجربتي عرف مثل معرفتي."

Translation: "I have reflected on the theological paths and philosophical methodologies, and found that they neither sufficiently quench nor satisfy. I realized the closest approach is the path of the Quran. For affirmation, read: 'The Most Merciful [Allah] rose over the Throne.' For negation, read: 'There is nothing like unto Him.' And whoever experiences as I have will understand as I do."

(Razi, "Risalah Mabahith al-Dhat wa al-Sifat," as cited in Ibn Taymiyyah's "Majmu' al-Fatawa," Volume 4, pages 72-73)

92 Ibn Khaldun made an observation regarding Qadi Nasiruddin Baydawi's "Tawali' al-Anwar," noting: "Subsequent scholars, following their predecessors, deeply engaged with philosophical texts. This led to a blend of theological and philosophical disciplines among these later scholars. Theological issues were increasingly intertwined with philosophical questions, making it difficult to distinguish one field from the other in their works. This blending is evident in Baydawi's approach in 'Tawali' al-Anwar.'"

(See Ibn Khaldun's "Muqaddimah," page 389, in the section "Tatimah Safwan al-Hikmah.")

93 In the scholarly history of Muslims, Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi's "Tajrid al-Aqa'id wal-Kalam" (Purification of Beliefs and Theology) stands out for receiving unprecedented attention. While the commentaries by Hilli, Isfahani, and Qushji are famous due to their inclusion in the curriculum, historical sources indicate over a dozen more commentaries on Tajrid.

Isfahani's commentary, in particular, gained such popularity that it overshadowed the original text.

In the ninth Hijri century, Hussamuddin Tauqani wrote a commentary on Jorjani's work, initiating a trend where writing commentaries on commentaries became a mark of scholarly distinction. This tradition of meta-commentary absorbed the intellectual energies of many prominent scholars over various eras. Some well-known names who contributed to this tradition of commentary on Jorjani's work include Muhammad Ibrahim Khateeb Zadeh, Muhyi al-Din Muhammad bin Qasim, Muhyi al-Din Ibn Hassan Samyouni, Shuja al-Din al-Yas Rumi, Anan al-Din Yusuf al-Ajmi, Ibn al-Ma'id, Khayali, Ahmad Talishi Halabi, Muhammad bin Khamud Maghlawi Wafa'i, Hussam al-Din Hussein bin Abdul Rahman Tauqani, Mawla Muhyi al-Din Burda'i, Ibn al-Sheikh al-Bushtari, Tash Koprü Zadeh Ahmad bin Mustafa, Nikari and Mahdi Shirazi, Shah Muhammad bin Hazm, Ala al-Din Hanna'i Zadeh, Shams al-Din Ahmad Qazi Zadeh, Abdul Rahman bin Ghazali Zadeh, Khusfur Beg bin Abdul Rahim, Shuja al-Din Kausaj, Sulaiman bin Mansur Tusi, Mawlavi Muhyi al-Din Ahmad bin Ibrahim al-Nahhas Damishqi, Abdul Ghani bin Amar Shah bin Mahmud, Muhammad bin Mahi Zadeh, and Muhammad bin Abdul Karim, among others.

This extensive engagement in the meta-commentary tradition reflects how significant intellectual efforts were channeled into expanding and elaborating upon established scholarly works.

94 A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Sa'd al-Din Al-Taftazani's commentary on the Creed of Najm al-Din al-Nasafi, translated by E. E. Elder, was published by Columbia University Press in 1950. This commentary offers insights into Islamic theology and doctrine, providing a detailed exposition of the creedal statements and their implications for Islamic belief and practice.

95 For further reading, one may refer to L. E. Goodman's article titled "Razi's Myth of the Fall of the Soul; Its Function in his Philosophy." This article is included in the book "Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science," edited by G. F. Hourani, published in 1975. Goodman's work explores the philosophical underpinnings of Razi's interpretation of the myth of the soul's fall, analyzing its significance and role within Razi's broader philosophical framework.

96 "Maqalat-e-Islamiyyin" (The Discourses of the Islamists), page 347.

97 Ibid. p.346.

98 The historian Al-Shahrastani (d. 1153 AD) traced the origins of Al-Nazzam's philosophy to Anaxagoras, an earlier thinker. Anaxagoras posited that any object, no matter how small, could be divided indefinitely, suggesting that even the tiniest fragment could be further subdivided. Al-Nazzam shared a similar view, asserting that every object has parts that can be endlessly divided, and no half is so small that it cannot be halved again. This concept implies the infinite divisibility of matter. The ideas of Anaxagoras are documented in Simplicius's commentary on Aristotle's "Physics." Simplicius was a philosopher of the 6th century AD.

99 "Maqalat al-Islamiyyin," page 283.

100 Ghazali expressed in his works "Mishkat al-Anwar" and "Ihya' Ulum al-Din" that the world we inhabit is merely a reflection of an eternal and timeless 'Realm of Malakut' (spiritual realm).

101 For further reading, see L.E. Goodman's engaging essay: "Three Meanings of the Idea of Creation" in A. Altmann's "Three Jewish Philosophers," New York, 1967.

102 Refer to Aristotle's "Categories," specifically section 6, 5a, page 25.

103 "Tahafut al-Falasifah," page 60.

104 Avicenna, a devout adherent of Aristotelian cosmology, faced a compelling necessity to accept the eternity of time. According to his interpretation, if time had an origin and nature was created at a certain moment, it would imply that time and nature pre-existed any other creation. In Aristotelian thought, matter is the foundation of all possibilities, and nature's creation is inconceivable without the pre-existence of matter. This led Avicenna to a profound dilemma: how could the universe exist before matter was created? And if matter isn't eternal, how did its creation occur? Furthermore, he pondered over the origin of time itself. If time was created at a specific point, then what initial motion measured this time, since Aristotle viewed time as a metric of movement? These questions highlighted a logical paradox in Aristotelian philosophy, trapping Muslim thinkers in a philosophical dead end with no resolution through philosophy alone.

The idea of a pre-creation time fundamentally contradicts the divine scheme of creation or the 'First Cause' concept. Avicenna's Aristotelian framework offered a possible solution: acknowledging God as the universe's creator while simultaneously existing outside it. Thus, while God is the prime mover of the universe, He is not part of or directly involved in it. This philosophical stance raised another issue: if the tangible aspect of matter isn't eternal, how can an eternal entity be linked to something non-eternal or created? These unresolved philosophical complexities underscored the inherent limitations of attempting to reconcile Aristotelian metaphysics with Islamic theological concepts.

105 Prior to Al-Farabi, students of philosophy were only allowed to study three of Aristotle's eight logical works: 'Categories' (Kitab al-Maqulat), 'On Interpretation' (Kitab al-'Ibarah), and

'Prior Analytics' (Kitab al-Qiyas), but only up to discussions on hypothetical syllogisms. The other five books were prohibited, as the clerics of the time deemed them detrimental to their religious doctrines. This changed during Al-Farabi's time when the restrictions on studying these additional texts were lifted. This historical shift is detailed in Ibn Abi Usaybi'ah's work "Tabaqat al-Atibba" (The Classes of Physicians), specifically in the second part, page 135.

106 In justifying the execution, Al-Mu'tadid stated, "He urged me towards atheism. I responded, 'I am the cousin of the guardian of this Sharia and currently occupy his role. There is a limit to what I can tolerate before I must take action.'" (Adapted from Mu'jam al-Adibba, Vol. 1, p. 145)

107 Ibn Murtada's "Al-Muniya wa al-Amal fi Sharh Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal," edited by Thomas Arnold, published in Hyderabad, p. 53.

108 Qutb al-Din Shirazi's "Sharh Hikmat al-Ishraq," published in Tehran, p. 15.

109 Suhrawardi's "Hikmat al-Ishraq," Loryan edition, 1952, pp. 1-11.

110 Shirazi in his writings clarifies:

"وقد أتى المصنف حكمهم ومذاهبهم في هذا الكتاب وهو بعينه ذوق فضلاء يونان وهاتان الأمتان متوافقان في الأصل كما ذكر جاماسف تلميذ زردشت وفرشاد شير و بوز مرجمهر المتأخرو من قبلهم مثل الملك كيومرث و طهورث و افريدون وكيخسرو وزردشت من الملوك الأفاضل و قد أتلف حكمهم حوادث الدهر... والمصنف أظفر بأطراف منها رآها موافقة للأمور الكشفية الشهودية، امتحنها وكملها."

"The author [Suhrawardi] has meticulously detailed the philosophical principles and doctrines of the Greeks in this book, capturing the essence of Greek sages' wisdom. He demonstrates a fundamental agreement between the intellectual

traditions of the Greeks and Persians. This alignment is acknowledged by figures like Jamasp, a disciple of Zoroaster, and later thinkers such as Farshad, Shir, and Bozorgmehr, alongside renowned kings including Kayumars, Tahmuras, Fereydun, Kay Khosrow, and Zoroaster. Their profound wisdom, however, was altered over time due to historical changes... The author has successfully unearthed aspects of this wisdom, finding parallels with intuitive and visionary revelations, which he has rigorously examined and refined."

111 Faruq Al-Qadi, "Afaq Al-Tamarrud: Qira'ah Naqdiyah fi Al-Tarikh Al-Urubi wal-Arabi Al-Islami" (Horizons of Rebellion: A Critical Reading in European and Arab-Islamic History), Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing, Cairo, 2004, p. 493.

112 Al-Farabi, "Ara' Ahl Al-Madinah Al-Fadilah" (The Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City), introduction and commentary by Albert Nasri Nader, Beirut, Fifth Edition, p. 115.

113 Al-Farabi categorizes the powers of the human soul into two main types: those responsible for action and those for perception. He further explains that action encompasses three kinds: vegetative, animal, and human. As for perception, it's divided into two kinds: animal and human. These five distinct categories coexist within humans, with several of them shared with other beings. This explanation appears in his treatise, "مقالة في أغراض ما بعد الطبيعة", published in 1349 AH by Da'irat Al-Ma'arif, Hyderabad.

114 In discussing angels, Al-Farabi uses the following words:

"الملائكة صور علمية، جواهرها علوم إبداعية ليست كالألواح فيها نقوش أو صدور فيها علوم بل هي علوم إبداعية قائمة بذواتها تلحظ الأمر الأعلى فينطبع في هوياتها ما تلحظ وهي مطلقة لكن الروح القدسية يخاطبها في اليقظة والروح البشرية تعاشرها في النوم."

Translation: "The angels are intellectual forms, whose essences are creative knowledge. They are not like tablets bearing inscriptions or having knowledge imposed upon them, but rather, they possess inherent creative knowledge. They observe the highest order and imprint within their essences what they observe. They are free, yet the Holy Spirit communicates with them in wakefulness, and the human soul interacts with them in sleep."

This description is found in "Fusus al-Hikam," pages 174-175, within the collection of Abu Nasr al-Farabi's writings.

115 "Maqalat Fi Aghrad Ma Ba'd Al-Tabi'ah," published in 1349 AH by Da'irat Al-Ma'arif, Hyderabad.

116 For further reading, refer to Al-Farabi's "Kitab Al-Millah," annotated by Muhsin Mahdi, Beirut, 1968.

117 Ibn Miskawayh's "Al-Fawz Al-Asghar" (On the Nature of Revelation, Question Three, Chapter Four), Beirut, 1319 AH.

118 It seemed initially that with the introduction of philosophical discourse, our Islamic theologians were beginning to unveil truths previously left unaddressed by Divine Revelation. However, in reality, these extensive discussions didn't lead to a greater understanding of truth. Instead, they increasingly distanced us from a revelation-based rational perspective. Consider the concept of the soul, for instance. The Quranic answer 'Say, the spirit is of the command of my Lord' implied that the mysteries of divine communication and the essence of consciousness are beyond human comprehension due to the dimensional differences between the tangible and intangible realms. Therefore, unraveling the mystery of the soul's infusion wouldn't significantly enlighten human intellect.

