INTRODUCTION

1. CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE IN ISLAM:

It is curiously interesting for a student of Islamic history to notice that the fountain of all rational thought in Islam has been its basic Faith, the most cardinal constituent of which are the concepts of Tawhid and Risalah. No less curious is the other realisation that the rich variety of all Islamic learning is directly or indirectly traceable to the incentives provided by the Holy Qur'ān — the word of God. This is why the authenticity of all rational, or ideological exposition throughout Islamic history has resided chiefly in its Faith as embodied in the Holy Qur'ān.

The cause of this curious observation is not hard to trace: reason and faith in Islam from the beginning have complemented each other rather than contradicted. This is in clear distinction to the general view held in modern days that religion holds good only beyond the purview of reason.

In Qur'ān the urgings to a pursuit of inquisition and knowledge, incentives to promote reason and thought

1. S. Muzaffaruddin, Islamic Thought and Sources, p.35.
and the emphatic distinction between the knowledgeable and the ignorant, are inter-spersed in almost every narrative of moral consequence and in the stresses of the uncompromising concept of oneness of God. The life of the Prophet of Islam and his "beautiful manners" (al-Uswah al-Hasanah) only reinforced the cause of reason and truth.

The foundation of rational Islamic thought practically was laid down as early as the revelation of the very first Ayah of the Holy Qur'ān, the very first word of which was in the form of a divine injunction: Read, (Iqra'). This was a direct commandment to proceed on the path of knowledge. What was, however, more important still, was the basis of all learning and the ultimate objective of all knowledge. The next few words clearly lay down this basis and explicitly set forth the objective in the broadest terms:

"Read! in the name of your Sustainer Who created". These words with their surprising brevity stress that the awareness of God, the Sustainer, is the basis of all training and instruction, while the knowledge of this Creation as a means to cognition of the Creator is the

1. S. Muzaffaruddin, p.29
2. al-Qur'ān, 96:1
ultimate objective. The knowledge in Islam thus is not an end in itself but a means to the cognition of truth.

This broad framework of Islamic concept of knowledge came through the course of later medieval centuries in most of the Muslim lands and communities, to be confined to pursuing mainly the theological studies — which alone were considered as the basis and objective of all real knowledge. This limited and narrow view practically excluded from the scope of human reason and inquisition, all study of this creation as the manifestation of divine wisdom. Moreover this confined view also precluded from its purview, the study of man — the supreme creature perhaps. Lately, however, the situation is changing for the better and the Muslim mind is in the process of re-Islamization of its vision.

The early phase of Islam witnessed for more than three centuries an overall development of learning, representing the broad Islamic outlook in conformity with the Qur'ānic Concept. This can be seen in the fact that the continued pursuit of knowledge in the very first century of Hijrah gave momentum to a process of strati-
fication of learning which became more specialised and discipline-oriented, in the forms of Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh, Sirah and History, Rijal, Kalam, Arabic Grammar and literature in the following centuries.

A variety of questions, problems and controversies were always there to urge and induce the learned into deeper and further investigation. In addition to those disciplines which sprang forth spontaneously from Islam and the Muslim society itself, this milieu of inquisition soon introduced the Muslim mind with the rather more exotic and temporal subjects of learning like philosophy, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, logic etc.¹

Classification of Reasoning and al-Kalam:

Reasoning to enquire the knowledge of God, has been divided by Muslim scholars broadly into two categories—exoteric and esoteric—depending on the external or internal method. The former method is based on affirmation while the latter on negation. Likewise the object of the former method is acquisition of knowledge of God whereas the aim of the latter is attainment to God.²

² S. Muzaffaruddin, p.4.
In the exoteric method of reasoning we keep on affirming a cause for every phenomenon we can think of, then affirming a cause for that cause also and so on. The affirmation of causes one after the other continues till we reach the Final Cause which has no cause for its existence. The self-existing cause is called God.

On the other hand, the esoteric method seeks to eliminate every phenomenon of existence which is faulty and defective. This process continues till a stage of existence is reached which is free from all defects. This Perfect and Independent Being is named God.\(^1\) The esoteric method has been still more enlarged through intuitionalism under the name of Tasawwuf.

The exoteric reasoning method was further classed as:

1. Hikmat (Philosophy Proper)
2. al-Kalam (Rationalism)

The latter then can be sub-divided into:

a) Mu'tazilism (Reasonism)
b) Ash'arism (Revelationism).\(^2\)

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1. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
2. Ibid.
Hikmat or philosophy's objective is to attain to truths concerning fundamental questions of life, world, soul and God — through rational and universally acceptable arguments whether these arguments and inferences conform to religious dogmas or not. The Hukama (Muslim philosophers) however, maintain that philosophical truths and inferences invariably conform to the principles of Islam.¹

On the other hand the purpose of al-klām is to attain to truths in a way compatible with the laws of Islam. The Hukama (Muslim philosophers) also reach the same goal with the difference that they do not proceed with this presumption from the beginning as the Mutakallimun do. The difference between Mutazilism /'Ash'arism is that the former gives prominence to reason and the latter to revelation. Hence, we have differentiated between them as Reasonism and Revelationism.²

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid, pp.5-6. Muzaffruddin has differentiated between the rational methods of Mu'tazilah and Asha'irah as Rationalism and Scholasticism respectively. But both of the terms involve many complications. Therefore, I have replaced them by Reason-ism and Revelation-ism, which seem more appropriate.
2. ILM AL-KALĀM AND MUTAKALLIMUN:

Meaning and Historical Origin:

The word al-Kalam during the Abbasid period began to be widely used. It does not seem to have been used in the Umayyad period in the sense of an independent discipline. In those days, however, any sentence or saying bearing logical or rational style—be it verbal or in writing—was technically called among the Arabs as Kalām, particularly in the field of theology while the speaker of it was known as a Mutakallim. Gradually, in place of individual sayings this word came to be applied to the whole system.¹

In this regard generally two explanations are given. Ibn—Khallikan writes "Due to there being great controversy regarding Kalām (word) of God during the Abbasid age and related as it was to Islamic Faith, therefore, it came to be called al-Kalam."² But this does not appear to be correct explanation. Shahrastani gives the better and correct explanation, "Either that the word (Kalām) of God became a subject of great controversy, therefore it became

¹ De Boer, Tarikh-e-Falsafa-e-Islam, Urdu Tr. by S.Abid Husain, p.41.
² Shibli Naumani, Ilim al-Kalām, pp.35-36
the name of all such controversies also. Or that this discipline was invented to face and refute Philosophy, therefore, the name of logic - a branch of Philosophy - was given to this subject, as Mantiq (logic) and Kalām are synonyms in Arabic language.¹

