Reasoned and Inspired Beliefs: A Study of Islamic Theology

A. E. Souaiaia
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

Abstract: In most cases, Islamic theology has been examined as a sub-field of Islamic legal studies. Ignaz Goldziher and Joseph Schacht for instance, see a link between Islamic law and theology. However, Islamic materials from the formative period of Islamic thought show that Muslim scholars distinguished between disciplines dealing with theological themes and those dealing with legal and jurisprudential topics. In this article, the author defines theology and identifies the major trends that contributed to the development of theological doctrines in Sunni and Shi'ite Islam. He argues that, during the various historical periods, the scope and reach of Islamic theology depended on the political, social, and intellectual environment. He concludes that, in the end, Muslim theology could only be understood in a context radically different from its counterpart in Judaism and Christianity.

In most cases, the Islamic discipline known as *kalām* has been translated to reflect its Western counterpart, which is termed theology.[1] In contrast to the prominence of theological dogma in Christianity and the role theology plays in shaping the identity of the adherents to the various Christian sects, *kalām* did not play a major role in creating Islamic identities beyond those affiliated with Sunnism and Shi'ism. Nonetheless, in today's secondary materials, there are fewer works dealing with *kalām* than those dealing with law and politics. These may be some of the reasons behind Islamicists' lack of interest in *kalāmic* issues. But there is also a practical reason for scholars working in public universities. To be sure, the stigma associated with teaching theology, a practice common in seminaries, adds to the legal and methodological concerns; thus, scholars' indifference to Islamic theology becomes understandable. Lastly, given that theological disputes — unlike the tolerated legal dissent — have far-reaching implications for the community of

believers, Muslim scholars avoid debating theological topics. Muslim scholarship is not alone in hesitating before engaging in this arguably very polemic endeavor; scholars of Judaism — both observant and outsiders — have shown a lack of interest too. Some of the questions that will be discussed herein concern a basic definition of theology, its domain, its subjects, and the various tendencies. Although I will allow for the comparative methodology inasmuch as it facilitates the understanding of the subject matter, the article deals in more detail with Islamic theological topics.[2]

Another important distinction must be made here and that is regarding the discussion of theological themes and topics as opposed to theology as a discipline. Christian scholars, in particular, and Muslims, to a lesser extent, discussed theological matters at a very early stage of the history of their respective religions. In addition to the originators of the early gospels, Christian scholarship was concerned from early on with theology from the biblical, historical, systematic, and practical perspectives. From the Greek influenced Martyrian, Clementian, and Origenian theologies through the Latin influenced Tertullian, Augustinian, up to the mediaeval systematic Lombardian theologies, the attempt to apply reason to faith-based matters persisted. Similarly, from the Kharajites' rationalization of faith through the Mu'tazilites zealous reliance on reason, up to the Ash'arites hesitant reconciliation of reason with tradition, Muslim scholarship has also engaged theological topics. But it can be argued that none of these early attempts settled questions regarding the place of "reasoned theology" *vis-à-vis* "revealed theology." In Islam, it will be shown that there were attempts to adopt reason and discard revelation; that school of thought flourished and then collapsed due to its overconfidence in reason. But the school of traditionalists (revelations-based knowledge) also failed to create the responsible believer. Hence, the emergence of a third position that relied on both reason and revelation to explain the world and that which is beyond this world to adherents.

With these distinctions in mind, one could argue that Christianity was introduced to theological topics as early as the Pauline era, while Islam was induced to deal with issues of *kalām* by the beginning of the second half of the first Islamic century (around 670 CE). In Islam, the mere distinction between reasoned and revealed theology resulted in dropping certain theological topics all together; whereas in Christianity, I would argue that Thomas Aquinas' natural theology has become a foundation of the ecumenical expression for a very diverse Christian theology.[3] For example, when Aquinas insisted that the existence of God as the unmoved mover, God's attributes of eternity and knowledge, the existence of free will, and the existence of angels all can be demonstrated by unaided human reason, he may have opened the

door for other liberal and humanist theologies to penetrate religious thought, especially during the Reformation era.

In Islam, on the other hand, *kalām* constituted an established discipline for some time but subsided with the dismantling of the Muʿtazilite school of thought, even though some of its themes continued to be discussed but were subsumed under other disciplines; namely, *uṣūl al-dīn* (fundamentals of religion), *uṣūl* (or *ʿilm*) *al-tawḥīd* (fundamentals of monotheism), and *falsafah* (philosophy). The decline of Muʿtazilite theology and the emergence of Ashʿarite doctrinal thinking have reduced Muslims' understanding of God to a quasi-negative theology. It is negative in the sense that it emphasizes what God is not rather than affirms what He is. It is true that for Muslims God is not exactly known by what He is not. However, He remains an unknown who is recognized only through attributes; this distinction makes the end result of the theological endeavors undertaken by Muslim scholarship fundamentally different from that in Christian traditions. This distinction must be made notwithstanding the implications of the general definitions that can be found in any scholastic dictionary, which, as we will see in the coming paragraphs, do contain aspects of the two categorizations that I just made. The distinction is also needed because it enables me to move forward in this analysis without discussing other related arguments. The division of modern scholarship over the utility and function of the so-called normative, historical, and critical approaches has repercussions and a consistency that will be well served once this distinction between theology as a mode of thinking and as a means of positing faith, and theology as a discipline, is clearly established.

To wit, theology is "the rational and systematic study of religion and its influences and of the nature of religious truth." It is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as the "study of religious faith, practice, and experience; especially the study of God and of God's relation to the universe,"[4] and in the Encyclopedia Britannica as a "discipline of religious thought that is restricted in its narrower sense, because of its origination and format, to Christianity but that may be applied in a broader sense, because of its themes, to other religions. The themes of theology are God, mankind, the world, salvation, and eschatology."[5] With this kind of understanding, one would imagine that every organized religion would have its own or shared ripostes to the above mentioned themes. The lack of interest in or the aversion to this discipline must inspire the curiosity of any inquisitive mind.