While Ghazali didn't delve into this mystery in 'Ihya' ulum al-din', a work aimed at the general public, he did address it in 'Maznun Saghir'. He described the soul as 'a substance, not a body, connected to the body in a way that is neither attached nor detached, neither inside nor outside, neither a condition nor conditioned.' This revelation required an understanding of terms unfamiliar to the first generation of Muslims, perhaps the reason why the legislator remained silent on the soul's reality. For those with a theological mindset, unraveling this mystery involved understanding that the soul is a substance because it perceives, and perception is an accident. According to philosophical principles, an accident cannot coexist with another accident, thus necessitating the soul to be a substance; otherwise, it would lose the attribute of perception. Moreover, the soul not being a body is evidenced by the fact that if it were, it would possess dimensions, allowing its parts to be divided. Then, one part would have knowledge of something, while another would have ignorance of the same, an impossibility. The soul's state of being neither attached nor detached, neither inside nor outside, is attributed to these qualities being specific to a body. And since the soul is not a body, these conditions do not apply.

This revelation, disclosed through theological reasoning, had a profound impact on those intellectuals like Ghazali. For a time, it dominated the thoughts of those who, in pursuit of divine mysteries, strayed from the path of Divine Revelation and lost themselves in the philosophical wilderness. It's striking how the allure of ancient Greek discourse so captivated the bearers of Divine Revelation that they simply echoed Greek thought rather than engaging deeply with it, despite the fact that Aristotle had explored these concepts in his Metaphysics. How did prominent figures like Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Ghazali, despite their adherence to the Quran, come to embrace

Aristotelian conjecture and even remain under the impression that they were attaining true understanding?

119 The issue of caliphate, particularly the validity of hadiths advocating for the rights of the Umayyad, Abbasid, and the Prophet's family (Ahl al-Bayt), is complex due to their vast number and variation. These hadiths appear to have originated from political necessities, and when examined within the Quranic framework, their true nature becomes evident. Many of these narrations are inherently ambiguous. For example, consider the renowned hadith from Jabir bin Samurah in Bukhari, where it's reported that the Prophet (PBUH) said: 'Islam will remain mighty until there are twelve caliphs.' The narrator admits to not understanding part of the statement, which his father clarifies as 'All of them are from Quraysh.' This example illustrates the initial confusion surrounding the primary message of the narration. Other hadiths, such as those referring to Al-Saffah from Banu Hashim (Musnad Imam Ali, 13/245), Ibn Abbas's narration about three figures from the Prophet's lineage, including Al-Saffah, Al-Mansur, and the Mahdi, and similar narrations, are found in several prominent collections. However, despite their widespread circulation, these narrations fail to meet even the most basic criteria of rationality and scrutiny. Consider the implausibility of a Messenger, designated as a Mercy to the Worlds, endorsing a figure like Al-Saffah, known for usurping wealth and spilling blood. Such individuals, irrespective of their kinship to the Prophet (PBUH), are disconnected from his teachings due to their immoral actions, as highlighted in the Quran: 'He is not of your family; his actions are unrighteous' (Hud:46). This example underscores the misalignment of these politically motivated hadiths with the spirit of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

120 Abdul Malik bin Marwan, during his caliphate, reportedly barred the people of Sham (modern-day Syria) from undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage. His concern was that Ibn Zubayr, who was in control of Mecca at the time, might convince the pilgrims from Sham to swear allegiance to him. However, this restriction on the essential religious duty of Hajj led to widespread discontent. In response to this situation, a hadith narrated by Shahab Zahri was brought to attention: 'One should only embark on a journey to three mosques: the Sacred Mosque, my mosque, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.' Abdul Malik bin Marwan, interpreting this hadith, declared the Al-Aqsa Mosque as an alternative to the Kaaba. He constructed a dome over the rock believed to be the place from where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to the heavens during the Isra and Mi'raj. This move enabled the residents of Sham to perform Hajj and Tawaf rituals within their own territory. (Referenced from Al-Ya'qubi 2/261).

121 Scholars, as inheritors of prophetic knowledge, gradually cemented such a significant social status that they became emblematic of an alternate political force. Ignoring or displeasing them became inconceivable for contemporary rulers. Consequently, oppressive rulers continued to pacify scholars through gifts and financial aids. A large number of scholars and narrators of hadith saw it as their right to benefit from the state's generous gifts. For instance, Imam Malik bin Anas didn't hesitate to accept state gifts, rationalizing it as the wealth of Muslims and arguing, 'Who else but scholars, busy in teaching and guidance, are more deserving of it?' Ibn Khaldun mentions that Imam Malik compiled 'Muwatta' on the encouragement of Caliph Mansur, who had offered him thousands of gold coins, saying: 'يا أبا عبدالله إنه لم يبق على وجه الأرض أعلم مني ومنك وإني قد شغلتني الخلافة فضع أنت للناس كتابًا يتنفعون به' ('O Abu Abdullah, there is no one more knowledgeable than you and

me on the earth. I am preoccupied with the caliphate, so you should write a book for people to benefit from.') (Tariq Ibn Khaldun, 1/117, Siyar Al-Dhahabi, 8/111). Included in these scholars were the Ahl al-Bayt associates, who due to their familial connection with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) enjoyed a special distinction. This was amplified by their status as inheritors of prophetic knowledge. For instance, Ja'far al-Sadiq, notable not only as a scholar but also for his Hashemite lineage, claimed his share from the state treasury. In the same vein, Imam Shafi'i, being a member of Banu Muttalib, was entitled to his share of war spoils. (Referenced from 'Al-Islam Bayn al-Ulama wa al-Hukkam' by Abdul Aziz Badri, Medina, 1965)

122 The emotional connection of Muslims with the era of the Prophet Muhammad was inherently strong. However, over time, mere temporal proximity to that era also began to be seen as a basis for sanctification. As a result, the first generation of Muslims was esteemed not only for having lived during the Prophet's time but also because they witnessed those who had seen the Prophet's era. Ideally, the Quranic phrase "محمد الرسول الله والذين معه" (Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and those with him) should have been specifically applicable to that small group which had the opportunity to be nurtured directly by him. Among the Prophet's companions, some were specifically honored as "السابقون الاولون" (the foremost, the first ones). However, those who idealized the Prophet's era often neglected the fact that a significant number of Muslims who joined Islam post-Conquest of Mecca did so due to political expediencies. They neither had the chance to be directly nurtured by the Prophet nor could they be truly considered among "those with him": {لا يستوى منكم من انفق من قبل الفتح و قٰتل} (Those who spent and fought before the Victory are not equal). Yet, as time passed, their temporal closeness to the Prophet's era also became a source of respect and sanctity.

123 The travelogue of Imam Shafi'i, as narrated by his student Rabia bin Sulaiman, can be found in Ibn Hajjah's "ثمرات الاوراق" (Thamarat al-Awraq), edited and annotated by Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim, published by Maktabah al-Khanji in 1971.

124 Ahmed Shalibi, "History of Muslim Education," Beirut, 1954, page 22.

125 Muqaddimah Ibn Khaldun, page 540.

126 The widespread belief that the Nizamiyah of Baghdad was the first significant effort to establish a Sunni Islamic intellectual and academic stronghold is a common misconception, often reinforced by historians like Al-Dhahabi. However, in reality, the Nizamiyah of Baghdad represented not the beginning but the apex of such efforts. Its establishment signified that formal academic institutions would continue to play a crucial role for Sunni Islam's propagators and preachers in legitimizing and popularizing Islamic teachings. Nizam al-Mulk strategically utilized this academic institution as part of the state's missionary machinery. The establishment of Nizamiyah madrasas in various regions during his era was an attempt to create a state-endorsed interpretation of Sunni Islam, continuing an already existing yet more informal and subtle process. Prior to the establishment of the Nizamiyah of Baghdad during Alp Arslan's reign (450–455 AH), Nizam al-Mulk had already laid the foundation for a Nizamiyah madrasa in Nishapur. It is noteworthy that Imam Juwayni had spent thirty years leading Nizamiyah Nishapur before his death in 478 AH. Nizam al-Mulk didn't limit his efforts to Baghdad and Nishapur; he also founded Nizamiyah madrasas in cities like Balkh, Herat, Basra, Merv, Amul, Mosul, and Tabaristan. Subki observed that nearly every major city in Iraq and Khorasan had a branch of the Nizamiyah madrasas, illustrating their widespread influence and importance in the Islamic world of that era.

The establishment of the Nizamiyah madrasas seems to have been a strategic move to influence public opinion and control the mindset of people. This initiative wasn't a novel concept in Sunni Islam; indeed, centers of Islamic learning had been emerging for several generations. For example, the Beyhaqiya madrasa was founded before Nizam al-Mulk, the notable Seljuk vizier born in 410 AH, even existed (as documented in Tarikh-i Beyhaqi). Similarly, the well-known Sa'diya madrasa in Nishapur was established by Amir Nasr ibn Sabuktigin in 390 AH. Subki points out that Nizam al-Mulk likely pioneered the practice of providing regular stipends to students in these institutions (Subki, Tabaqat ash-Shafi'iya al-Kubra, Cairo 1964, vol. 4, p. 314). This approach of Nizam al-Mulk bears resemblance to the Fatimid Caliphs' establishment of the Al-Azhar Mosque. The Fatimids aimed to shape public opinion to support the state's interpretation of Islam, thereby consolidating the state's ideological foundations.

127 Mawardi, Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniyyah, Cairo, 1973, p. 30.

128 In his analysis of the declining Islamic state, Mawardi, a notable scholar of his era, noted the emergence of local warlords and tribal chiefs who had forcefully established their authority in various regions. The diminished influence of the caliph, now limited to his palace, necessitated acknowledging these regional leaders as his deputies. This situation contributed to a profound sense of uncertainty about the political system's future.

Mawardi, cognizant of the critical nature of these developments, realized that any substantial reform was beyond the current caliph's capability. Consequently, in his theoretical framework, he proposed legitimizing 'Imarat al-Istila'' (امارت الاستیلاء) — leadership through forceful conquest — as a viable governance model. He suggested that governors or sultans, acting as the

caliph's deputies, could be established either by appointment or by forcibly seizing control. This model was applicable to dynasties such as the Buwayhids, Seljuks, and Ghaznavids, who had ascended to power through conquest. Mawardi's 'Al-Ahkam Al-Sultaniyyah', composed in Cairo in 1973 and found on page 47, explores these issues in depth.

129 In the historical context of the early Islamic period, Tughril Beg's appointment of Hanafi scholars to key positions is a notable event, especially highlighted by the assignment of Ali bin Ubaidullah al-Khatib. Al-Khatib's significance is further underscored by his role as the Qadi al-Quzat (Chief Justice) of Isfahan, a city traditionally known for its alignment with the Shafi'i school of thought. Additionally, the establishment of a new Hanafi mosque in Ray and the appointment of a Hanafi Qadi from the prominent Sa'idi family of Nishapur signaled a deliberate shift. These appointments suggested that the Seljuk rulers were inclined towards promoting Hanafi jurisprudence, potentially overshadowing the influence of the Shafi'is in these regions. This trend in the religious dynamics of early Islamic Iran is extensively discussed in Wilfred Madelung's "Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran," published in 1985 by Variorum in London (p. 30).

During the Seljuk rule, the influx of Hanafi scholars into traditionally Shafi'i territories was significant. This trend intensified after the mysterious assassination of Nizam al-Mulk. It appeared as though the Seljuk government had sanctioned open aggression against the Shafi'is. Notably, Sultan Muhammad ibn Malik Shah reportedly sent a military unit to assault the Grand Mosque of Isfahan, a known Shafi'i stronghold. Hanafi Imams were appointed in the Grand Mosques of Isfahan and Hamadan, a deliberate move to demean the Shafi'is. These events marked the beginnings

of an escalated conflict that eventually evolved into a full-scale civil war. This led to the downfall of both scholars and their patrons, an episode in history referred to as the Fall of Baghdad. This era is detailed in Noorullah Kasa'i's "Madrasas Nizamiyah and Academic Purifications," published in Tehran by Amir Kabir in 1984, on page 14.

130 In the Seljuk era, the government developed a practice of rewarding their allies by bestowing lands, and sometimes entire regions, as endowments. Frequently, these properties were seized from their original owners against their will. As a result, many madrasas and Sufi lodges gained substantial endowments from the Sultan. Concurrently, local emirs exploited this practice to usurp lands from weaker individuals.