The basic difference of approach between Mu'tazilah and Muhaddithūn gradually changed the basic connotation of al-Kalām, which in this controversy of reason and revelation came to be applied generally to Mu'tazilah. Hence, the dislike of this word among the circles of Muhaddithūn.²

As for the principles governing this branch of Islamic learning - Ilm al-Kalām -, Shahrastānī (d. 1153 A.D.) defines al-Kalām and its objects as follows:

"The subject of Ilm al-Kalām is the principles and doctrines (usūl) whereas the subject of Ilm al-Fiqh is the subsidiary issues (Furu'). Thus, every thing which is rational and is reached through reflection and reasoning belongs to the principles, while everything which is grasped

¹ Shahrastānī, al-Milāl w- al-Nihāl, pp.32-33
² Ilm al-Kalām, pp.36-38.
through analogy and reckoning belongs to the subsidiary class." ¹

The subject of Iṣlm al-Kalām, according to Ibn Khaldun, is,

"the rational argumentation through reasoning to defend or keep up the belief system of Shari'ah so that doubts may be removed and bid'āt (innovations) may be eliminated." ²

Causes of Emergence of Iṣlm al-Kalām:

The evolution of society and polity as well as the development of learning and thought in Islam was bound to give rise to controversies also.

During the life-time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the first two caliphs, no controversy - political or otherwise - could gain strength capable of cracking the lines of the believers. ³ But the subsequent Muslim differences, particularly in political life, effected irreparable cleavages in their ranks. It is rather difficult to say

¹ Shahrastani, al-Milal w- al-Nihal, p.51.
² Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima, p.466.
whether the sword led to the raging controversies or the controversial issues resulted in the drawing of swords. However, it can be said with certainty that the use of sword confirmed and sanctified political sectarianism.

No doubt it turned out the greatest single factor in creating a milieu of theological controversies and polemical debates which made possible the emergence of the science of reason or Ilm al-Kalam. However, many other factors and historical forces were working together in this direction which, in spite of their importance, were not as visible.

Various factors — internal and external both — contributed in the development of Ilm al-Kalam. The internal factors relate mainly to the holy Qur'an, the nature of Islam and Muslim themselves. The external factors were the influences which came from different religions and cultures other than Islam.

**Internal Factors:**

a) In addition to its call towards unity of God and prophecy etc., the Qur'an addressed itself also to the

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religions prevailing during its period of revelation, and rejected and refuted many of their ideas. Such as those who denied Godhead and prophecy and said: "nothing can destroy us except the time." The Qur'an refuted them with various arguments.

In the same way it also challenged and rejected the ideas of Mushrikun. For instance, those who believed in the godhead of stars, the sun or the moon. Likewise those who speak of Godhead in Jesus Christ were rejected and refuted at various places in Qur'an.

The Qur'an likewise refuted those who believed in and worshipped the Idols, and associated them with God. Similarly, those who did not believe in the Day of Resurrection, have been warned of their ultimate and eternal doom. Moreover, God commanded the Prophet to go ahead with his message and argue with them keeping the best of manners.

It was in the nature of things then that the Muslim 'Ulama also took the same route and argued with their

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1. al-Qur'an 45:24
2. al-Qur'an 6:76
3. al-Qur'an 3:59
5. al-Qur'an, 16:125
opponents in accordance with the kind of argumentation directed towards them. They even had to renew and revise their rational views under the weight of changing questions and emphasis etc. All these helped Ilm al-Kalam to emerge.¹

b) Islam in the beginning was a simple and strong Faith where the eyes were directed to the basics of Islam. But as the Muslims became free from their conquests and prosperity came to them from all around, they settled down thinking and theorising in different spheres of interest. The emerging issues of faith began to be tinted with academic and philosophical colouring. Questions like which of the two — pre-destination or free will — is ultimately the Islamic concept, or how to harmonize between the two concepts both of which occur in the Qur'an, became a focus of thought and debate.² In the same way in the Qur'an, there are two kinds of verses: Muhkamāt and Mutashabīhāt. The former are clear-cut whereas the latter are ambiguous in their meaning. Although the Qur'an itself has stressed ³ that the meaning of the latter kind of verses is not known but to God alone, yet these verses became in

² Cf. al-Qur'an, 2:6; 4:165. See Duha al-Islam, V. III, pp.2-4; Ilm al-Kalam, p.21
the course of time a focal point of controversy between the literalists and the rationalists.¹

c) Political Controversy: perhaps the greatest of the controversies produced by the internal conditions of Muslim society was the issue of Khilafat. The Prophet had not left any clear instructions as to who will succeed him as the leader of the community or what would be the mechanism governing the issue of succession.²

Today we shall regard it as a pure political problem. It was so because Islam did not restrict the Muslims to a definite form of government only. The only restriction for the Muslims was to keep in view before taking any decision the common weal of the community.³ Thus, if there appeared any controversy in the selection or election of a Khalifah it was obviously a political difference.

During that period things were not as clearly defined as today. The parties did not take this kind of pure political form. All issues were coloured with a strong religious tint and every political party soon

turned into religious sect. It adopted or was given a name pointing to its sectarian faith instead to its political origin,¹ like Shia, Khawarij, Murjiah etc.

In place of arguing on the basis of the consequences of their actions in respect of public interest or harm, they argued in terms of Kufr and Iman, paradise and hell.

In fact the early sects were political parties each of which was sure that the truth lies with it. One party was confident that Ali was the best of people so as to be the Khalifah of the community, the other saw that Mu'awiyah was the most suitable Muslim for this purpose, still another was of the view that neither this nor that — rather there was no need of any Khilafat. If at all, then, the best of men should be chosen, though he be a negroid Muslim. A forth of these parties did not enter this controversy fearing that it would only strengthen the raging conflict.² In this way these political controversies shortly afterwards changed into sectarian faiths and provided the early bases of Ilm al-Kalam.

¹. Duha al-Islam, V.III, pp.4-5.
². These parties respectively were the Shias, the Umayyads, Khawarij and Murji'ah.
d) Added to this was another important factor. As is seen in every war-fare, there were certain clever and artful individuals who took full advantage of the fact that the slogan of defence of Faith facinated the people more than the slogan of public welfare. Such persons then made the best of this situation and provoked the sentiment which led to drawing of the swords in the name of Faith. Thus, those who did not have any fear of God went ahead to even fabricate Hadiths in case they did not find anything which suited their ends. Therefore, the political difference was the greatest among the factors responsible for religious dissension and for promoting the sectarian trends. It was transformed into theological controversy regarding the very definition of Iman and Kufr, Kabīrah and Şaghirah as well as the position of the one who committed a Kabīrah. These controversies were carried from the principles on to the corollaries of faith and law - producing ultimately an independent sect which differed from others in principle and detail both.