As early as the beginning of the second half of the first Islamic century Muslims found themselves engaged in an existentialist debate on these and other matters.[6] It all started when some Muslims began to look to the Qurʾān for validation of their acts and the acts of the people around them and for

guidance. By the beginning of the third Islamic century, *kalāmic* discourse had become a powerful tool in the hands of some scholars and their political sponsors (the Abbasid Caliphs) to create social cohesion and exert further control on the actions and even thoughts of Muslims. This process culminated in institutionalizing the inquisition (*miḥnah*) to determine whether or not religious scholars and judges subscribe to the "official" orthodoxy.[7] In the Islamic context, theology has undergone numerous transformations in content, scope, and even nomenclature. By the fifteenth century C.E., Ibn Khaldūn was able to define the discipline of *kalām* (theology) as "a science that involves arguing with rational proofs in defense of articles of faith and refuting innovators who deviate in their dogmas from the doctrines of the early generations and the people of tradition. The core of these dogmas is the oneness of God."[8] This definition is similar to that provided for defining theology in the context of Christian traditions. However, before the crystallization of the meaning, scope, and themes of this discipline, Muslim scholarship addressed in varying degrees topics that were at any given time clearly theological. In order to do justice to this subject matter, and in order to have a better understanding of the particulars of Muslims' theology, it is beneficial to start by considering early expressions of *kalām*.

While attempting to determine the function or purpose of theology in Islam, it should be noted that the death of the Prophet Muhammad and the need to justify and validate the acts and activities of the individual and the community all contributed to the emerging of what can be characterized as theological themes at the early stage of the life of the Muslim community (*ummah*). In other words, they needed answers to questions regarding the status of Muslims who fight each other, validation of and meaning for their personal beliefs, a conceptualization of God, an explanation of the doctrine of accountability that was introduced by the concepts of reward and punishment (*jazā'* and *'adhāb*), and an articulation of the nature and extent of the Hereafter. However, since the Qur'ān provides guidance on most of the above topics, early theological discussions focused on the proper understanding of its verses. For instance, during the rule of the third Caliph ('Uthmān), who was widely believed to have been playing favoritism and not holding government officials to account, critics relied on the words of the Qur'ān to declare his acts deviant and label him as exiting the faith (*māriq*), which justified his eventual murder. The views of these rebels, whom some scholars have characterized as "puritans," judged a person's actions by whether or not they conform to the virtues of the Qur'ān. They further argued that even the office of the caliphate, the highest political and religious office which was then exclusively held by men from Quraysh, could be entrusted to a woman or black former slave as long as she or he lived according to the Qur'ānic teachings. With these

developments in mind, we can see the emergence of Qurʾānic (or exegetical) theology as the first manifestation of Islamic thought.

Five hundred years later, some consensus had formed to provide the community with a systematic explanation of such issues as the status of a Muslim who sins and the nature and attributes of God, the heavens, and the universe. This achievement constituted a comprehensive dogma (ʿaqīdah) for mainstream Muslims, although the aforementioned consensus fell short of articulating a thorough system that amounted to an official orthodoxy. In the following paragraphs, I will present some theological activities and bring to focus the formation of the various groups and their ideas. It will be clear after this brief survey that from the beginning to end, discussions of theological matters were not systematic, hence, the absence of organized theological schools of thought (madhāhib) and the presence of intellectual trends and influential thinkers instead.[9] It is true that some coherent tendencies emerged as early as the rise of the Kharajites, but as the evidence will show, the mere fact that these tendencies collapsed as soon as the founder died indicates that it was a matter of personal charisma rather than persuasive reasoning that sustained a religious sect for extended time periods.

The Chronology of Theological Tendencies in Islam

It can be argued that the precursor to kalāmic divisions was the first fissure in the Islamic structure that produced distinct denominations and which was undoubtedly political; it began with the Saqīfah meeting that resulted in the selection of Abū Bakr. However, with the murders of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī (and later his son Husayn), followed by bloody civil wars, Shiʿite discontent was easily transformed into a broad religious conundrum focused on the following: What is the status of Muslims who fight and kill other Muslims, and How is one's religiosity determined?[10]

The answer to these questions largely depended on the views on scripture held by the respective parties. For instance, Shiʿites believe that God's grace (luṭf) necessitates that the ummah is provided with absolute guidance in the form of the protected revelation (ḥifz al-qurʾān) and the continuous line of infallible Imāms (ʿiṣmat al-imām). These two principles form the cornerstone of Shiʿite thought and set them apart from other Muslims. This vision did not develop overnight, but rather took considerable time to become an element of Shiʿites' official creed.

Around the same time period, rebels known as the Kharajites (who were the driving force behind the murder of the Caliph ʿUthmān and who played a major role in subsequent civil wars) had articulated their opposition to the status quo based on a radical exegetical theology. They were loosely bound groups who saw the world as black and white with little in between.[11] They

believed that a literal interpretation of the Qurʾān should suffice as a guide on all matters. They saw themselves as the true Muslims, and anyone who disagreed with their interpretations they considered to be non-Muslims who are damned in this world and damned in the hereafter. They had an answer to every question but failed to maintain a consistent logic.[12] It is reported that a leading Kharajite was known for his mercurial temper and made it a habit to discipline his son and call him "the son of the harlot," which his mother was not. Aware that he would be lying every time he uttered that phrase, he opted to divorce his son's mother and fornicate with her (while divorced) so that he could continue calling his son "son of the harlot" without being found guilty of telling a lie. He reasoned that the sin of a single act of fornication is not as bad as the sin of ten thousand lies. While extreme and perhaps apocryphal, the case illustrates the kind of reasoning that existed during this time period, and may well have represented the attitude displayed by influential figures of the Kharijite movement.[13]

In contrast to the Kharajites, who offered answers for every question, especially with regard to the status of Muslims found guilty of committing major sins (*kabāʾir*), a group called the Murjites (*Murjiʾah)* held the view that any determination ought to be postponed until the Day of Judgment for it is God who rules on such matters. As was the case with almost all theological tendencies of this time period, members of *Murjiʾah* (those who hold off judgment) did not constitute a coherent and distinct school of thought either. It was simply an attitude that was adopted by some members of the community, one that distinguished them from other tendencies such as those of the Kharajites.[14] According to some accounts, the son of ʿUmar, the second Caliph, was a leading figure in this movement. Given the nature of their position, members of the *Murjiʾah* did not take sides in the civil strife and lived in seclusion. Even the leaders of the community retired from politics at this point in time and for this reason there are very few records of their political and religious thought.