The extent of this issue is exemplified by the case of Abu Ishaq Shirazi. Initially, he declined the position of head of the Nizamiyyah Madrasa in Baghdad due to concerns over the legitimacy of the land and materials used in the madrasa's construction. It was only after receiving assurances from Nizam al-Mulk that he accepted the role. However, adhering to Shafi'i jurisprudence, he remained cautious and refrained from performing prayers in the madrasa, as prayers are considered invalid on unlawfully acquired property.

This situation is further detailed in Ibn Khallikan's "Wafayat al-A'yan" (Obituaries of Notables), published in Beirut in 1977, Volume 1, on page 414.

131 In one of his fatwas, Ghazali expressed profound concern about the state of Sufi lodges. Traditionally seen as beacons of simplicity and asceticism, these lodges were flourishing on the back of endowments made by rulers who had accumulated their wealth through prohibited means. Ghazali argued that anyone relying on such illegitimately obtained endowments does not merit the title of a Sufi.

This situation and Ghazali's views on it are thoroughly examined in Nasrullah Pourjavady's research, titled "Do Mujaddid: Studies on Muhammad Ghazali and Fakhr Razi." This work, specifically in the section about the funding of Sufi lodges, discusses the ethical questions surrounding the sustenance of these lodges and Ghazali's stance on the matter. Published in Tehran in the Islamic year 1381, the book spans pages 87 to 91, offering an insightful analysis of Ghazali's critique on the financial aspects of Sufi practices.

132 During the third and fourth centuries, historical records often mention ascetic circles and small religious retreats known as "daera" and "zawia." However, by the late fourth and early fifth centuries, these evolved into more formal Sufi lodges, dedicated to education and spiritual training. Similar to madrasahs, these Sufi lodges began receiving endowments and support, particularly during the Seljuk period.

Zakariya al-Qazwini, in his work "Athar al-Bilad" (written in 661 AH), credits Abu Sa'id Abi al-Khayr as the founder of a Sufi lodge, although this claim isn't consistently corroborated by other historical sources. "Asrar al-Tawhid," a collection of Abu Sa'id's teachings, mentions the lodges of Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (died in 412 AH), Abdullah Bakuy (died in 420 AH), and Imam Qushayri (died in 465 AH), indicating that by the early fifth century, ascetic groups were establishing more organized institutions. This evolution of Sufi practices into institutionalized settings is further elaborated in both Zakariya al-Qazwini's "Athar al-Bilad" and Ibn Munawar's "Asrar al-Tawhid."

133 Abu Sa'id al-Istirabadi, who passed away in 440 AH, serves as a notable example. Renowned as both a profound Shafi'i scholar and a Sufi, he was instrumental in establishing madrasahs. A parallel can be drawn to Abu Sa'id al-Karkushi, who died in

404 AH. He is remembered for founding a madrasah and a Sufi lodge, underlining the intertwining of scholarly and spiritual pursuits in that era. This dual contribution of establishing educational and spiritual centers is highlighted in Al-Subki's "Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah" (Volume 4, page 293). Further, Abu Ali Daqqaq and Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri jointly founded the Madrasah Qushayriyah in 391 AH. Al-Ghazali, a prominent figure of his time, also exemplified this blend of academic and spiritual affiliations, maintaining connections with both madrasahs and Sufi lodges until his later years.

134 Khwaja Abu Ali Farmadi, who passed away in 1082 AH, originally enrolled in the Sarajan Madrasah for his educational pursuits. However, during this time, he met Sheikh Abu Sa'id Abi al-Khair. The profound connection he felt with the Sheikh ultimately led him to shift his focus from the academic setting of the madrasah to the spiritual environment of a Sufi lodge. This significant change in his spiritual path is detailed in Ibn Munawar's work, "Asrar al-Tawhid," found in Volume 1, on page 119.

135 In "Al-Iqtisad fi al-I'tiqad," Al-Ghazali introduces the concept of 'Tafweed' (delegation), paralleling Mawardi's notion of 'Imarat al-Istila' (leadership through force). Ideally, a caliph would delegate powers to his deputies or governors. However, the Seljuk rulers' scenario was different; they were not reliant on the caliph for their power. Their military strength sustained the caliphate's symbolic presence. In this dynamic, the caliph, somewhat helplessly, would grant them authority, not out of choice but necessity. The sultans were self-made through their might, and their commands were enforced across various regions. Despite the troubling nature of this arrangement, Al-Ghazali saw it as the only viable option under the circumstances. He states, "Governance becomes effective for sultans in distant

lands, far from the caliph's direct influence." This is outlined in his seminal work, Ihya' Ulum al-Din (The Revival of the Religious Sciences), published in Cairo in 1282 AH, Volume 2, page 116.

136 Baba Tahir Uryan, famed for his distinct style of two-line or six-line poetry, became a household name, with his verses becoming a shared cultural heritage. Over time, his body of work grew to include contributions from numerous unidentified poets. Determining whether Baba Tahir was a mythical figure like Khidr or a real historical person is challenging. Some historians, like Rida Quli Khan Hidayat in "Majma' al-Fusahaa," place him in the Dailamite era. Others link him to contemporaries like Ain al-Qudat Hamadani (died 526 AH) or Nasir al-Din Tusi.

Beyond these historical debates, a critical point emerges from the Abbasid era: as the caliphate weakened and the sultanate rose, Sufi circles filled the emerging spiritual and societal gap. In situations where scriptural support was lacking, the endorsement of a Sufi Sheikh provided legitimacy. The reverence for this new 'celestial class' was akin to divine sanction. Sufi sheikhs were perceived as miraculously appearing and disappearing, granting rulers their mandates and imbuing them with an aura of divine approval. This phenomenon, akin to the legendary appearances of Khidr, reinforced the belief among the masses that the Seljuk Turks' rule was divinely ordained. The narratives of Sufis appearing on mountaintops and distributing blessings solidified the notion of their spiritual authority and the divine endorsement of their earthly actions.

137 Muhammad ibn Ali Ravandi, Rahat al-Sudur, edited by Muhammad Iqbal, London, 1921, pp. 98, 99.

138 Ibn Munawar, Asrar al-Tawhid fi Maqamat al-Sheikh Abu Sa'id, Tehran, 1997, Vol. 1, p. 156.

139 In Mawardi's 'Imarat al-Istila', which legitimizes rulership established through force, he didn't quite offer a clear justification for the Fatimid and Umayyad regimes in Andalusia. However, his concept came to rationalize the independent revolts of various emirs and sultans across regions, effectively incorporating them into the caliphate's legal structure. Mawardi felt reassured that these states, albeit formed under compulsion, were now part of the caliphate where Islamic laws were enforced and judicial decisions followed Sharia principles. Al-Juwayni, confronting a different scenario from his predecessor, faced a weakened caliphate and sultanate following Sultan Alp Arslan's death in 465 AH. In "Ghiyath al-Umam," Juwayni broke from traditional views that required the caliph to be of Qurayshi lineage. Instead, he proposed that Nizam al-Mulk assume the Imamate, emphasizing qualities like decisiveness and independence over ethnic lineage. For Juwayni, Nizam al-Mulk epitomized these essential leadership traits. In his various writings, Ghazali did not completely disregard the traditional belief that Islamic leaders ('Imams') should be from the Quraysh tribe. However, he suggested that much of the prevailing conception of Islamic leadership was grounded in speculative beliefs rather than definitive religious texts. In "Fada'ih al-Batiniyyah," he argued that being from the Quraysh tribe was a circumstantial attribute for an Imam, not a divinely mandated requirement. Despite this view, he maintained that a usurper lacking verified Quraysh lineage was unacceptable for the position of Caliph. During the period of decline of the Seljuk Empire and the efforts of Caliph Al-Nasir (575–622 AH) to regain authority, it appeared that a powerful caliphate might reemerge. Umar Suhrawardi, a notable scholar of that era, used his rhetorical skill to portray the Caliph as the 'Shadow of God on Earth.' Suhrawardi described the Caliph as a divine intermediary between God and humans,

appointed to guide humanity, and bestowed with a spiritual status beyond the reach of even the most revered Sufis. These evolving circumstances led to diverse interpretations among Islamic scholars, complicating the development of a uniform Islamic orthodoxy. Some scholars accepted a limited role for a physically confined Caliph, while others justified the suspension of a Caliph who was not a jurist, considering the demands of the times. The focus on Quraysh lineage by some and the elevation of the Caliph to a nearly divine status by others further fragmented the Islamic understanding of leadership.

140 Al-Kasani, a prominent Islamic scholar, was sent as an envoy by the ruler of Konya, Arslan, to the court of Sultan Nur ad-Din Mahmud at a time when Sultan Nur ad-Din adopted a stringent stance against the government of Konya. Sultan Nur ad-Din, known for his great respect for scholars, was so impressed by Al-Kasani's scholarly reputation that upon Al-Kasani's arrival in the court of Aleppo, he offered him residency and appointed him to head the Madrasah al-Halawiyyah. This is indicative of the high esteem in which Al-Kasani was held.

Similarly, Mawardi, another esteemed Islamic scholar, was assigned the role of the Caliph's ambassador on diplomatic missions to Northern Iran in 1042 and 1044, during the confrontations with the Ghaznavid usurpers. These historical events are documented in Sami al-Dhahhan's "Annotations to the History of Aleppo" (Vol. 6, pp. 295, as referenced in "Kunuz al-Dhahab") and Al-Kasani's "Bada'i' al-Sana'i'" (translated by Muhammad al-Hasan Arif, Vol. 1, p. 43), illustrating the significant roles played by Islamic scholars in diplomacy and governance during that period.

141 In the early era of Islam, mosques were vibrant centers for imparting a wide range of knowledge, both sacred and

secular. They hosted multiple learning circles simultaneously, each dedicated to different subjects. Some circles delved into poetry and literature, others discussed narrations and traditions, while yet others engaged in the interpretation and commentary of religious texts. Participants freely navigated these circles, choosing subjects that piqued their interest. The story of Wasil ibn Ata illustrates this educational culture. He famously left Hasan al-Basri's study circle to establish his own, a move detailed in historical texts. In prominent cities like Mecca, Medina, Kufa, and Basra, renowned scholars gained fame primarily through the educational circles they led within mosques. Over time, these circles evolved, with those led by jurists adopting specific names like Maliki, Hanafi, and Shafi'i, indicative of their respective jurisprudential leanings. This scholarly tradition persisted well into the early Abbasid era. In Kufa's mosque, luminaries like Al-Kumayt and Hammad al-Rawiya were celebrated for their literary circles. Similarly, Abu al-Atahiya, a noted poet in Harun al-Rashid's court, conducted his literary gatherings in a Baghdad mosque. These mosques, thus, were not just places of worship but dynamic centers of education and cultural exchange, integral to the early Islamic societal fabric.

142 Abdul Waheed Khan, op. cit., page 533.

143 During his travels in the 8th century Hijri, Ibn Battuta experienced the Madrasah al-Mustansiriyya firsthand. He found himself particularly struck by the sight of a teacher, garbed in a black robe and adorned with a turban, seated with a sense of solemn dignity. This image, as described in Ibn Battuta's journey account, 'Rihla Ibn Battuta' (Vol. 1, p. 167), encapsulated an air of respect and composed authority.

144 Ibn Sa'd 7/120

145 Quoted in Shibli, Al-Ghazali, p. 15

146 Quoted in Abdul Waheed Khan, p. 507

147 Quoted in Shibli, 'Ilm al-Kalam, p. 68

148 Al-Yafi'i, Vol. 3, p. 126

149 In the early era, Imam al-Haramayn, known for his social and political prominence, lacked depth in scholarly methodology and critical thinking. He was proficient in stirring up disputes but showed little tolerance for his opponents, often failing to embody the dignity expected from a representative of a significant religion. Consider his critique of Abu Hanifa in "Mughith al-Khalq." He challenged Abu Hanifa's scholarly credibility, citing his Nabataean descent and implying skepticism about the intellectual worth of someone from a non-prominent, non-Arab family. The book also contains significant historical inaccuracies, diminishing Imam al-Haramayn's scholarly stature. For instance, he incorrectly asserts that Imam Shafi'i's visit to Harun al-Rashid's court coincided with Abu Yusuf and Muhammad bin Hasan al-Shaybani's presence, even though Abu Yusuf had died before Shafi'i's arrival in Baghdad. Furthermore, Imam al-Haramayn included a bizarre and offensive tale in his book about Qaffal performing a Hanafi prayer. According to this story, Qaffal conducted the prayer while wearing a dog's skin, smearing himself with filth, performing ablution with fermented juice, and reciting nonsensical phrases like "دوبرگگ سبز" instead of the traditional Takbir. He made mock prostrations, deliberately passed wind, and concluded without completing the prayer, claiming to Mahmud of Ghazni that he had just demonstrated a Hanafi prayer. Such narratives, intended to mock the Hanafi sect, reveal more about Imam al-Haramayn's questionable scholarly integrity than about the sect he aimed to discredit.