External Factors:

a) A number of those who embraced Islam during

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
and after the period of Muslim conquests hailed from different religious and cultures like Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, Sābīs, Hindūs, the materialists etc. These people had the training of their earlier religions and culture ingrained in their heart and mind as they were brought up in their respective societies. Among those who had replaced their faith by Islam were raised questions and problems which derived strength from their former faith.¹ Among them were many scholars also who gave these questions and problems an Islamic look as they interpreted them in Islamic light. This is how we find in books dealing with sectarian beliefs, such views as are totally alien to Islam, like the views of Ahmad Ibn Ha'īt or that of Ahmad Ibn Ayyub bin Manūs concerning transmigration of souls or the views about Jesus Christ, having the semblance of Christians Faith.²

b) Another important factor was the study of the rationalist basis and arguments of the non-Muslim opponents for polemical purposes. This can be seen in the case of Mu'tazilah whose chief objective was not only to propagate Islam but also reject and refute the argumentation put

¹. S. Muzaffaruddin, p.7.
². Shahrastānī, Kitab al-Milal w-al-Nihal, pp.76-79
forward by their opponents or non-Muslim scholars in the defence of their faith. This led the Mu'tazilites towards studying extensively the view, beliefs and arguments of their religions and religious sects. These polemical debates and studies raised new questions and required deeper contemplation, providing thereby wider grounds for the development of *Ilm al-Kalam*.  

At the same time it should be realised that some of the religions particularly Judaism and Christianity were already equipped by Greek philosophy. Felix the Jew (25 BC - 50 AD) was among the first who tried to philosophize the Jewish religion at Alexandria. Likewise Clemon the Alexandrian (Born 150 AD) and Orecton (185-254) pioneered to blend Christianity with neo-Platonism and a number of Nestorian Christians followed their path. The Mu'tazilite contact with Nestorians compelled them to study their rational basis. This became an important reason for the growth of Islamic rationalism.  

c) In order to keep with their opponent on rational grounds the Mutakallimun were forced to study Greek philosophy and logic. Thus, a number of Mu'tazilites

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3. Ibid.
during the Abbasid period such as al-Nazzam, Abu al-Huzail al-Allaf and others studied Aristotle and refuted him on many questions. Many of the Mu'tazilites are seen during this period using terms like essence, contingency, motion, generation, the sole essence etc. which came directly from Greek Philosophy and became part and parcel of the debates among the Mutakallimun.¹

All these factors - internal and external ultimately made possible the emergence of IIm al-Kalām and established it as an independent discipline. Therefore, to say that it is a pure Islamic learning which is not influenced by Greek and other philosophies will be to deny the historical growth of this discipline. Similarly, to regard IIm al-Kalām as having been born of Greek philosophy will be equally wrong as Islam itself is the source and pivot of this discipline.² Moreover, the argumentation of Mutakallimun is essentially based on the verses of Qur'ān and on its interpretations.

The truth, therefore, is that al-Kalām is a discipline mixed by both of these elements. But the Islamic identity in that is far more powerful than the Greek identity which is related more to the form and phraseology.³

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¹. IIm al-Kalām, pp.36, 40; Shahrastāni, pp.67-74.
³. S. Muzaffaruddin, p.37.
The Muslims during the early period of Islam did not entertain any controversies. They seldom indulged in debates in so far as the tenets of Islam were concerned. This harmony of Faith and practice however, could not continue for long. The expansion of Islam and new converts from different societies led to give rise to many questions and discussions which caused discords and dissensions. The Muslim scholars sensed the gravity of the situation and responded to the emerging needs. As a result a number of such as sciences came into being, commentary, jurisprudences, theology grammar, rhetoric etc. All this learning was directly and closely connected with the Holy Qur'ān, and turned out very helpful to the Muslim people to understand the implications and the meaning of the Qur'ān. But then at the same time it also opened the door of academic and other controversies. The political interests and alignments were highly nourished on academic development. As a result increasing political dissent found its best expression in sectarian debates.

The Early Kalami Sects:

Shahrastani (1083 - 1153 A.D), sums up the main issues of controversy in respect of Islamic faith in the following

four points:

(1) Human Will, whether man has liberty of choice and volition or not, i.e. freedom in the choice of his actions.

(2) Attributes of God, i.e. whether God has attributes or not and if so whether they are part of his essneces or different from it.

(3) Beliefs and actions, i.e. whether human actions are part of his faith or separate from it.

(4) Reason and Revelation, i.e. whether the human reason is subject to revelation or otherwise, which of them is the criterion of truth.¹

The first of these questions was closely connected with Muslim political life and therefore, it became the cause of serious debate and rift, for it raised the question of freedom of choice. There was even before the advent of Islam widespread belief in Fatalism or Pre-destinarianism that everything is pre-determined and man lives and does - be it good or bad - as a tool in the hands of God.²

¹ Shahrastani, al-Milal w- al-Nihal, quoted by Muzaffaruddin, pp.11-12.
² Muzaffaruddin, pp.11-12.
On the other hand, another section of humanity, though a relative minority, believed in the absolute liberty of human action holding that God has given man power and freedom and it is up to him to use or misuse them.¹

Both of these theories have their own merits and demerits and represent extremes or contradictory positions. But there may also be an intermediary course between the two extremes. The Qur'an confirms and verifies the unlimited powers of God and at the same time recognizes partial freedom and responsibility of human individual.²

Those who are well-versed in Islamic learning or who have familiarised themselves with Islamic spirit cannot fail to grasp the Qur'anic idea. The apparent conflict of Qur'anic verses, however, led some in Islamic history to stress what was in fact their own inclination towards Fatalism or Human Liberty and not the Qur'anic idea.³ In between the two kinds of Qur'anic verses, e.g.:

"And He pardons whom He will
and punishes whom He will,
inasmuch as God is a Supreme Being." ²:49

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¹. Ibid.
and

"So whoever follows the right path, does so for his own good, and whoever goes astray, bears on himself the responsibility (of going astray)." 10:108

there emerges a third view, distinct from both extremes. That God is beyond all doubt the Supreme Sovereign, but human beings too have been given some discretion so as to be able to make choice between good and evil, harmful and beneficial, right and wrong.¹