Another tendency that emerged during the second half of the first Islamic century is one whose members had held that the attributes of God that are mentioned in the Qurʾān are expressive of His physical characteristics. Proponents of this idea argued that God has hands, a body, a face, eyes, ears and other body parts since He said so in the Qurʾān. These early advocates of the literal understanding of the Qurʾān were known as the *mujassimah* (anthropomorphists).[15] Adherents to this denomination were also inclined to believe in predetermination (*jabr*). Advocates of the opposing view that upheld the idea of human free will were the *Qadariyyah*; they relied on reason in order to interpret revelation and they too contributed to the development of Muʿtazilite thought.[16] Generally, Muslim thinkers of this time

period did not split into sharply defined schools of thought; they were divided over critical theological questions such as the status of the sinner, the qualifications of the Caliph, the status of a group of Muslims who fight another group of Muslims, the nature and attributes of God, and the meaning and nature of the Qurʾān.

By the dawn of the second Islamic century (8th century CE), two major tendencies began to dominate the theological discourse; one was located in Basrah and headed by Hasan al-Basrī (d. 110/728),[17] the other was known as the Baghdad school.[18] Leaders of both tendencies emphasized the role of reason in discovering religious as well as mundane truths. The use of reason got al-Basrī in trouble when it seemingly failed to provide him with a convincing answer regarding the status of Muslims who commit sins (kabīrah). This real or perceived failure to provide appropriate answers to important questions caused his student Wāsil Ibn ʿAtāʾ (d. 131/748) to drop out of his classes and establish what was to become known as the Muʿtazilite school. Reportedly, Wāsil did not agree with his teacher's opinion that the sinner becomes a non-Muslim or munāfiq (hypocrite). Wāsil, on the other hand, contended that a Muslim who engages in sinful acts becomes fāsiq (corrupt), but remains a Muslim nonetheless. Because of this disagreement, Wāsil left the learning court of al-Basrī. When al-Basrī later learned that his pupil left his school, he reacted saying: "iʿtazala ʿannā wāsil" (Wāsil has secluded [iʿtazala] himself from us); hence, the coining of the name muʿtazilah (a group or a person who abandons or secludes themselves or himself from others).[19]

The Muʿtazilites during the post-Basrī era emphasized the doctrines of unity (tawḥīd) and justice (ʿadl) while preserving the fundamental role of reason as an indispensable faculty. They argued that God is just; hence, He cannot compel a person to undertake a wrong act then punish him for it. It followed then that a human being, in their opinion, is empowered to act as one wills (mufawwaḍ). That is, one is free to do good or bad but will be held responsible for the choices he or she makes. As for the doctrine of unity, Muʿtazilites of this time period believed that there exists only one God and that God is eternal (qadīm); that is, he is the First and the Last. In other words, nothing preceded or existed along side Him and nothing will outlast Him. Finally, Muʿtazilites seem to be the first group to assign distinct meanings to the words muslim and muʾmin (faithful/believer). Accordingly, a fāsiq (the term they had coined for a Muslim who sins) is a Muslim but he is not a faithful/believing person.[20] The Muʿtazilites had retained a consistent methodology and maintained doctrinal unity for nearly one century, after which their consensus was again challenged by another decisive question regarding the fate of persons of different beliefs and different ages. During the first half of the fourth Islamic century (10th century CE), another Muʿtazilite

student named Abū al-Hasan ʿAlī Ibn Ismāʾīl al-Ashʿarī inquired of his teacher Abū ʿAlī al-Jubāʾī about the status of a believer, a non-believer, and a child:

> Al-Ashʿarī asked Abū ʿAlī al-Jubāʾī: Sheikh, what do you say concerning three individuals: a believer, a non-believer, and a boy [qabla al-taklīf; under legal age]; what is the status of each? Al-Jubāʾī replied: the believer is in the higher status (ahl al-darajāt), the non-believer is among the damned (ahl al-halakāt), and the boy is among the saved ones (ahl al-najāt). Al-Ashʿarī continued: Can the boy move up to the higher status if he wanted to do so? Al-Jubāʾī replied: No! He will be told that the believer earned that status through his obedience but he had not done so. Al-Ashʿarī then added: if the boy says that it is not his fault that he died young, if God allowed him to live longer, he would have done what the believer did. Al-Jubāʾī retorted: God would say: I knew that if you lived longer you would not have obeyed Me, so I took mercy on you and caused you to die before you had reached the age of legal responsibility (taklīf). Al-Ashʿarī then said: what if the non-believer, upon hearing this, pleads with God: O! God, You knew his future just like You knew mine. Why haven't You considered Your mercy on me? Al-Jubāʾī then said to al-Ashʿarī: 'You are a madman!' and he stopped talking.[21]

This event led to yet another split. Most Muslim scholars considered the new orientation to be Islamic "orthodoxy."[22] However, a closer examination of the theological doctrines found in the writings of post-Ashʿarī scholars shows inconsistency and unsystematic logic suggesting that the discipline collapsed altogether under the prominence of jurisprudents (fuqahāʾ) and the zeal of uncompromising traditionalists (ahl al-ḥadīth).[23] Moreover, the timeline also suggests that jurisprudence and traditionalism coexisted with kalāmic tendencies for at least two hundred years. Rather than the end product of a maturing theology, the resulting "orthodoxy" was the fusion of opposite ideas and the willingness to compromise certain philosophical principles and traditional beliefs. The pioneer of this new tendency was none other than al-Ashʿarī, who wrote a treatise entitled Risālah fī istiḥsān al-khawd fī ʿilm al-kalām (Treatise on the Goodness of Delving into Theology).[24]

Developments in kalām continued unaffected by the shifting loyalties of political leaders of the time. After Abū al-Hasan al-Ashʿarī, other scholars continued this new line of thinking and tried to strengthen its foundations. For instance, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, Abū Ishāq al-Asfarāʾīnī, Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī, al-Ghazālī, and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī had all adhered to the broad outline established by al-Ashʿarī, although the latter two improvised a great deal. It can be argued that the Ashʿarite school underwent many gradual changes, particularly in the hands of al-Ghazālī, who even added some Sufi elements to it. Similarly, al-Rāzī moved kalāmic discourse closer to Greek

philosophy.[25] Some might argue that with time, as the leading Ashʿarites moved away from the teachings of the founder of the school, they inadvertently brought his doctrines closer to the views of the Muʿtazilites or those of the new philosophers, who benefited at this stage from the translation of the writings of Plato and Aristotle.[26]

Doctrinal Specificity in Islamic Theology

It is important to put these developments into perspective. Three main groups — and thus three somewhat different theological perspectives — came to dominate the discipline of *kalām*. Following is a brief synopsis of the ways in which they interpreted some of the major doctrines of Islam.