Let's now turn to Imam Ghazali, the esteemed disciple of Imam al-Haramayn, and his approach to Islamic scholarship,

which often leaned towards the non-academic and mythical. His famous book, "Ihya ulum ad-Din," is laden with baseless narrations, stories, and weak hadiths. Ghazali included these narratives from Abu Talib Makki's "Qut al-Qulub" in his work without any critical examination or analysis. Ibn al-Jawzi criticizes this approach in Abu Talib Makki's work, noting, "He authored a book named 'Qut al-Qulub' and mentioned in it hadiths with no foundation." Ghazali's non-scholarly method of composition can be exemplified by a story he wrote about Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz, known among the Umayyad caliphs for his piety and asceticism. According to Ghazali, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz's extraordinary character was due to the divine influence in his lineage. Ghazali narrates that Sulaiman ibn Abd al-Malik once requested leftover food from the renowned ascetic Abu Hazim, then broke a three-day fast with it and subsequently conceived Abd al-Aziz, Umar's father, with his wife. Any student of Islamic history knows that Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz was not Sulaiman ibn Abd al-Malik's grandson. Thus, when readers encounter this unfounded story in Ghazali's "Mustazheri," they are left to question his standards of research and analysis.

150 Allama Al-Kawthari Al-Hanafi also expressed a similar idea in his book "Ihqaq al-Haq ba Ibtal al-Batil fi Mughith al-Khalq".

151 The name of Dhul Sharifain was Syed Murtaza, who was a wealthy and renowned scholar and hadith expert of his time (see Yafi'i, Vol. 3, p. 133).

152 The title of Faqih al-Iraqain was given to Ibn Sabbagh, who once held the presidency of the Nizamiyyah Madrasah (Yafi'i, Mirat al-Janan, Vol. 3, p. 135).

153 Ibid.

154 According to Anushirwan, who was a minister during the Abbasid Caliphate, Ghazali, in the early years of his life, had

the desire to enhance his own titles through my contributions. 'This is the one who, in his early age, sought to add more distinction to his titles through me,' as documented by Ibn Jozi in "Al-Muntazam," Volume 9, page 170.

155 Safarnama(rehla), p. 275, first part, chapter 28.

156 According to historical records, it appears that the madrasa established by Imam Abu Bakr ibn Furak al-Isfahani, who died in 405 AH, is rightfully considered the first formal madrasa. Imam al-Haramain al-Juwayni was among its distinguished alumni. The significance of Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Asfara'ini's madrasa in Nishapur is also notable, particularly because it gained renown when his student, the Shafi'i scholar Al-Bayhaqi, assumed the role of a teacher there, leading to its recognition as Madrasa Bayhaqiya. Additionally, in Nishapur during the same era, there was the madrasa of Imam Abu Hanifa Abdul Rahim bin Muhammad Al-Bayshaki.

Muhammad Abdul Rahim Ghaneemah, Tareekh al-Jami'aat al-Islamiyah al-Kubra, Dar al-Taba'at al-Maghribiyah, Tetouan, 1953.

157 The Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, esteemed as a beacon of social and academic distinction, had already determined its leadership to be under Abu Ishaq Shirazi, a scholar from the Ash'ari doctrine within the Shafi'i school. Shirazi was notably antagonistic towards the Hanbalis, frequently voicing his disapproval openly. The notion of appointing someone with such a stark opposition to the Hanbalis as the head of the prestigious Nizamiyyah institution was strongly opposed by the Hanbali faction, sparking a significant dispute. Despite this, the Hanbalis' influence paled in comparison to that of the Shafi'is and Hanafis, allowing Abu Ishaq Shirazi to maintain his influential position with considerable authority.

158 Imam Shafi'i was vehemently opposed to theological discourse. In his writings, he has taken a strong stance against the scholars of Kalam. According to Shafi'i, 'ماتردی احد فی الکلام فافلح' (No one who indulges in Kalam achieves success). He is attributed with another saying, 'لوعلم الناس مافی الکلام فی الاهواء لفروا منه کما یفر من الاسد' (If people knew what lies in engaging in Kalam about whims, they would flee from it as they flee from a lion). Additionally, he stated, 'حکمی فی اهل الکلام ان یضربو ا بالجرید والنعال ویطاف لهم فی القبائل والعشائر و یقال هذا جزاء من ترک الکتاب والسنة واقبل علی الکلام' (My judgment for the people of Kalam is that they should be beaten with palm branches and shoes, paraded among tribes and clans, and it should be declared, 'This is the recompense for the one who abandoned the Book and the Sunnah and turned to Kalam').

159 Al-Khwarizmi justifies the division of sciences in this way: 'I have made it into two discourses; one of them is the sciences of Sharia and those associated with it from the Arabic sciences, and the second is the sciences of the non-Arabs, from the Greeks and other nations.' The first discourse covers six sciences, which are Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Kalam (Islamic theology), Nahw (Arabic grammar), Poetry, Diwan writing (official record keeping), and History. The second discourse, related to the sciences of the non-Arabs, encompasses Philosophy, Logic, Medicine, Mathematics, Geometry, Astronomy, Music, the science of mechanical devices, and Alchemy. For more details, see 'Mafatih al-Uloom' by Al-Khwarizmi, p. 4.

160 Ghazali advocates a dualistic view of knowledge. He categorizes knowledge into two primary types: (1) Shari'ah Sciences and (2) Non-Shari'ah Sciences. Shari'ah Sciences, as he defines, are those derived directly from the honored prophets, peace be upon them. These sciences are not accessible through reasoning like arithmetic, nor can they be obtained through experience like medical knowledge, nor simply through listening, as in the

case of learning languages. In contrast, Non-Shari'ah Sciences are further divided into categories: some are commendable, others are not, and some are neutral.

Notably, Ghazali includes jurisprudence (Fiqh) under worldly sciences. He observes that the essence of Fiqh has evolved from its original meaning. Initially, Fiqh was imbued with concepts of monotheism, remembrance, and wisdom. He points out that in the first century, 'Tafaqquh' was focused on the purification of the soul and fear of the afterlife. In contrast, contemporary Fiqh deals with matters like divorce, manumission, mutual cursing (li'an), sale by advance payment (salam), and leasing. Thus, Ghazali considers early jurists as scholars of the worldly realm. He warns that excessive preoccupation with Fiqh leads to a generation of scholars with hardened hearts and a lack of divine fear, stating: 'Such continuous engagement does not inspire warning or fear, but rather, it hardens the heart and strips away the sense of awe, as we currently observe in those excessively devoted to it.' (Introduction, Ihya' ulum al-Din)

161 Ghazali lamented this state of affairs, stating, 'In many cities, the only available physicians are the People of the Book, whose testimonies in medical-related legal matters are not acceptable in Fiqh. Yet, we observe a lack of interest in pursuing medicine, much like the negligence observed in the study of Fiqh.'

He then queries the underlying reason, saying, 'Could it be because the practice of medicine doesn't lead to control over endowments, guardianship of orphans' wealth, judicial and governmental positions, or superiority over peers and power over adversaries? Certainly not! Indeed, true religious knowledge has been eclipsed by the misleading practices of unscrupulous scholars.' (Introduction, Ihya' ulum al-Din)

The focus on Sharia sciences intensified so much that by the close of the sixth Hijri century, a large part of the state budget

was dedicated to these madrasas. In Baghdad alone, beyond the Nizamiyyah of Baghdad, there were thirty significant madrasas. Ibn Jubayr observed that each madrasa seemed like a city unto itself. (Rihla of Ibn Jubayr). Specifically, the Mustansiriya Madrasa was supported by endowments generating an income of seventy thousand mithqals of gold. Ibn Battuta described his experience in a madrasa in Tustar, noting: 'I stayed there for sixteen days. I was astounded by its organization and the sumptuousness of its food. The servings included enough for four people, consisting of spiced rice cooked in ghee, fried chicken, bread, meat, and sweets.' (Rihla of Ibn Battuta, Vol. 1, p. 141)

162 "Originally, the Nizamiyyah catered exclusively to followers of the Shafi'i school. Over time, however, the Mustansiriya broadened its scope to include teachings from all four Islamic schools of thought. This expansion was structured such that each school's educators and curriculum were distinctly separate from the others. The trend of elevating personal religious interpretations to a fundamental aspect of Islam represented a regrettable scholarly innovation, one that ultimately deformed the universal structure of Islam.

163 Ibn Athir, Entry under the year 475 AH

164 Ibn Khallikan, Entry on Abdul Karim Abu al-Qasim Qushayri

165 Ibn Khallikan, Entry on Amid Kunduri

166 Shudhur al-Dhahab by Ibn Imad, Vol. 4, p. 139

167 Whenever a particular theological school gained the backing of the ruling powers in any era, it leveraged the political system to suppress its rivals. It is often mentioned that Ibn Hazm fell out of favor with the ruling authorities of his time due to his book 'Al-Milal wa al-Nihal'. His intense critique encompassed not only the Mu'tazilah but also the Ash'arites, who were

predominant in his time, leading to severe repercussions for his dissenting views. This opposition from the jurists resulted in his exile. Ibn Hazm eventually met his demise in a nomadic state, in the Laila desert. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, Volume 15, referenced by Muhammad Yunus, p. 159)

168 Citing 'Armughan-e-Ahbab' by Syed Abdul Hai, Rashid Ahmad Jalandhari has chronicled an episode in Delhi. He narrates an incident where a mosque's imam abducted a woman. As the neighborhood's concerned individuals sought clarity on the matter, the Maulvi justified his act by declaring: 'These individuals, specifically those from the Hanafi sect, are deemed permissible to be killed (their bloodshed is lawful). Their property is regarded as spoils of war, and their wives are lawful for us.' Rashid Ahmad Jalandhari, Bartanvi Hind mein Musalmanon ka Nizam-e-Ta'leem, Jild Awwal, Lahore, 2004, Safha 142.

169 According to Ghazali, "لولم يشتغلوا بصرف الاوقات فيه لا شتغلوا بنوم اوحديث فيما لا يعنى" (If they did not occupy themselves with wasting time, they would engage in sleep or in idle talk about matters that do not concern them). (Ihya' ulum al-Din, Vol. 3, p. 95)

170 Observing the abundance and repetition in the books of Fiqh, Ibn Khaldun reached the conclusion that 'وهى كلها متكررة والمعنى واحد والمتعلم مطالب باستحضار جميعهاو تميز ما بينها والعمر ينقضى فى واحد منها ولواقتصر المعلمون بالمتعلمين على المسائل المذهبية فقد لكان الأمردون ذلك بكثير وكان التعليم سهلا ومأخذه قريباًولكنه داء لا يرتفع لا ستقرارالعوائد عليه فصارت كا لطبيعة...ودلّ على أن الفضل ليس منحصرا فى المتقدمين سيّما ما قدّمناه من كثرة الشّواغب بتعدد المذاهب والطرق والتآليف ولكن فضل الله يوتيه من يشاء۔ وهذا نادر من نوادر الموجود والا فالظاهر أن المتعلم و لو قطع عمره فى هذا كله فلا يفي له بتحصيل علم العربيةمثلا الذى هو آلة من الآلات و وصيلة فكيف يكون فى المقصود الذى هو الثمرة؟ ولكن الله يهدى من يشاء...' (Tarikh Ibn Khaldun, Vol. 1, p. 729).' He reflected that all these books are repetitive and convey the same meaning. The learner is burdened with memorizing all of them and distinguishing

between them. A lifetime can be spent on just one of them. If teachers and learners were to focus only on the doctrinal issues, the matter would be much simpler, and learning would be easier and more accessible. However, this issue persists due to the established norms becoming like second nature... This indicates that excellence is not confined to the predecessors, especially considering the distractions caused by the multitude of madhabs, methods, and compositions. But Allah's favor is bestowed upon whom He wills. Such instances are rare among what exists; otherwise, it is apparent that a student, even if he spends his whole life in this pursuit, will not achieve, for example, the knowledge of Arabic, which is a tool among tools, a means to an end. How then can he achieve the intended goal, which is the fruit? But Allah guides whom He wills...