The school of thought known as Jabr or pre-destinarianism was founded by Jahm bin Safwan who held that man has no freedom of will and liberty of volition and action. He is absolutely helpless. The other view of a sub-sect of Jabriyyah according to Shahrastani is relatively moderate: that man has got ability which is however, not effective. Obviously the Jabriyyah ignored and based their stand on the verses asserting absolutism of Divine Will.²

¹. Ibid, pp. 15-16.
². Shahrastnai, pp.108-112.
The Qadriyyah represented the opposite view and based it on Qur'anic verses related to human freedom of discretion, ignoring the other verses about the divine sovereign powers. As a school of thought, it was initiated by Ma'bad al-Jahani. The extremists in this school held that man has unqualified discretion in the choice of good and evil and right and wrong.¹ Ma'bad al-Jahani had to pay dearly for his views and was executed in 80 A.H. (699 A.D.) at the instance of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwán. The school was carried forward afterwards by Ghilān al-Dimashqi who further expounded that Ḥanāfī neither increases nor decreases. He also spoke like Ma'bad, about Qur'an as created word of God. He was stopped short of his theorizations by Umar bin Abdūl Azīz and ultimately executed at the behest of Hishām bin Abd al-Malik in 724.²

After a prolonged polemical war, the two schools of Jabr and Qadr finally merged with each other at the instance of the former regarding the question of free-will. Henceforth the Jabriyyah however was better known as Mushabbihah or Resemblists, i.e. those who resembled attributes of God to

1. Ibid, p.20
those of man. The Qadris withstood all repressive measures to become finally the Mu'tazilah or reasonists of Islamic history.

Basra and Kufah during the Umayyad period had become the centres of Ahl al-Rai from whose ranks emerged most of the Mutakallimun. It should be kept in mind that in the first place, there was no difference between Muhaddithun Ahl al-Rai or Murji‘ah. It was only in the second place that according to their Ijtihad (personal judgement) they took to a particular outlook known as rai', irja etc. Basra came under greater lime-light due to the presence there of Imam Hasan Basari. The Imam was well-versed in Islamic learning. He was as ascetic in trend as rationalistic in his speculation. He was respected greatly in Basra and large number of people assembled around him in the great mosque of Basra every day to listen to his lectures.

One day, when the Imam was about to answer a question put to him regarding the position of a man committing a major sin, one of his disciples Wasil bin 'Ata came forward

2. Ahl al-Rai' (people of Opinion) were those who relied on Qiyas (analogy) and decided cases of Figh through the exercise of their rai' (personal opinion in the light of Shari Oiyas, however is the fourth and final source of Figh after Qur'an, Hadith and Ijma.
and said: "Such a man is neither a believer nor an un-believer, but he should be ranked in an intermediate stage." Having said this Wasil seceded from his teacher's circle and began to express his own views. The Imam then said 'Itazala 'Anna' (He seceded from us). From then on, Wasil and his circle were named as Mu'tazilah and their views as Mutazilism (Secession).

The main participants thus among whom Kalāmi debates during Umayyad period dragged on were Khawārij, the Shi'a, Qadriyyah and Jabriyyah. About the last decades of Umayyad period the Jabriyyah lost their identity to Qadriyyah, but the trend of Jabr (Fatalism) persisted in other forms. Likewise, Qadriyyah views were also dissolved only to take the new form of I'tizal. Just as in between Khawarij and Shi'as was the moderating position of Ahl al-Sunnah w- al-Jama'ah regarding the issue of Khilafat and Imamat, in the same way, on the issue of Fatalism and Free-will, was the position of Murji'ah in between Qadriyyah and Jabriyyah.

Murji'ah has been derived from 'Irja' - postponement (of judgement). In the raging controversy of the position

1. Umar Farrukh, p.156.
3. Ibid, p.22.
of a man committing a major sin, the position of the Umayyad Caliphs vis-a-vis the Shi'as, Hashimites and the Khawārij or the position of the controversy between pre-determinism and free-will, the stand of Murjur'ahs was that of postponement of all judgement till the Day of Judgement.

They held for instance that Iman or Faith is the verification at heart whereas translating it into action is not an essential part of the definition of faith. Hence all Muslims seem to have perfect faith whether they act accordingly or not. We must postpone then the judgement till the Last Day.¹

In other words they preferred for themselves an impartial position in respect of all burning questions and controversies. One of the important reasons of this attitude on their part was that the Murjur'ahs generally belonged to the class of serious academicians who did not want to involve themselves in such controversies as might result in a crisis between them and the rulers.²

¹. Duha, V.III, pp.316-19. As a corollary to this they also held as against Mu'tazilah and Khawārij that Iman does not increase or decrease and that the one who committed a major sin would not deserve eternal hell, for after all he was a believer.

². Ibid, pp.324-27.
In the political controversies, their stand was
(i) we accept and obey Banu Umayyah rulers for they are
the Caliphs. (ii) we do not fight them because we believe
that however great a sin may be it does not extrude a Mu' mín
from Iman. As long as a man is Mu' mín, killing him is not
lawful.¹

3. Qur'ān and Mutakallimūn:

Different Styles:

At this stage we must pause for a while to appreciate
the characteristic style of the Mutakallimūn vis-a-vis the
style of the holy Qur'ān. In fact they have a rationalistic
style which does not seem to agree with the style of the
Qur'ān, the Prophet and that of the Companions.² Equally
the rationalistic style of the Mutakallimūn does not appear
to complement or reconcile with the reasoning style of the
philosophers. This is because a Mutakallim looks up to the
universe in order to argue for the existence of God. His
investigation mainly aims at discovering evidence for the

¹ Tarikh Fikr al-'Arabi, p.151.
² Duha al-Islām, V.III, p.15.
actions of the Creator. This is not in the case of philosophers who reflect over the creation and causality without any pre-conceptions, and try to correlate the chain of causes to reach a final conclusion, be it whatever it may.\footnote{Ibn Khaldun, p.466.}

In other words the stand of a Mutakallim is that of an advocate who investigates to secure evidence to prove his case. However, the position of a philosopher is like that of a judge who weighs all evidence available and reaches a final conclusion - his judgement.\footnote{Ibid, p.18.}

1) The Style of Qur'an: The holy Qur'an trusts in its message on human nature rather than human reason. Every human individual has in his nature ingrained the belief of the existence of a Supreme Power — the Creator of this World, who keeps it moving too. In this feeling or awareness or faith, all human individuals whatever their differences regarding the names and attributes of God, stand on equal footing, with no distinction of primitive and modern ignorant or educated.\footnote{Duha al-Islam, V.III, p.11}

The holy Qur'an therefore, addresses all humanity trusting the human nature. The Qur'anic address and appeal