I. On Unity (*tawḥīd*)

The doctrine of the unity or the singularity of God (*tawḥīd*) is so fundamental to Islamic beliefs and practices that most Muslim theologians, sociologists, historians, and even jurists felt compelled to address it in one context or another. Because it constituted a primary theme for scholars in various disciplines, *tawḥīd* acquired different and complex meanings. Before we compare the various opinions on this doctrine, it is imperative for clarity and precision to explore the concept of unity and firmly ground its understanding in the theological context. Generally, the doctrine of unity consists of *al-tawḥid al-dhātī* (unity of the essence), *al-tawḥīd al-ṣifātī* (unity of the attributes), *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* (unity of the acts), and *al-tawḥid al-ʿibādī* (monotheism in worship).

According to most Shiʿite and Sunni scholars, *al-tawḥid al-dhātī* signifies the divine essence to be one and unique; it has no likeness. It is said that all other beings are God's creations and that they are necessarily inferior to Him in station and in degree of perfection. In fact, they cannot be compared to Him at all, as per Qurʾānic enunciations: "Nothing is like Him" [Q42:V11] and "He does not have a match" [Q112:V4].

Similarly, most scholars of *kalām* defined *al-tawḥīd al-ṣifātī* as signifying God's attributes such as knowledge (*ʿilm*), power (*qudrah*), life (*ḥayāh*), will (*mashīʾah*), perception (*nazar*), hearing (*samʿ*), and vision (*baṣar*). These attributes are not realities separate from God's essence, but are identical with the essence. That is to say that the attributes are true of the essence, or that the essence manifests the attributes.[27]

Al-tawḥīd āl-afʿālī means that all acts — including human acts — exist by the will and power of God, and are in some ways willed by His essence. *Al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī* implies that no other being except God deserves worship and devotion. Worship of anything or anyone besides God is idolatry or polytheism (*shirk*) and puts the worshipper outside the boundaries of Islamic

monotheism. To some extent, *al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī* stands apart from other kinds of *tawḥīd* inasmuch as the first three are related to God while the latter concerns His creatures, especially humankind. *Al-tawḥīd al-dhātī* and *al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī* are parts of the basic system of belief in Islam. A deficiency in belief in either of these two principles would put one outside the realm of Islam.

With these basic definitions in mind, we can consider how the three schools of thought differ in their interpretations.

Al-tawḥīd al-ṣifātī is upheld by the Muʿtazilites but rejected by the Ashʿarites, who recognize *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī*, which is rejected by the Muʿtazilites. *Al-tawḥīd al-dhātī* and *al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī,* on the other hand, are recognized by all. Shiʿite scholars hold that *al-tawḥīd al-dhātī, al-tawḥīd al-ʿibādī, al-tawḥīd al-sifātī*, and *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* are all part of the doctrine of *tawḥīd*. That is, regarding the attributes, Shiʿites are on the side of *al-tawḥīd al-sifātī*, and in the debate on human acts, they are on the side of *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī*. Nevertheless, the understanding of *al-tawḥīd al-sifātī* held by the Shiʿites is different from that held by the Muʿtazilites, just as their conception of *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* differs from that held by the Ashʿarites. While the conception of *al-tawḥīd al-ṣifātī* of the Muʿtazilites is synonymous with the idea of the absence of all attributes from the divine essence, or is equivalent to the conception of the divine essence being devoid of all qualities, the Shiʿite notion of *al-tawḥīd al-ṣifātī* means the full identification of the attributes with the divine essence.[28] Similarly, the Shiʿite understanding of *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* differs from that held by the Ashʿarites in that the Ashʿarite notion of *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* means that no creature is of any consequence in the scheme of things, and everything is directly ordained by God. Accordingly, He is also the direct creator of the deeds of human beings, and they are not the creators of their own acts. This doctrine is similar to the idea of absolute predestination that was rejected by many scholars at a very early stage. The notion of *al-tawḥīd al-afʿālī* upheld by the Shiʿites sees the system of causes and effects as real, and every effect, while being dependent on its proximate cause, is also dependent on God.

II. On Justice (*ʿadl*)

The concept of *ʿadl* as defined by the Shiʿites means that God bestows His mercy and blessings and also His trials according to the prior and intrinsic deservedness of beings, and that divine mercy and trial, reward and punishment are determined in accordance with a particular order or law. This understanding of *ʿadl* is also held by the Muʿtazilites.[29] The Ashʿarites reject this doctrine of *ʿadl* on the ground that *ʿadl* thus conceived necessitates God's subjection and subordination to something else and thus contradicts His absolute power. Evidently, the doctrine of justice, when taken in the context

of human acts, is intimately related to the binary of reward and punishment, as well as to the doctrines of choice (*ikhtiyār*) and free will. In that, while humans have the choice to act virtuously or wickedly, justice demands that each is rewarded fairly and deservedly. In other words, without a concept of justice, according to Muslim theologians, human acts will not have any significance.