171 Shabbir Ahmad Khan Ghori, Islami Mantiq wa Falsafa, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library Patna, 1998, p. 254.

172 Quoted in Haqiqat-ul-Fiqh, vol. 2, p. 106.

173 For instance, Maulana Mahmood-ul-Hasan, revered among Indian scholars as Sheikh-ul-Hind due to his profound scholarly stature, focused his scholarly endeavors on issues such as Raf'ul-Yadain (the practice of raising hands during prayer), Qirat Fatihah Khalf-al-Imam (reciting the Fatiha behind the Imam), the theoretical possibility of prophetic error (Imkan-e-Kizb), and the potential for parallel occurrences (Imkan-e-Nazeer). Insights into these debates are available in his well-known works 'Adillah Kamilah', 'Izah ul-Adillah', and 'Juhd al-Muqal fi Tanzih al-Mu'azz wal-Muzall'.

174 Al-Shafi'i's 'Al-Risalah' has been a cornerstone text in shaping our jurisprudential approach, serving as a fundamental book in the field of Fiqh. Prominent authors from the early centuries who penned commentaries on it include Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Sairafi (died 330 AH), Abu al-Walid Hassan

Nishapuri (died 349 AH), Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Ismail Al-Shashi (died 365 AH), Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Abdullah Al-Shaybani Juzfi (died 388 AH), and Abu Abdullah ibn Yusuf Al-Juwayni (died 438 AH). These commentaries have elevated 'Al-Risalah' to the status of a timeless reference in the principles of Fiqh. Over the years, the scholarly endeavors and discussions of jurists have consistently revolved around the principles established in 'Al-Risalah'.

175 In the field of jurisprudence, 'Al-Umdah' by Qadi Abdul Jabbar (died 415 AH), 'Al-Mu'tamad' by Abu al-Husayn al-Basri (died 473 AH), 'Al-Burhan' by Imam al-Haramain Abdul Malik al-Juwayni (died 478 AH), and 'Al-Mustasfa' by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (died 505 AH) held significant positions. Two abridgments of these texts gained particular renown: 'Al-Mahsul' by Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (died 606 AH) and 'Al-Ahkam fi Usul al-Ahkam' by Saif al-Din al-Amidi (died 631 AH). These condensations were so well-received that subsequent scholars developed further summaries and commentaries on them. Notable among these are the commentaries on 'Al-Mahsul' by Shahab al-Din al-Qarafi (died 684 AH) and Shams al-Din al-Isbahani (died 749 AH). Taj al-Din Muhammad al-Urmawi (died 656 AH) created a summary titled 'Al-Hasil,' while his contemporary, Siraj al-Din al-Urmawi (died 682 AH), produced another summary named 'Al-Tahsil.' The story continued as 'Al-Hasil,' already a summary, was further condensed by Qadi Abdullah bin Umar al-Baydawi (died 685 AH) in 'Minhaj al-Wusul ila Ilm al-Usul.' This successive layering of abridgments turned the book's content into a complex puzzle, thereby presenting scholars with fresh opportunities to write new commentaries.

Now, let's turn to Amidi's summary, which he prepared under the title 'Al-Ahkam fi Usul al-Ahkam' from those four books.

Initially, the author himself created an abridgment titled 'Muntaha al-Rasool.' Then, Abu Umar Usman bin Amr, known as Ibn al-Hajib (died 646 AH), wrote another summary titled 'Muntaha al-Sool wal-Amal fi Ilmi al-Usul wal-Jadal.' This 'Muntaha' was further condensed into 'Mukhtasar al-Muntaha.' The question then arose: who would interpret and explain this abridgment? This significant scholarly task was undertaken by Allama Azad al-Din al-Iji (died 756 AH). Saad al-Din al-Taftazani later wrote a gloss on this commentary. Taj al-Din al-Subki (died 771 AH) authored an influential commentary on Ibn al-Hajib's summary in two voluminous parts, titled 'Raf' al-Hajib an Ibn al-Hajib.' Commentaries by Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi and Shams al-Din al-Isfahani on these books also remained in circulation among scholars; otherwise, mentioning all the commentators would require a lengthy register.

These two examples of the bustling market of commentaries are presented as a sample from the abundance, to provide some insight into the actual nature of the scholarly activities of the commentators.

176 Covering all the abridgments and associated works of 'Ihya' ulum al-Din' is an impossible task. Given its widespread popularity, numerous scholars in each era have created abridgments to facilitate its dissemination. Among these, particularly noteworthy are 'Mukhtasar Ihya' ulum al-Din' by Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Ali Ajlouni (died 813 AH) and 'Lubab al-Ihya,' authored by Ghazali's brother, Ahmad bin Muhammad. Additionally, the abridgments by Sa'id al-Yamani Abu Zakariya Yahya, Abu al-Abbas al-Mawsili, and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti are also of considerable significance.

177 Whether it's Imam Razi, Muhaqqiq Tusi, Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi, or Shams al-Din Khusraw Shahi, their roles in the realm of philosophy are essentially limited to being commentators and

summarizers of Ibn Sina's work. A similar situation applies to Katibi Qazwini (author of 'Hikmat al-Ain'), Siraj al-Din al-Urmawi (author of 'Matali' al-Anwar'), Athir al-Din al-Abhari (author of 'Hidayat al-Hikmah'), and Mulla Mahmud Jonpuri (author of 'Shams Bazigha'). Their books, while significant, primarily relate to and elaborate on Ibn Sina's philosophical system, rather than presenting original philosophical thought. The reputations of Mirak Bukhari, Sadr al-Din Shirazi, and Meybodi also stem more from their commentaries and glosses on Ibn Sina than from their own philosophical ideas. However, as Bayhaqi notes, truly original philosophers are rare, with only four major figures: Aristotle and Plato before Islam, and Farabi and Ibn Sina during the Islamic era. (Tatimma Safwan al-Hikmah, p. 16)

178 As the social respect and political power of religious scholars increased, the gap between religious and secular sciences widened. At times, religious scholars even attempted to discredit scholars of discovery. Consequently, scientists felt the need to provide religious justifications for their work. A striking example of this is a quote from Al-Biruni, which we have taken from his scientific masterpiece 'Efrad al-Maqal fi Amr al-Zilal':

'Those who have devoted themselves to the study of religious texts and have honed their expertise in these sciences are not separate from the general public. It is incorrect to believe that these disciplines are contrary to religion or Sharia, or that they belong to the categories that should be considered obsolete or abrogated. If someone believes this, they are demonstrating their ignorance of the true spirit of religion. This misconception is primarily due to a fear of new discoveries and a lack of awareness about what is acceptable and unacceptable in religion.' (Efrad al-Maqal fi Amr al-Zilal, p. 6)

179 See: Ibn al-Qifti, 'Tarikh al-Hukama', p.155.

180 'Maktubat Imam Rabbani', vol.1, Letter 266, the Sheikh states: "Among their sciences, the knowledge of geometry is worthless and utterly unproductive. Equating the angles of a triangle or constructing a right-angled triangle has no practical use." "از علم و منتظم ایشاں علمِ ہندسہ است، مالا یعنی ست ولاطائل صرف، مساوات زاویاے ثلث و مثلث ہردوقائمہ رابچہ کار می آید۔"

181 Quoted in Abdul Wahid Khan, p. 513.

182 Abdul Basit bin Khalil bin Shaheen, 'Nil al-Amal fi Dhail al-Dawal', Beirut, 2002, Vol. 5, p. 28.

183 Medieval Muslims were acquainted with printing technology. By the 13th century, there were printing presses in both Egypt and Baghdad. However, this block printing technology was sparingly used. One reason might have been the scholars' penchant for exquisite calligraphy and artistry, which block printing couldn't match. Another reason was likely a psychological reluctance to embrace the unadorned craft of block printing. The introduction of the movable type press in the 15th century garnered interest, yet there was resistance to printing Arabic or Turkish texts with this new method, owing to traditional sensibilities. E.W. Lane, in his book 'The Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians' (London, 1869, p. 281), mentioned that during his 19th-century visit to Egypt, there was a debate regarding the inappropriateness of printing Islamic texts, as they frequently contain the name of God, and the printing process was seen as potentially disrespectful.

184 Halil Inalcik, The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973, p.179.

185 Serif Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, Princeton, NJ, 1962, p. 222–3.

186 Few are aware that Baibars, albeit unintentionally, played a pivotal role in shaping what is today recognized as 'Islamic orthodoxy' or traditional Islam. Interestingly, he was neither an intellectual nor a religious figure. So, who was Baibars exactly? It is remarkable how a military leader managed to acquire such significant influence during a specific period in Islamic history, to the extent that his jurisprudential reforms have maintained lasting importance. His impact was so profound that the concept of Islam for the majority of Muslims became inextricably linked with the Four Imams, making it hard to imagine the religion without their contributions. To fully comprehend how and why this happened, a detailed and accurate historical examination is crucial. It's essential for understanding the subtleties and complexities of our jurisprudential and ideological evolutions.

Baibars, during a tumultuous period, stemmed the rising tide of the Mongols when they seemed an invincible force, almost a divine scourge. His victory over the Mongols at Ain Jalut rekindled new hopes in the hearts of the dispirited Muslims. This military success greatly boosted Baibars' popularity, elevating him to the status of 'Defender of the Faith' and 'Reviver of Religion' in the eyes of both the elite and the masses. However, this popularity alone could not justify Baibars' rule, as Muslims believed that without the endorsement of the Caliph, a Sultan's rule could not gain religious or legal legitimacy. On 9th Rajab 689 AH, corresponding to 8th June 1281 AD, a member of the Abbasid family arrived in Cairo from Iraq in secret. Baibars saw a new opportunity for legitimizing his rule in the person of Abu al-Abbas Ahmad. He organized a grand assembly attended by high government officials, scholars, judges, merchants, and Sufis. Abu al-Abbas' lineage was verified, and he was proclaimed the new Caliph with full honors. In the same assembly, the Caliph conferred the right of governance and administration to Sultan Baibars. Essentially,

the appointment of the new Caliph was a confirmation of Baibars' sovereignty. He now became the deputy of Imam Ahmad al-Muntasir billah, effectively managing and protecting the entire community. Meanwhile, in Cairo, the Shafi'i judge Ibn al-Az continued his duties, highly respected by the masses for his piety and righteousness, yet unaware of the changing political reality that Baibars was no longer just a Sultan but had become the right hand of the Caliph and the community's protector and administrator. Partly to reduce Ibn al-Az's influence and partly to prevent sectarian bloodshed, Baibars announced the establishment of four alternative courts of law. Baibars' administrative and jurisprudential decision eventually led to the permanent establishment and canonization of the four Islamic legal schools. Over time, it began to feel as though these four jurisprudential schools were divinely ordained.

187 Regarding Nur ad-Din Zangi, it is narrated that when he was engaged in battle against the Crusaders, some of his advisors proposed reallocating a substantial part of the state budget and the significant revenues from endowments, usually reserved for jurists and Sufis, towards the military efforts. Reportedly, Nur ad-Din Zangi reacted vehemently to this suggestion. He declared that all the victories and triumphs were attributable to the blessings of these respected individuals. 'How can I justify reducing their allowances?' he argued. 'While I rest in my bed, these are the very people who battle on my behalf with arrows that invariably hit their mark.' (quoted in Abu Zahrah, 'Hayat Ibn Taymiyyah', p. 329.)