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1. Ibn Khaldun, p.466.
2. Ibid, p.18.
3. Duha al-Islam, V.III, p.11
is based on reinforcing and revitalizing this human sentiment. It aims to reform and purify it from all that has contaminated this sentiment, such as superstitions, irrational beliefs, partnership in Godhead, incarnation etc.¹

God Almighty therefore is not only the Creator of man but of everything in this natural phenomena, we know and understand it or not. He is the cause of all existence, all life and all order manifesting itself in this Creation.²

The Holy Qur‘an throughout keeps up this style in its call of Tawhīd. In this regard the Qur‘anic arguments are mainly based on what it familiar and comes naturally to us. For example, it is not possible that one territory may be ruled simultaneously by two rulers. The Qur‘an makes it a basis of Tawhīd and declares that had there been more than one God the whole of this universe would have been but ruined.³ In the same way the Qur‘an points to the unified whole of this creation where all the created beings or phenomena comply to the dictates of a unitarian system. Thus, there is nothing in this creation which does not bow

¹. Ibid.
down to God and recite His hymns, though we may not understand the language of these hymns.\(^1\) The might and wisdom of God have thus been explained and verified by the Qur'ān.

This style obviously takes care of the nature of man and nourishes the divine idea lying at the core of his heart, which acknowledges this call and often heeds to it also - even the heart of an athiest. This is indeed a style - characteristic to Qur'ān - which has its appeal not only for the common people but also for the scholarly and the enlightened. The holy Qur'an in its arguments does not rely on logical exposition, nor it makes use of such philosophical terms as essence and contingency. Nor it presents us to any intellectual dilemma or illogical dogmas. The Faith obviously is not meant for scholars alone or the masses only. The Qur'anic appeal thus is not limited to particular section of human beings.\(^2\) It covers the humanity at large.

However, there are scattered in Qur'ān such verses also which present total ambiguity or apparent contradiction. For example, there are verses which clearly stress pre-destination whereas certain other verses seem to emphasize human

\(^1\) al-Qur'ān 17:44

\(^2\) Duha al-Islam, V.III,p.13
free will. Therefore, the question arises how to harmonise between them or what is the ultimate direction of such verses. Moreover, there are verses which speak of divine face or hands or foot or divine throne etc. At the same time there are other verses which speak of God being far above from all conception of matter and form. Again the question is raised how to bring about harmony between them. Such verses have been termed by Qur'an itself as Mutashabihat (the ambiguous). They became a subject of contemplation and debate. ¹

As for the early Muslims they had complete faith in them and verified them without much questioning. They were sure that debating the possible meaning of the Mutashabihat was not in the best interest of Muslim community. Nor the common people have the capacity to understand the deeper implications. Therefore, the best way for the Muslims at large is to believe in them in general.

A tradition of the Prophet reported by 'Ali says,

"Speak to the people at the level they can understand. Do you want to falsify God and His Prophet?"² Rabī'ah al-Ra'i was once asked the meaning of Istawa Al al-'Arsh. He

replied, "The meaning of Istawa (sitting) is obvious, the state is incomprehensible. The prophecy is by God, the Prophet is responsible for preaching the message, and we are under obligation to verify. "1 Likewise Malik ibn 'Anas was asked the same question and his reply was, "The meaning of Istawa is plain. The state of it is incomprehensible, the faith in it is obligatory and the question about it is an innovation (bid'ah) "2 This school of thought was headed during the Abbasid period by Ahmad ibn Hambal and during the later period by Ibn Taimiyyah who was the foremost among the leaders of this school.

ii) Style of Mutakallimun: But the style of the Mutakallimun, basically differed from this approach. Initially they believed in God and His word as revealed to the Prophet. However, here the similarity ends. They wanted to reinforce this faith by logical and intellectual arguments. Thus, they changed the position from the human sentiment and nature to speculation and reasoning in the phenomena of creation. To put it briefly the Mutakallimu transported the whole thing from the heart to the mind.

1. Ibid, p.15.  
2. Ibid
Although they believed in Mutashabiha as did others, yet they rearranged the Qur'anic verses which speak of pre-destination and of free will and verses which speak of God in human terms or in terms of incorporeal Being. This they did with a view to harmonise between these conflicting verses. Thus, their main effort was to reconcile rationally between reason and revelation. This rationalist approach led them to form independent opinions with regard to each question.\(^1\) In this way the most important sphere of Ilm al-Kalam came to be recognised as interpretation of the holy Qur'an.

In the nature of things, this interpretation led some of them to take the stance of pre-destinarianism while others to take the stand of free-will. The Umayyads in their effort to vindicate their position of caliphate, hardly desirable for the large majority of Muslims, patronized generally the school of Jabr (pre-destinarianism) to the shere disadvantage of the opposite school. This is why these polemical controversies appear so marked in their intensity.\(^2\)

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iii) al-Kalām and Muslim Philosophy: It must be mentioned here that between Ilm al-Kalām and Muslim Philosophy, there is a basic difference in so far as the growth of the two is concerned. The development of al-Kalām was rather gradual and it includes a number of issues which grew up in its historical folds. Some people raised a question, others differed and both attracted many others to their stand, giving rise to a new sect and so on. Thus, the question was raised about the one who committed a Kabīrah - as to whether he was a Kāfir or a Mu'min? The Khawarij regarded him a Kāfir, but the Mu'tazilah kept him in between the two extremes of Kufr and Iman. In the course of time, new problems and questions emerged and new solution for them were evolved. This was not confined to al-Kalām only, the same holds true of Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic grammar etc.\footnote{Duha al-Islam, V.III, p.20.} \footnote{Ibid.} 

But the Muslim philosophy does not show this gradual development. Rather it presents almost a complete picture from the beginning. This is because the Muslim philosophers inherited Greek philosophy as a developed system which made possible for them to cut short the distance of gradual de-
Thus, to this system of philosophy they added their own contribution of correlation, commentaries and independent opinion. Their main achievement was an effort of harmonization between Greek philosophy and issues of Islamic Faith.

This is why it is rather difficult to name the philosophy with which al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Ibn ʿSīnā etc. were engaged as Islamic philosophy. Equally that is why Ilm al-ʿKālām is to be counted as an Islamic Science, as the basis and issues of faith in al-ʿKālām mainly come from Islam itself or more exactly from the Holy Qurʾān. This explains the resentment of Muhaddithun during the early centuries against the 'Mutakallimun' - particularly the Muʿtazilah - whose faith came from Qurʾān no doubt, but their especial stress on reason and rationalism opened the door of un-restricted speculation. It weakened their relation with the holy Qurʾān and Sunnah, and brought them closer to Greek system of thought. It must be recognized however, that they were essentially the champions of Qurʾān rather than philosophy - Greek or otherwise.