III. On Free Will and Freedom

For the Muʻtazilites, human freedom or free will is equivalent to divine empowerment (*tafwīḍ*). That means leaving the human being to himself and suspending the divine will from any effective role. Free will, according to the Shiʻites, implies that humans are created as free beings who, like other creatures, are entirely dependent on the essence of God for their existence and all its modes, including the mode of actions. Human actions are derived from and are dependent on God's will and merciful care. Accordingly, in Shiʻite thought, it is argued that free will and freedom can be seen as an amalgam consisting of elements from the widely held Ashʻarite predestination doctrine (*jabr*) and the Muʻtazilite notion of absolute freedom resulting from empowerment (*tafwīḍ*).[30] In that, while Ashʻarites see humans as able to act only when God wills it, Muʻtazilites argue for absolute freedom to act. Shiʻites take a middle position by arguing that God wills the acts of humans so that they are realized, but it is humans who decide whether or not to act. This Shiʻite position resonates with another minority Ashʻarite opinion that distinguished between having the will to do something (*mashīʾah; ʻirādah*) and having the power to realize it (*qudrah*); humans have free will to choose what to do in any given situation but they remain dependent on God's power to carry it out. This position did not gain prominence in Sunni Islam because it did not resonate with other established maxims that saw reward and punishment as being deserved only upon realizing an action, not just wishing or wanting them. For example, if one contemplated and decided to commit a crime but did not act, one would not be punished for having the intent alone. On the other hand, it is said that if one intended to undertake a righteous act but was prevented by circumstances outside his control to carry it out, one will be rewarded as if he has actually done it. This standard is not based on justice but rather on divine mercy. But it nonetheless raises serious concerns with the Ashʻarite doctrine that assigns human's power to act to be the providence of God, which challenges the doctrines of deservedness and justice.

IV. On the Inherent Morality or Immorality of Deeds

The Muʻtazilites believe that all deeds are intrinsically either good or evil. For example, justice is intrinsically good and oppression is inherently evil. Since God is wise, His wisdom necessitates that He should do good and

abstain from evil. Thus, the inherent goodness or badness of acts on the one hand and the wisdom of God on the other necessitates that some acts become obligatory upon God while others are undesirable. The Ashʿarites are fiercely opposed to this point of view since they reject both the inherent goodness and badness of acts and the applicability of such judgments as obligatory or undesirable upon God. The Ashʿarite position is simple: no logical or reasonable rules apply to God and therefore one cannot say that God *cannot* do a bad thing; rather, He will not do it, for His power is not limited by any thing. Shiʿites are divided on this matter: some of them accept the Muʿtazilite view, while others accept the doctrine of inherent morality or immorality of acts, but reject the view that the judgments of permissibility or undesirability are applicable to God.

V. On Grace and Choice of the Best (*luṭf and ikhtiyār al-aṣlaḥ*)

Muʿtazilites considered divine providence and grace (*luṭf*) as a duty and obligation incumbent upon God, whereas the Ashʿarites reject both the doctrine of *luṭf* and the necessity of choosing the best (*al-aṣlaḥ*) for positions of religious and political authority. Some Shiʿite scholars accept the doctrine of *luṭf* as defined by the Muʿtazilites, but those who reject the notion of "duty" and "obligation" upon God provide a modified understanding of the principle of choosing the best (*ikhtiyār al-aṣlaḥ*), which is based on divine selection of the *imām*. Shiʿites see *luṭf* as a combination of divine grace, mercy, and providence. In other words, for Shiʿites, just as humans are dependent on God for sustenance, they are also dependent on God for guidance. For them, the Qurʾān is only part of this divine guidance, which needs to be supplemented by infallible interpretation by living authorities. This difference between Sunni and Shiʿite thought is manifested in the preservation of a widely quoted prophetic tradition known as *ḥadīth al-thaqalayn*. According to Sunnis, it is reported that shortly before his death the Prophet declared: "I am leaving behind two things if you hold on to them, you will never go astray after my departure: the Book of God [Qurʾān] (*kitābu allāh*) and my Sunnah (*sunnati*)." According to Shiʿites, the same tradition is preserved but with a different ending: "I am leaving behind two things, if you hold on to them, you will never go astray after my departure: the Book of God (*kitābu allāh*) and the progeny of the members of my household (*wa-ʿitrat ahl baytī*)." In other words, while Sunnis see the Qurʾān and the Sunnah as a complete system of guidance, Shiʿites see the necessity of the presence of a living infallible Imām in any given generation to authoritatively interpret the Qurʾān. Initially, Shiʿites argued that such an infallible person is the only person qualified to be the Caliph (dual authority [political and religious; *al-marjaʿiyyah al-dīniyyah wa-ʾl-siyāsiyyah*]), but with time, they saw him as the religious authority and not

necessarily the political one. Zaydī Shi'ites were the first to give up on the doctrine of infallible dual authority.

VI. On Validity of Reason (*ra'y*)

While Shi'ite and Mu'tazilite thinkers believe reason enables the discovery of truth, Ash'arites accept reason but consider tradition and revelation superior to it. Mu'tazilites had a complex understanding of reason that allowed them to reconcile faith and knowledge in that they argued that knowledge is of two categories: necessary and acquired (and the knowledge about God was necessary).[31] Shi'ites initially did not consider *ra'y* as valid unless it was that of the infallible leader. To make the distinction clear, they use the word *'aql* (intellect) instead of *ra'y*, which is liberally used by Sunni scholars. Only during the major occultation (*al-ghaybah al-kubrā*) did *ra'y* become a tool to be used by the "deputies" of the hidden Imām.

VII. On Aim and Purpose of Divine Acts

The Ash'arites reject the contention that divine acts may be for one or several purposes or aims. They state that possession of a purpose or goal is solely applicable to human beings and other creatures. God, on the other hand, is above such matters, since having a purpose and aim implies subjection of a doer to that purpose or aim. God is free from and above every kind of limitation, restriction, and subordination. Shi'ites affirm the Mu'tazilites' doctrine that attributes purpose to divine acts. They distinguish between the purpose of the act and the purpose of the doer; in that, it is impossible that God seeks to satisfy some purpose of His own through His acts. However, a purpose or aim which is directed to the benefit of a creature is not at all incompatible with divine perfection and the supremacy of His self-sufficing essence.