188 The epistles of the Ikhwan al-Safa (Brethren of Purity), whose authors remained enigmatic for a long time and were initially circulated in Ismaili circles, quickly established their significance in academic circles. The authors of these epistles posit that the creation of the three dimensions in the world was a result of the will of the Tenth Intellect. This Tenth Intellect's excellence

also led to the differentiation of misguided souls or forms into three categories. The first group, repentant and seeking forgiveness, formed the heavens and the planets, aligning with the ten intellects. The second group, uncertain and perplexed, gave rise to the elements: water, earth, air, and fire. The third, stubborn and arrogant, resulted in the creation of the rock, which forms the center of the heavens, known to us as Earth. The movements of the heavens and planets shaped human temperaments, influenced by these celestial bodies, such as during the era of Saturn and Jupiter.

After about fifty thousand years, the human being emerged. Initially, twenty-eight individuals were created, among whom one spontaneously became aware of monotheism. This individual is identified as both Adam and the possessor of the original body. His twenty-seven aides were known as the 'people of knowledge,' as referenced in the Quranic verse 'Allah bears witness that there is no deity except Him, as do the angels and those of knowledge' (Quran 3:18). This possessor of the original body imparted esoteric knowledge to twelve individuals, among whom the foremost was known as the 'Gate of Gates,' serving as a conduit to the Imam. Anyone who heeds the call of the Da'i (missionary) is endowed with a point of light in their soul. After death, all souls converge in the Imam; this collective is termed Lahut (the divine realm). Three days after a believer's burial, a subtle vapor known as the 'soul of wind' emanates from the body. The 'souls of wind' of all believers, collected through the rays of stars, converge in the Moon, and then the Moon transfers them to the Sun via Mercury and Venus. This Imam or possessor of the original body manifests as prophets in a seventy-year cycle. Prophet Abraham was such an established Imam, uniting both exoteric and esoteric knowledge. This lineage of established Imams continued through his descendants until Abdul Muttalib,

after whom the external call was given to Abdullah and the internal call to Abu Talib. This role transitioned from Abdullah to Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and from Abu Talib to Ali. While the lineage of the external Shariah concluded, the lineage from Ali will give rise to Imams until the Day of Judgment.

These were the cosmological concepts whose formulation and dissemination were credited to Ismaili missionaries. For detailed discussions on this topic, see: 'Ikhwan al-Safa', 4/70

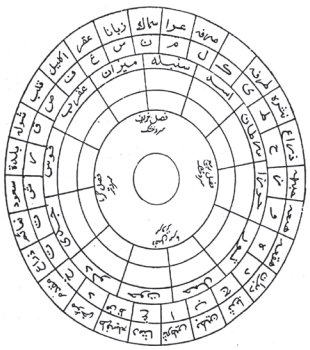
189 Shah Waliullah presented concepts like 'Alam-e-Mithal' (World of Similitudes), 'Alam-e-Khayal' (World of Imagination), Lahut (Divine Realm), and Nasut (Material Realm) as evidence of spiritual knowledge. This approach creates an impression that his spiritual cosmology is a reflection of his mystical experiences and a unique insight into the higher celestial order. However, all these notions, including the belief that the souls of the righteous acquire a specific cosmic force over centuries, are influenced by the mystical and deviant epistles of Ikhwan al-Safa and other Ismaili thinkers. For a detailed study, one should compare the texts in the epistles of Ikhwan al-Safa with Shah Waliullah's book 'Huma'at.'

'The souls of the believers, the friends of Allah, and the righteous ascend after death to the celestial kingdom and remain there until the great and complete Day of Resurrection. When their bodies are resurrected, these souls return to their bodies for judgment and recompense. As for the souls of the disbelievers, they remain in their state of ignorance until the Day of Judgment, then return to the bodies they came from to be judged and recompensed.' "انفس المؤمنين من أولياء الله وعباده الصالحين يعرج بها بعد الموت إلى ملكوت السماوات وتخلى هناك إلى يوم القيامة الطامة الكبرى فإذا أنشرت أجسادها ردت إلى أجسادها لتحاسب وتجازى وأما أنفس الكفار فتبقى في عماها إلى يوم القيامة ثم ترد إلى أجسادها التي خرجت منها لتحاسب وتجازى - الرسالة السابعة في البعث والقيامة

من الجزء الثالث.". Additionally, the same epistle states: 'Do not be, my brother, among those who wait for the resurrection of bodies, for that is a great injustice to yourself. Be among those who await the resurrection of souls. Know, my brother, that returning the souls to perishable bodies in the earth may sometimes be their death in ignorance and a submergence in the darkness of bodies.' فلا تكن يا أخي ممن ينتظر بعث الأجساد فإن ذلك ظلم عظيم في حقك فكن من الذين ينتظرون بعث النفوس واعلم يا أخي أن رد النفوس إلى الأجسام الفانية في التراب ربما يكون موتًا لها في الجهالة واستغراقًا في ظلمات الأجسام

Fatimiyeen Misr, vol.2, p. 203.

190 In the realm of Sufism, the concept of 'tanazzulat'—or descents—gives rise to the extraordinary transformative power attributed to letters. This idea posits that all emanations manifest themselves in circular forms. Specifically, the second emanation takes the shape of a circle, which Sufi thinkers divide into a pole and two arcs. The first arc is said to encompass divine realities, containing twenty-eight names of God. The second arc relates to cosmic realities and includes manifestations associated with the higher letters. These 82 letters, often referred to in the context of cosmic names, are believed by certain practitioners to hold the key to spiritual manipulation. Unraveling the mysteries of these letters is thought to lead to an understanding of the secret of divine Lordship.

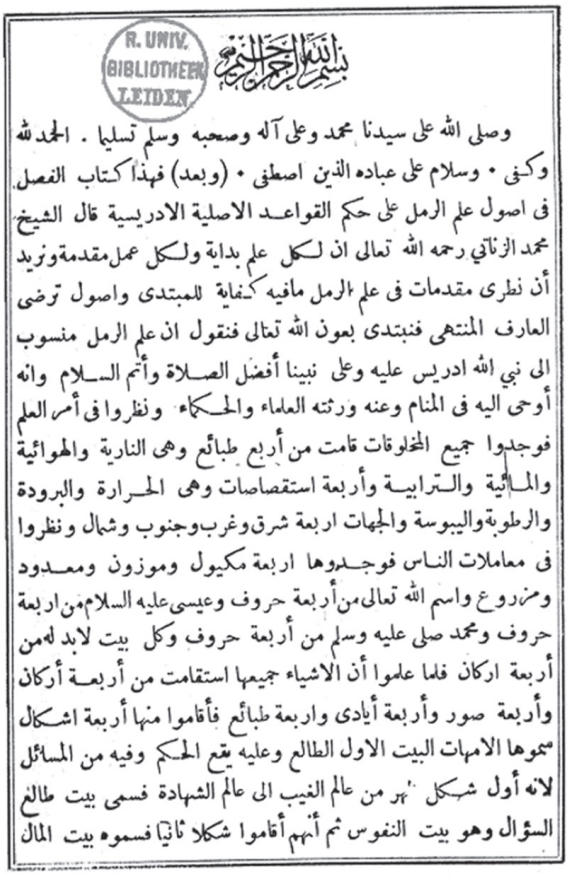


The chart of the secrets of cosmic letters

The table of the six descents

191 Determining when Muslims first became familiar with geomancy (‘ilm al-raml) is challenging. Historical sources mention figures like Muhammad al-Zanati, Ali bin Umar, Fazl bin Sahl al-Sarakhsi, and Ahmad bin Ali Zanbul in relation to this field. Evidence suggests that ‘Al-Fasl fi Usul ‘Ilm al-Raml’ by Muhammad al-Zanati may be the first comprehensive work dedicated to this art, emerging around the mid-13th century CE. The exact details of Zanati’s identity are not clear, but it is widely believed that he was associated with Morocco’s Zenata tribe. Ibn Khaldun posited that geomancy was a simplified form of physiognomy, popular among rural communities who found the complex astrological charts too intricate to understand. Essentially, it served as a more accessible form of fortune-telling for the less privileged, offering them a way to foresee their future in the dust of the earth.

For further insight, one can refer to the first page of the book on geomancy, where Sheikh Zanati attributes this art to Prophet Idris:



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم تسليما . الحمد لله
وكفى • وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى • (وبعد) فهذا كتاب الفصل
فى اصول علم الرمل على حكم القواعد الاصلية الادريسية قال الشيخ
محمد الزناتي رحمه الله تعالى ان لكل علم بداية ولكل عمل مقدمة ونريد
أن نطرى مقدمات فى علم الرمل مافيه كفاية للمبتدى واصول ترضى
العارف المنتهى فنبتدى بعون الله تعالى فنقول ان علم الرمل منسوب
الى نبي الله ادريس عليه وعلى نبينا أفضل الصلاة وأتم السلام وانه
أوحى اليه فى المنام وعنه ورثته العلماء والحكماء ونظروا فى أمر العلم
فوجدوا جميع المخلوقات قامت من أربع طبائع وهى النارية والهوائية
والمائية والترابية وأربعة استقصاصات وهى الحرارة والبرودة
والرطوبة واليبوسة والجهات اربعة شرق وغرب وجنوب وشمال ونظروا
فى معاملات الناس فوجدوها اربعة مكيول وموزون ومعدود
ومذروع واسم الله تعالى من أربعة حروف وعيسى عليه السلام من اربعة
حروف ومحمد صلى عليه وسلم من أربعة حروف وكل بيت لابد له من
أربعة اركان فلما علموا أن الاشياء جميعها استقامت من أربعة أركان
وأربعة صور وأربعة أيادى واربعة طبائع فأقاموا منها أربعة اشكال
سموها الامهات البيت الاول الطالع وعليه يقع الحكم وفيه من المسائل
لانه أول شكل ظهر من عالم الغيب الى عالم الشهادة فسمى بيت طالع
السؤال وهو بيت النفوس ثم أنهم أقاموا شكلا ثانيا فسموه بيت المال

192 This refers to the Quranic verse: 'He is the One Who has set for you the stars, that you may be guided by them amidst the darkness of the land and the sea' (Al-An'am: 97).

193 See, Th. Emil Homerin, From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Farid, His Verse, and His Shrine (Columbia 1994) pp. 26-32.

194 Spencer Trimingham, The Sufi Orders in Islam (Oxford 1971) pp. 44-50; Annemarie Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam (Chapel Hill 1975) 228-58.

195 See, Muhammad ibn Wasil, "Mufarrij al-Kuroob fi Akhbar Bani Ayyub," edited by Jamaluddin Al-Shayyal, Cairo, 1957,

pages 281–84; Ibn Al-Athir, "Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh," Beirut, 1979, Volume 11, pages 5, 404.

196 Ahmad al-Maqrizi, "Al-Mawa'iz wal-I'tibar bi-Dhikr al-Khutat wal-Athar," Baghdad, 1970, Volume 2, pages 415–16

197 Muhammad Amin, "Al-Awqaf wal-Hayat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Misr: 648–923H," Cairo, 1980, pages 204–8.

198 The Mamluk rulers established extensive Sufi lodges (khanaqahs) outside the city, typically near the graves of their relatives, to ensure continuous spiritual benefits for the deceased. Additionally, the endowments' incomes were managed by the rulers' relatives, creating a system where the rulers secured the afterlife for their ancestors and the worldly welfare of their descendants. For more detailed information, see Muhammad Amin's "Al-Awqaf," pages 692–98.

199 Endowment documents often specified the establishment of a Sufi lodge (khanaqah) for the spiritual benefit of a particular individual, detailing the prescribed prayers and Quranic verses for those affiliated with the khanaqah. This practice aimed to ensure a precise amount of spiritual reward for the founders. For more information, refer to Muhammad Amin's "Al-Awqaf," pages 211–16, and Muhammad al-Suyuti's "Jawahir al-Uqud," edited by Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi, Cairo, 1955, Volume 1, pages 356–59.

200 Consider the book "Davetname" by Ferdowsi Tawil, written in ancient Turkish script. This work is an encyclopedia of mystifying spiritual symbols, a comprehensive collection that delves into the intricate world of spiritual imagery and concepts. It represents a significant compilation in the realm of mystical and esoteric studies, written in a script that reflects the rich heritage of ancient Turkish literature and spiritual thought.