1. De Boer, Tarikh Falsafa-e-Islām (Urdu Tr.), p.27
2. Duha al-Islām, v.III, p.20
The hostile relations between Muslim philosophers and Mutakallimun are related essentially to this difference of approach - for instance between Ibn Rushd and Ghazali.

4. **MU'TAZILISM AND ASH'ARISM**:

A - Mu'tazilism (Reasonism):

Mu'tazilah's doctrines on which are based all their views and polemical discussions are mainly as follows:

1) **Principle of Tawhīd**: God is one, single and Eternal and that He has no attributes, as it contradicts the divine unity. As a corollary of this principle, they denied the attribute of *Kalām* (word of God). Hence, their view that Qur'ān is not eternal but created.\(^1\)

2) **Principle of Adl**: God is Just only and cannot be unjust so as to enjoin for evil and then punish for that. Therefore, man is free in his actions and choice and hence he merits punishment and reward.\(^2\)

3) **Principle of Wa'd and Wa'īd**: i.e. divine promise and threat. This principle as is apparent is related with

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1. Muzaffaruddin, pp.40-42; Duha, V.III, pp.22-44.
2. Umar Farrukh, pp.164-65; Duha, V.III, pp.44-64.
the principle of 'Adl (equity).¹

4) Principle of 'Aql (Reason): The judgement of reason has priority over revelation in case of conflict.²

5) Principle of Intermediary position: (al-Manzilah Bain al-Manzilatayn): According to this principle a Muslim committing a major sin,³ is neither a Mu'min nor a Kafir. He is in between Kufr and Iman.

These were the five basic principles on which was built up the edifice of Mu'tazilism which according to them distinguished the truth from non-truth. It appears that all these principles came to be evolved not at one time and by a single man. Wāsil bin 'Ata, however, pointed to all five of them as "the principles". Nazzam later reduced them to three, i.e. the principle of Tawhid, Adl, Wa'd and Wa'id.⁴

Towards the close of the Umayyad period the Mu'tazilite school gained strong ground, particularly under Yazid II, the son of Walid II (743 - 44 A.D.).⁵ In 750 A.D., the Umayyads were replaced by the Abbasid dynasty and the Persian influence

¹. Duha, V.III, pp.61-64.
². Ibid, pp.64-67; Umar Farrukh, pp.164-65.
⁴. Ibid, p.164.
⁵. Muzaffaruddin, pp.30-31.
became pre-dominant in the Abbasid Court and the Muslim Society. The second Caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansoor (754-776) was rather liberal and advocated freedom of thought and the doctrine of free-will. He was however, not a Mu'tazilite in the true sense of the word, though Mu'tazilism was indirectly aided by him when he arranged for the translation into Arabic/certain philosophical works from Greek language.¹

The influence of Mu'tazilah views continued to widen under the patronage of the Burmakids.² Unlike his father, Haroon al-Rashid did not favour rationalist views though he was forced to change his policy towards al-Kalam under the pressure of circumstances, as cited above.

It was about this time that al-Kalam found strong support through the learning of Abu al-Huzail al-'Allaf and Ibrahīm bin Sayyar al-Nazzām. The former wrote a number of books on the refutation of Zindiqs, Dualists and Materialists. He was known for his vast knowledge of religious learning and eloquence.³ Likewise al-Nazzām, a pupil of Abu al-Huzail, was well-versed in his knowledge of Greek philosophy and

¹. Ibid, p.31.
². Ilm al-Kalam, pp.40-41.
During the reign of al-Mamun, i'tazal (i.e. Mu'tazilism) was raised to the status of state-religion and the door of philosophical discussion was pushed wide open. Mu'tasim and Wathiq after al-Mamun continued the patronage of this rationalistic school. Afterwards, however, almost all the Abbasid Caliphs were opposed to Mu'tazilah school and gradually therefore it was doomed to extinction inasmuch as its propagation and popularity was concerned. On academic level, however, a number of Qur'anic commentaries were produced in the fourth and fifth centuries of Hijrah on the basis of Mu'tazilite principle. The only Tafsir of Mu'tazilite surviving from this period is al-Kashshaf of Zamakhshari (d. 1119). He is the first to give way to rhetorics in Tafsir.¹ In this it is held in great esteem.

B - 'Asha'rism (Revelationism):

Contrasted to Mu'tazilism was Asha'rism which came into being as a reaction to the former. The section among the Muslim scholars, generally referred to as Muhaddithun was opposed in principle to the rationalistic school of Mu'tazilah. In

¹ Ibid, pp.47-48
addition to their stress on revelation and strict adherence
to Qur'ān and Hadīth they held that the Mu'tazilite princi-
pies due to the pre-dominance of reasonism were rather
abstract to understand for the common Muslims. They feared
that this trend would only lead the Muslim masses to think
that religion is not as binding as it is considered, and
they would rid themselves of its control. This will only
promote irreligious even immoral outlook and practice. There
is no denying of the fact that the apprehension was not
altogether unfounded. In fact the rationalistic approach
of Mu'tazilah might have satisfied a small elite among the
Muslims, but it was too abstract for the Muslims at large.

Added to this was another factor. The reign of
persecution initiated by Abbasid al-Mamun for promoting
'Itizal and suppressing all other thought antagonised the
Muslim divines still more. The Muslim public who found more
solace amidst the Muhaddithun and other divines also looked
towards the Mu'tazilah with dislike. The Abbasid Caliph
al-Mamun might have been an advocate of rationalism and
free thinking, but eventually he became himself the greatest
cause and means of intolerance and suppression of all freedom
of thought.