VIII. On the Faith of the Corrupt (*fāsiq*)

The status of a Muslim who undertakes prohibited acts or ignores religious obligations has been a source of tension as early as the first Islamic century. Civil wars, political corruption, and sectarian violence made the determination of the status of the "corrupt Muslim" of paramount importance. On this matter, the Shi'ite scholars' views are in agreement with the Ash'arites, but are different from the views of the Kharajites, who believed that a *fāsiq* is *kāfir*, and the Mu'tazilites, who believed in intermediate status (*manzilah bayna al-manzilatayn*). Shi'ite and Ash'arite theologians see the status of a *fāsiq* as a corrupt Muslim; he is ultimately judged by the net outcome of all his deeds after the good ones cancel out the bad ones and whatever is left determines his fate. In the rare situation where the balances of bad and good deeds are equal, Ash'arite and Shi'ite theologians argue that God's mercy will tip the

balance of good; hence, although the person will not earn his stay in Paradise, God's mercy will send him there anyway.

IX. On the Infallibility of the Prophets and the Imāms (*ʿiṣmah*)

Shiʿites hold the view that the prophets and the Imāms are infallible and do not commit any major or minor sins. Scholars of the rest of the schools of thought either do not uphold this doctrine, or hold a qualified acceptance of the Shiʿite doctrine.[32] The doctrine of infallibility is essential not only in Shiʿite Islam, but also in Sunni Islam as well. Indeed, although Sunni Muslim scholars do not subscribe to the necessity of an infallible person to live in each generation, they argue that it is the entire community (*ummah*) that is infallible. The Sunni position, while challenging a specific doctrine, reaffirms another: the need for absolute knowledge. Like all other established and organized religions, Islam does not tolerate relativism in matters of dogma. The Shiʿite scholars exemplify the difference between revelation and reality; although the Qurʾān was revealed and is still among them, there must be an infallible living person to bring it to life. In other words, there must be a living authority who is able to interpret the revelations and counsel followers.

The Case against Islamic Orthodoxy

The points raised above make it clear that Muslims throughout history have held divergent opinions on a number of crucial theological issues. Because of these differing perspectives, the Islamic community has never been able to reach the consensus needed to be able to create some sort of "Islamic orthodoxy." Admittedly, the macro-divergence alone may prove the absence of an Islamic orthodoxy. However, if the above diversity among the major schools is considered along with the variations within the schools themselves, it is not unreasonable to argue that Islamic theology as it manifested itself in the discipline of *kalām* had virtually collapsed in the face of the typological, teleological, and philological readings of the Qurʾān. The divergent opinions held by the scholars of the Basrah school and those who were members of the Baghdad school (although both camps were known as Muʿtazilites) as well as the difference of opinion between neo-Ashʿarites (like al-Bāqillānī, Ibn Hazm, and al-Ghazālī) should make the case for this collapse. Moreover, Muslim scholars' need to drop the name *kalām* in favor of a newly coined one, *uṣūl al-dīn*, can also be seen as indicative of the changing attitudes towards the discipline and its themes.[33] It is true that the nomenclature could have been necessitated by the shrinking of the domain of *kalām*, but that decrease in the domain is in itself further evidence of the unease that surrounded the discipline. This shrinking of the domain of *kalām* allowed scholars like al-Baghdādī (d. 429/1037) to incorporate the remaining acceptable theological

themes into *usūl al-dīn*.[34] Similarly, Imām al-Haramayn al-Juwaynī (d. 478/ 1085) transformed the topics of the discipline of *usūl al-aḥkām* into the more inclusive *'ilm al-tawḥīd wa-'l-'ilal*, which deals with semi-theological themes (selective themes) and juridical and legal matters.[35] This readjustment and refinement phase was barely noticed by Western and modern Muslim scholars, some of whom portrayed all the disciplines as one and the same. Abd al-Rahman Badawi, for example, contends that "*'ilm al-kalām*, also known as *usūl al-dīn*, was first named *al-fiqh al-akbar* by Imam Abū Hanīfah. It was also known as *'ilm al-nazar wa-'l-istidlāl* and *'ilm al-tawḥīd wa-'l-ṣifāt*."[36] More research on this subject has shown that this characterization is not accurate.[37]

Alternatively, it can be argued that within the Islamic tradition, the themes and findings of *kalāmic* discourse had to be readjusted over time in order to remain true to the normative matrix that religion imposes. The very nature of the domain of theology, as is the case in other religious traditions, is to explain matters of faith using reason. The faculty of reason is limited since it too depends on the senses. In the event where reason carries the seeker too far out of the domain of basic scriptural teachings, he or she risks being expelled from the community of the faithful.[38] For this reason, Muslim scholars, just like Jewish scholars before them, shunned theological discussions of some topics. In Jewish practice, even the name of the deity cannot be uttered in vain. Similarly, Muslims generally, and Shi'ites in particular, are discouraged from writing down what is widely considered as the Arabic name for God (*Allāh*); instead, the phrase "the Most High" will substitute for it. Similarly, the discussion of the nature of God in Islam, whether He is material, spirit, or corporeal has been excluded from the domain of religious and mundane sciences in traditional schools of learning and in mosques. Those who insisted on debating such issues sometimes have been considered to be heretics.

We have seen, then, that normative theological discourse produces a range of responses to any given theological theme. On the one hand, the diverging views, and the schools of interpretation that they spawned, could be seen as creating new dogma. While this is probably inevitable, it could be (and has been) seen as heretical. On the other hand, from a legal perspective, normative legal or juridical discourse may produce more than one answer to the same legal question. That process, however, would lead to the creation of tolerable legal schools of thought.[39] In other words, the same normative discourse used in the area of theology and the field of jurisprudence will produce in the adherents two incongruent reactions: one places the follower of the different theology outside the fence while the other maintains the follower of the innovative legal thought inside the fence.