201 Ibn al-Qayyim, "Miftah Dar al-Sa'adah wa Manshur Wilayat al-'Ilm wal-Iradah," Azhar Library Press, edited by Muhammad Hasan Rabiah, Cairo, 1939, page 559.

202 Miftah, op. cit., page 474.

203 Ibid.

204 Yaqub Ahmad ibn Abi Yaqub ibn Wadhih al-Katib: "Kitab al-Buldan by Yaqubi" (Al-Haidariyah Press, Najaf, 1377H/1957), page 7.

205 The Quran originally fostered a mindset centered on discovery and rationality. Over time, however, this clarity became clouded by a thickening mist of mythological thinking. This shift was largely due to interpretive traditions that increasingly acquired a sacred status. As a result, the situation gradually worsened, with these traditions coming to be seen as the primary means of understanding the text. Despite their failure to meet the standards of logical analysis and discernment, the widespread acceptance of these traditional interpretations left readers with little choice but to view the Quran through a mythological lens. Take, for instance, the Quranic verse "It is He who created for you all that is on the earth, then He turned to the heaven and made them into seven heavens." This verse, which speaks to the creation of earth and heavens, is overlaid with Ibn Abbas's commentary. Instead of clarifying the creation process, this commentary obscures it. Tradition holds that initially, when only water existed and God's throne was above it, God formed steam or vapor from the water. This vapor rose to create the heavens. Once the water dried up, God crafted the earth and then, over two days, created seven earths and seven heavens from the smoke. (Ibn Kathir)

These interpretations, lacking scholarly, Quranic, or observational grounding, found their way into the fringes of

commentaries. Over time, rather than being critically examined and refined, they gained unwarranted legitimacy. Even esteemed collections contain such narratives, where challenging their accuracy is often viewed as irreverent. For example, Bukhari's interpretation of "The sun runs its course" includes a narrative that the sun, upon setting, prostrates beneath God's throne and seeks permission to rise again. Similarly, Abu Hurairah's account in Bukhari links the change of seasons to Hell's request to breathe twice a year, with each breath initiating a new season. (Bukhari, Vol. 2, Page 143)

This inclination toward mythological explanations eventually led to a form of intellectual anarchy within the Muslim mindset, diverging from the Quran's original spirit of inquiry and reason.

206 Ibn Qayyim's statement should be understood in its historical context. After the destruction of Baghdad, remarkable progress in the science of astronomy was ongoing at the Maragha Observatory under the direction of Tusi and Shirazi. Little did anyone know that in the coming days, in Ibn Qayyim's own city of Damascus, a scholar named Ali ibn Ibrahim Al-Shatir would emerge, laying the foundations for new science. Ibn Qayyim's frustration stems from the fact that a multitude of ignorant people, under the guise of astrology, had taken hold of Muslim society. In this market of superstitions, exploratory sciences and experimental pursuits were being sidelined. (Miftah, p. 487)

207 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' al-Fatawa (Compiled by Ibn al-Qasim), 37 volumes, Rabat: Maktabah Al-Ma'arif, 1401 AH, Volume 27, Translation by Yahya Mashut, Vol. 21, pp. 22-23

208 Vol. 21, pp. 20-22

209 Ibid.

210 Ibid.

211 Ibid.

212 Vol. 21, p. 21

213 Vol. 21, p. 22

214 In the chapter on stars (Majmu' al-Fatawa)

215 Vol. 20, pp. 22-21

216 Ibid.

217 It has been narrated in a tradition attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that if a black dog passes in front of a person who is praying, their prayer becomes invalid because the black dog is a devil. Muslim 1/365, Number 510.

218 Muslim 4/1756, Number 2236.

219 In hadith literature and chronicles, it has become a well-established notion that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was affected by the magic of Labid ibn Asam. We have refuted this point of view in the first volume of my book Idrak. (See: Idraak, Vol. 1, Page 425) Among Muslims, there is also a widely held belief that merely casting an evil glance can lead to the destruction of the opponent. The credibility of this belief actually rests on a narration that has been included in Sahih Muslim:

Narrated by Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'The evil eye is real, and if anything were to overtake the divine decree, it would be the evil eye. And when you are asked to take a bath (as a form of remedy) then do so.' (Reported by Muslim in kitab as-Salam, Chapter on Medicine and Spells).

220 Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmu' al-Fatawa, Vol. 20, p. 59

221 Al-Nubuwwat, p. 265.

222 op. cit., p. 266.

223 op. cit., p. 263.

224 op. cit., p. 273.

225 op. cit., p. 264.

226 Maulvi Shabbir Ahmad Ansari, Urooj al-Islam translation of Futuh al-Sham, pp. 97-296.

227 Shudhur al-Dhahab by Ibn Imad, Vol. 5, p. 87

228 quoted in Abdul Wahid Khan, pp. 489-90

229 Abdul Aziz Badri, Islam in the Hands of Scholars and Rulers, Qazi Publishers, 1994, pp. 103-5.

230 Nafahat-e-Makkiyah (Biography of Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki) cited in Rashid Ahmad Jalandhari, Musalmanon ka Nizam-e-Taleem, Darul Uloom Deoband, Lahore, 2004, p. 178

Glossary

Abbasid Caliphate: A major Islamic dynasty that ruled much of the Muslim world from their capital in Baghdad.

Abd al-Malik: An Umayyad Caliph known for administrative reforms and establishing Arabic as the state language.

Abdullah bin Ja'far: A companion of Prophet Muhammad known for his creativity in music and poetry.

Abdullah bin Zubair: A figure in Islamic history who established a caliphate in opposition to the Umayyads.

Abu al-Barakat: An Islamic philosopher known for his critique of Avicenna and Aristotle.

Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari: A major Islamic theologian who influenced the development of Sunni theology.

Abu Bishr Matta ibn Yunus: A Christian translator and philosopher in the Islamic world.

Abu Hanifa: An early Islamic scholar and jurist known for his initial involvement and later distance from Kalam.

Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari: A companion of Prophet Muhammad known for his beautiful recitation of the Quran.

Abu Sa'id Sirafi: An Islamic grammarian involved in debates on the value of philosophy and logic.

Adab al-Kalam or Adab al-Jadal: The discipline of theological debate and argumentation in Islamic scholarship.

Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib al-Sarakhsi: A disciple of Al-Kindi, known for his involvement in philosophical and theological discussions during the Abbasid Caliphate.

Ahmad Sirhindi: Indian Islamic scholar, who is regarded by many as the Mujaddid Alf Sani, or the Renewer of the Second Millennium, held scientific knowledge in low esteem and is often exaggeratedly considered as such.

'Alam-e-Amr (World of Command): In Islamic thought, the realm of divine command and predestination, as opposed to the physical world ('Alam-e-Khalq).

'Alam-e-Khalq (World of Creation): The physical world in Islamic cosmology, considered distinct from the metaphysical realm of divine command.

'Alam-e-Mithal (Imaginal World): A concept in Islamic mysticism representing an intermediate realm between the physical world and the spiritual realm.

Al-Azhar Mosque: A mosque and educational center in Cairo established by the Fatimid dynasty, pivotal in promoting their version of Islam.

Al-Biruni: A renowned Islamic scholar, astronomer, and polymath, known for his scientific explorations and contributions to various fields of knowledge.

Al-Farabi: An influential Islamic philosopher known for his interpretations of Greek philosophy, particularly the works of Aristotle, and their integration into Islamic theology.

Al-Ghazali: A key Islamic theologian who critiqued the blending of Greek philosophy with Islamic thought and later turned to Sufism.

Ali ibn Husayn: Also known as Zain al-Abidin, a significant figure in Shia Islam and a survivor of the Battle of Karbala.

Al-Kindi: Often considered the first Muslim philosopher, notable for integrating Greek philosophical concepts with Islamic thought.

Allegorical Interpretation: A method of interpreting religious texts symbolically rather than literally, as proposed by some Islamic philosophers.

Al-Ma'mun's House of Wisdom: An important institution of learning during the Abbasid Caliphate, known for its translation movement and contributions to science and philosophy. It symbolizes a golden age of Islamic scholarship.

Al-Qaffal: An Islamic scholar who contributed to multiple disciplines, including exegesis and theology.

Al-Quds (Jerusalem): A city of religious significance in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Al-Shafi'i: An influential Islamic jurist, founder of the Shafi'i school, known for his work in establishing principles of jurisprudence.

Al-Shafi'i's 'Al-Risalah': A key text by Al-Shafi'i, laying out the principles of Islamic jurisprudence.

Amr bin Al-As: A prominent companion of Prophet Muhammad, known for his military leadership, particularly in the conquest of Egypt.

Aristotelian Philosophy: The philosophical teachings of Aristotle, which had a significant impact on Islamic thought.

Aristotle's 'Topics VIII.2': A significant work in Aristotelian philosophy, influencing Islamic thought.

Ash'arism: An Islamic school of theology that emphasizes God's omnipotence and the limits of human knowledge regarding the divine.

Atomism: The philosophical belief that everything is composed of indivisible atoms, adapted in Islamic thought to reconcile with divine creation.

Avicenna (Ibn Sina): A Persian polymath and a key figure in Islamic philosophy and medicine.

Barbat: A lute-like musical instrument in Arab culture.

Batanin: Term used by Ghazali to describe scholars engaged in petty theological debates.

Book of Nature: A metaphorical concept referring to the natural world as a source of divine knowledge and wisdom.

Buyids: A Shia dynasty that controlled Iraq and Iran, reducing the Abbasid Caliphs to figureheads.

Caliph Abd al-Malik: An Umayyad caliph known for significant administrative and cultural changes.

Caliph Ali: The fourth caliph, whose reign was marked by significant shifts in Islamic governance.

Caliph Umar Al-Farooq: The second Caliph of Islam, known for his just and austere rule.

Caliph Uthman bin Affan: The third Caliph, known for his wealth and the expansion of the Prophet's Mosque.

Caliphate: The Islamic state and leadership established after the death of Prophet Muhammad, representing the political and religious leadership of the Muslim community.

Catch-on Syndrome: Describes the practice of trying to emulate or catch up with Western advancements in science, technology, and civilization, often without considering the unique cultural and religious context of the Muslim world.

Colonialism: The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.

Daff: A type of frame drum used in traditional music, particularly in celebrations.

Da'irah: An Islamic term referring to a circle or community, often in a religious context.

Dharrar bin Amr: An early Islamic theologian and proponent of the Mu'tazilite school.

Divine Revelation: In Islam, this refers to the knowledge and guidance revealed by Allah, primarily through the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Diwan al-Ata: 'Bureau of Grants' established by Caliph Umar for disbursing state allowances and support.

Evil Eye: A belief that a person can harm others simply by looking at them with envy or ill intent, a concept found in various cultures including Islamic societies.

Exploratory Mindset: An intellectual approach characterized by inquiry, experimentation, and a reliance on empirical evidence.

Exploratory Sciences: Fields of study such as astronomy, medicine, and physics, encouraged by the Quran but neglected by religious scholars.

Exploratory vs. Mythological Thinking: The contrast between rational, empirical approaches to knowledge and belief in supernatural, mystical explanations.

Fatimid Caliphate: An Ismaili Shia caliphate that ruled parts of North Africa and the Middle East, known for its intellectual and cultural contributions.

Faza'il and Manaqib: Narratives of virtues and noble deeds used by scholars of traditions to give a religious overlay to political divisions.

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence, the science of understanding and applying Islamic law.

First Fitna: The first major Islamic civil war following the death of Prophet Muhammad, marked by deep divisions within the Muslim community.

Ghazali: A key Islamic theologian and philosopher known for his critique of philosophy and integration of Sufism into Islamic thought.

Hadith Chroniclers: Scholars who collected and documented the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, forming the basis of Islamic tradition and law.

Hadith: Traditions or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, which form a major source of guidance in Islamic law and practice.

Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali, Ja'fari, Zaidi: Islamic jurisprudential schools, each with its unique legal methodology and interpretations.

Harun al-Rashid: An Abbasid Caliph known for his patronage of the arts and sciences, and the flourishing of culture during his reign.

Hisham bin Abdul Malik: An Umayyad Caliph who furthered the translation of foreign works into Arabic.

Hudā: Traditional camel-driving songs in Arab culture.

Ibn al-Haytham: A renowned Muslim scientist, particularly in the field of optics.