1. Muzaffaruddin, p.53
2. Ibid
3. Ibid, pp.52-53.
A third factor towards making a reaction imminent was the emergence of a group of rationalist schools known as Ikhwan al-Safa or Brethern of Sincerity. Their object perhaps was to harmonize among various conflicting schools of thought in Islam and other religions as well as they worked and held discussions in full secrecy to avoid displeasure of one school or the other. With their objective of reconciling reason with revelation they composed a number of treatises — fifty-one in total — on burning topics of their day. They managed to circulate them among Muslims of various views and schools. Their rationalist approach aimed at harmonizing between the "conservatism of the theologians and the abstractism of the Mu'tazilites to a point where they could meet."3

These three factors taken together prepared the ground for a reactionary movement, which was initiated by Imam Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Ash'ari. Himself a disciple of the renowned Mu'tazilite teacher al-Jubbai, he declared his renunciation of Mu'tazilism while about 40 years of age and became the champion of the cause of Muhaddithun.4 Al-'Ash'ari (874-942 AD) had assimilated and mastered all Mu'tazilite learning and

1. Umar Farrukh, pp.293-94
2. Muzaffaruddin, pp.53-54
3. Ibid
logic, which he directed afterwards against Mu'tazilah themselves. About the same time, two other Muslim scholars of jurisprudence were treading the same path as al-'Ash'ari was. They were Ahmad al-Ṭahāvi (d. 940) in Egypt and Abu Mansūr al-Māturidi (d. 944) in Samargand. But Imām al-'Ash'ari far exceeded them in fame and influence both.¹

1) He declared that the attributes of God are neither included in His Essence nor excluded. Rather they are co-eternal with Him. This was in fact an intermediary course between Mu'tazilah who denied divine attributes, and the Sifātiyyah who spoke of independent attributes.²

2) Human beings live a pre-destined life. The good and evil both belong to the will of God. The Ash'arites substituted human free-will by Kasb i.e. human power of earning or acquisition of what is pre-destined.³

3) That the holy Qur'ān and every part of it is uncreated and eternal.⁴

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1. Umar Farrukh, p.250.
2. Muzaffaruddin, p.57; Ibn Khaldun, pp.462-65
4. Ibid.
4) That all the duties commanded belong to revelation and as such are binding.¹

5) That all things concerning ghaib (the unknown) like paradise, hell, Sirāt etc. given through the divine word for belief are true and exist as stated.²

6) That Khilafat is a responsibility and a matter of Muslim choice.³

7) That faith is a verification at heart. Thus, who verifies at heart the unity of God, the prophecy and its message, his faith is all right. A verbal affirmation and practice of the pillars of Islam is but subordinate to this faith.⁴

Ilm al-Kalām did not find much ground in Spain where the study of philosophy and logic was rather dangerous.⁴ Ibn Hazm Zahiri (994-1064), however, gave a new turn to al-Kalām here. It was through him that Spain got the unique

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
distinction that Hadith and al-Kalām both were brought together.¹ He wrote more than 400 books which run in about 80,000 pages. He has been held as one of the few greatest geniuses and most fertile minds of Islamic history. In al-Kalām, he wrote two books. One on a comparative study of the Qūd and New Testament. The other is entitled al-Fasl fi al-Mīlal w-al-Ahwa w-al-Nīhal.² This is the first-ever book written on the subject of comparative religion dealing with the principles of faith of different religions and then refuting them on rational level.³

Decline of al-Kalām:

The development of al-Kalām from almost the end of the third century of Hijrah onwards is mainly the story of 'Ash'arism which had consolidated the stand of the Muhaddithun and the Muslim divines. It became also a source of satisfaction for the Muslims in general.⁴ The culmination point of Ilm al-Kalām was reached finally in Imam Ghazzālī, in whose writings the very framework of Ilm al-Kalām was almost entirely changed.⁵ For although he supported the 'Ash'arite

¹ Ilm al-Kalām, p.50
² Ibid.; P.K. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.558
³ Ilm al-Kalām, p.50
⁴ Umar Farrukh, p.252.
⁵ Ibid, p.249.
doctrines yet he was of the view that it does not reveal the truth. Therefore, he wrote a number of books in which he explained the problems of Faith in a way different from that of 'Ash'arites, e.g. Jawāhar al-Qur'ān, Ma'ārij al-Quds, Madnūn etc.¹

This new methodology and trend of al-Kalam after Imam Ghazzālī was carried forward by Muhammad bin Abd' al-Karīm Shahrastānī (1087-1153) who rose to the eminence of being called Afdal al-Ulama. He renowned himself in hadīth, Fiqh as well as in Ilm al-Kalam in which he wrote a number of books. In the field of al-Kalam he wrote al-Milal w-al-Nihal in which he discussed elaborately the history of religious sects in Islām as also the history of Hukama (philosophers) particularly, the Greek philosophers.²

He was followed in this field by Imam Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149-1210 A.D.). Just as he was considered an Imam (leader) in Tafsir, Fiqh etc, so he was considered an Imam in the field of reason and philosophy, perhaps even greater.³ His greatest contribution in al-Kalam like

1. Ilm al-Kalam, p.58
2. Ibid
3. Umar Farrukh, pp. 441-42
Ghazali lies in the field of the refutation of philosophy. The most renowned among his books is the commentary of the Qur'an popularly known as al-Tafsir al-Kabir, in which the questions of faith and its many important problems have been rationally explained. He names those who harmonize between revelation and reason, as Hukama-e-Islam and mentions them in esteem.

The last important scholar in the field of al-Kalam was Abu' al Hasan 'Ali Saif al-Din Āmdi (1154-1234 A.D.). Although many others after him wrote a number of books in al-Kalam but often the problems of philosophy have been mixed up with questions of al-Kalam and both of these subjects have mostly been derived from Rāzi and Āmdi.

The great calamity that befell the Muslim world in the form of Tartar invasion and devastations, brought a sudden end to all development of al-Kalam also. However, the growth and development apart, the propagation of 'Ash'arite system of thought continued till it was disseminated so widely in the Muslim World that all other systems were totally eclipsed.

1. Ilm al-Kalam, pp.60-61
3. Ilm al-Kalam, p.70; Ibn Khaldun, p.466.
5. **SCOPE OF AL-KALĀM:**

**Qur'ān : the Source of al-Kalām:**

This historical development of al-Kalām seems to give currency to the impression, that al-Kalām was initially the product of internal strife while in its wider dimensions was the result of Muslim mind’s friction with non-Islāmic ideas.¹ This is true in so far as the historical growth of theological discussions is concerned.

It does not however, holds good inasmuch as the rationalist trend itself is concerned. This rationalist tendency is inherently present in Muslim society through its relation with the Holy Qur'ān. The rational view of Qur'ān is explicit even in such themes of Islamic Faith as unity and justice of God, prophecy, reward and punishment, individual accountability etc, not to speak of the Qur'ānic rational view of moral excellence, equality, piety, democratic spirit, acquisition of knowledge, status of women, laws of inheritance etc. At the same time it does not ignore the practical realities of human society in matters of rights and duties.