In order to further explain this phenomenon, let's consider two examples. During a period of heated theological debate and lively legal discussions, one

of the Shiʿite prominent scholars named Jaʿfar al-Sādiq managed to gain recognition for Shiʿism by avoiding theological matters and focusing on legal issues.[40] Within years, not only did he manage to unite divided Shiʿites, but he also attracted prominent Sunni scholars like Abū Hanīfah to his circle of learning. He enjoyed great support from the public and the blessings of the ruling class at a time when many other Shiʿites were under oppression and under close government watch. His legal teachings transcended sectarian affiliation, although his jurisprudence fundamentally differed from that of the traditional Sunni Muslims. In contrast, and around the same era, Abū al-Khattāb al-Asdī,[41] who was also a prominent teacher of many Shiʿite leaders, including Jaʿfar al-Sādiq's sons, began to preach that at any given time there exist two Prophets: a public or speaking Prophet (nāṭiq) and a silent one (ṣāmit). He determined that during the early time of Islam, Muhammad had been the speaking Prophet and ʿAlī was the silent one. This theological theory brought death to most of his followers and he himself was crucified on the governor's orders.[42]

Such cases, of which there are many in Islamic history, support the contentions that Islamic theology did not produce a universally accepted orthodoxy and that those who insisted on a radical theological vision found themselves either dead or outside the realm of Islam.

Conclusion

As a religion with deep roots in Judaism and Christianity, Islam did not have to articulate a new theological dogma. It merely affirmed all that is valid in those two traditions and rejected the few doctrines that it did not see as valid. But there is something unique about Islam and that is its extremely fused religious and political aspects. Since his migration from Mecca to Madīnah (622 CE), Muḥammad acted as the spiritual guide and the Commander-in-Chief at the same time. He maintained order and peace because of the dual role he played. Soon after his death, intra-religious violence (civil wars and sectarian clashes) forced community leaders to explain the spilling of Muslim blood, which was prohibited during the lifetime of the Prophet. It is in the halls of some corrupt regimes, in battlefields of numerous civil wars, and in Caliphs' courts of learning and debate that Islamic theology was born. When the circumstances that gave rise to theological discussions were no longer present, the discipline too disappeared only to re-appear later under similar conditions. The result of this significant struggle to give meaning to trying times resulted in defining Islam neither as an orthodoxy (with a set of orthodox beliefs *or* practices), but as a system that combines both actions (Pillars of Islam) *and* beliefs (Articles of Faith). A Muslim is a person who undertakes or recognizes the binding nature of five acts: performs daily obligatory prayers (ṣalāh), fasts

the month of Ramadan every year, if able (*ṣawm*), pays alms yearly (*zakāh*), performs *ḥajj* once in a lifetime, if able, and enlists to defend these causes if needed (*jihād*). A faithful is a person who believes in five basic tenets: the singularity of God, the Prophetship of Muhammad and other prophets, the Scripture as God's revelation, the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, and the Existence of Angels and the Hereafter. Undertaking the Pillars of Islam makes one a *muslim* while believing in the Articles of Faith makes one a *mu'min*. In the end, this dual system that combines faith and acts (*'īmān* and *'a'māl* [sing. *'amal*]) does not produce two different kinds adherents; rather, one. To be sure, in such a system, the strength of one's faith is measured by one's commitment to the practice. In times of war and peace, the *muslim* and the *mu'min* are seen in different lights. Even today, for instance, when Shi'ite authorities call on believers (*mu'minīn*) in Iraq to do or not do something, the designation carries subtle theological and legal judgments. That is the synthesis of Islamic theology and its relevance in every day life.

Endnotes

1.   From this point onward, I consider *kalām* to be the argumentative discipline that produced (in the end) the five articles of faith in Islam anchored by the declaration of faith (*shahādah*); see the determination of Muslims' creed in 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 3:43. It consists of the rational (*'aqli*) and traditional (*naqli*) positing of Islamic thought. Of course, this determination will be qualified further by the arguments throughout this paper.

2.   I have discussed theology in the context of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in other works.

3.   Of course there were attempts to establish official theological doctrines for the Church prior to Aquinas; however, with the publication of his work known as *The Summa Theologica*, one can speak of systematic theology being incorporated into the religion.

4.   These definitions can be found in the most recent editions of dictionaries like the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

5.   "Theology." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2003. Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. 02 Nov, 2003 http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?eu=73911.

6.   It is an existentialist debate because the result, during the inquisition period (*miḥnah*), could decide the life and death of the person.

7.   A key question that was posed to judges and scholars during the Abbasid era to determine their "suitability" to the position was: was the Qur'ān created? Historical records show that Ahmad Ibn Hanbal was jailed repeatedly and risked execution because he kept answering that question by saying, "it is the word of God." Early Abbasid Caliphs adopted the Mu'tazilites' view that stated that the Qur'ān was created. Mu'tazilites argued that if the Qur'ān was not created, then it must have necessarily existed with God eternally which would violate God's claim to *qidam* (His being the single First and Last).

8.   'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 3:34.

9.   It is true that theological schools had existed for a short period during the first Islamic century, but they have not persisted the same way schools of law and jurisprudence have.

10.   A good historical account of the political and religious motives and platform of Shiʿites can be gleaned from, Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 32–90. Also see, Tabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-ʾl-mulūk* (Albany: State University of New York Press, c1996); Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Mufid, *Awāʾil al-maqālāt fī al-madhāhib wa-ʾl-mukhtārāt* (Tabriz: Maktabat Haqiqat, 1330 [1951 or 1952]); and Hibat al-Dīn Muhammad Shahrastānī, *al-Hayʾah wa-ʾl-islām* (al-Najaf: Matbaʿat al-Adab, 1965).

11.   ʿAbd al-Rahman Badawī, *Madhāhib al-islāmiyyīn* (Egypt: Dar al-ʿIlm li-ʾl-Malayin: 1996).

12.   Arthur S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1947), 35–42.

13.   Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr al-Jāhiz, *al-Hayawān* (Beirut: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmi al-ʿArabi al-Islami, 1969).

14.   Muhammad Ibn Saʿd, *al-Tabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1968), 5:67–69, 6:214–20.

15.   This point of view did not end with the rise of the Muʿtazilites; rather, it remained throughout the Islamic civilization and in all times. These views may have changed from the early formulation of predeterminism but the general argument has persisted and it can be said that it was the precursor to the movement of the Zahirites; the people who believed in the "apparent (*zāhir*) meaning of the Qurʾān."

16.   ʿAlī Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hazm, *al-Fasl fī al-milal wa-ʾl-ahwāʾ wa-ʾl-nihal* (Cairo, Muhammad Ali Sabih, 1964), 4:200–215.