Ibn al-Jabr al-Kana'ani: A physician in early Islamic history, illustrating the Islamic appreciation for scholarly expertise beyond religious lines.

Ibn al-Maristani: A figure who opposed scientific works, such as those by Ibn al-Haytham, on astronomy.

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: A prominent Islamic theologian and jurist, student of Ibn Taymiyyah, known for his works on Islamic spirituality and law.

Ibn al-Rawandi: A critical thinker in Islamic history, known for his skepticism about religious narratives.

Ibn Arabi: A Sufi mystic and philosopher whose works, including the concept of Wahdat al-Wujood (Unity of Existence), greatly influenced Islamic thought.

Ibn Hanbal: Refers to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, an influential Islamic scholar, theologian, and founder of one of the major schools of Sunni jurisprudence.

Ibn Hazm: An Andalusian polymath known for his contributions to various fields, including Islamic jurisprudence.

Ibn Khaldun: A prominent Islamic scholar and historian, known for his work on the philosophy of history.

Ibn Miskawayh: A Muslim philosopher who viewed human evolution towards spiritual transcendence as comparable to prophethood.

Ibn Rushd (Averroes): A Muslim philosopher known for his defense of Aristotelian philosophy against Al-Ghazali's criticisms.

Ibn Salah: Islamic scholars known for their critical views on the role of logic in Islamic jurisprudence.

Ibn Sina (Avicenna): A prominent Muslim philosopher whose work 'Al-Shifa' extensively reflects Greek philosophical ideas, particularly in logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics.

Ibn Subki: An Islamic jurist known for his writings and contributions to Islamic law.

Al-Suyuti: Islamic scholar who opposed the blending of Greek philosophy with Islamic thought.

Ibn Taymiyyah: An influential medieval Islamic scholar known for his critical approach to traditionalist theology and jurisprudence.

Ibn Zubayr: A key figure in early Islamic history who declared a rival caliphate against the Umayyads.

Ijtihad: Independent reasoning in the Islamic legal tradition; a process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the legal sources.

Illuminationist Philosophy (Ishraq): A philosophical school led by Shahab al-Din Suhrawardi, integrating Greek philosophical ideas with Islamic mysticism.

Ilm al-Kalam (Islamic Theology): A discipline in Islamic scholarship focused on rational discourse and theological debate.

Imam Mahdi: A prophesied figure in Islamic eschatology, believed to appear before the Day of Judgment to restore justice and faith.

Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt: Religious leaders from the household of the Prophet Muhammad, particularly revered in Shia Islam.

Imitative Modes of Islamic Thought: Refers to the tendency in Islamic scholarship to emulate and follow past interpretations and traditions rather than innovating or critically examining religious texts in the contemporary context.

Infinite Regress: A philosophical concept questioning the beginning of time and existence, debated in Islamic philosophy.

Iqta' System: A system of land grants and revenue collection used to support state officials and institutions, including religious ones.

Isharat al-Nass and Iqtiza al-Nass: Terms in Islamic jurisprudence referring to the implications and requirements of textual evidence.

Ismaili Caliphate: A Shia Muslim caliphate established in North Africa and later Egypt, emphasizing esoteric interpretation of Islam.

Isra'iliyyat: Narratives in Islamic texts derived from Jewish sources.

Isti'la': A term referring to dominance or control, often used in the context of Sultanate governance.

Jahannam (Hell): In Islamic theology, it is the place of punishment for those who disobey God and reject His guidance.

Jannah (Paradise): In Islamic belief, it is the eternal place of reward and bliss for those who believe and do righteous deeds.

Jabr wa Qadr: Predestination and free will, a central theological debate in Islam.

Jihad: In this context, refers to armed struggle to protect or expand the Islamic state.

Jinn: Supernatural beings in Islamic theology, often associated with various spiritual and mystical phenomena.

Jizya Tax: A tax levied on non-Muslim subjects in an Islamic state.

Juwayni (Imam al-Haramayn): An influential Islamic scholar known for his social influence and role in governance.

Kalam (Islamic Theology): A field of Islamic study focusing on rational discourse and theological debate.

Khalid ibn al-Walid: A companion of Prophet Muhammad and a renowned military commander in early Islamic history.

Khalq al-Quran: The debate over whether the Quran was created or uncreated, a significant theological controversy in Islamic history.

Khanqah: Sufi lodges serving as centers for spiritual guidance and education, often supported by the state.

Kharijites: An early Islamic sect known for their strict and literal interpretation of Islam.

Khatm Bukhari: The completion of reading or reciting the entire Sahih Bukhari, often conducted as a religious practice.

Khedive of Egypt: A title used by the Ottoman governors and later rulers of Egypt.

Kuttab: Basic educational setups for children, not solely dedicated to religious teachings but including a broad curriculum.

Madlul Alaih and Istidlal: Terms in jurisprudence indicating evidence (proof) and the process of reasoning or deduction.

Madrasa: Educational institution primarily focused on Islamic studies, emerging from personal schools around scholars of hadith.

Mahdi: In Islamic eschatology, a prophesied redeemer who will restore righteousness before the Day of Judgment.

Malae A'la (Highest Angelic Realm): A term in Islamic mysticism referring to the highest level of spiritual existence, closely associated with divine presence.

Malakut: A term in Islamic mysticism referring to a higher spiritual realm beyond the physical world.

Mamluk Era: A period in Islamic history marked by the rule of Mamluk Sultans, known for their military prowess and patronage of Islamic learning.

Mamun: An Abbasid Caliph, renowned for his patronage of science and the translation movement.

Manqulat (Transmitted Sciences) and Ma'qulat (Intellectual Sciences): Categories of Islamic sciences based on their sources of knowledge.

Mansur: The second Abbasid Caliph, known for consolidating Abbasid power and founding the city of Baghdad.

Milak al-Yameen: Quranic term referring to 'what your right hands possess', often interpreted as slaves owned by a person.

Monaqib Literature: Works that exalt specific individuals or clans, often used for political leverage.

Mu'allaqat: A group of seven long Arabic poems considered the best of pre-Islamic era, often hung on the Kaaba.

Muawiya bin Abi Sufyan: A companion of Prophet Muhammad and the first Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty.

Mubahala: A Quranic concept involving invoking God's curse on the liars in a dispute.

Mukhtar al-Thaqafi & Caliph Al-Mutawakkil: Key historical figures in early Islamic history, noted for their political and military roles.

Mulla Sadra: An influential Islamic philosopher who deeply engaged with Suhrawardi's Illuminationist philosophy.

Mutassim: An Abbasid Caliph known for his military campaigns and consolidation of power.

Mutazilite Jurists: Islamic theologians known for their rationalist approach in interpreting Islamic teachings.

Mythological Mindset: A way of thinking characterized by a belief in supernatural forces and events, often based on traditional stories or legends.

Nabidh: A traditional non-intoxicating drink in Arab culture.

Nafs al-Zakiyya: A descendant of Prophet Muhammad who rebelled against the Abbasid Caliphate.

Najm al-Din al-Katibi and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi: Islamic scholars known for their works in logic.

Nasikh wa Mansukh (Abrogation): The concept in Islamic jurisprudence where certain Quranic verses replace or cancel others.

Nasir al-Din al-Tusi: A Persian scholar whose work 'Tajrid al-Kalam' is highly regarded in both philosophical and Kalam circles.

Nizamiyyah: A network of Sunni religious schools established by Nizam al-Mulk Tusi, integral to promoting Sunni Islam.

Occasionalism: A philosophical theory in Islamic theology, discussing God's role in the direct causation of events.

One Thousand and One Nights: A famous collection of Middle Eastern folk tales, reflecting the cultural milieu of the Abbasid era.

Philosophy in Islam: The study of knowledge, truth, and the nature of reality, influenced by Greek thought in early Islamic intellectual history.

Physiognomy: The practice of assessing a person's character or personality from their outer appearance, particularly the face.

Prophethood: The office or condition of being a prophet, with Prophet Muhammad being the last in Islamic belief.

Prophetic Islam: This term refers to the original teachings and practices of Islam as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. In the book, it's contrasted with the interpretations and changes that have occurred over time.

Prophetic Wisdom: The wisdom and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which are considered a guide and model for Islamic life and practice.

Ptolemaic System: An ancient Greek astronomical model that was eventually refuted by Islamic scholars.

Qadi Nasir al-Din al-Baydawi: Influential Islamic scholar known for blending Kalam and philosophy.

Qiyas: Analogical reasoning, a fundamental principle in Islamic jurisprudence.

Qutb al-Din Shirazi: A Muslim philosopher who respected the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardi.

Rajaz: A form of Arabic poetry, often used in war contexts.

Razi (Fakhr al-Din al-Razi): An eminent Islamic scholar, known for his extensive Quranic commentary and contributions to Islamic theology.

Ribat: A type of Islamic fortification or frontier, often serving as a religious and military base.

Ridda Wars: Conflicts during Caliph Abu Bakr's reign against groups seen as apostates or rebels.

Rijal al-Ghaib (Men of the Unseen): Mystical beings in Islamic esoteric beliefs, believed to have supernatural powers and knowledge.

Sahih Bukhari: One of the most authentic collections of hadiths (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad), highly revered in Sunni Islam.

Salaf-e-Saliheen: 'The righteous predecessors,' referring to early Islamic scholars revered for their interpretations of Islam.

Seljuks: A Sunni Muslim dynasty that established sultanates in the Middle East, supporting Sunni Islam and Hanafi jurisprudence.

Shah Waliullah: A renowned Islamic scholar influenced by Sufi philosophy, including concepts from Al-Farabi and later philosophical developments.

Sharia Law: The Islamic legal system derived from the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sheikh al-Islam Ataullah Afandi: A religious authority who opposed Western military technology in the Ottoman Empire.

Shia and Sunni: Two major Islamic sects, with differing views on leadership and authority in Islam.

Shukuk (Skepticism): A phase in Islamic intellectual history characterized by doubt and questioning of previously accepted knowledge.

Sibawayh: A foundational figure in Arabic grammar and linguistics.

Stoicism: An ancient Greek school of philosophy focusing on personal ethics informed by a system of logic and naturalistic views.

Sukayna bint Husayn: A notable figure in early Islamic history, known for her cultural contributions and hosting of musical events.

Sultan Baibars: A Mamluk Sultan of Egypt and Syria, known for his military victories and administrative reforms, including in the religious and legal spheres.

Sultan Selim: A Turkish Sultan known for modernizing his military with Western technology.

Sultanate: A form of Islamic government ruled by a sultan, often coexisting with a caliphate.

Tafsir Kabir: Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's major exegesis of the Quran, known for its comprehensive and analytical approach.

Tafweez: A concept in Islamic jurisprudence meaning delegation, used to justify the Sultan's authority.

Talisman & Amulet: Objects believed to have magical powers or to bring good luck, often used in superstitious practices.

Ubaidullah bin Ziyad: A governor during the Umayyad period, known for his administrative roles in early Islamic history.

Ukaz: A famous pre-Islamic Arabian market and site for poetry competitions.

Ulema: Scholars of Islamic law and theology, who became influential in governance and religious interpretation.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz: An Umayyad Caliph known for his piety and reformist policies, particularly regarding the treatment of non-Muslims and slaves.

Umar Ibn al-Farid & Al-Hallaj: Notable Sufi poets and mystics, known for their ecstatic poetry and controversial teachings.

Umayyad Dynasty: An Islamic dynasty known for its expansion and the shift in Islamic governance towards a more monarchical system.

Uthman's Shirt: Symbol of the martyrdom and injustice faced by Caliph Uthman, leading to significant political upheaval.

Wars of Apostasy: Conflicts during Caliph Abu Bakr's reign against tribes that renounced Islam following Prophet Muhammad's death.

Wasil ibn Ata: An early Islamic theologian and founder of the Mutazilite school of thought.

Yazid: Son of Muawiyah, known for his controversial reign and role in the early Islamic civil wars.

Zakat: Islamic almsgiving, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, and its central role in early Islamic politics.

Zat wa Sifat: Essence and attributes of God, a key theological concept in Islamic thought.

Zawiya: Small Islamic religious schools or monasteries, often linked to Sufi orders.

Index

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

W