¹ Ilm al-Kalām, pp.19-20.
Were it not for this trend of reason and rationalism ingrained in Qur'ānic verses even in matters of faith, it is difficult to imagine that in a hundred years or so, after the Prophet, ʿal-Kalām should have emerged as a rich and independent subject. More important still, as a subject ʿal-Kalām tends to resume its importance and role variously according to the changing trends. This can be seen from the Qadris and Murji'ah of the very first century of Hijrah to ʿal-ʿAsh'ari (d. 943); to ʿIbn Hazm (d. 1064 A.D.) to Ghazzāli (d. 1111) to al-Rāzi (1210) to Ibn Taimiyyah (1263) to Shah Waliullah (d. 1761) to Maulana Mohd. Qasim (d. 1880) etc. to name only the more illustrious. ʿIlm al-Kalām being the direct product of the Qur'ān's inherent rational outlook, it therefore, must not break away or divert from this divine source in word and spirit both. Or else it is bound to lose its authenticity as it happened in case of Mu'tazilah etc.

If viewed in its totality, reason in Qur'ān is the synonym of truth, inasmuch as the cognition of truth essentially depends on the right direction of reasoning. The holy Qur'ān seeks not to dictate but points out the true course of reason.1

A close scrutiny of the words ʿHidāyah (guidance) al-Sīrāt al-Mustaqīm (the guided path), Ḥaq (truth) and other Qur'ānic

terms imply invariably the rational truths – starting from the concept of Tawhid down to the implications of a life of Taqwa (precaution = God fearingness) and Akhlaq-e-Hasanah (moral excellence).

An important thing to notice here is that reason in Qur’ān is never delinked from moral conception. In other words moral awareness with human reason forms the basis of Qur’ānic rationalism, or using modern phraseology/ the world-view of Islām.

The Positive al-Kalam:

As we can see debateism initially started from a discussion of political issues. In the second place these discussions were widened to sectarian rationalization. In the third place this rational approach developed to the level of rational defence of Islām. Allama Shibli says,

"Broadly speaking historical al-Kalam has been divided into two main categories which have their own different objectives:

1) The first is that which was essentially caused by the internal strife and sectarian conflicts."
These conflicts spread far and wide ... and much of internal strength was wasted away in consequence.

2) The second category of *al-Kalām* was that which was brought into existence in order to counter the challenge of philosophy.

Till the time of Imam Ghazzālī, both of these trends of al-Kalām were distinct and separate. The tradition of blending the two trends was established by Ghazzālī. Imam Rāzi greatly contributed to develop this tradition. The later writers however, mixed up the issues to such an extent that philosophy, the principle of Faith and al-Kalam became almost indistinguishable.

The above classification of *al-Kalām* is evidently a historical fact. But this observation has obviously omitted the fact that Imam Ghazzālī also laid the foundation of a third category of al-Kalām: The positive rational statement of Islamic Faith. This positive approach is not related essentially to any defensive view of Islam, be it the refutation of philosophy or any other faith or ideology.

It was Imam Ghazzālī (1058-1111 AD) who raised al-Kalām to its highest level in the defence of Islam against philosophy.  

Still greater contribution of Ghazzālī, however, was that he laid the basis of a rational view of Islamic Faith which was essentially positive. But this positive view of *al-Kalām* is generally over-shadowed by his more elaborate and vocal refutation of philosophy, for which he is better known.

This third category of *al-Kalām* mainly seeks to explain the inherent rational basis of Islamic beliefs. In this sense it is certainly the most positive approach towards understanding the Islamic Faith-system and its under-current of rationalism. In fact it is this category of *al-Kalām* which contributed during the last two hundred years or so a very positive interpretation of Islamic Faith and society.

**Stagnation or Re-evaluation:**

From the fourth century of Hijrah the rapid growth of *al-Kalām* witnessed a gradual decline leading into a period generally classed as a period of total stagnation after Ghazzālī and Rāzi. It was not the special case of *al-Kalām* only, but this decline was common to almost all branches of Islamic learning.
It would be conceded perhaps that the standstill to which all growth of Islamic learning had come, denotes not as much the stagnation of Muslim thought as it denotes an attempt at self-assessment, pointing to the need of reorganising, reassessing and re-evaluating all Islamic learning contributed so far. Stagnation appears but only a sarcastic and sweeping term for the centuries that elapsed by after the fall of Baghdad - in view of this period's tremendous academic output in Arabic and other Muslim languages such as Persian, Turkish, Urdu etc. There is no dearth either, though less frequently, of many an original contribution in this period, if only 'original contribution' is not confined to mean discovering a new continent. A rediscovery of the vast treasures of Islamic learning through incessant academic work on details, elaborations, annotations, chronological or other classifications, comparisons, critical assessments etc, as has been the case during the preceding centuries, deserves by no means to be called 'stagnation'. A continuous academic tradition through centuries may be compared and classed in its various phases as brighter or, less bright but it hardly merits being designated as stagnant or degenerated.

The disintegration of the institution of caliphate, however nominal and debased it might have turned, was indeed
the termination of a great political tradition. The harmony of Islamic mind, and the totality of Arabic as the Islamic language was shattered. The grip of an invisible binding force that was capable of bringing unity and harmony to diverse views and outlooks, races and generation, territories and languages was let loose all of a sudden.

The hegemony of the Arabic language had come to a final halt. The Persian and the Turkish replaced Arabic in many works of religious and other learning. The new trend gradually led to the appearance of new Islamic languages and the new Muslim outlook that derived its strength as much from territorial and geographical interests as from wider Islamic outlook. This can be seen in the shift of emphasis from mainly the religious sciences to mainly the secular spheres of learning (Ma'qulat).

Al-Kalām as an Islamic science was the greatest victim in all this. So much so that even a philosopher-historian like Ibn Khaldun (d. 1405 A.D.) saw no relevance of al-Kalām any more. He says, "Al-Kalām for our age has become only futile, for the atheists and the innovators are found no more, while the rational arguments of ahl al-Sunnah have already been
compiled. Now there is left no room for al-Kalām except in regard of Tanzih (divine incorporealism)."¹

The time for a positive contribution in al-Kalām initiated by Ghazzāli was not to come before the advent of 18th and 19th centuries when Shāh Waliullah of Delhi and Maulana Mohd Qasim of Nanautah respectively revivified al-Kalām and gave it a new respectability and acceptance. They broadened its scope from the traditional view of rational defence of Islām to a more positive rational framework of Islām - where reason can be seen at work on both levels:

i) the conception of Islām as a society as elaborated by Shāh Waliullah,

ii) the conception of Islām as a Faith as detailed by Maulana Mohd Qasim.

¹. Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddima, p.466.
CHAPTER - I

ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN INDIA

1) Before 18th Century
2) 18th Century : Shah Waliullah and al-Kalam
3) 19th Century : The Debacle and the Dilemma