17.   The Basrah school consisted of: al-Hasan al-Basrī, ʿAmr Ibn ʿUbayd (143/760), Wāsil Ibn ʿAtaʾ (131/748); then, Ibrāhīm Ibn Yahyā al-Madanī, Khālid Ibn Safwān (133/750), al-Hasan Ibn Zakwān, Hafs Ibn Sālim, ʿUthmān al-Tawīl; then, Mʿammar Ibn ʿUbād (220/835), Abū Bakr al-Asamm, Abū al-Hudhayl (235/849); then, Bishr Ibn al-Muʿtamir (210/825), al-Shahhām (233/847), al-Aswarī (200/815), al-Nazzām (231/845); then, Abū Ali al-Jubāʾī (303/915), al-Jāhiz (256/869); then, Abū Hāshim al-Jubāʾī (321/933), Abū al-Hasan al-Ashʿarī (330/941).

18.   The School of Baghdad consisted of: Bishr Ibn al-Muʿtamir (210/825); then, Thumāmah Ibn al-Ashras (234/848), Ahmad Ibn Abī Duʾād (240/854), Abū Mūsā al-Murdar (226/840); then, Jaʿfar Ibn Mubashshir (234/848), Ibn Harb (236/850), Abū al-Hasan al-Khayyāt (290/902), Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Kalbī (319/931), and al-Iskāfī (240/854).

19.   This story and a variation of it was reported in Ibn Qutaybah's *Maʿārif* and *Durar wa-ghurar.*

20.   Abū Mansūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir Ibn Tāhir al-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī, *Usūl al-dın* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1981).

21.   See al-Subkī's *Tabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyyah*, 2:250–1; and Ibn Khalkān's, 3:398.

22.   Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Nuzhat al-nazar* (Banaras: al-Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1983), 19–45.

23.   The *mihnah* and the fate of many scholars who held views that did not confirm to the "official" dogma are telling events of the seriousness of the clash between the various tendencies.

24.   This document was published as an appendix to his book *al-Lumʿah.* The same work was reprinted in the first volume of *Madhāhib al-islāmiyyīn* by ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Badawī, 15–26.

25.   Fakhr al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn ʿUmar Rāzī, *al-Firāsah* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Qurʾān, 1987); Fakhr al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn ʿUmar Rāzī, *Asās al-taqdīs* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Kulliyat al-Azhariyyah, 1986); and Fakhr al-Dīn Muhammad Ibn ʿUmar Rāzī, *khalq al-Qurʾān bayna al-muʿtazilah wa ahl al-sunnah* (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Thaqafi li al-Nashr wa-ʾl-Tawzīʿ, 1992).

26.   Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adillah fī ʿaqāʾid al-millah* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1998); Ibn Rushd, *Āthār al-ʿuliyah* (al-Qāhirah: al-Majlis al-Aʿla li-ʾl-Thaqafah, 1994); Ibn Rushd, *al-falsafah* (Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1978).

27.   ʿAbd al-Rahmān Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967a), 3:61–9.

28.   The differences in opinion are so complex rendering it almost impossible to reduce the various views to comparable binaries unless relying on the specific technical definitions of the terms per se. For a broad outline of the ideas of theologians see Arthur S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1947).

29.   The idea that it is God's obligation (or duty) to observe what is best for humankind is rejected by Ashʿarites as an impossible limitation upon God; some Shiʿites also hold modified understanding of this Muʿtazilite doctrine. For more on the Muʿtazilite view of ʿadl see Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 3:61.

30.   There is a Shiʿite maxim that states "*lā jabr wa-lā tafwīd bal amrun bayna amrayn.*" That means: neither predetermination nor empowerment; but it is something in between.

31.   Arthur S. Tritton, *Muslim Theology* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1947), 85.

32.   For instance, there are scholars from the Sunni scholarship who believed that the Prophet, or Prophets for that matter, is infallible in matters of transmitting the religion, but they may err in performing mundane tasks such as military or administrative affairs.

33.   There are numerous reports where the founding figures of Islamic schools of jurisprudence, such as Ibn Hanbal and al-Shāfiʿī, were quoted making denigrating comments about *kalām* and the *mutakallimūn*.

34.   Abū Mansūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir Ibn Tāhir al-Tamīmī al-Baghdādī, *usūl al-dīn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1981), 1–2.

35.   al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī usūl al-dīn* (Egypt: al-Maʿārif, 1969).

36.   ʿAbd al-Rahman Badawi, *Madhāhib al-islāmiyyīn* (Egypt: Dar al-ʿIlm li al-Malayin, 1996), 7.

37.   A. E. Souaiaia, *The Function of Orality in Islamic Law and Practices* (United Kingdom: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

38.   Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿilis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

39.   Today for instance, there are at least seven acceptable schools of thought in Islam; but no distinct schools of theology.

40.   The lack of theological literature attributed directly to Jaʿfar al-Sādiq in a time of heated theological debates indicates that he was consciously selective of his teachings and topics which were mainly legal in nature; while encouraging his deputies to address theological matters. The list of theologians who were followers of al-Sādiq and who spoke on his behalf proves his reluctance. Among these theologians we can mention Zurāb Ibn Aʿyan, Muʾmin al-Taq, Hishām Ibn Sālim al-Jawāliqī, ʿAlī Ibn Ismāʿīl al-Maythamī, Hishām Ibn al-Hakam, and Abī al-Khattāb al-Asdī. For more on this topic, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs: Their History and Doctrines* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 88.

41.   He is accredited of being the originator of the Ismāʿīlī theological tendency. A number of Ismāʿīlī figures have wrote on this topic including Nasir Khusrow al-ʿAlawi (d. 841/1437–8) who wrote *Jami" al-hikmatayn* and *Kitab wajh al-din*; Abū Hātim al-Rāzī (d. 332/943–4) the author of *Aʿlām al-nubuwwah*; Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijjistānī the author of *Kashf al-mahjūb*; and Hamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī, a student of Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijjistānī.

42.   Al-Asdī is regarded by many as the founder of the Ismāʿīlī Shiʿite school of thought, also known as the *Bātinī* School. For more on this story and the origins and beliefs of Ismāʿīlī Shiʿism, see Farhad Daftary, *The Ismāʿīlīs Their History and Doctrines* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 89.